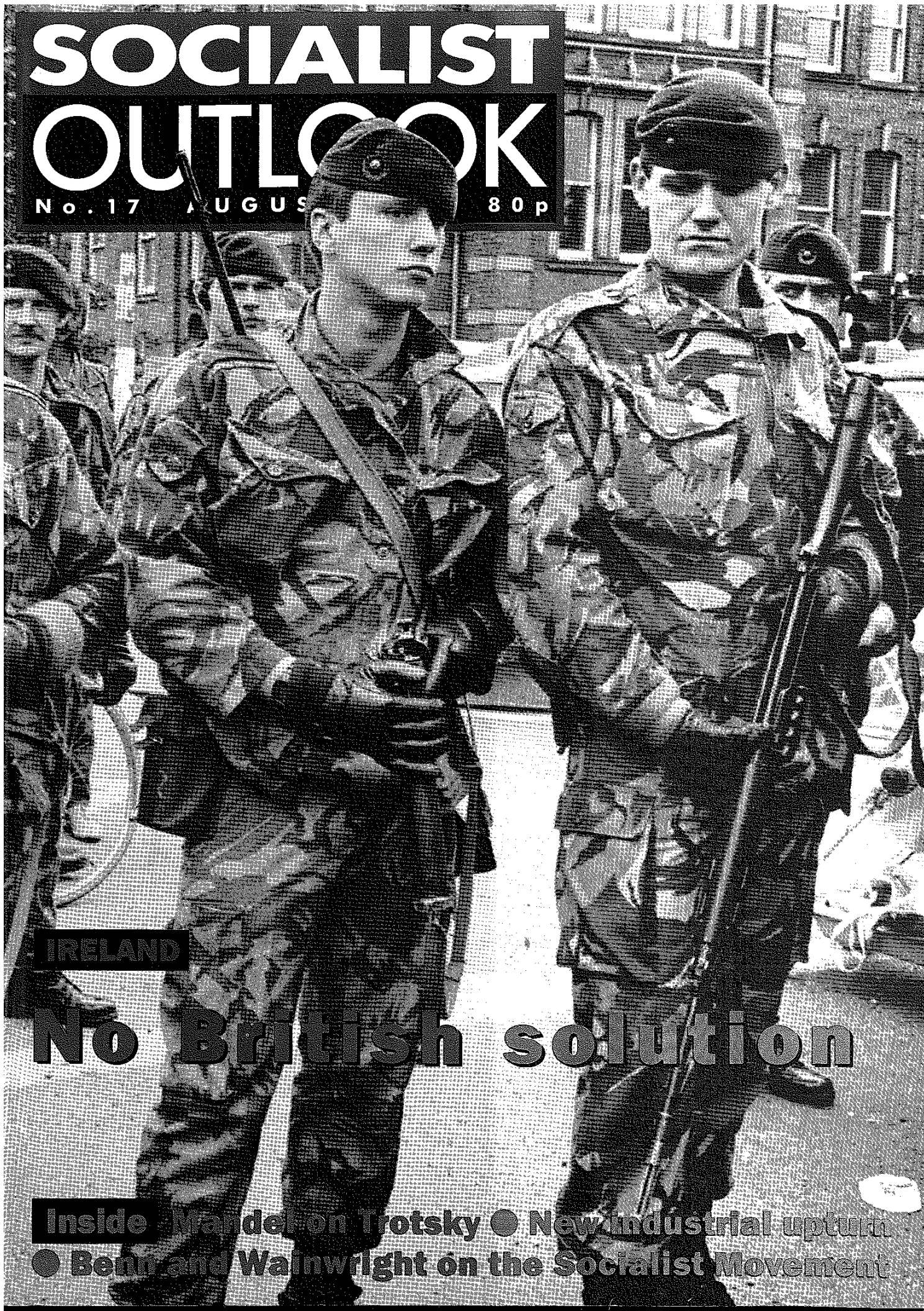


SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

No. 17 AUGUST 80p



IRELAND

No British solution

Inside Mandel on Trotsky ● New industrial upturn
● Benn and Wainwright on the Socialist Movement



John Harris/FTL

Solidarity with Chinese socialists - see page 2

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LETTERS

A slumbering giant awakes

OVER 100,000 Soviet miners are on strike in Siberia and the Ukraine as this magazine goes to press. They are demanding better wages and conditions – including consumer goods to spend their wages on – as well as cuts in government bureaucracy, improved safety (10,000 miners have died in accidents since 1980) and greater local autonomy in the mines.

In Siberia the strikes have been accompanied by huge public rallies, supported by other sections of industrial workers. They have established a regional strike committee to conduct their negotiations outside the framework of the 'official' trade union movement and Communist Party.

Though the economic clout of the miners is undoubtedly enormous (already there are warnings that power stations and steel plants could swiftly close for lack of coal) it is the *political* significance of this mass rebellion that brought Soviet Premier Ryzhkov, a deputy prime minister and a top Politburo economist post-haste to negotiate with the Siberian strikers.

The upsurge of militancy is the biggest show of strength since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 from that sleeping giant, the Soviet proletariat. Even more clearly than the recent elections to the Congress of Deputies, it shows workers taking full advantage of the increased freedoms permitted under glasnost to press home their own demands, despite the embarrassment it causes Mikhail Gorbachev and his co-thinkers. Having spread like a brushfire across the Siberian coalfields and into the Ukraine, the revolt could yet kindle much wider working class action in other industries, reminiscent of the Polish events of 1980-81.

Spokespersons for the Gorbachev leadership are quick to claim that the miners are striking to demand *faster*, not slower reforms, and assert that the concessions they are demanding are in line with perestroika. Yet coal industry minister Mikhail Shchadov has been desperately attempting to stem the movement with offers of more pay, better holidays, medical equipment, and better food: he, like his fellow bureaucrats, knows that as they begin to feel their own strength, workers' demands will become increasingly political and focus against the power and privilege of the ruling bureaucracy itself.

Already the official unions are being by-passed and the Communist Party machinery is seen as discredited. A full-scale Polish scenario of a mushrooming independent trade union movement with a comprehensive set of anti-bureaucratic demands could swiftly follow.

As if to rub this point home, in Poland itself the isolated General Jaruzelski, whose ruling stalinist party has been unable to win a single contested parliamentary seat against the recently-legalised trade union Solidarnosc, is facing the tough question of who should form a government, and how. Having failed to crush Solidarnosc under its tank tracks in 1981, and seen its half-baked economic measures slide into ever-worsening chaos, the Polish bureaucracy now only rule on the strength of the armed forces and with the tacit consent of part of the Solidarnosc leadership.

Yet this weakening of the bureaucracy has also exposed the political divisions and weaknesses of Solidarnosc itself. It was split down the middle over whether to participate in the 'round table talks' which preceded its re-legalisation and landslide electoral

victories. Now it is torn into at least three schools of thought on how to respond to the governmental crisis. The choices are: to reject any cooperation with the regime; to form a Solidarnosc-based government; or to form some form of coalition with Jaruzelski's stalinist Polish United Workers Party (for example with a Solidarnosc President and a PUWP Prime Minister).

Of course Solidarnosc is not a political party with a coherent programme of its own as a basis to form a government: it is a union, reflecting many political points of view. The debate is especially confused since Solidarnosc has been illegal for all but a few months since 1981, and thus denied any democratic discussion. It is even more confused by the fact that many of Solidarnosc's main leadership figures appear to endorse Jaruzelski's recipe to resolve the economic crisis through a combination of 'marketisation' reforms and Western aid.

A coalition based on such policies could only mean acceptance of the standard IMF-style austerity package of unemployment, wage cuts, price increases and the removal of state subsidies on essential goods: Thatcher and Bush would not part with loans on any other basis. If Solidarnosc were to back such policies it would be forced to act in the same way as the old official unions, against which it was formed to fight; it would be seriously compromised in the eyes of its working class supporters, and would almost certainly split.

In Poland the revolutionary socialist alternative to the policies of Lech Walesa and others on the conciliationist wing of Solidarnosc is presented by the small Polish Socialist party (Democratic Revolution). They are pressing for an urgent democratic congress of Solidarnosc, for legalisation of political parties, and against collaboration between Solidarnosc and the stalinist bureaucracy.

Similar political lessons will emerge in the development of the new Soviet workers' movement: as in Poland the unleashing of market forces (perestroika) has helped trigger the sharpened class struggle, while the bureaucracy, whose privileges rest not on private ownership of the means of production, but in the last analysis on their ability to contain the working class, is finding itself vulnerable. Yet even as the independent union finds its strength, its very political independence can be jeopardised.

All this also comes with a warning. The Chinese bureaucracy, too, having carried 'marketisation' reforms much further than Gorbachev, and possibly even more corrupt than its Polish counterparts, also seemed instantly vulnerable when confronted by the growing movement outward from Tienanmen Square. But sooner than relinquish their power and privilege, the desperate old men of Beijing unleashed bloody violence, reminding us all that the armed bodies of men are the decisive factor in bureaucratic rule. There will be forces inside the Soviet (and Polish) bureaucracy pressing for similar action.

Only in the completion of a *political revolution* which smashes the state machinery that defends the bureaucracy and establishes the power of workers' councils can this threat be lifted: a political leadership is needed which can explain and popularise this understanding. However the Siberian events show yet again that such a scenario is no abstract Trotskyist pipe-dream: it is the logic of today's struggle of masses of workers in the stalinist states.

After the Beijing bloodbath

The fight for solidarity

As the recent events in China began unfolding with increasing drama, a sizeable number of members of the overseas Chinese community got together in an ad-hoc fashion to picket the Chinese embassy and to offer practical support to the Chinese student hunger strikers based in London.

The Chinese Solidarity Campaign was formally established in mid-May to coordinate activities in Chinatown and around the embassy. A 6000-strong march was organised and the initiatives of the campaign concentrated on explaining the profoundly socialist nature of Chinese students' and workers' demands for democratic rights and against bureaucratic corruption.

Nothing however could have prepared the campaign's supporters for the extent of bloodshed of unarmed students and workers that was to take place on and after June 4th. The mood of supporters is now changing from grief and horror to anger and resolve. The degree of repression that the Chinese leadership is willing to unleash suggests their desperation as much as their ruthlessness.

The reports since received from China indicate that this desperation arose firstly because of the strength and organised nature of the mobilisations in Tiananmen Square and elsewhere. The students and intellectual dissidents displayed a political maturity in their tactics and internal organisation which posed a greater challenge to the credibility of the ruling bureaucracy than ever seen before. But perhaps more importantly, the active participation by residents and workers sounded alarm bells for a leadership strongly identified with and committed to a host of economic reforms which rely on passive compliance by the urban working class in the face of measures for increased productivity.

Workers in key industries in Beijing began to vent their frustration over the lack of

democracy and workers' control over production and the running of their factories, by setting up, a month after the first student demonstrations in April, the workers' autonomous federation with their own tent and banners prominently displayed in Tiananmen square.

Trini Leung from the Hong Kong trade union education centre, who visited the federation's camp during the occupation of Tiananmen square, writes; 'Under the red banner of the workers' autonomous federation and fluttering slogans calling for democracy and freedom of association, between 50 and 100 workers erected a tented headquarters ... members of the union were mostly production workers, service sector workers and worker intellectuals. Among the core members there were steel workers, railway workers, aviation workers, restaurant cooks, students and lawyers ... The problems the federation were addressing focused on the corrupt bureaucracy and the existence of a privileged elite in China.

The wide wage discrepancy between workers and plant managers, the lack of workplace democracy, the lack of genuine workers' representation in the policy-making process, poor labour protection and working conditions, and the deterioration of workers living standards in recent years were among their main grievances.

The federation's camp was towards the north-east of the Square. On the evening before the massacre, troops were massing at that end of the Square, and it was clear that a confrontation of some sort was about to occur. The members of the union, were among the most courageous of the demonstrators, and holding their union banners high, they marched to the front of the crowds, facing the waiting troops. It was from this corner of Tiananmen Square that the massacre began.

Students who survived the massacre told us in the following hours that most of the repre-

sentatives of the autonomous workers' federation were killed as the troops attacked.'⁽¹⁾

Similar autonomous unions in other industrial centres of China were soon to follow. There can be little doubt that it was the organised and militant workers' support for the democracy movement that posed the biggest threat to the bureaucracy and exacerbated the prevailing divisions within it.

That the students and workers sought throughout the uprising to stress the patriotic nature of their struggle and their commitment to the republic suggests a recognition of their role in securing the ideals of the revolution rather than trusting them to their 'leaders'.

Where now from here for solidarity with the Chinese democracy movement? The initial frenzy of demonstrations, rallies and public meetings cannot be sustained. Nor is it necessarily wise to do so. The solidarity which needs to be built is one that can respond to the long term needs and immediate demands of the movement, as and when they arise. What a tragedy it would be if one year, or even ten years after the 1989 uprisings, the British working class was once again caught unprepared to extend its strongest political and moral support.

This depends on the construction of grassroots Chinese solidarity organisations throughout the country, and the formation of close links between these and the Chinese organisations, both legal and underground, supportive of the democracy movement. There is much to be done. The British labour movement must reorientate its contact with China on the basis of exposing the complicity of the official structures claiming to represent Chinese students and workers, as well as that of our own government and its capitalist friends who have little concern for democracy — whether in China, Hong Kong, or the six



counties of Ireland or in Britain itself.

The task of re-establishing liaison between student unions, trade unions, professional, arts and sports bodies and educational establishments which undermine the Chinese state's bureaucratic control is a major one, requiring close international cooperation. In particular, the leaders and members of the autonomous workers union will face severe repression and will rely on political back-up from workers' organisations outside China.

The solidarity campaign in Britain has throughout this period taken much of its lead from the outpouring of support by the masses in Hong Kong, who had been demoralised by their own lack of say in the island's economic, social and political affairs and have now been horrified, enraged and inspired by their compatriots' sacrifice for democracy.

The Chinese solidarity campaign must expose Britain's collaboration with the Deng regime which guarantees a superior trading position at the expense of the Hong Kong people's ability to decide collectively the course of their own lives.

The struggle for democracy in China is intrinsically bound up with the struggle for democracy in Hong Kong, and allows no room for equivocation: there is no role for Britain in the future of Hong Kong. It is for Hong Kong's masses to decide on the form of the island's relationship with the Chinese government, including that of partial or full self rule, and the option of emigration to Britain.

Ai Meun Lim

(1) Echoes from Tiananmen; Friends of Chinese Minzhu, Hong Kong.

Just as they thought it was safe to put the boot in ... Here's the industrial upsurge!



Graeme Cookson

On their first-ever national strike: NALGO local government workers

The trade union movement, written off by the Tories as a thing of the past, has sprung back into life.

There is a national dock strike. No trains or London tubes one day each week. London bus workers have been in action. Half a million local government workers are involved in stoppages. BBC workers are mounting 24-hour strikes. London building sites are on strike. There have been strikes on the North Sea oil rigs, and at some passport and DHSS offices. In the autumn, strikes are due to start in the engineering industry in pursuit of a 35 hour week.

The Tories celebrated too soon. They mistook the damage they had inflicted, and the effects of new realism, as the death agony of the trade union movement. Now they are panicking in the face of mass strikes, watching the confidence of the working class rise every day. Every time there is a strike ballot, the media now assume that workers will vote for action. Some of the votes are remarkable, particularly the 3-1 second ballot of the dockers and the NALGO vote. This is the first ever national strike of NALGO, after two previous ballots were lost. Many NALGO branches report a big increase in union membership since the strike decision was taken.

It is clear that there has been a fundamental change in the mood of the working class in this country, which is not just reflected in the strikes now taking place but also by in the lead in the opinion polls that Labour now

have over the Tories. The Tories are now seen to be failing on the economic front, previously seen as their greatest strength. The stock market crash of November 1987 has worked its way through, via a credit-led boom, to rising inflation, record interest rates and a balance of trade crisis.

This crisis of the Tories gives the working class the confidence and necessity to fight back. Suddenly attacks on the unions and the public sector are not so popular. The real rate of inflation for those with mortgages is at least double the official rate of 8%. These conditions raise the possibility of a generalised fight-back.

The industrial upsurge also poses the possibility of a regeneration of the trade union movement and an opportunity to repair the damage done over the past ten years. But such a development poses the need for a political fight against the defeatist line of new realism, which is still at the present has reached its highest point. With the clear exception of the NUM, most trade union conferences have been adopting policies within the terms of Neil Kinnock's Labour policy review, in readiness for this year's Labour party conference. The newly-launched Socialist Movement, as the most important national current opposed to new realism, has a particular responsibility to organise against this.

The most important problem created by new realism remains entirely unresolved – the matter of the anti-union laws. They pose a direct threat to the present round of disputes, in particular

the dock strike.

At the time of writing (day three of the strike) the main ports are solid, but with a small number of registered dockers working in several smaller ports. At the same time the employers have had two months to organise the diversion of cargo – which is now taking place on a massive scale.

There was never a chance that a dock strike could be successfully conducted within the law. Now this must be faced. Any registered dockers still working need to be picketed out and the diverted cargo challenged in the unregistered ports. It would be a disaster if, at a time of rising levels of industrial struggle, the dockers were isolated and defeated.

The policy of compliance with the law adopted by the TGWU conference is not a strategy which can win: it must be challenged by the dockers if the strike is to be made effective.

Compliance with these laws which has been advocated by the TUC for the past five years has been a disaster. Every time a union has complied with the law, the Government and the courts have gone further.

This is not to argue that the ruling class are not divided over exactly how far and how fast to go with anti-union legislation. This was clear in the contradictory decisions of the courts in the legal battle over the dock strike.

First the High Court refused the port employers an injunction to stop the strike; and then the Court of Appeal granted it. This was then overturned by the Law

Lords at the final stage. Partly this was because of the far-reaching nature of the Court of Appeal decision, which, if upheld, would have ended the right to strike in this country at a stroke.

But the decision also reflects more general divisions in the ruling class, which have also been evident over the discussion about banning of strikes in public services. The Tories are determined to go ahead with more anti-trade union laws, but they know that their is a real danger of triggering a fightback against them which they could not control or confront and therefore they have sharp disagreements over tactics.

The need now is to consolidate the dock strike, push forward with the other strikes and force the Tories to fight on several fronts at the same time – something they managed to avoid in the miners' strike and are deeply concerned about now.

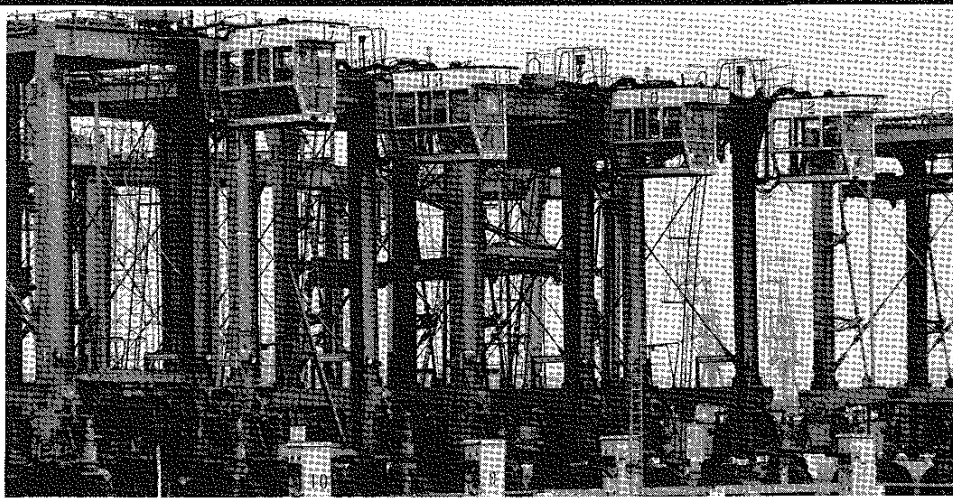
Thatcher herself heads the Cabinet Committee set up to fight the strikes, and which controls their day-to-day strategy. This influence was evident on the first day of the dock strike, when suddenly, after weeks of saying 'no compromise', the British Rail Board suddenly backed down, agreed to negotiation on both pay and bargaining structures, and starting looking for a settlement with all urgency.

It is crucial that the unions refuse to fall for this strategy. There should be no shabby compromises which leave the dockers isolated and wind down the present round of action. The actions should be stepped up and

the initiative seized by the unions pressed home to the full.

At the same time a mass support movement for the dockers has to be mounted on the lines of the support groups in the miners' strike. There are already important initiatives in this, for example in East London and in Bristol. The dockers must not stand alone. The great dock strike of 1889 led to the development of the general unions and the TGWU in particular. We have to ensure that in 1989 the dockers, and all the other sections of the movement entering into struggle, are again victorious.

John Harris/FL



This year's union conferences Battle lines behind the headlines

When union conferences meet in the middle of the biggest rash of industrial militancy seen in this country since the 1970s, it's not surprising that media interest focusses on what conference decisions made will mean for that action and for Labour's newly-improved prospects at the polls.

But on the conference floors and behind the scenes there is much else that it's easy to miss: a constant battle being fought out over broader ideas and strategy, and the character of the political and industrial leadership of the movement.

In this year's round of conferences, the skirmishes between camps vying for power are varied – but the underlying stresses are similar and the chosen battleground is common to many.

Boardroom deals and golden handshakes

Union mergers – some out of financial necessity, some in the name of the members, but all carried out in the interests of those at the top – are the name of the new game.

The much-discussed mega merger between the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) and the public sector

white collar union NALGO rumbles on. This year's conferences saw the merger plans nudged along, and now the health union COHSE is desperately trying to get in on the talks at the very last minute. Their conference this year agreed to look at feasibility of mergers, clearly looking to the two bigger unions as potential partners. COHSE leaders should prepare for a rough reception.

Behind the scenes at NALGO and NUPE, serious effort has gone into preparations for the harmonisation of rule books, with a 'levelling down' of internal democracy likely, to ensure that the power stays where it is – at the top. Trading top positions so that the spoils are shared out in a gentlemanly fashion is another important part of this process.

The NUPE/NALGO merger is a classic case. NALGO's shadowy General Secretary, mystery man John Daly, announced his decision to take early retirement just before the union's conference – and to leave just before the merger target date. He thereby leaves the way clear for a younger, more vital replacement from NALGO's hierarchy, to ward off any effective competition from NUPE's higher-profile challengers. Speculation is rife about Daly's likely successor, and about the size of his golden

handshake.

He won't be the only bureaucrat to benefit handsomely from the streamlining of staffing in the merger process. Large payouts for people at the top are increasingly common in the trade union movement, much to its discredit. Self-confessed property millionaire and former ASTMS leader Clive Jenkins hit the headlines last year when he left the newly merged Manufacturing Science and Finance union MSF with £213,000, leaving the top job safe with Ken Gill, the 'tankie' communist former leader of the engineering white collar union TASS. The TASS takeover of the merged union is almost complete: they now have the general secretaryship and three out of four assistant general secretaries.

The movement is currently gripped by merger mania. MSF itself, like the National Union of Mineworkers, is now looking for another potential new partner in the Transport Workers (TGWU). But moves to 'workers' unity' are not always in the workers' best interests – born often of necessity, combined with self-protection and self-aggrandisement on the part of top officials and driven by the manoeuvres of high TUC politics.

When such proposals are put

to the members, real politics sometimes intervene. The Engineering Union (AEU)'s policy-making National Committee delivered its leadership a bloody nose earlier this year when it voted to halt all merger talks with the EETPU, the scab electricians' union. The delegates insisted instead that talks should proceed only with TUC-affiliated unions.

Given a chance, politics sometimes also make it onto conference floors and agendas, giving the members the chance to engage in the popular conference sport of 'overturning the platform' (or just attempting to). Their scores in this sport are a useful measure of the union's internal democracy, as well as the degree of member's confidence and level of organisation.

This is just as difficult as it sounds – and in some unions almost impossible.

GMB – Edmonds' 'new model union'

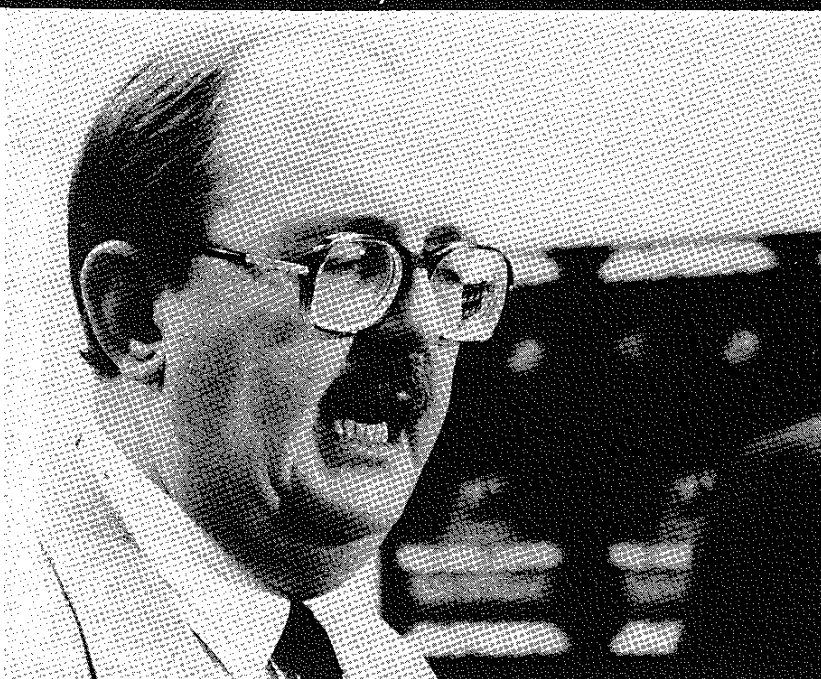
The newly-merged (or sub-merged) clerical workers' union APEX and general and municipal workers' union GMB met for their first conference in Brighton this summer. Living up to its well-earned reputation as possibly the most undemocratic organisation in the movement, the overbearing GMB trod all over

not only the smaller and weaker APEX but over its own ranks too.

GMB general secretary John Edmonds has inherited a strong regional and officer-dominated structure, combined with a uniquely undemocratic decision-making process. The regional barons' grip extends even to granting (or refusing) permission to members of their delegations to address conference. This year a young woman delegate from the London Region was almost reduced to tears as her local boss subjected her to a humiliating half-hour public harangue. Her crime? She had dared to go to the rostrum to complain about sexism in a GMB promotional video shown at conference. Her contribution was well received, even by the overwhelmingly male conference. But she hadn't asked for his permission to speak.

The GMB's ruling body, the Central Executive Council, makes its recommendations on conference motions to its regions well before conference itself. Most other Labour movement executives wait until eve-of-debate meetings and deliver their deliberations to delegates on the conference floor. The GMB method might have a consultative gloss, but it is, of course, a stitch-up. Under their system, Regional Secretaries (who under GMB rules can – and do – dominate the ruling CEC as elected as well as paid officials), use the time to go back to push through their own recommendations to their members for a rubber-stamp which binds conference delegates. This way, votes on the conference floor are almost entirely accounted for weeks in advance. Emergency motions put directly to conference tend to be the only possible spanner in the works of this otherwise monolithic machine.

This year the platform, as ever, suffered only a few minor defeats. The rejection of the CEC's recommendation that conference be a non-smoking event, predictably trounced by the



Wayne Edginton

GMB leader Edmonds: inherited a uniquely undemocratic structure

massed ranks of male middle-aged and smoking delegates, can hardly be acclaimed as a step forward for the working class. Two other defeated recommendations, concerning numbers of visitors' tickets issued and the organisation of industrial conferences were, in the scale of things, also of little importance.

But one significant blow was delivered to the GMB bosses, who suffered the humiliation of having to back a conference floor attack on one of their own officials.

Excelling in its ability to bend over backwards until it falls down, the Labour Party NEC has surpassed last year's decision to allow the scab Royal College of Nursing (RCN) a stall at Labour's annual conference (COHSE opposed – NUPE's Tom Sawyer abstained). This time they voted to let the privatisation Water Authorities Association have a stall (a move supported by Tom Sawyer as well as the GMB). But at the June GMB Conference, an emergency motion from the London Region sent the union's NEC rep, Tom Burlinson, back with his tail between his legs to the NEC to overturn its position – which he had previously supported. A special emergency Central Executive Council meeting called during conference had decided to sup-

port the move rather than face certain defeat.

NUPE

The platform at the notoriously officer-led union NUPE was defeated on only one key conference debate this year, when conference backed a call for co-ordinated national industrial action to defend the health service: the report of the year's activities in the health sector was also referred back, in a clear gesture of no-confidence from the membership. The apparatchniks will no doubt comfort themselves that since the resolution calls for joint action with other trade unions it never need be implemented, as they have no intention of building for such solidarity. But the vote nevertheless indicates not only the growing mood of industrial militancy, but, more importantly, a broader dissatisfaction with the leadership's 'batten down the hatches' new realism.

This dissatisfaction was demonstrated too, in the results of the ballot for NUPE's Deputy General Secretary. *Militant* supporter Nick Bradley polled around 30,000 votes to Tom Sawyer's 48,000 – leaving Sawyer a surprisingly slim majority and an even slimmer turnout. Just 13.5% of the union's 650,000 members bothered to vote at all. The left on the union's NEC was also reinforced in this

year's elections: Sawyer is not getting things all his own way.

But of course the most significant platform victory at NUPE conference this year was the reversal of its non-nuclear defence policy. The vote represents a victory for Sawyer's own brand of new realism in the union and bodes badly for prospects for the super-union to be created by the merger with NALGO.

NALGO

Due to a combination of a particularly top-heavy but politically weak bureaucracy, and a relatively stropy, organised and confident membership, the odds are slightly better for platform defeats at

NALGO. This year the mood was to the left, although victories for the conference floor were modest – confined basically to those issues which would not require the union to confront the Government or the employers.

The ruling National Executive Committee was defeated on its proposal to hold only a 'confirmatory ballot' (i.e. do what the union officials tell you) for the election of a new General Secretary. It was defeated too in its opposition to affiliation to the 'Time To Go' campaign on Ireland, and on a number of rule changes. As a result NALGO women's conference will now send motions through to national conference – a breakthrough in bringing women into the heart of union policy making and a considerable advance on the Labour Party structures, for example.

Despite only small gains and defeats on some key issues, (including the conference rejection of a proposal to write some democratic safeguards into the NUPE/NALGO merger discussions), the NALGO left took comfort in the size of its opposition vote. A third of delegates voted for a position of non-compliance and non-implementation of the law in the poll tax debate. A quarter of the delegates supported the call for an immediate

ballot for all-out strike action in the local government pay campaign. And in a close vote the NALGO black workers' group proposals for autonomous self-organisation were just lost – whilst conference went on overwhelmingly to reject the NEC's preferred option.

TGWU and MSF: last line of defence?

A divided TGWU leadership leaves more openings for a fair fight between opposing forces on the conference floor. Thus the defence debate confounded the new realists: the union's unilateralist stance was narrowly retained. Though the 1.1m strong TGWU will cast its votes, together with MSF (whose conference earlier this year voted, at its leadership's recommendation, to take a unilateralist stance) against back-tracking on defence, Labour's leaders have done their sums and know they have it in the bag. The implications of the vote, as a blow to Kinnock's grip in the movement, have been talked up out of all proportion.

Everything else in the TGWU conference will have given Kinnock a great deal of comfort. Delegates pulled back from demanding that a future Labour Government would reinstate full trade union immunities, and rejected a call for Labour to reinstate and extend nationalisation. 'We will not do ourselves any favours by promising much more than we can realistically hope to deliver,' warned TGWU general secretary Ron Todd, stepping back firmly into the Labour leader's camp. Conference also voted overwhelmingly to take public money for ballots, and ended the union's opposition to EC membership.

New realism

It would be easy to see the summer of discontent as a slap in the face for the new realists and the end of their ascendancy. It is certainly a measure of the mood and the members' willingness to fight – always underestimated and played down by those who lead them.

But beyond the first stage of getting the troops out, lies another hurdle. 'What do we do now?'. Until the left advances a convincing answer to that question and fights for it consistently in the trade unions, it will continue to lose the political battles for leadership, and we'll witness yet again the waste of a frustrated militancy, translated only into meaningless composites and manoeuvres rather than channelled into effective action.

Jane Wells

ITALY:

The left regroups after Euro-Elections

Every other year it seems there is a government crisis in Italy at the beginning of the summer months. More often than not it is sorted out before the annual holidays, since the politicians are anxious not to share a hot and sticky Rome with the tourists.

This year Socialist Party leader Bettino Craxi made the first break in the five-party coalition ('*pentapartito*') in the run up to the Euro-Elections. He thought a sharp turn to attacking Italy's number one party, the Christian Democrats, would bring in some more votes.

In the event, the Christian Democrats lost around one per cent, polling 32.9 per cent, while the SP vote increased by about half of one per cent.

Craxi lost out: the Christian Democrats have regained the initiative within the coalition, and that wily old stager, former Prime Minister Andreotti, is set to lead the same, reshuffled group of coalition partners.

The modestly good performance for the CP follows the launch of an increasingly social democratic CP programme under party leader Ochetto at the recent Congress, and more vigorous activity by the party in campaigns against health cuts and mafia corruption (and their Christian Democratic friends). Nevertheless the last CP congress saw the formation for the first time of an opposition current around an alternative document.

Many militants who do not particularly share rebel leader Cossutta's nostalgia for the Russian bureaucracy still voted for this document, since it did at least maintain some notion of class and struggle – concepts almost totally absent from the majority text.



The Green vote of 6.2 per cent represented nearly a threefold increase on 1987. They were very divided, between a more 'leftish' Rainbow slate that included some forces from the right wing of the fragmenting centrist movement *Democrazia Proletaria* (DP – Proletarian Democracy), and the official, more British-style, Green slate.

The hard left wing of DP must have breathed a huge sigh of relief, because they managed to hold on to the same support as in the last Euro-elections – 1.3 per cent and made the quota for one Euro-MP. They were under the most pressure from the Greens since most of their parliamentary representatives were supporting the Rainbow slate and hoping to profit from a DP disaster.

Inside DP, which is a little like a reservoir of the post-1968 revolutionary experience, there has been a very sharp political crisis for nearly 2 years now. DP's main historic spokesperson, Capanna, along with nearly all their MPs bar one, and most of the other public officeholders, wants to abandon any strategy for change that includes action and conflict outside of bourgeois institutions.

Despite a lot of wooliness about DP's programmatic statements over the last years it has maintained references to marxist notions of the class struggle and the state. The right wing want to abandon DP as a structure, name and tradition and build some sort

of new rainbow alliance with the Greens and the Radical party.

The centre and left of the party have a majority for maintaining the DP tradition. Unfortunately precisely because DP has been a bit of a catch-all grouping without very coherent norms it is vulnerable to this sort of offensive. Movementist green-type currents have coexisted with the traditional communist working class strongholds of DP in places like Milan. The relationship between the party and its MPs was rather fluid.

Since the development of this crisis, the only other significant left group in Italy, the LCR (Revolutionary Communist League), Italian section of the Fourth International, decided to involve itself in this political struggle between the right wing and the left majority of DP. When the Capanna grouping went all out on the offensive refusing to support the DP election campaign or the referendum campaigns sponsored by their own party, the LCR decided to have a discussion about joining forces formally with the left inside DP.

Initially the LCR intervention went smoothly. A DP national delegate assembly agreed terms for integration which included a proviso for the establishment of a Fourth International association enabling ex-LCR militants to maintain organised links with and propaganda concerning the International.

However during the Euro-election campaign the DP National Secretariat drew back from the earlier decision and postponed the formal integration until after the elections. Disputes also arose about standing well-known comrades from the Fourth International like Allain Krivine

(France) on DP slates.

The latest development prior to this report has been the formal split of the Capanna grouping at a national assembly of his supporters on 8/9 July. Nearly all DP's MPs and public office holders have supported the split. This assembly was called 'From DP to the Greens'. Apart from the Rainbow Greens there was a delegation from the official Greens at the meeting. Capanna wants to unify all the Green forces. This may be easier said than done, since the Greens are very heterogeneous politically. Some of the official Greens have put themselves forward as members of the *pentapartito* government!

All this has concentrated the minds of the DP leadership, and it has now voted definitively in favour of the integration of the LCR, broadly in line with the earlier agreement. The LCR will hold a dissolution conference at the end of July.

Hopefully DP, despite the loss of nearly all its public officeholders, will emerge strengthened after the integration of the LCR in its fight to stop the drift to 'new realism' or vague green politics in Italy.

There is plenty of space for the activity of a party like DP. A new, revitalised DP would have to work out a correct strategy for linking up with the thousands of CP activists dissatisfied with the Ochetto turn. The struggle against the government's austerity measures, particularly in the public sector goes on. The decree imposing charges for hospital care was renewed recently, again without debate in parliament. It still has to eventually be taken in full debate and voted on, so as much pressure as possible is necessary to ditch the decree. Already there has been a half-day general strike over this and the potential for further action is there.

Dave Kellaway



Massive protest against the defeated Alfonsin government: will Menem fare any better?

Argentina:

Can Menem revive the old Peronist magic?

A country which is one of the bread baskets of the world and a major meat exporter – but which has seen mass looting for basic foodstuffs.

A country self-sufficient in energy and water, but which cannot maintain continuous supplies.

A country with immense natural riches, overwhelmingly urban and largely industrialised, in which a third of its 32 million population live below the official poverty line. Here you can no longer use credit cards because inflation is running at 120 per cent a month. Here the currency was devalued to 650 australs against the dollar in early July, though just a few days earlier it had been 300 against the dollar. The interest alone on the foreign debt is equal to 60 per cent of the value of its exports and the public sector deficit is equal to 15 per cent of GNP.

This country is Argentina. Reality here belies all the superficial analyses that capitalist and imperialist contradictions no longer operate. Neither can it be dismissed as a peripheral undeveloped colonial country having little effect in the imperialist chain. Along with Brazil and Mexico it is one of the most industrialised semi-colonial countries.

British capital has both an historic and a contemporary responsibility for the devastation of the economy and the sufferings of the people.

The political and social situation is highly unstable. In the last six months there has been:

- a failed military uprising;
- a suicidal attack by left-wing guerrillas on a military base;
- the subsequent establishment of a National Security Council headed by the military;
- waves of strikes particularly in the bankrupt public sector;
- a massive 50 per cent-plus vote against the government in favour of a populist candidate from the party founded by former President General Peron, now promising better times for working people;
- mass looting of shops in all cities on two occasions, with dozens shot by police.

In the country with 'two Presidents but no government', Carlos Menem, the Peronist leader, took over the Presidency from Raul Alfonsin five months earlier than allowed for by the constitution. The Argentine ruling class are desperately hoping that a revamped Peronism can hold the lid down on an explosive situation.

Why did the people turn so massively back to the Peronists? In

the savage decade of the military dictatorship which ended only five years ago, the Peronist bureaucracy openly collaborated with the policy of torture, and death squads which left 15,000 'disappeared'. Indeed the last Peronist government, led by Peron's second wife Isabel, was already massacring left-wing opposition before the military took over in 1976.

Perhaps the easiest way to understand Peronist populism in general terms is to think of Labourism in Britain. Populism obviously is not the same as social democracy but successful varieties do share some features.

First, it has organic roots in the day to day organisation of the working class. Peronism is politically dominant in the trade union movement. Despite the often 'gangster' methods of the union bureaucrats, it co-exists with strong traditions of rank and file shop steward organisation.

Second, it is forever associated in the collective memory of the working class with the 'golden age' of General Peron's redistributive wage and welfare policies between 1944-1955 – somewhat similar to the way Labour Party militants look back to the Attlee government of 1945. International conditions during and after the

Second World War did provide a space for resource-rich and relatively developed countries like Argentina to build up import-substitution industries and profit from favourable terms of trade. Imperialist industrial exports were disrupted by war, and foodstuffs and other raw materials were needed desperately. The Argentine ranchers, industrialists and workers could all gain. Quite an advanced health and social security system was established. Absolute hunger and deprivation, commonplace in the majority of Latin American countries, were much reduced.

Thirdly the resilience of Peronism is its nationalism. Argentina remains a semi-colonial country. Despite its development, the economy is still dependent on, and distorted by, imperialism. The 60 billion dollar foreign debt is the clearest expression of that. So Menem's nationalist rhetoric finds a ready audience. But Peronist nationalism continues to be premised on an alliance of working people with an illusory national bourgeoisie. In the 1950s, new national bourgeois interests did develop which had some conflict of interests with foreign companies. This sector of the bourgeoisie is much weaker today, and is assimilated into the dominant pro-imperialist ruling class.

Working class identification with the gains of Peronism was seen in 1955 when the masses took to the streets to defend Peron's government against the military coup. Many were killed while Peron negotiated his own safe passage to Spain.

The 14 May vote for Peronism was also very much a vote against Alfonsin's Radical government. In the first years of that government people were willing to hold back on economic demands because there were democratic freedoms for the first time for nearly ten years and some limited justice against the military was being handed down. However, Alfonsin, pressured by successive military uprisings, soon scaled down his human rights programme, and implemented more and more austerity measures to deal with a growing economic crisis. Government popularity slumped.

At the same time the vote for Menem is not a vote of blind confidence or general illusion in his programme. Many people realise that the old state redistribution formula of the 1950's golden age cannot operate if the economy is in such a mess there is nothing to distribute. To achieve redistribution today would require much more radical measures.

Mass looting of supermarkets took place after the vote, and again on a lesser scale last week. Although illusions do exist, and looting does not in itself provide an organised political alternative,

with industrialists to freeze certain prices and a special wage bonus has been proposed.

Menem's choice of cabinet ministers reflect an almost new-look sub-Thatcherite Peronism. Roig, his choice of economy minister had a brief of restructuring the huge 'lame-duck' subsidised state sector before his sudden death. His successor has pledged identical policies. The richest woman in Argentina is to become a roving ambassador to go cap in hand to the imperialist powers for economic aid.

A lot depends on how Menem can use Peronist control of the trade unions to sell his social pact. Shopfloor militancy is alive and well in Argentina, but it will face sabotage from the Peronist trade union bureaucrats and will require a political expression if it is not to run out of steam. Here Menem has another advantage, since the left opposition is relatively weak.

Historically the Communist Party squandered its early promise by its sectarian opposition to the national struggle and to Peronism in the 1940s and 1950s. During the war Stalin ordered Communist parties in the third world to ally with their 'democratic' bourgeois against the fascists and to abandon any anti-colonial struggle. Consequently Peronism captured the working class, while the Communists had a base among intellectuals and were barely stronger than the Trotskyist current.

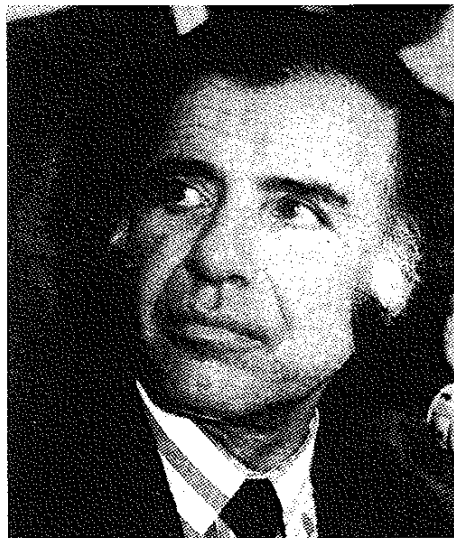
Argentina has had one of the strongest Trotskyist traditions. In general it was less sectarian to the nationalist movement and to Peronism and was able to build a real working class base, which continues to exist today. In the 1960s one wing became the leadership of the PRT/ERP guerillas, which suffered a terrible defeat. The other wing, led by the late Nahuel Moreno - al-

though perhaps over-enthusiastic in its legalistic condemnation of any armed struggle - maintained a strong trade union presence and intervened in elections. Today this wing is called the MAS (Movement for Socialism) and has several thousand members.

In the recent elections the MAS and the CP were on a joint slate called Izquierda Unida (United Left). The MAS had campaigned for this unity for a long period. Internal open elections were held to decide on which tendency should head the joint slates. The CP narrowly won. In the elections the slate as a whole won about half a million votes (or 3.4 per cent) in the parliamentary elections and about 400,000 votes in the presidential elections (2.5 per cent). This represented an increase of about half a per cent for the parliamentary slate compared to two years ago. The MAS leader, Luis Zamora, was elected as an MP.

The vote for the left would perhaps have been greater if last January's leftist adventure of attacking the Tablada barracks had not taken place. The attack was aimed at provoking a general insurrection. It came after a succession of military uprisings which were as much negotiations as out and out coup attempts. It was led by the MTP (Everyone for the Fatherland Movement) which came out of a national-liberation rather than a strictly marxist or Communist background. It did not even have the sort of social base enjoyed by the PRT of the 1970s. Most of the guerrillas were killed, along with mostly conscript soldiers. The attack was violently condemned by the Izquierda Unida. The MAS, keeping with the Morenist tradition, even refused to let its lawyers defend the MTP prisoners. Of course the media portrayed the guerrillas as 'PRT' or Trotskyists, and this must have had some impact on the electoral campaign.

The May rioting and looting also gave the authorities a chance to repress the left. Even the international press has picked up on the alleged role of Trotskyist groups. 1000 people have been detained, including militants of the MAS and another group *Politica Obrera* (Workers Politics). The latter group has



Menem: no delay in ditching his electoral promises

it does reflect a desperation and a lack of hope that the new government will put bread and meat back on the table.

Menem was careful during the electoral campaign to stick to vague promises about increasing wages, and to adopt a tougher posture on the debt. But he did not call for non-payment, and his basic project is a social pact between industry and workers to produce a 'national' recovery.

His first moves have even surprised seasoned Argentine watchers in their brutal and instant break with his campaign rhetoric. Petrol prices have been increased by up to 700 per cent. In order to cut the public sector deficit he has increased prices for public services by between 200 and 640 per cent; state spending will be cut. To try and sweeten the pill, unspecified measures will be taken against speculation and tax evasion. Talks are going on

been particularly singled out as organising the looting. PO is another Trotskyist group with some sort of base, although is on a different scale to the MAS. It polemicalised against the MAS for alleged concessions to Menem and Peronism and for freezing it out of the Izquierda Unida. The MAS responded by arguing that it made no concessions (its newspaper did have extensive coverage against the 'illusions' in Menem) and was keen for PO to come into the front.

From outside Argentina and without more evidence it is difficult (and silly) to make categorical statements on who is sectarian or who is making concessions. However it is clear these left, mainly Trotskyist forces already do have a certain base. Given the extent of the crisis and the potential contradictions with Menem's project there is plenty of potential for the development of a left alternative.

Here we can only highlight the difficulties:

- building united front work with Peronist workers in the trade unions without making concessions to Peronism;

- linking the economic struggles to overall political alternatives such as proposals on the debt or the public sector;

- finding ways to take up the question of the military threat or even power itself without falling into adventurism.

Already some military leaders have made noises about keeping things under control or about their future presidential ambitions. The history of modern Argentina has oscillated between short periods of democracy and general mobilisation for reforms and long periods of military dictatorship drowning such hopes in blood.

Generally in Latin America events (Venezuela) and votes in elections (PT success in Brazil) have indicated a upturn in popular mobilisation and new openings for the left. However it is all very fragile, and it is the responsibility of socialists in Europe to mobilise solidarity with these new struggles. This means in the first place defending the left wing political prisoners arrested under Alfonsin but still being held in Carlos Menem's Argentina.



Gordon Morgan

Will the Socialist Movement help swell the army of 1 million non-payers of poll tax?

Building the Socialist Movement

Sheffield revisited

The third socialist conference in Sheffield on June 17-18 marked a new stage in the development of the opposition to 'new realism' with the launch of the Socialist Movement.

With a full programme of national initiatives including the vital trade union conference in November, a second national conference of Women for Socialism next spring and a national convention on democratic rights, as well as the crucial task of developing its own apparatus, the Socialist Movement will have a busy time ahead. It is vital that the left as a whole understands the importance of building this Movement and the unique role that it can play in developing an opposition and alternative to Kinnock throughout the labour movement.

Such support from the various different groupings on the left should not be seen as in any way counterposed to building our own campaigns and organisations on the one hand, or from the need to have the fullest and frankest discussion about the perspectives and priorities of the Socialist Movement itself. Many of those participating in the Sheffield conference complained of the lack of democratic structures, the exclusive character of several of the policy groups and insufficient attention devoted to campaigning priorities as a focus for work on the ground in each area.

The conference was also marked by a substantial political involvement from the *Morning Star* and the Communist Party of Britain, who clearly intend a serious involvement in the Socialist Movement, and have considerable influence in the Campaign Group of MP's (with both Jeremy Corbyn and Tony Benn giving substantial endorsements to the *Morning Star* newspaper). The involvement of such forces could strengthen the hand of the Socialist Move-

ment in the trade unions – but would also bring the political complications of substantial links with sections of the trade union bureaucracy. This in turn must lead to a sharpening of political discussion about the type of leadership the Socialist Movement is aiming to develop, particularly in the trade unions themselves.

Many of the flaws of the Sheffield conference are a product of the defeats the class has suffered during ten years of Thatcherism and the weaknesses of the left as a whole. But developing more democratic and participatory structures cannot be left until next year's conference, and the development of some sort of press to speak for the new Movement must be based on full democratic accountability to all the various strands involved.

It is also now vital that the policy groups not only develop ideas but begin to implement them and that the campaigning priorities, perhaps particularly around the poll tax are fully integrated into the work of the Movement as a whole.

Trade unionists moving into struggle in a whole range of industries need to be made aware that the Socialist Movement supports their struggles and can help to build popular support for them. In this context, it is vital that members of the Campaign Group (now renamed the Socialist Campaign Group) use every platform that they appear on to project the existence of the Movement and the need to build it.

In the following two interviews, GILL LEE from *Socialist Outlook* discusses with two key participants in the Socialist Movement, HILARY WAINWRIGHT from the Socialist Society and TONY BENN MP their assessments of the Sheffield Conference and what they see as the key steps forward over the next period.



Graeme Cookson

NALGO and NUR demonstrators: solidarity is important, but not enough

Wainwright: "the Socialist Movement is asserting that the labour movement is a coalition and claiming the right to organise within it"

An interview with HILARY WAINWRIGHT

Q: What is your balance sheet of the Sheffield Conference?

HW: The conference indicated a solid base of people who look to the Socialist conference to provide a national political focus. It raised the first phase of the income we need to pay for a full-time organiser. The policy papers represented an advance, several of them were the result of a year's work by well-organised policy groups. Our first attempt to draw up a coherent strategy statement provided a useful focus and in most policy workshops the discussions were more productive than in the past.

The press reports indicated that the overall message of the conference got through; that we intend to campaign for socialism throughout society, not just in the Labour Party.

There were negative aspects too. The numbers were down – an indication that organisationally we have not adequately consolidated people's initial enthusiasm. And we did not clearly enough convey the change from being a conference to a movement.

With hindsight, we should have prepared the sessions on campaigning priorities more thoroughly. This would have given a more practical feel to what a movement is about. In some workshops there was still a depressing degree of sectarianism. I don't mean political disagreement; there will always be that and that's healthy: I mean a destructive desire to block any movement in the discussion, a refusal to listen, a constant barrage of single transferable speeches.

Q: Some criticism has been made, for example in *Labour Briefing*, of the fact that there didn't seem to be adequate channels for democratically discussing, amending and adopting the policy documents. Do you see this as a problem?

HW: I don't think you can start having votes and amendments before you have a membership structure and the resources to get documents out well before the conference. In the policy workshops, people could indicate areas of disagreement with the main strategy documents so that these would be continuing areas of debate. I don't think all the convenors made that clear and that was a failure in our organisation.

The preparation of the conference – policy work linked to campaigning – must become a priority. We won't be able to agree on everything, and it would be stupid to try, but we must aim to agree, with votes, on the main

themes for which we stand and practical priorities over the year.

Q: How do you see us overcoming the relative weakness of the Sheffield conference in attracting people who would primarily identify themselves as trade unionists?

HW: We have to put much more emphasis on just finding out how workers are expressing disaffection, how they are resisting in ways we wouldn't recognise as political. While being programmatic in our internal discussions we've got to be more innovative in our campaigning. There are many new initiatives which do not hit the headlines, such as organising casual and part-time workers or campaigns linking workers and commuters on health, safety and environmental issues.

We need to work more systematically on two levels: through national political debate by using the media more cunningly, and through popular resistance. We in the Socialist Movement, and we who have been politically active for most of our lives are ignorant of those networks of people who are disaffected and potentially rebellious, but don't identify with the left; people who voted Green if they voted at all. We've got to make contact with them, not initially by recruiting them, but by getting to understand their concerns.

We've got to be more than a solidarity movement; we've got to be putting wider arguments and finding ways of reaching a popular audience. Sometimes, because the unions are necessarily sectoral, wider issues don't get brought out. We've got to be more than supplementary pickets, we've got to take on an ideological and political role.

Q: One of the strengths of the Socialist Movement so far has been the link between people in the Labour Party and people outside, struggles in the Labour Party and struggles in the unions and campaigns. Do you see it continuing to develop in that direction, or in the direction of the formation of a new political party?

HW: I see the first path as the future. Because of the union/party link there is a sense in which the Labour Party is a coalition. It's never really been treated as one, because the Labour leadership has a kind of monopoly over it. I think the Socialist Movement is about asserting that the labour movement is a coalition and claiming the right to organise within it

Q: Perhaps one of the weaknesses of the Socialist Movement as revealed at Sheffield was the relationship to it of the Campaign Group, who had a relatively weak presence. How do you see that link evolving?

HW: The Campaign Group of MPs are the parliamentary spokespeople of the Socialist Movement; or at any rate they should be.

For the national profile of the Socialist Movement to be developed we need to establish a working relationship with the Campaign

Group, where they take on particular areas of work: for example, a Campaign Group MP could be assigned to each of our campaigning priorities, and make the most of their role as spokespeople.

Q: There has been a Green policy group in Chesterfield since its inception. How do you see that evolving after the Euro-election result?

HW: I think the impact of the Green vote could be very positive. There are problems with the weight of Labourism on the socialist left. Although the Green leadership is quite anti-left, many Green activists and voters are raising issues which challenge the old Cold War politics and many are explicitly anti-capitalist.

The Association of Socialist Greens was formed as a result of the first Chesterfield conference, though at times they have felt marginalised. The result of the vote will be to make the socialist greens stronger in the Socialist Movement. Eco-socialism, like socialist feminism, is leading us to redefine many aspects of our vision. The Socialist Movement can be a means by which the insights of these different movements are debated and woven into a whole, while at the same time these movements retain their autonomy.



Plens Cavendish

Tony Benn: 'people don't want to be told what to do'...

change. I would hope that this would build up now. But you have to be critical about it. The Socialist Movement (SM) hasn't got a strong enough trade union representation, especially in the organising committee.

We're trying to go about correcting it by spreading the word in the trade unions; you try to raise it at trade union conferences; there are strong lefts in the trade unions now, and we need to draw them in; and you organise in solidarity, like the meetings I spoke at in Hull and London around the docks dispute.

Q: You've talked about the SM as a co-ordinator of struggles, and one of its important roles has been to bring the left together in a discussion forum; but do you see a role for the SM as a body which gives political leadership to struggles too? For ex-

Benn: "We're spreading the word in the trade unions; there are strong lefts in the trade unions now, and we need to draw them in and organise in solidarity, like the meetings I spoke at in Hull and London around the docks dispute"

ample, as well as building solidarity with the dockers, should the SM try and give political leadership to their struggle?

Yes. I think the Labour Party should do that, and the Campaign Group, it's not confined to the SM. The term leadership can be interpreted in different ways. Some people say you should tell people what to do, tell them to come out. I've always taken the view that your function was to explain how these battles were won, which is by struggle,

and then when people do decide to act you support them 150 per cent.

But I've always been doubtful of going around telling other people what to do, because I think they don't appreciate it. They have to make a decision themselves, and unless you're part of the struggle you're not putting your own neck on the block. In the miners' strike, when I did something like 222 meetings around the country, I would never tell them what to do: but I was always there to assist, and raise the issue in the House.

During the miners' strike I did say we should give serious consideration to a general strike: that's the nearest I have ever come to breaking my own rule, but people should be able to know they can rely on you. When you're in a struggle you've got to be able to come and see people in your local Labour Party or whatever and know they'll help you.

Certainly it's true that if you're not involved in giving solidarity, anything you say about political direction is completely mean-

An interview with TONY BENN MP

Q: What do you see as the political base, strengths and weaknesses of the Socialist Movement?

TB: I think it's important to stress it isn't another electoral organisation, it isn't a sectarian breakaway, looking for some purity under some discipline of a particular ideological bent. It's a place where people can actually meet and speak, rather like the peace movement or the women's movement or the black organisations or the Greens and so on; that's the purpose of it.

We had two socialist conferences which were very much bigger and more successful than we thought, and we tried to broaden it out; so although 80 per cent are probably Labour Party members, there are also people from other groups - the Socialist Workers

Party, the Greens, the women's movement, Women for Socialism, and so on. The Movement has taken off because a vacuum has been left by the policy review.

It's not very strong at the moment on the trade union side. That's not really the fault of the Movement, but some trade unions were suspicious of it because they thought it was ultraleft or something, and therefore they haven't played as big a part as I would like to have seen them play. It's got good international links, and it's trying to develop a Solidarity Network, so that it doesn't become a talking shop. The Campaign Group is the tip of the iceberg, one eighth visible above the water, with seven eighths below water - being the struggle outside parliament.

Q: How do we overcome the reluctance of trade unions to get involved? You have a very strong personal base in the trade unions ...

TB: Remember that the trade unions have gone through ten years of despair, and it's when hope appears that things begin to

ingless.

Q: How does this relate to saying the only way in which struggles can be won? For example if we take the dockers' strike, I would say that the only way in which it can be won is by people deciding to break the law. It cannot be won in any other way.

TB: I can understand that, and this is where my analysis comes into play. You can't tell someone else to break the law; but if they do, you support them. Supposing a docker did break the law because he heard a speech by me telling him to do it: it would have a qualitatively less effect than if he decided to do it; and as trade unionism becomes literally illegal – because this new trade union legislation is going to take us back to before the Combination Acts – the argument becomes clearer and clearer.

What I do is go around and tell people all our rights were won by breaking the law. That's just a step back from saying 'break the law': but if they do, then you support them. You're more welcome if you operate in an educative and supportive role rather than telling people what they should do.

I feel the same on the poll tax. A member of parliament not paying the poll tax will just have it taken off his salary: but somebody who has already got a loan off the Social Fund is going to suffer personally; we have to be responsible about that.

Q: But isn't someone who is unwaged even more in need of a leadership role being taken by someone who will say 'Millions must not pay the poll tax'?

TB: It's a big question but you'll have to ask me whether I've ever been criticised for this other than by intellectuals of the left groups. I've never ever been criticised for not telling the miners to go on strike. On the other hand there was tremendous support when the five dockers went on strike and I moved at the National Executive a motion that was agreed unanimously – that unless they were let out by Tuesday, the Labour Party would support a General Strike.

That was fantastic, and that was what they wanted; they didn't want me to tell the five dockers what to do. It's a difference of analysis about how leadership should be exercised. People want backing, they don't want lectures, that's the basis on which I've worked for a long time. Leadership doesn't necessarily mean you push yourself out, it means you back the people who are taking the lead. The people who are taking the real lead are the dockers, the Pergamon Press strikers, those are the ones who are giving the leadership. You mustn't assume that leadership is the special prerogative of MPs.

Q: Hilary Wainwright said yesterday that the Campaign Group of MPs should play more of a role as the parliamentary spokespersons for the Socialist Movement. How do you see the link between the Campaign Group and the SM being developed?

TB: It's an important question because the roots of the Socialist Movement are various. There's a group who were set up after the 1981 deputy leadership campaign who supported me, and that was really the grandfather of the Campaign Group, set up formally after 1983. Then you have the Socialist Society, set up after the Great Debate of 1980 with Tariq Ali, Hilary and myself, Sheila Rowbotham, Stuart Holland. The Socialist Society was formed and had a tremendous start, and then began to shrink a bit. Then the Conference of Socialist Economists (CSE) was set up; so there are a number of contributing elements. One thing we have decided to do recently, after widespread consultation, we've decided to change the name of the Campaign Group to the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs.

The Campaign Group itself has lost a few people over the years – for a variety of reasons, one being that if you join the Campaign Group and then denounce it, you go straight onto the Labour front bench, and the power of patronage is very strong. The House is a very individualistic place and people are incredibly busy. Once a week we gather and we have all kinds of people coming to see us: from El Salvador, the Pergamon Press strikers, workers from South Africa; and we perform this function of a collective surgery.

We have considered whether we should reform the Campaign Group on the basis of being a kind of shadow Party, but the Group doesn't want to do that. We work very well together but I think to try and over-structure it might not work. I was disappointed that more Campaign Group MPs didn't come to Sheffield, but then they are all very busy. I think the Movement will continue to grow and consolidate, but it still is a movement in an embryonic stage. It isn't a major political force.

As the SDP dies, the Socialist Movement is born; as Labour picks up Tory votes in a shift to the left, the Greens come along and pick up votes at that end; and as Thatcher declines, the Wets get stronger. Wherever you look, you can see the whole thing shift to the left. I think the 1990s are going to be wholly different. The policy review was written in the winter of despair and published in the spring of hope, and they are absolutely out of time. The policy reviews are the last events of the pessimistic 1980s and the 1990s lie ahead of us: what we're doing and saying is going to be very influential.

We're trying to tilt the direction of thinking about politics: we've had twenty years of Thatcherism in Britain, not ten, and our objective must be to build a consensus for socialism.

Q: At the Morning Star fringe meeting at Sheffield you called for the Morning Star to become the daily paper of the Socialist Movement. Given that the SM is made up of different currents – including ourselves, the SWP, and Labour Party people who

wouldn't necessarily support the politics of the Morning Star – is that a good idea?

TB: I said it would be a good thing if the *Morning Star* did become the daily paper of the SM. The *Morning Star* is the only daily paper which provides the news items I want to read: it tells you what's happening in all the strikes, and on the whole its news items are not so bad. I think we've got to get over this historic argument between Stalin and Trotsky – they're very important streams, but to suggest that this is going to be the touchstone is a sectarian approach.

Q: But if we were going to have a daily paper of the Socialist Movement, wouldn't we want one that was democratically accountable to the SM itself rather than controlled by one party or another?

TB: Another socialist daily paper would probably be a good thing. The *Morning Star* is actually accountable to its readers. It's not really, as some people in the left groups tend to think, tied to Moscow and the old Moscow line. You have to encourage all the left papers, but if people could get hold of the *Morning Star* as a daily paper they would be better informed.

Q: At the second Socialist Conference we had the Benn-Heffer leadership challenge: and at Sheffield we had the Socialist Policy Review. We seem now to have about 900 people who attend regularly; what focus can we use over the next year to turn the conferences into a Movement and keep people together?

TB: The Benn-Heffer campaign – and it was a campaign – was a very exhausting thing to do, and a lot of people were critical of it at the time. We went round the country; that played a notable part in building up a network of people, and the organisers of that campaign are now associated with the SM. I think it deferred the policy reviews for twelve months.

What will happen next year depends a lot on other things. If the industrial militancy continues, the Labour conference will have a very different flavour from the one that was anticipated when the policy reviews went through, and then there will be scope for developing the argument in a way that is persuasive and influential.

Q: Do you feel that the vote for the Greens has strengthened the left within the Labour Party?

TB: Yes, the Greens got 15 per cent with unilateralism. It's always been the Labour leadership's historical argument that there's nowhere else for the left to go. I'm not in favour of people voting Green; but I know that now there is somewhere else to go, and when you get Green pressure instead of SDP pressure on the Labour Party, that will tilt it in a direction that's good. An environmental policy is as incompatible with capitalism as a socialist policy.



Leon Trotsky (left) chatting with Lenin and Kamenev, May 1920

Mandel on Broué

Understanding Trotsky

I

Infallibility does not exist in this world. Trotsky was mistaken more than once in his analysis and especially in his political decisions, just like Lenin, Rosa Luxembour, Engels and Marx before him. There were chinks in his armour – as with all men and women. But his was still a golden armour inspiring our admiration. It will continue to do so for successive generations of activists, intellectuals and ordinary readers.

This great revolutionary steps out from the pages of Broué's biography as an extremely attractive, human personality – much more so than in the legend presented both by his enemies and his unconditional admirers. He was not at all the authoritarian, arrogant martinet of a leader portrayed by his friend Lunacharsky, even though he was a man completely absorbed by his successive political/organisational projects. Trotsky was very sensitive, often inclined to compromise, and his reserved manner hid

a capacity for expressing deep affection. His ability to communicate with huge crowds reached heights rarely equalled in this century. But he also knew how to win and keep longlasting individual friendships and affection, the best-known being that of Christian Rakovsky.

Like all the classic Marxist thinkers, his interests were not limited to politics and economics but were universal. He was keen on literature, philosophy, history, the natural sciences, military theory, technology, psychology and painting. One of Marx's favourite Latin dictums 'I am a man and nothing human is foreign to me' certainly applied to Trotsky. One of the less obvious merits of Broué's book is to bring out Trotsky's deep humanity and get it across to the reader.

II

Trotsky was a weaker tactician and politician than Lenin, the born leader. Lenin was better at drawing around him broad teams of capable collaborators, keeping their specific contributions but integrating them into an increasingly effective collec-

tive. This was one of the fundamental reasons for Vladimir Ilyich's spectacular success in building the Bolshevik Party. On the other hand Trotsky was the boldest revolutionary theoretical thinker and strategist produced by the workers' movement in the twentieth century. Even today one is dazzled by the depth of the analysis in *Results and Prospects*, written in 1906. All the history of our century is summarized in this analysis.

Alone among Marxists, Trotsky foresaw that in the imperialist-determined framework of uneven and combined development, the proletariat was going to lead the first socialist revolution to victory (we might say today the first socialist revolutions) *not* in the most advanced industrial countries, where it was already numerically hegemonic and culturally stronger than elsewhere, but in a relatively less developed country, Russia, where it was *politically* the most advanced, and where the correlation of social-political forces was most in its favour due in particular to the weakness and

Until now, Isaac Deutscher's 'Prophet' trilogy has been the seminal work on the life of Leon Trotsky. Now it has been overtaken by Pierre Broué's masterly book (Fayard, Paris, 1988), writes ERNEST MANDEL, in an extended review (originally published in *Quatrième Internationale* magazine).

"Trotsky was the boldest revolutionary theoretical thinker and strategist produced by the workers' movement in the twentieth century"

decrepitude of the ruling class.

This victory was going to unlock a process of international revolution which would eliminate the subjective weakness of the workers' movement in the most advanced industrial countries. If that did not happen, then holding on to proletarian power in Russia would become practically impossible. We can see that all the success and tragedy of the Revolution over the last 70 years was thus anticipated.

However the loss of direct power by the Russian proletariat following the defeat of the first wave of international revolution did not take the form of capitalist restoration but the usurping of power by the bureaucracy. Trotsky had not predicted that variant in 1906. It haunted him already in 1922, as it did Lenin from the same period. This is why the idea of 'Thermidor' dominated Trotsky's thought and action for 15 years, if not right up to his assassination by a Stalinist agent. [The use of the term 'Thermidor' refers to the French 1789 Revolution, being the month of the new French calendar in which the revolutionary Jacobins, led by Robespierre, were overthrown a wing of the revolution which was reactionary but which did not restore the old feudal regime. Incidentally this analogy and concern was raised by Lenin before Trotsky].

But like the forecast of the October victory as early as 1906 and the intuition of the universal value of the permanent revolution strategy for all the less developed countries, the Thermidor concept is not simply a transposition of the French revolution experience to the Russian revolution. It only has any sense within the framework of the internationalisation

of history and therefore of the class struggle that has been definitely opened up by the imperialist epoch.

As a class the Russian bourgeoisie had been smashed and to all intents and purposes eliminated by its defeat in the civil war. It could not return to power. Capitalist restorationist forces could only emerge from the new society created by the October revolution. They could only win out in an alliance with, and totally subordinated to, imperialism. But imperialism had itself gone into a profound, irreversible crisis with the First World War. It was challenged by successive waves of proletarian struggle in the industrial centres, by severe economic crises, by exacerbated inter-imperialist conflicts and by increasingly extensive uprisings by the colonial and semi-colonial peoples.

The fate of the remaining gains of the October revolution is therefore necessarily linked to the outcome of the class struggle – more precisely of all social-political conflict on a world scale. The question of Thermidor is inextricably combined with the process of world revolution and counter-revolution. Practically alone among communist leaders, Trotsky understood this as early as 1923. It is correctly one of the *leitmotifs* of Broué's book. This is also one of the reasons for what Trotsky saw as the decisive importance of building the Fourth International during the final period of his life. Nevertheless the significance and content of the Soviet Thermidor remained a central question in the factional struggles of Russian communists between 1923 and 1933. On this Broué's book gives us more details and some important conclusions compared to Deutscher's trilogy.

The Left Opposition from 1923 had a correct idea of the danger of bureaucratic degeneration in the party and state. As Marx and Engels put it: there was a risk of the full time officials of the working class becoming its oppressors. That is what obviously happened and can be summarised by Trotsky's later formulation of the political expropriation of the proletariat (which brings with it many consequences on the economic level).

But such a counter-revolution is not a *social* counter-revolution, and does not involve the restoration of capitalism, just as the French Thermidor did not imply the restoration of the Ancien Regime (the power of the semi-feudal nobility and absolutist monarchy). **It was a political counter revolution on the basis of a society created by the victorious revolution.**

For the Opposition this key distinction was not clear in the first period of its struggle. For a quite a lot of its leaders Thermidor and capitalist restoration were seen as the same thing, or at least were put together in an over-mechanical way. Then in the struggle on three fronts against the bureaucracy, the *Nepmen* (the new medium scale urban bourgeoisie) and the Kulak danger, the Opposition was subjected to a stern test when Stalin and his faction made a brutal ultra-left turn in 1929 with forced collectivisation of agriculture and breakneck industrialisation. One sector of the Opposition, Piatakov then Preobrazhensky, Smilga and Radek, saw this turn at least partially as a vindication of their ideas. They used it to justify their capitulation. The other sectors of the Opposition who kept fast to the fundamentally proletarian, anti-bureaucratic and in-

"The Left Opposition from 1923 had a correct idea of the danger of bureaucratic degeneration in the party and state. As Marx and Engels put it, there was a risk of the full time officials of the working class becoming its oppressors"

"Isaac Deutscher is a more brilliant writer than Pierre Broué. His language is more striking, he has a more lively style that is easier to read and he has a gift for summarising ideas and events in an original way. But Broué is a better historian. He uses quotes and backs up his sources. He avoids ready-made judgements. And now, unlike the time when Deutscher was writing, he has been able to have access to and use supplementary documentary sources and a secondary literature.

Above all Deutscher's third volume was marked by the author's

over-polemical approach to his subject on all the questions in dispute between the two men in the 1930s. An objective examination of these questions with the information we have today leads us to the conclusion that it was Trotsky's analysis and not Deutscher's that was right on most of them. Two important examples bear this out. First of all the scope of the social/political crisis in France in 1934, culminating in the June 1936 General Strike and the subsequent defeat of the 1938 General Strike. Deutscher clearly underestimated this, even if Trotsky's June 1936 formulation 'The French revolution has begun' is debatable. Then there is the question of the foundation of the Fourth International in September

1938, recognising the necessity to continue the work begun in 1933 of patiently building new revolutionary nuclei both nationally and internationally and of consolidating this work as far as possible against the pounding it would receive from the effects of World War.

On these questions and on many more, Broué, who is obviously politically closer to Trotsky than Deutscher was, is also a more objective historian. He writes as a supporter of Trotsky but not as an awestruck admirer. He never hides his immense admiration and love for his subject – sentiments we understand since we share them. But he does not mythologise some guru or infallible politician."

ternationalist reasons for their struggle against Thermidorian degeneration, continued their battle under Trotsky's leadership. This meant they had to clarify the content of the Soviet Thermidor. Broué takes us step by step through the development of the thinking of the Opposition and of Trotsky on this. It is a key part of his work.

Deutscher's hesitant and contradictory analysis on this does not hold up to an overall historical examination. How can one speak of a 'revolution from above', as he describes the forced collectivisation, when the counter-revolution was carrying all before it in all areas of society? Trotsky illustrates this in a striking way in *Revolution Betrayed*, and his general analysis is backed up even more pungently by the radical criticism of this period in the *glasnost* of the Soviet Union today. The great development of French industry, made possible by the Jacobins, did not really begin until the Consulate and the Empire. But does that justify calling this period the 'second revolution'? Were the Five-Year Plans the product of October or of Stalinism?

Today, when we can draw up a final balance sheet, little doubt remains. Anything positive built during the 1929-39 period was the product of the October revolution. But the mass assassinations, the famine, misery, oppression, wastage, and absurd inequalities which accompanied what was constructed were the product of Stalinism, the bureaucratic dictatorship and the power of a definite social layer. Deutscher seriously underestimated all this. The proletariat and true communists do not claim any co-responsibility for all those disasters. We have to relentlessly struggle against such crimes, as Trotsky and the trotskysts did.

The victorious political counter-revolution in Russia can only be overthrown by a political revolution. However there has always been a debate about the possible self-reform of the bureaucracy. Also on this question Broué is generally right against Deutscher. The falsely defined 'revolutions from above' like those of the archtypical Emperor Joseph II of Austria or the abolition of serfdom by Tsar Alexander II of Russia are characterised by the fact that they do *not* radically eliminate all vestiges of the decrepit regimes, which have to



Trotsky in exile: speaking in Copenhagen, November 1932

be swept away if progress is to be guaranteed. Such 'revolutions' can be radical. They can liberate important progressive forces. But their function is through certain changes to *prevent* popular revolutions. Precisely because they cannot be as radical as real popular revolutions they can at the most hold these back (sometimes they even facilitate the development of a popular revolution). In the long term they cannot stop popular revolution. What was true for Alexander II or Bismarck will prove to be true in the light of history for Khrushchev and Gorbachev - whatever the differences with our historical examples.

It is important to understand the particular dialectic between radical reforms initiated from the top and the mass struggles below. This dialectic is even more important and specific in post-capitalist societies, where the bureaucracy is *not* a class, unlike the nobility of the Austrian court with their civil service, or the Prussian Junkers. This dialectic is more accentuated due to the fact that the proletariat has an enormous potential socio-economic hegemony in the USSR, beyond comparison with that of the popular classes in the societies of our historical examples. It would have been useful if Broué had made this point clear.

III

Despite all its weaknesses, Deutscher's trilogy (which has reached an audience far greater than Broué's ever will) did have the historical merit of breaking the wall of silence and slanders that Stalinist and bourgeois historians, as well as fellow travellers and opportunists of all sorts, have tried to erect for a quarter of a century around the leader of the October insurrection and the founder

of the Red Army. Outside the small Trotskyist movement and its periphery, where this book was obviously not necessary, it marked out a path to the truth for hundreds of thousands of readers. Far from being, as Broué at one point suggests, an apology for Stalin, it was an essential stage in the demystification of Stalin for this part of world opinion.

The same comment applies to the Khrushchev report at the CPSU Twentieth Congress. It would be quite irrational and historically blind to define it as a 'subtle apology for Stalin'. For millions of communists throughout the world it marked the end of the Stalin cult and not the subtle continuation of his authority. Ninety-nine percent of people at the time saw it this way too - even the strongest defenders of Stalin understood it.

The unjustified and unjust attempt by Broué to systematise his criticism of Deutscher comes apart in two chapters where the polemic is strangely absent: the chapters dealing with 1920-21, tellingly entitled 'The Crisis of the Revolution' and 'The Retreat'. We entirely agree with Broué's judgement on the Kronstadt events - it is nuanced and solidly backed up by documents from the imperialist archives which Trotsky himself was not aware of at the time. But we think Deutscher explains the tragic role of 1921, the watershed year of the revolution much better than Broué does.

The historical background is well known: there was a catastrophic fall in production; famine; numerical decimation of the proletariat; downturn of the first revolutionary wave in the West with the capitalist counter-offensive; but also the definitive defeat of the White armies in the Civil War and the end of imperialist

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"In a period of enormous material difficulties for the working class, to institutionalise the apparatus's power and its methods of command, reducing and then snuffing out workers' democracy, means contributing to a sharp decline in working class political activity"

military intervention against Soviet Russia. This is the context in which the Bolshevik Party, with Lenin and Trotsky at its head, decided on the New Economic Policy, organised the retreat, and took a position in the Comintern against ultra-left adventurism and the theory of the 'offensive' put forward by Zinoviev and Bukharin. Against them, Lenin and Trotsky supported a united front policy giving communists a line for the masses and a way of winning a majority prior to any struggle for power. All this was logical, coherent and based on a correct understanding of reality, the relationship of forces and the tendencies of the situation. Broué (like Deutscher) correctly highlights all this.

But at the same time the Bolsheviks' attitude to the forms of exercising political power in Russia took an absolutely unjustified and illogical turn. Instead of saying 'the civil war is over, and the class enemy has received a decisive blow and will not recover quickly so we must decisively broaden soviet democracy, particularly in the party, in the trade unions and in the soviets', the Bolsheviks, in their great majority, including Lenin and Trotsky, made a turn in precisely the opposite direction, saying: 'since the civil war is finished the proletariat's political energy and dynamism will ease up, along with its idealism and commitment, so there is a mortal danger that the economic retreat will grow into a political retreat; hence we must step up discipline, control from above and centralisation. Political democracy must be radically reduced'.

Furthermore this schema of analysis served as a model - we should say a justification - for generally accompanying measures of economic liberalisation with a political tightening up. This went on for decades, contradicting all the forecasts and predictions of Western liberal dogmatists

In fact the analysis was false. It led to disastrous political conclusions. It is hard to show that the threat to Soviet power of the NEP men was worse than that of Kolchak or Wrangel. It was even more difficult to explain how a working class that was absent from political decision making and increasingly reduced to the role of a passive supporter of the apparatus, was more capable than an active, consciously intervening one of struggling against the 'rampant' and

'underground' counter-revolution. Again, given the economic context the Bolsheviks should have understood that the number one danger was not the bourgeois counter-revolution but the alienation and political passivity of the working class, which in turn would open the door to the political counter-revolution, to Thermidor.

The upturns and downturns of the revolution in the last analysis depend on the correlation of social forces and not on what happens in the two main political camps. Within this correlation, what happens inside the working class is at least as important if not even more important than what happens among the bourgeoisie and its allies.

In a period of enormous material difficulties for the working class, institutionalising the apparatus's power and its methods of command, reducing and then snuffing out workers' democracy, means contributing to a sharp decline in working class political activity and to its political weakening, therefore changing the relationship of forces at its expense. Trotsky and Lenin did not understand this in 1921. They understood it one year later. But meanwhile the damage had been done (we are not saying it was irreversible). The one-party regime was made official. Factions were banned inside the single party (a nearly inevitable consequence of the one party principle since each faction is a potential second party). Stalin became general secretary of the single party. At the same time there was an ultra-rapid, monstrous growth of the party apparatus - a few hundred full-timers just after the October revolution but 15,000 in August 1922.

Deutscher's book has the merit of showing the radical, decisive nature of this turn. This is not reflected in the pages of Broué's book. Moreover, Trotsky, in *Revolution Betrayed*, did not mince his words. In one of the most important self-criticisms of his political life this is what he said:

'The prohibition of oppositional parties brought after it the prohibition of factions. The prohibition of factions ended in a prohibition to think otherwise than the infallible leaders. The police-manufactured monolithism of the party resulted in a bureaucratic impunity which has become the source of all kinds of wantonness and corruption.'

(New Park, 1967 pp 104-5)

How in the world can a writer like Deutscher, who gives over a chapter of his book to this mechanism, the analysis of which has been confirmed

by history and repeated by many people today in the USSR although not by Broué (yet), be characterised as a veiled apologist of Stalin? Obviously the accusation just does not hold water.

There is another argument that goes along the following lines. While Lenin and Trotsky made the same political error of the bans in 1921 and while Lenin did in fact nominate Stalin for the post of general secretary, nevertheless Trotsky is more blameworthy because of his anti-democratic positions on the trade union question. By doing this he opened the way for Stalin. The latter's new post meant the removal of Trotsky's supporters Preobrazhensky, Krestinsky and Serebriakov as party secretaries following the Trotsky/Bukharin bloc's defeat on the trade union question.

However we should nuance the judgement made of Trotsky's error on the trade union question. Here Broué tends to follow Deutscher's incomplete position on the matter. In fact the trade union question as discussed in 1920 can not be reduced to the problem of the (relative) independence of the trade unions from the state, or of the extent of working class action autonomous from the managers of industry (who were more and more bureaucratic). Lenin was right and Trotsky/Bukharin were wrong on *this issue*. But the trade union question also involved the form of management, the problem of 'who manages'.

On this aspect of the trade union question, Lenin defended the principle of management alone being in charge. Trotsky/Bukharin, while not clearly raising the question of self-management (the Workers' Opposition were for management by the trade unions, as stated in the official party programme) did propose decisive moves in this direction in documents that Broué, like Deutscher, does not take into account or is unaware of. We already referred to them in 1955. (1)

With hindsight it is clear you cannot stop the process of bureaucratisation by simply defending trade union autonomy against the managers who were separate from the mass of producers. Struggle against bureaucracy must be carried out on at least three fronts: defence of workers' immediate economic interests; socialist democracy, (working class and soviet) and its institutionalisation; and workers' management of the workplaces and the economy as a

"...you cannot stop the growth of bureaucracy simply by defending trade union autonomy against the managers"

whole. On this last point at least Trotsky was in advance of Lenin in 1920.

IV

Broué's hesitations on the central question of political pluralism and on the watershed year of 1921 are particularly surprising, since one of the main merits of his book is precisely the way he brings out the continuity of Trotsky's thought and action as the intransigent defender of working class self-activity and self-organisation.

Trotsky was the first theoretician of soviet organisation, from 1905-6. He foresaw even then that soviets would spring up all over Russia in the next Russian revolution. Lenin only took up this

key idea, which also comes from Marx and Engels, with his book *State and Revolution*, in 1917. The Comintern generalised this idea in 1919-1920. It was made into a universal principle applicable to all revolutions with a predominantly proletarian character, all over the world. Rosa Luxemburg, Gramsci and other revolutionary Marxist thinkers further elaborated this concept in 1918-1920. So Trotsky had already made a theoretical 'breakthrough' with such an idea in 1906.

While he was the theoretician and practical leader of working class self-organisation, Trotsky had to refine his conception of the organised workers' movement, especially after the division between communists and social democrats crystallised after 1919-20. Lenin had come down the same road in his fight for the united front, starting with *Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder* and then the Comintern's Third Congress. Trotsky's more precise focus on the workers' movement led to the concept of the organic nature of this movement as a contradictory whole. On the one hand there are political differentiations, conflicts and sometimes quite hard struggles, and on the other hand there is a continued reflex of class solidarity, common struggle, unity of action against the class enemy against common dangers and in pursuit of common interests. If this is obvious from the economic point of



Lenin in full flow, May 1920

view and fully justifies the line of a single mass trade union confederation, it is equally true on the political level.

Trotsky's analysis of fascism, his definition of the vital role of the workers' united front to stop the rise of the Nazis in Germany, his tactical proposals and his fireless campaign around the mortal danger which Hitler's taking of power would represent for the German and international workers' movements, are among the most brilliant contributions of Trotsky to revolutionary marxism. Broué shows an intimate knowledge of his subject here. Trotsky's writings on fascism are an indispensable complement to the general theory of working class self-organisation. Through them it is possible to understand how the soviets (workers' councils) are both the most effective and natural instrument for unitary struggle and the most effective instrument for the exercise of power by the working class. In one of those breathtaking insights that crop up regularly in Trotsky's writings - Broué does not like to call them 'prophetic' which sounds a little religious when it is really a case of combining scientific analysis with intuition - he predicted, years before the event, that the soviets would emerge in Spain first in the form of anti-fascist militias. This is exactly what happened in 1936.

This obviously does not mean that the intransigent defence of the prin-

ciple of workers' self-organisation, which is at the heart of all Trotsky's political activity - with the tragic exception of 1921 - was absolutely without any weaknesses. Broué relates in passing how Trotsky, like Lenin, was an ally of Kautsky against Rosa Luxemburg around 1910, when the latter campaigned in favour of the mass political strike. Her success would have been of supreme importance for the future of the German workers' movement and the class struggle of that country. The question is closely linked to that of workers' self-activity and self-organisation.

History confirms that the workers' 'average' class consciousness is very much connected to their experience of concrete struggle and therefore to the concrete forms of struggle they have lived through. It would have been useful if Broué had emphasised this point more.

We should be thankful to Broué for having the courage to lift, at least partially, the taboo that still exists in our ranks on the writings of the young Trotsky - *Our Political Tasks*. It is a very uneven book, very unfair to Lenin. However to find there, as certain historians have done, the seeds of Stalinism and the bureaucratisation of the party and soviets is to make a mockery of a whole concrete and complex historical process that produced Stalinism stretching over two decades, involving three revolutions and two

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"Real working class self organisation, a network of soviets with effective power involving the whole of the working class or at least its great majority, is only possible on the basis of party pluralism"

counter-revolutions, the fluctuating activity of millions of men and women, the varying relationships of forces of colossal social forces and their inevitable repercussions on the thinking of leaders including Lenin. This is particularly misguided, since *Our Political Tasks* is a declaration of war against such bureaucratisation.

It is hard to deny that the Lenin of 1905-7 or of 1917-19 had rectified some of the excessive formulations of *What is to Done?* concerning the radical, centralising, leading 'jacobin' role of professional revolutionaries. He had obviously bent the stick too far in one direction, and he rapidly bent it back the other way when he insisted, notably in the Preface to the collection *In Twelve Years* on the broadest application of democratic principles, the need for the election of leaders, for public, transparent debates in a legal and public mass party. On a more theoretical level he stated:

'Of course the primary reason for this success [of the party of professional revolutionaries] resides in the fact that the working class, whose best elements are in the Social Democratic party [ie. the marxists], is different for objective economic reasons from all other classes in capitalist society by having a greater aptitude to organise itself. Without this condition the organisation of professional revolutionaries would have been a plaything, an adventure, a mere facade. The pamphlet *What is to Done?* on many occasions emphasises that **this organisation's only reason for existence is its liaison with the really revolutionary class which goes spontaneously into battle**'.

Collected Works, Vol 13, [translated from French] our emphasis.

This seems to us to be the correct formulation of the problem of the relationship between the vanguard organisation (as a specific task to be achieved), mass spontaneity and working class self-organisation, although Lenin's term 'in liaison with' could be further developed.



Trotsky, returning to Russia in May 1917, urges proletarian revolution: soviet organisation has always been the key.

Having said all that it is nevertheless the case that *Our Political Tasks* does voice concern and warn against the risks any party runs where one of the components of this doctrine, and especially the practice of democratic centralism, is developed in a one-sided way, particularly when the party exercises state power and there is a decline of the masses' self-activity. Broué has done a good job in bringing this out into the open. The taboo needed to be lifted.

Our conclusion is self-evident. Real working class self-organisation, a network of soviets with effective power involving the whole of the working class or at least its great majority, is only possible on the basis of party pluralism.

This is not only true because the working class in practice follows different parties and political currents. Stifling or banning them is not the same as restricting the rights and powers of the bourgeoisie or imperialism but is rather an attack on the rights and political initiative of important sectors of the working class. Without free political debate and struggle working class political education and activity will rapidly degenerate. First you get a system of

passive tailing and then bureaucratic obedience. The masses' consciousness and intelligence decline. Finally generalised indifference and cynicism replaces a living workers democracy.

The great Rosa Luxemburg first understood this problem, despite her passionate support for the Russian revolution and despite the fact she was not informed of the particular circumstances of the civil war raging in 1918-20. From 1921 on, her warning (issued three years earlier, before she was brutally murdered) was shown to be legitimate and alas confirmed by historical experience:

"If political life is suffocated throughout the country then paralysis will necessarily take hold of the soviets. Without general elections, without freedom of the press, of unlimited right of as-

sembly, without a free battle of ideas, then life will wither and vegetate in all the public institutions, and the bureaucracy will remain the only active element."

Russian Revolution, October 1918 (Maspero, Paris, 1969) [translated from French]

V

Broué's book helps us answer a question that arises from the history of the USSR in the 1923-1940 period, which historians and young people (not to mention the workers' vanguard) ask (and will increasingly ask in that country) – how do you explain Stalin's persistent hatred, the implacable persecution against Trotsky, his family and friends?

We can leave on one side the purely psychological aspect of the phenomenon – personal rivalry, jealousy, envy, feeling of intellectual inferiority feeding a strong sense of guilt, endemic paranoia developing finally into a universal and monstrous paranoia. All that is true. But it is absolutely insufficient to explain how an individual with such traits was able to express them in a nearly unlimited way in a big country that had emerged from a spectacular revolu-

"...only Trotsky presented not only a denunciation of Stalinism but also an explanation based on the marxist tradition, of the bureaucratic dictatorship. Inevitably this made him the main enemy of the regime..."

tionary experience, which had not only liberated economic energies but also the potential moral and cultural emancipation of millions of human beings.

We get closer to a scientific, coherent explanation if we focus on the political role of the two protagonists in this drama as the representatives, in an almost concentrated way, of the interests, traditions and 'values' of the two antagonistic social forces — the proletariat and the bureaucracy.

Stalinist hatred was shared by a good part of the bureaucracy for a long time. Trotsky's anti-bureaucratic struggle was seen as basically correct by a good part of the workers' vanguard, to varying degrees and at different times — that is the tragedy — by nearly all the old Bolsheviks, including those who had first supported Stalin.

As the powers accumulated evolving towards 'personal power', and as Thermidor led to the bonapartism and Stalin's dictatorship, so the survival of anything or anyone who incarnated the programme or ideals of October, or even the emancipatory tradition of marxism, became unacceptable to the lackeys and spokespersons of the political counterrevolution. Since it was a *political* and not a social counter-revolution the umbilical cord with Marx and Lenin could not be totally cut, so the regime cloaked itself in the monstrously deformed mask of 'Marxism-Leninism'. It presented itself as the legitimate follower of a tradition that it desecrated increasingly each day. Hence it was not enough just to suppress the main person speaking out against it: all potential opponents also had to be condemned to permanent silence.

Among these opponents only Trotsky presented not only a denunciation of Stalinism but also an explanation, based on the marxist tradition, of the bureaucratic dictatorship. Inevitably this made him the main enemy of the regime since his writings undermined it from the inside, albeit only in a theoretical way. Consequently the systematic persecution,



Trotsky with Left Opposition leaders: as revolutionists, they posed a special threat to Stalin

the attempt to totally wipe out Trotsky's memory and ideas, corresponds to a reflex of self-defence and self-justification of a privileged caste made up of hundreds of thousands of individuals. Stalin was only the most effective and most unscrupulous executor of such criminal acts. Already this is a more credible explanation.

This explanation is still insufficient. It does too much 'honour' to the bureaucracy in general and to Stalin in particular if we present them as obsessed with ideas, programmes, denunciations, critical analyses or even of the need for self-justification or identity. All of this played a role in the persecution of Trotsky, of trotskyism and then of the whole Bolshevik party. But there is more to it than that.

What made Trotsky and the Bolshevik-Leninists of the Opposition public enemy number one of Stalin and the bureaucracy was the unshakable capacity and will of Lev Davidovich (Trotsky) and his comrades to translate criticism and denunciation of Stalin, stalinism and the bureaucracy into *political activity oriented to the working class*. These were revolutionaries, educated, hardened by two experiences of activity in a non-revolutionary period, before 1905 and between 1907 and 1913, where they had learned, in smaller groups then the 1928 or 1932 Opposition, to look out for the least sign of revival of working class activity. They had learned how to intervene and to insert their ideas into the most limited and moderate struggles. They

had learned the art of underground organisation, patiently building up the links, even if with only two oppositional workers in a workplace or three rebellious students in a university or two hundred workers involved in protest action or a small scale strike.

Stalin had gone through the same school and knew the same techniques and he was obsessed by the idea that what Trotsky and the Bolsheviks had succeeded in doing against the Tsar they would sooner or later do against him. He could find some compromises with everyone on certain conditions (look how he dealt with the successive waves of capitulationists between 1928 and 1934). He could find no compromise with propagandists and agitators with an intervention aimed at the working class and youth.

He was not wrong, at least from the long term historical point of view. One just has to consider the question — What would have been the destiny of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, what would have happened with Solidarnosc if there had been in these countries a nucleus of organised Bolshevik Leninists? Even if they had been only a thousand strong, even without a 'Trotsky', they would not only have been able to represent and concretise the communist tradition of that country but also be identified with every popular protest and workers' demand over the last 10-15 years. In this way we can understand the difference the life or death of Trotsky and trotskyism in the USSR

"Since it was a political and not a social counter revolution, the umbilical cord with Marx and Lenin could not be totally cut, so the regime cloaked itself in the monstrously deformed mask of 'Marxism' and 'Leninism'"

“What Stalin and the bureaucracy hated in Trotsky is what the Russian workers and youth are going to admire and imitate in the years to come: his intransigent defence of workers’ political and material interests...”

Photographs from the splendid photography Trotsky by David King (Basil Blackwell)

represented for the long-term chances of survival of the bureaucratic dictatorship. Stalin’s hatred and persecution of Trotsky and trotskyism was therefore not only hatred and persecution of ideological enemies. It was a hatred and persecution against the only communists capable of helping the Soviet working class to undermine and overthrow the privileges and power of the bureaucracy.

What Stalin and the bureaucracy hated in Trotsky is what the Russian workers and youth are going to admire and imitate in the years to come: his intransigent defence of workers’ political and material interests; his identification with the anti-bureaucratic struggle, for socialist democracy; his persistent struggle against social inequality, against privileges, against untrammelled power, against injustice, for the rights of women, young people and minority nationalities against discrimination and oppression.

Broué helps us relive in a meticulous way, month by month, year by year, one of the lesser-known aspects of Trotsky’s life as the inspirer and leader of the Opposition after his expulsion from the CPSU. It is one of the greatest contributions of this remarkable book. Thanks to Broué this impressive political-organisational continuity is not excessively personalised around Trotsky.

There was not just Trotsky and his son Sedov. There were numerous other outstanding activists who are brought to life again by Broué. He gives them a name and a political identity. They are among the purest heroes and heroines of our century. They never bowed or gave into the ‘inevitable’. They never lost faith that this nightmare would end. They were killed to the last person. As one eyewitness said: They were felled like great oaks, with a curse for Stalin and a slogan for soviet power and the world revolution on their lips. We are proud of them. In the future all the workers of the USSR will be proud of them. Thanks to them our current is the only one who can look the Soviet people in the face without a sense of guilt, without shame or complexes. These heroes saved the honour and continuity of communism.

In his final speech before his ‘judges’ at the Third Moscow Trial, the unfortunate Bukharin said (perhaps covering up some regrets) that one had to be a Trotsky to propose and do all that. Indeed. You had to be Trotsky to tirelessly continue the fight for the emancipation of the Soviet

and international working class in midst of Hitler’s and Stalin’s terrors, when it was midnight in the century. Thanks to Broué’s book thousands of contemporaries will better understand it now and understand it was not at all a lost cause.

VI

Broué’s book covers a half-century of world history. It is inevitable that he could not cover everything. We can all have our ideas on what should have been developed more, on what could be left out and what could not.

We regret that Broué does not mention Trotsky’s role as a precursor in the analysis of the black minority in the United States (2). We also regret he did not mention the fact that alone among marxists, Trotsky predicted in 1938 that if there were a new World War, all the Jews of Europe risked being physically liquidated. Broué also does not mention the first important political defeat of stalinism, the trial of the Spanish POUM, whose representatives were at first accused of collaboration with Franco – a vile lie – but were finally sentenced for having tried to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

We are sorry that after emphasising the role of comrade Badovsky in introducing Trotskyist ideas in Poland in the 1950s, he does not mention the role of our comrade Petr Uhl, the most respected figure of the Czech opposition, continually attacked by the bureaucracy for his Trotskyism and who spent six years in a Stalinist prison.

We are particularly surprised about the way Pierre Broué dealt with the question of Trotsky’s rehabilitation and the ongoing campaign on this, not just among Western journalists looking for a scoop, but among important currents of the international workers’ movement.

We have never asked for USSR governments – the political representatives of the bureaucracy – to politically rehabilitate Trotsky. We concede no competence to them on this matter. The judgement of Trotsky’s political role and his ideas is a question of history and of the Soviet and international working people. We have never doubted their verdict. At the end of the day it will reach into the CPSU itself.

On the other hand we have demanded the penal and judicial rehabilitation of Trotsky and we must continue to do so. Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov were accused of terrible

crimes by the prosecutor and judges of the first Moscow Trial. They were found guilty in their absence in the sentence of this trial. The verdicts at the second and third trials confirmed this judgement. This is the basis on which Trotsky is judged to be an ‘enemy of the people’ and has had his writings banned in the USSR.

Moreover the USSR supreme court has solemnly rescinded the verdicts of the three Moscow Trials. It has rehabilitated the old Bolsheviks who were sentenced on the basis of totally fabricated accusations. Is there to be an exception made for Leon Trotsky? What else but a Soviet tribunal can judicially rehabilitate him at this time.?

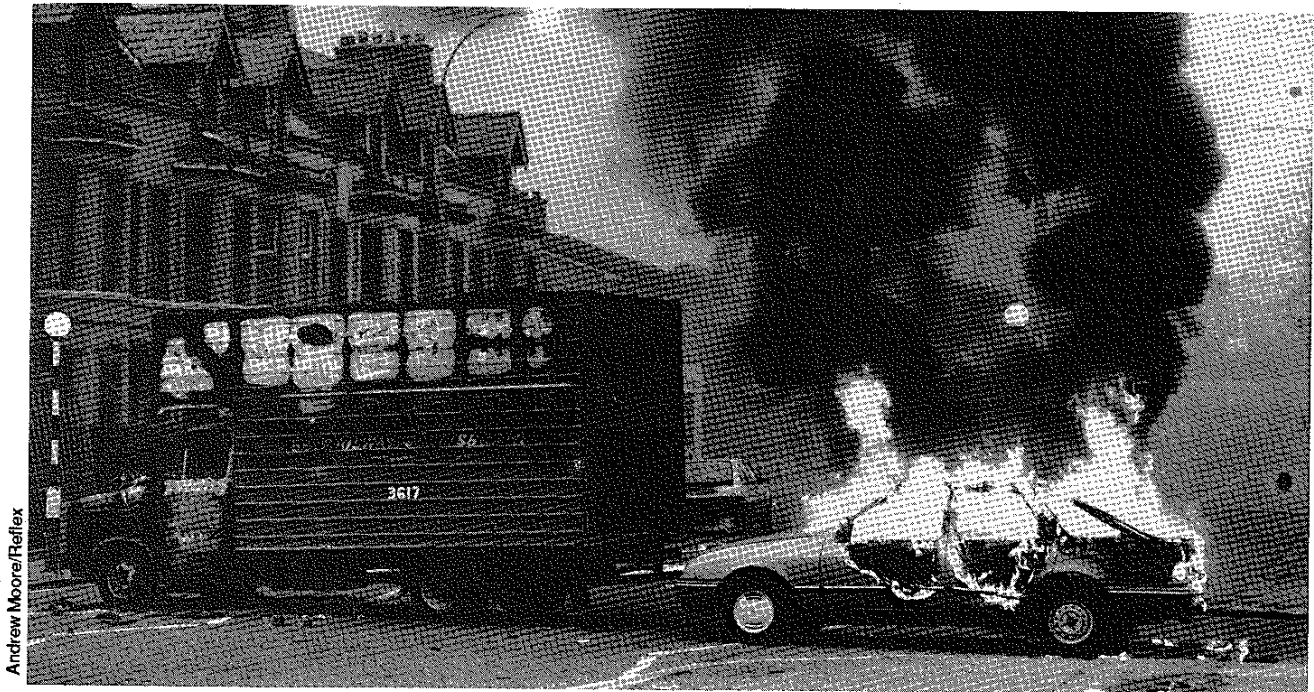
The question also exists on a more directly political level. Thousands of courageous men and women are campaigning in the USSR for the judicial rehabilitation of all the victims of the Stalinist purges, including Trotsky. Isn’t it our elementary internationalist duty to support this struggle? Broué has probably already changed his position on this. If he has not yet already done so let’s hope he will do so soon.

But all this scarcely alters our overall judgement on this book. It is a great, a very great book because of its objectives, the verve it conveys, the scholarship and the conclusions it comes to which we share. It is and will remain an indispensable instrument for the education of cadres and for the recruitment of sympathisers. We will have to wait a long time for a better one, perhaps after all archives in the USSR are opened, and possibly a while after that.

Footnotes:

(1) E. Germain: The discussion on the trade union question in the Bolshevik party (1920-1) in *Quatrième Internationale* 1955, No.1

(2) George Novack has correctly emphasised Trotsky’s contribution on this to the development of marxist thought, clarifying a central aspect of the political tasks of revolutionaries in the United States (George Novack: *Leon Trotsky’s Contribution to Marxism in Proletarian Politics*, Baroda/India, 1980, No.1/2). The same article contains a succinct and lucid presentation of the law of uneven and combined development that Trotsky first formulated, and a defence of the theory of permanent revolution which is based on this law. George Breitman developed the marxist (trotskyist) conception of the black question in the United States in more detail.



Andrew Moore/Reflex

Ireland 1969-1989: No British solution

By the Summer of 1969, almost a year of peaceful civil rights marches in the six counties had been assaulted and banned. The run up to an annual celebration of Protestant ascendancy – the August 12 Apprentice Boys parade in Derry – had seen a month of provocative Orange marches through and by catholic areas. Rioting was a commonplace result, with the RUC shooting and killing civilians in its unashamed defence of the sectarian status quo. In Belfast catholic families were already being forced out of their homes.

The August 12 parade was stoned as it passed the edge of catholic Bogside. The RUC baton charged and the Bogside Defence Association built barricades around the area. The RUC used armoured cars and CS gas and local youths retaliated with petrol bombs. The area was under siege and a pitched battle ensued.

The effect on the political set-up was volcanic. The moderate civil rights leaders were swept aside by Republican and left activists. 21 year old Bernadette Devlin (now MacAliskey) – ‘the street-fighting MP for Mid-Ulster’ – was behind the barricades urging on the militants. The Starry Plough – flag of James Connolly’s workers’ militia, the Citizen’s Army – was flown from local flats. Across the six counties, riots and rallies were organised to stretch the police to its maximum.

By August 14, the North was on the edge of war. The exhausted RUC were being replaced by the B-Specials (a hated sectarian militia that was scrapped and replaced by the identical ‘UDR’). Under strong pressure to intervene directly, the southern Irish army sent field hospitals to the border.

At 5pm on August 14, British soldiers were moved into Derry. The British commander agreed to pull the B Specials and RUC behind his own troops and not to enter the Bogside.

This temporarily defused the crisis in Derry, but in Belfast a massive pogrom was underway – leaving six dead over 24 hours – with attacks, shootings and the burning of catholic houses, actively involving the RUC and B-Specials. Barricades were built on the Falls Rd and the

army was sent in. But by the end of September 1,820 families had been forced to flee – 82.7 per cent of them catholic.

The Labour government’s deployment of the troops appeared contradictory in character. For a brief period the army was welcomed by the catholic ghetto-dwellers. It was seen as symbolic of a victory over the sectarian forces of the Northern Ireland statelet and the hope that intervention would lead to reforms.

But this ambiguity was superficial, as republicans and socialists warned at the time. The only role of the army could be – and has been since – to support the civil administration. It was a last ditch attempt to save the six county statelet from terminal crisis. Because the function of the intervention was to stabilise the partitionist status quo – it inevitably led the conflict from its focus on basic civil rights reforms to include the existence and basis of that status quo.

The unravelling of this situation didn’t take long. By the Autumn of 1969, the moderate catholic leadership was re-asserting itself and barricades were coming down. But the inability of Stormont to make any real concessions (having for almost 50 years cultivated a mass base through the ideology and practice of protestant ascendancy) and the inability of the British state to defend Stormont led to renewed crisis.

In 1970, confrontations escalated as the army attacked nationalist areas through the Summer, with saturation raids and violence. The July curfew of the Falls Road was a turning point in hardening out this process into a direct struggle between continued British rule and a re-emergent Irish nationalism. It was only in August 1970 that the IRA, which had been re-arming after years of inactivity, began its military campaign – not killing the first British soldier until February 1971.

The Social Democratic and Labour Party was launched – unifying the moderate middle class nationalist parties – in an attempt to head off this escalating polarisation. But to little avail. The IRA campaign was in full swing by the Spring of 1971 and in August 1971 internment was introduced. This was met by the setting up of ‘no go’ areas in Derry, guarded by openly armed IRA volunteers, into which the British army and the RUC did not enter for a year. A rent and rate strike against in-

terment was supported by tens of thousands of families. A war had erupted.

Twenty years on, what is the balance sheet of Britain's intervention? Brigadier Frank Kitson, commander of the British army in Belfast from 1970 to 1972, summarised the state's immediate aims in such situations as being to 'regain ... and then retain the allegiance of the population, and for this purpose it must eliminate those involved in subversion. But [to do so] ... it must gain control of the population'. Judged on these terms there have been twenty years of failure: with unabated mass resistance exemplified by the 1981 hunger strikes and the electoral rise of Sinn Fein.

But has the British state secured its more *strategic* interests? The answer is more complex. With some exceptions, the period from 1922 to 1969 signified the success of the partition project as a means of protecting British interests. The southern Irish bourgeoisie was increasingly quiescent and unwilling to challenge the border. The northern statelet was run by a wing of the British ruling class – utilising supremacist ideology and minor material advantages for protestant workers – through the monolithic and seemingly permanent Unionist Party.

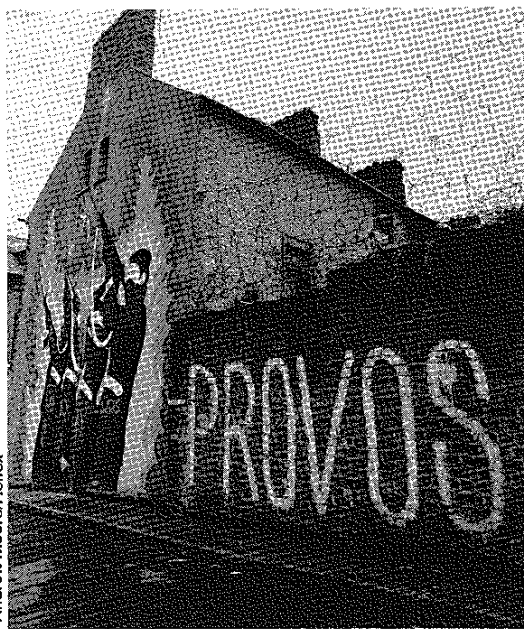
But the combination of rising catholic expectations in the north, the ending of the post-war boom, the weakness of the Irish economy and the international upsurge of struggle in the 1960s undermined this stability. In particular the unionist monolith has broken up – partly on class lines and partly due to a diminution in its privileged relations with the British ruling class.

Britain saw reforms and a rapprochement with the catholic middle class as the best means of bolstering partition. The latter led to the continued attempts at power sharing from 1973 onwards. The British ruling class sought to utilise not only the Southern capitalist state, but also growing US, Japanese and European economic interests in the island.

There were also political and military interests at stake. Northern Ireland is part of the British state. Although historically a *colonial* relationship, it has been integral to the development of the 'domestic' class structure and political apparatus. Hence the fear of any potential destabilisation spilling over into Britain, and the need to control this – one reason for the strategy of Ulsterisation, normalisation and criminalisation inaugurated in the late 1970s. And the anomaly of a potentially neutral and independent Ireland on the western flank of NATO Europe – in a key position regarding British defence strategy – was highlighted by Dublin's refusal to back Thatcher in the Malvinas adventure.

Thus successive governments have sought strategies that took account of these interests. Currently faith is placed in the Hillsborough Accord, 'anti-terrorist' co-operation and the military, political and economic tying up of the 26 counties through the Single European Act. But, while 1992 may yet succeed where other policies have failed, Britain is still far from stemming the failure of the last two decades.

This failure has had several consequences. Firstly, there has been an inevitable strengthening of the argument that there is, literally, no British solution. The longer Britain has held on, the less the credibility of its rule. An indicator has been the success of the McBride campaign in the USA, where major states (now including California) will now not invest in the north of Ireland due to the rampant discrimination. Although in some quarters simply expressed as a cry of despair and pessimism – the natural conclusion is that the Irish people themselves should decide their own future. The issue of self-determination is therefore increasingly relevant.



Andrew Moore/Reflex

Secondly the class content of the situation has come more sharply into focus. Unionism has broken up. And the social base of the anti-imperialist movement during the 1970s moved firmly into the working class, with this politically reflected in leftward developments in the 1980s. The longer time scale of the struggle has placed the need for class alliances – particularly with the southern working class and the women's movement – higher on the agenda.

Finally, British unity behind the partition project of 1921 has begun to erode – even if only at the edges. Such division is not entirely new. For almost 50 years before 1921, the ruling class was deeply divided on the Irish question. This time, without a solution based on stable capitalist rule north and south, there is no chance of the ruling class adopting a unification or withdrawal policy. Indeed gaps in credibility and

confidence will necessarily be filled by a policy of repression – the nakedness of the coercive state reflecting the weakness of its political base.

Nonetheless this has led, particularly since 1981, to an increasingly open conflict within ruling circles with – the canvassing of alternative strategies within the framework of British interests.

An opening drama in this crisis of perspectives was the internecine conflict between MI5 and MI6 over Ireland in the mid 1970s which counterposed purely military solutions to the need for political initiative. MI5 won – leading to the torture, shoot to kill and criminalisation policies of Labour's Roy Mason years in the late 1970s. But the failure of this approach inevitably led to the re-emergence of the 'political' wing, with the Anglo-Irish talks of 1980, the now-defunct Northern Ireland Assembly and the Hillsborough Accord of 1985.

With a strategic solution eluding Britain's rulers, some have canvassed solutions *outside* the traditional partitionist framework. Such approaches look towards the total re-organisation of Anglo-Irish relations – a kind of new neo-colonial settlement – with the emphasis on the socio-economic integration of the two countries. This scenario would be greatly facilitated by 1992 and its straitjacketing of the 26 counties' neutrality and independence within the pro-capitalist confines of an IMF and NATO-dominated Europe. Within such a set-up, a nominally independent Ireland could be tolerated so long as there was a degree of bourgeois consensus.

This type of line is being peddled by the SDLP in the north and right wing parties in south. These forces look to the Accord as the first stage of such a process. In many respects it parallels the bourgeois nationalist perspective of the SNP's platform of 'independence within the European Community'.

Traditionally the British Labour bureaucracy has been a loyal supporter of the imperialist consensus on Ireland. But since Labour's adoption of 'Irish unity by consent' in 1981 it has played a role of canvassing such alternatives – generally linked to a programme of economic reflation and the return of a Labour government. This has led to a convergence with the positions of the Irish capitalist parties.

This 'tendency' in Anglo-Irish politics doesn't back withdrawal as a policy and is most unlikely to outside of a restabilisation. Instead, in Labour's case, it seeks a 'harmonisation' of the socio-economic structures North and South as a way of avoiding any challenge to partition. Furthermore this perspective dovetails neatly into the Tories' Accord offensive and will do so even more in the run up to 1992 – to the extent that we may find a new resurgence of bi-partisanship in the early 1990s ... whoever wins the next election.

Nonetheless, Labour's 1981 break represented a welcome shift that

symbolised the beginnings of glasnost on the issue after years in which discussion was silenced in the labour movement. But it is unlikely that the establishment would have tolerated this (compare the relentless struggle against unilateralism) if it wasn't regarded as a serious discussion within its own circles.

Despite all this, the ruling class and its Labour lieutenants are still firmly wedded to a line of division and repression as the only guaranteed way of shoring up British interests in the short term. But there's no doubt that openings have developed for major debates on the issue for the first time in decades. This has been reflected by public rows within the higher echelons of the media and the legal establishment about the Stalker affair; the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four; Gibraltar and media censorship – identical issues to those studiously ignored by these circles ten years ago.

Irish solidarity activists should intervene and use the opportunity to take new steps in laying the foundations of a withdrawal movement. However the process has been, and will be, very contradictory. Although in recent years the Bakers' Union, Nalco, NUM, UCATT, NUR, the National Union of Students and sections of the Labour Party have adopted withdrawal policies of various types – there have been retreats and there is a continued tendency to impose a framework based on an imperialist settlement and the denial of self determination.

Indeed, if one thing unites *all* the various tendencies within ruling circles it is the need to deny Irish self determination. This, more than anything, is the cement that unites the Tories, Labour and the Irish capitalist parties in their support for the Accord and post-1992 Europe. Thus qualitatively broadening the support for withdrawal must be combined with a vigorous fight for the democratic right of Irish self determination.

There can be an open discussion on all these issues, a dialogue with those who don't agree with self determination. But the *basis* for a



movement cannot be the framework of British people debating their favoured options for Ireland's future. Whatever the intentions of its propagators this would ultimately undermine the cause of Irish self determination. Rather we should seek the opposite: that such a dialogue be a tactic within subordinated to the framework of a fight for unconditional withdrawal.

There are precedents for mass movements based on principled demands of this type but successfully mobilising masses around basic broad slogans – CND being the most obvious. Socialists must take advantage of the impasse in British strategy after the last two decades and make the building of such a united movement on Ireland a number one priority.

Piers Mostyn

Irish solidarity Time to Unite!

Last year saw the launch of a new initiative on Ireland, Time To Go! It promised a qualitative breakthrough into new broad layers of support that had not previously backed withdrawal, and that it would hold a major march and carnival on the anniversary of the troop deployment. One year on, the results are, to say the least, mixed.

It began with a lot of more or less famous people putting their names to a Charter which admitted that it was necessary for Britain to leave Ireland. A good start. Then it began to run into heavy ground because of its leadership's attitude to the Troops Out Movement and the Irish in Britain Representation Group.

All over England, Scotland and Wales, Time To Go (TTG) and Year of Action groups were created, and where they existed in the same area they sometimes worked constructively together – and sometimes were mortal rivals. As a rule Year of Action groups last longer and are more active than their TTG equivalents. This is due in no small measure to the fact that they do not impose support for the Charter as a condition of membership, but simply support for British withdrawal and Irish self determination.

The TTG Show in June was the first major public event it organised in 1989. In December 1988 its senior members were anticipating an attendance of two thousand. In fact it was attended by about 600 people.

That the organisers deliberately chose the same weekend as the CND-sponsored Glastonbury festival and the Socialist Movement's conference cannot have helped. Nevertheless the SWP had, by their own admission, 150 comrades present and the bulk of the audience was made up of members and supporters of other left currents. As well as *Socialist Outlook*, most of the Communist Parties were there, as were *Socialist Organiser* (though in the light of their line on Ireland nobody quite understood why) and *Socialist Action*.

The event did not bring along the substantial numbers of the people who have recently become active on the question of British withdrawal. In particular, the large numbers of young Irish people in evidence on last year's Bloody Sunday march were absent. Indeed some of the *local* meetings organised by Year of Action groups have attracted similar numbers of people, and certainly were attended by much larger number of Irish and black people.



As well as failing to provide the focus for large numbers of activists and the newly interested, TTG is also failing to win the support of large numbers of labour movement bureaucrats. NALGO conference may have voted to affiliate to TTG, but that was in the teeth of the leadership's opposition, and Clare Short herself admitted at the show that NALGO had not wanted to put themselves out on a limb by becoming the first bureaucracy to hold what would be widely understood as a 'Troops Out' position.

Nevertheless, despite all the problems with the way in which the policy was adopted, the happy truth remains that one of the largest unions in Britain has adopted what is generally interpreted as a policy in favour of getting British troops out of Ireland. That is something no other campaign has managed to do in the past 20 years. It is also one of the reasons why TTG will be an important part of the withdrawal movement for some time to come.

On top of this, the Gaelic Athletic Association, which contains many thousands of working class, immigrant Irish youth has declared its support for TTG, something no other solidarity movement has achieved.

However if TTG wants to continue as an important component of a broad withdrawal movement, there are a number of problems it is going to have to sort out. The first of these is that it appears to be entirely self-selecting, both in a positive and a negative sense.

The positive sense is that anybody who wants to can set up a TTG group in an area or union. The negative sense is, that having done this, you are given no opportunity to participate in the national organisation's decision making processes. At the show there was no discussion about electing officers, AGMs, nor of an active, conscious membership. The leaders had already elected themselves, won the support of some left groups for the project and are content to let the foot soldiers follow orders.

Realistically, we have to accept that the campaign for British withdrawal will be a long haul. Can the leaders of TTG seriously believe that any campaign can have a future without the involvement of its membership? To state the question bluntly, what will they do if,

for example, the Socialist Workers Party decides to move on to pastures new, thus depriving them of large numbers of unquestioning activists? It will not be possible to create a large, dynamic, campaigning organisation without democracy.

But the question of democracy is inseparable from the kind of organisation the organisers of TTG want it to be. At the moment it sees its primary purpose as that of building a movement which will switch the debate on Ireland from *whether* or not Britain should withdraw, to how and when the withdrawal should take place. Unfortunately, too much of the debate which took place at the show was about the shape of Ireland after British withdrawal, because some on the left in Britain forget that they do not have the right to impose their schemas.

That is not simply a consequence of Britain's imperialist history, it is also a result of the parameters that TTG has set itself. If TTG wants both to remain in existence and a credible part of the withdrawal movement, it must begin to clearly distinguish between its supporters who are committed to British withdrawal and those, mainly in the labour movement bureaucracy whom it wishes to persuade. This would best be achieved by clarifying its political basis as being support for the two demands of British withdrawal and Irish self determination.

It must also abandon the megalomaniac pretensions of some of its leaders to hegemonise the withdrawal movement. This is sectarian and disruptive. Experience, most recently the rally with Bernadette McAliskey in London, shows that all the elements of the withdrawal movement are able to work around common events. This unity in action shows the real way forward to building a mass campaign for withdrawal, in which the orientations of the various trends complement each other and will bring tens of thousands of people onto the streets of Britain.

If, after the August 12 march in London, the strengths of TTG and the Year of Action can be brought together in this way, there is real potential for a new growth in the movement for British withdrawal and Irish self determination.

Liam Mac Vaid

1979-1989: ten years of struggle

Nicaragua under the Sandinistas

Marking the tenth anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution, Will McMahon looks at strengths and weaknesses of what has been achieved.

The political landscape of the 1980s has been fashioned by US imperialism attempting to roll back the gains made by the workers and peasants since 1945. In Asia, Africa, Latin and Central America this has often taken the form of proxy wars fought by counter-revolutionary groups financed by US imperialism. At the eye of this storm has been the Sandinista revolution.

It is ten years since the Frente Sandinista Liberacion Nacional (FSLN) destroyed the Somoza dictatorship. They replaced it with a popular regime that was anti-imperialist and claimed to be intent on building a new, socialist country. Any discussion of the nature of the revolution must begin by recognising that the achievements of the Frente have been wide ranging and significant.



Will McMahon

We must also recognise that the fight for national self-determination is still a living process in Nicaragua. It is essential that internationalists defend that revolution and the interests of the workers, peasantry and oppressed within it. This implies unconditional solidarity with the workers and peasants in all of Central America.

However, unconditional solidarity does not imply a straightjacket being placed on the critical faculties of internationalists. Neither does it imply that the leadership of the revolution should be regarded as the equivalent of its mass base or that it is above criticism. One of the key lessons of the counter-revolution in Grenada is that there must be open and honest discussion of the problems that a revolution faces. It is pointless whispering in corners when the labour movement needs collectively to understand what is occurring and why.

Internal reforms, external war

The Sandinista government has faced problems qualitatively greater than those confronted by the Cuban leadership and even perhaps the Bolsheviks. Yet despite geographical vulnerability and the absence of a politically experienced urban proletariat the revolution in its first phase managed to deliver substantial increases in living standards to the poorest in

Nicaragua. Health, education and land redistribution programmes gave the oppressed a quality of life denied to the majority of people in Latin and Central America. These advances were a tremendous step forward for the whole of the continent and in simple humanitarian terms allowed Nicaraguans to stand up with dignity and begin to shape their own destinies.

Over the long term the aim was to enable the country to transform the slogan of national self-determination into a reality. Programmes were developed to encourage the self-organisation of the workers and peasantry. This model of 'participatory democracy' is at the core of the Sandinista strategy. Within this participatory democracy the forces needed for the liberation of women and progress towards autonomy for the Atlantic Coast were set in motion.

Praised and utilised by socialists worldwide as evidence of what a regime defending the interests of the majority could achieve, these reforms became the threat of a good example to the Latin American bourgeoisie and in particular the Central American oligarchies and US multinationals. Faced with such a challenge to their domination, a challenge that was not based on a one-party state but offered

another version of democratic plurality, the US and its allies moved to destabilise the Nicaraguan regime. They launched a counter-revolutionary war.

Cost of the contra war

The achievements of the Nicaraguan workers and peasants can be measured by the ferocity of the contra war launched against them. It is important to recount the cost of the war and the implications for the developmentalist strategy of the Sandinistas as well as the quality of life of the average Nicaraguan. The total cost is estimated to be over \$3 billion, or over 15 years' export earnings. As in all revolutions, the best cadres headed for the front, directly to confront the counter-revolution. This denied the political and state structures many of the most able organisers. Moreover, the costs of the war led to a dramatic scaling down of the education, health and other welfare programmes, formerly the centrepiece of the popular revolution.

The more recent costs for the poor have included massive price rises, deregulation of the grain markets and the sacking of over half of the state employees. Widespread and generalised poverty has reappeared on the streets of Managua, Leon and other major cities.

Whither Nicaragua?

So after a decade of war and revolution how can we characterise the Nicaraguan revolution and what are its prospects? These two questions are, of course, intertwined.

Some argue that in 1979 the FSLN used armed power to overthrow the Somoza regime, definitively smashed the old state machine, and in its place constructed one that was serving the interests of the workers and peasantry. Concessions to the bourgeoisie, it is argued, were merely a long term tactical manoeuvre that would lead to the eventual elimination of the capitalist class. In addition, the petit bourgeois economy would be surrounded by the structures and controls of the popular planned socialist economy.

This whole argument was constructed on the basis of an acceptance of the Sandinista ideology as, in some form, proletarian, and the belief that the FSLN was a revolutionary socialist party with a clear strategy for the transition to socialism. Whether this is in fact the case is debatable. This can be discussed at

two crucial levels; the economy and socialist democracy.

The mixed economy and national development

The economic strategy of the FSLN has been one of pluralism based on a mixed economy: this is underlined by the protection of the rights of private producers, which are enshrined in section six of the constitution. The long-term nature of the mixed economy project has been commented on by President Ortega. In a recent interview with *Time* magazine he said, 'We are convinced our model should not be the countries of Eastern Europe or Cuba ... the proper example for Nicaragua would be the Scandinavian countries'.

Yet, despite the economic concessions made to the large and medium-size bourgeoisie, the economy is still facing economic disaster. Enormous spending cuts have been carried out by the FSLN against its own social base and it is making more concessions to the capitalist ranchers. In the first six months of this year ranchers have been allowed to open up direct export lines for cattle, given preferential interest rates on loans and reassured that there will be no more confiscations of large scale landholdings. The aim, according to the Sandinista government, is to make cattle ranching the axis of the country's economic recovery.

This is essentially the same scheme that has already been attempted and failed with the cotton bourgeoisie. The whole project is designed to finance development through the expansion of the export sector. If it was clear that the economy was a socialist economy, then there could be a certain merit to this scheme, although it would be vulnerable to fluctuations in the world market. However, within the Frente's strategic mixed economy perspective, the big bourgeoisie in key export sectors have become untouchable economically, since it is imperative that the export sector is allowed to accumulate undisturbed.

Preferential economic measures for the bourgeoisie move any surplus that might exist from the poor to the rich. The 'logic of the majority' is not served by reinforcing the confidence of the bourgeoisie in their economic power while introducing austerity measures which have the effect of demobilising the workers and poor peasantry. The evidence seems to clearly indicate that the mixed economy does not work. Rather, it is the source of crisis after crisis for the economy. Its dynamic is a drift to the right in economic policy. The only way to prevent this is to break the economic and political power of the landholders and large bourgeoisie - once and for all.

Elections, socialist democracy and workers' power

The spending cuts against the workers and peasantry and the economic reactivation

programme do not in themselves give a definitive characterisation of the Sandinista regime. Any socialist state under attack from imperialism would have to cut social expenditure. Merely the mobilisation of productive labour into defence activities takes resources away from the social sector. Encouraging the bourgeoisie to produce can be the best way to create the rope with which to hang them. However, the key question is in what structural political context is this taking place?

Early on in the revolution many analysts became convinced that the role of the mass organisations and local Sandinista Defence Committees (CDSs) was to lay the basis for the foundation of a genuine mass based socialist democracy. The mass organisations played a key role in the Council of State which provided a direct link between the masses and the decision making process. It seemed to be the embryo of a new socialist democracy. The elections of 1984 changed this situation qualitatively.

Role of the mass organisations

These elections had a two-fold political purpose. First, they were used to strengthen the legitimacy of the leadership role of the FSLN. Second, they were a political manoeuvre to outflank US imperialism in the region and to assert the national sovereignty of the revolution. Many commentators on the left saw it as a living example of revolutionary democracy. A more sober analysis of what occurred indicates that in place of the legitimacy of the mass organisations there is now a five-yearly electoral system. This is closer to a liberal democratic model than a socialist democracy.

This problem is added to when the role of the mass organisations is considered. As Luis Serra, a well known sociologist resident in Managua argues (2) 'There are many state authorities in which these organisations participate in working out policy and projects concerning the sectors they represent. Nonetheless, such participation is generally only of a consultative nature, and they are in a minority with respect to the government's delegates'. The danger of the subordination of the mass organisations to the FSLN is clear.

The CDSs, as James Dunkerley points out (3), are bodies that do not have powers beyond being the eyes and ears of the revolution. It is true that they operate as a barometer of mass feeling for the Frente but this again is representation on the basis of consultation rather than the power to determine and define policy.

The decision-making and legislative processes are carried out in the national assembly which is a parliamentary body. As Mandel argues (5), such a parliamentary body is not in itself a problem if this organ does not supercede the power of soviet-type bodies and the economic decision-making process is tied to workplaces. But in Nicaragua there are no soviet-type bodies and there is very little

workers' control. Such a model of democracy is a large obstacle to the socialist transition.

Second assembly?

Given the enormous problems that the Frente are having with the economy the lack of direct organs of workers' and peasants' democracy is a threat to the revolution and its democratic gains. If those who made the revolution have to suffer because of the contra war then it is crucial that the democracy on offer allows them to take that decision. Otherwise, the party simply takes the decision for them. To avoid a generalisation of this problem a regeneration of the CDSs is required. Investing more power in them and creating a second parallel assembly based on council type elections from workplace, co-operative and CDS would balance the purely representational nature of the National Assembly. It would place the economic decision making process in the hands of those who produce the surplus value and allow them to distribute it throughout the economy in their interests.

Is the FSLN marxist?

If the dynamic of the economy is questionable, and the nature of the democracy quite clearly not socialist but 'participatory' then the last defence of the transition lies in its leadership and the state formation that it has created. If it can be shown that the Frente leadership has a coherent marxist majority that is merely being pragmatic in the face of a difficult situation and that the state machine it rests on is a workers' state, then it could be argued that the revolution is secured but that the strategy being followed endangers it.

What kind of ideology does the Frente have? The answer is not as simple as the question. The Frente is a complex combination of marxist, nationalist, social democratic, revolutionary and reformist christian thought encapsulated in the term Sandinistaism. The number of traditions within the FSLN are of crucial importance in the decision making process at a leadership level. We are not witnessing, as Henri Weber originally suggested (5), a marxist vanguard-within-a vanguard leading less coherent layers to a socialist transformation under the cover of the term Sandinistaism. To believe otherwise would be to ignore the economic, democratic and state / constitutional developments discussed above.

So which project has the majority support within the leadership of the FSLN and what are the consequences for the revolution? Evidence for an assessment is very difficult to come by. But given the dynamic of the past period it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the difficulties of war and the emphasis on the export-led growth strategy have led to stress of the question of national unity and an attempt to place national development above any particular class logic. This assessment is reinforced by the new international climate in which the FSLN is operating. Gorbachev's project of a peaceful co-existence for the

1990s is a clear indication that the CPSU is not prepared to underwrite the Nicaraguan revolution.

Thus the contra war, the decline in mass mobilisations, the mixed economy strategy, the international climate and the notion of national development have all been key factors in pushing the balance of forces in the FSLN's leadership away from a radical transition. This is, in effect, a long term strategic retreat from the transition to socialism.

Is Nicaragua a workers' state?

To sustain itself a workers' state needs a socialist economy and democracy to ensure its own reproduction. Although the Sandinistas can be said to have definitively smashed Somoza's bourgeois state machine in 1979, it is clear that its replacement is not of a socialist character. Rather, it is of a contradictory type that has reflected the different ideological sources within Sandinista thought and practice.

For a decade a spectrum from the patriotic bourgeoisie via street trader to poor peasant and proletarian has been held in balance by the nationalist core of the anti-imperialist revolution through a state machine that it is the structural embodiment of a workers' and farmers' government. The real problem with this outcome from a marxist perspective is that there are neither the structures of socialist democracy to challenge the course of the Frente leadership nor the political space to do so in civil society, given the dominant role of the FSLN in the revolutionary war. This indicates that the workers' and farmers' government and the state created by the massive socio-economic crisis in Nicaragua in the 1970s are more likely to lead to the final creation of a Mexican or Algerian (ie non-socialist) outcome than a socialist transition, given the present dynamic of the Frente leadership. This does not indicate that such an outcome is inevitable – just the most likely scenario.

Now that the war is over, and the focus appears to be shifting to the rising revolutionary struggle in El Salvador, it is possible that the marxist wing within the FSLN could begin again to win the arguments over strategy. A shift to the left could result, and a positive resolution of the transition period might occur. However, this option will need a dynamic intervention from the marxist wing to pull the situation around through the mobilisation of the most advanced layers on the basis of a programme for a transition to socialism.

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Workers hold key to the question of Hong Kong and Macao

Extract from text adopted by the 5th National Congress of the Revolutionary Communist Party of China.

Chinese Trotskyists have since 1948 advocated that the sovereignty of both Hong Kong and Macao be recovered from imperialism. However, the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) still has the same conciliationist policy now as it did when the New China was created, and continues to submit to

treaties signed between the Qing government, Britain and Portugal.

The Deng faction continues this policy, and only after the lease treaty expires on June 30th 1997 will it 'recover' Hong Kong. Nevertheless, the act of taking back the sovereignty of Hong Kong should still be supported.

Having failed to retain control of Hong Kong, British imperialism has hypocritically posed as the defender of the rights of those living in the colony and continues to exploit the fear and discontent of the Hong Kong people towards the CCP in order to defend the interests of British, foreign and local capitalists.

During negotiations between the British and Chinese governments on the future of Hong Kong, absolute secrecy has been maintained over the contents of the deals being struck. This has deprived Chinese people and in particular, of course, those living in Hong Kong, of their right to know, speak out, intervene and decide. This in itself gives a good impression of the way in which the CCP is likely to continue to extend its influence over the people of Hong Kong.

At the moment, the Chinese and British governments are investigating models of joint rule for Hong Kong – joint rule by the Beijing bureaucrats and Hong Kong rich. The Chinese-British Joint Declaration states

clearly that the people of Hong Kong will enjoy a high degree of the right to self rule, administrative control and legislation after 1997. But it also states that the Hong Kong Basic Law must be defined by Beijing in accordance with the contents of the Joint Agreement. The Basic Law Drafting Committee that the CCP appointed and the Consultative Committee that it indirectly appointed enable it totally to control the drawing up of the Basic Law.

The sovereignty of Hong Kong belongs to China, meaning that it belongs to all the people of China. The people of Hong Kong are a part of China. However, Hong Kong, for historical

and economic reasons, has been separated from the rest of China. As the people of these two places have not had the opportunity to democratically merge their different systems, Hong Kong should be ruled democratically by the people of Hong Kong. It should be stressed that this demand is raised in specific historical circumstances and does not imply that Hong Kong will permanently hold this special position.



Fighting for the return of the sovereignty of Hong Kong to China and demanding that Hong Kong itself is democratically self managed, means to resist the bureaucratic rule of the CCP. The people of Hong Kong must decide for themselves which social and economic system they want in Hong Kong.

The CCP's policy of 'one country, two systems' means that after recovering Hong Kong, the capitalist system there will remain in place for 50 years. This policy not only deprives the people of Hong Kong of their right to decide what system they want but also denies the working class any possibility of struggling to overthrow capitalism. This is a fundamental betrayal of the basics of marxism.

In addition, if Hong Kong continues with a capitalist system, its higher productivity and links to international capitalism will act as a beach-head for world capitalist expansion into China. The contradictions between the capitalist economy in Hong Kong and mainland China will sharpen day by day. Thus, the

'two systems' will become a forceful element in the restoration of capitalism in China. If there is no intervention from the masses, the 'two systems' will conflict and struggle against each other with one of two possible results. Either the CCP changes its policy, strikes at the bourgeois forces and overthrows the capitalist system or, alternatively, China goes through capitalist restoration.

In our opinion, to realise the unification of China, for Hong Kong to be integrated into China, for capitalism to be overthrown in Hong Kong, bureaucratic rule in China must be overthrown. Socialist democracy must be established in China in conjunction with a single system of state property. Only the mobilisation of the Chinese and Hong Kong masses can achieve this.

In Hong Kong, these mobilisations will begin around struggles over living conditions and democratic rights. The central demand at the moment should be for a Hong Kong People's Congress with full powers, constituted by a general election to replace the colonial regime. The Hong Kong People's Congress so constituted should draw up the Basic Law.

The Hong Kong working class must be the main force behind this struggle and lead the other toiling layers. As the wave of class struggle rises revolutionaries would then raise the demand of a Congress of the toiling masses to replace the Hong Kong People's Congress so as to meet the new objective requirements at that time and push the struggle to a higher plane.

The higher the level of struggle in Hong Kong, the more possible it becomes to encourage the people on mainland China to struggle and assist the people of Hong Kong to gain their rights. The democratic future of Hong Kong is tightly linked to the democratic future of their fellow Chinese on the mainland.

The question of Macao is, in its essentials, the same as Hong Kong. The Chinese and Portuguese governments have agreed to return Macao to China and end Portuguese rule of Macao on December 20th 1999. As with Hong Kong, the Chinese authorities appointed their officials and supporters to draw up the Basic Law for Macao to ensure its strict control.

The aim of the people of Macao should be to struggle for democratic self rule. In reality, this means struggling to constitute a Macao People's Congress through universal suffrage. This could discuss and adopt a Basic Law for the Macao Special Zone which in turn would be presented to the National People's Congress as a record to guarantee the people of Macao full democratic rights. From today on, the people of Macao must unite to take initiatives, participate in and decide their future. The struggle of the people of Macao must also link up with the struggles in Hong Kong and mainland, China in order that all Chinese people are reunited through struggle.

(The original text is in Chinese. This is an edited form of the translation)

The SWP and women's liberation

Facts Tony Cliff cannot handle

The policies and theoretical analysis by the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) on the issue of women's liberation were discussed in a feature article by Rebecca Fleming in *Socialist Outlook* No.14. Here VALERIE COULTAS develops the discussion - which will also be open for additional contributions.

I agreed with many of the points made in Rebecca Fleming's article on the SWP and women, but there were some points with which I cannot fully agree.

It's true that the history the SWP presents of marxism and feminism is a selective history-- but Rebecca doesn't specify *where* it is selective. This is an important omission, because debates among marxists in the past can help us clarify issues today.

SWP leader Tony Cliff always places the stress on the attitude Clara Zetkin and Alexandra Kollantai took towards the bourgeois women's movement before the victory of the Russian revolution, where marxists advocated building a communist women's movement. He refuses to acknowledge that marxists (Lenin included) gave any weight in their analysis and tactics to the specific oppression of *all* women, despite the fact that this oppression takes different forms among different classes. This helps Cliff to leave out of his analysis the more sophisticated tactics developed by the Third (Communist) International after the defeat of the German revolution in 1919; he makes no reference to the debates on the united front and the women's movement, where Lenin and Zetkin discussed how marxists should try and work with suffrage organisations to pursue the fight for women's rights.

This is where we disagree with Cliff - over how to use the united front to build the

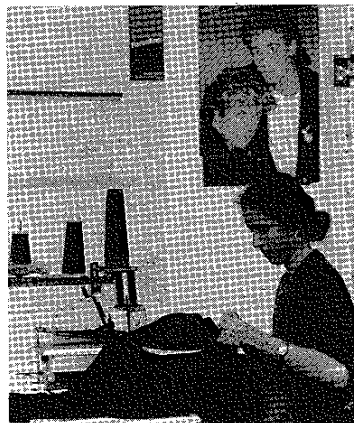
women's movement- not on whether marxist women should prioritise the needs and demands of working class women within that movement (revolutionary women have always done this).

This point is important for today because Cliff suggests that marxist and socialist women sympathetic to feminism (inside and outside the SWP!) are arguing for a cross class women's movement. This has never been our position. We have always argued for an *autonomous* women's movement, a movement governed or led by women, *based on the needs of the working class as a whole*.

Marxist women are not for autonomy in the abstract - that would be separatism: we advocate self-organisation to allow women to organise against their oppression. We argue that the best route to securing women's liberation is through an alliance with the workers' movement, because of the revolutionary role of the working class. We argue that the self-activity of women on issues of abortion, sexuality and equal rights aids the working class and disorganises the ruling class. The alliance with the workers' movement must be based on a recognition of the specific oppression of women in all spheres of life.

Now to touch on the issue of 'material interests'. This debate is a very old one among marxists, revived in a new

form among modern feminists. It has been debated in nearly all revolutionary organisations that have had an active engagement with feminism. Lise Vogel (*Marxism and the Oppression of Women*) argues that there has always been a theoretical confusion in the marxist movement over the exact nature of women's oppression. She suggests that a 'dual systems' analysis (i.e. based on systems of patriarchy as well as class society) and explanation of women's subordination has often co-existed with an analysis more directly related to the social relations of production - for example in the accounts given by Engels and Bebel for the origins of women's



The Comintern recognised women's specific oppression

for the origins of women's oppression.

There has thus been an ongoing debate about how far we can talk of a separate system of patriarchy or male power, operating autonomously from class relations. But those marxists who defend some kind of dual systems analysis, and therefore stress that working class men have a material interest in the oppression of women, have some pretty tricky questions to answer, as Rebecca's article showed us.

If working class men have a short-term material interest which differs from their long-term interest, which interest is dominant at any one time? What determines what is their dominant interest? In what sense is the term 'material interest' being used? For marxists, material interest means class interest. What purpose does it serve for marxists to structure their analysis around individual relations in this case, rather than placing individual relations in the context of social relations, structures and power relations in class and capitalist society, as we do in every other case?

While men do have more status and power in society and can oppress women in a myriad of ways surely the marxist answer to this is to urge women to organise collectively to confront that sexism? We also point out that structures, like the patriarchal family, reproduce these social relationships on a daily and generational basis, and working class men have every reason to support a total transformation in these relations. The power that working class men are allowed to exercise over women and children in the family does not in fact allow even men to lead full and free lives sexually, emotionally or materially.

Working class men appear to benefit from exercising sexual domination over women but domination is not real power. As women have gained more freedom, they have begun to show - through the divorce statistics - that they can resist aspects of this domination. It is the *capitalist class* that benefits materially from male domination, not working class men or women, even though men are the agents of domination.

Which class benefits from an analysis that focuses on the conflicts between working class men and women, as opposed to that which unites them? When we argue in trade unions that working class men must support women's abortion rights, and lesbian and gay rights because it is in their interests to do so, do we really mean it? Should we be saying



Wayne Eginton

Petitioning as women fight for their NHS

'This resolution isn't in your short-term interests but...?'

We know that a lot of men will not change until social conditions, and particularly the family, are changed, but we argue that the battle for women's liberation must start *now* and that the most advanced workers will fight on behalf of the specially oppressed.

Traditionally, Lise Vogel points out, the reformist wing of the workers' movement leant towards the 'dual systems' analysis, and the revolutionaries defended the position that women's oppression was rooted in capitalism and class society. Far from the latter position meaning that you refuse to confront issues like rape, pornography, and female sexuality, it means that you confront those issues from a standpoint that analyses gender oppression in the context of class society - which means you support women organising but you refute racist, 'law-and-order', or 'lifestylist' solutions.

Our experience in the class struggle tells us a lot about the relevance of these debates. When the mining communities went into battle with the Tory government, and men no longer had to go down the pits, the politically active miners' wives, backed up by the support groups, were able to challenge the backward attitudes of their husbands. Men did begin to perceive their class interest lay with women's liberation.

This was a very exciting experience because some of the miners began to see that what they had seen as their privileges - to spend their leisure time away from their wives and kids, to expect their wives to ser-

vice them because of shift work - were not as advantageous as shared political and domestic involvement turned out to be. However retreats on this front were inevitable as soon as the men went back to work.

Tony Cliff's history of the women's movement is very one-sided. He fails to project a clear record of the debates that took place between radical and socialist feminists over the last two decades in Britain and America. He ignores the positive features of feminism and the gains that women (including working class women) have made in society, the trade unions, political parties and the far left as a result of self-organisation. His rigorous critique of the women's movement is never applied to the SWP, whose record on women's rights has been inconsistent, opportunist and crude (busloads of SWP men shouting women down at Greenham!) as Rebecca explains.

In replying to Cliff it is correct to take the side of the downtrodden, particularly when the movements he attacks are under seige from the right. But socialist women should not fall into the trap he sets and allow anger at his doctrinaire version of marxism to cloud our understanding of the revolutionary potential of the working class, nor forget that socialist women have waged many a battle with radical feminists about the agenda for the women's movement. I hope *Socialist Outlook* devotes more space to this debate in future issues because it is a very rich one and touches on many questions of concern to marxists and feminists.

A balance sheet on the women's liberation movement

The past is before us; feminism in action since the 1960s

by Sheila Rowbotham, published Pandora Press, £1.5

Reviewed by Judith Arkwright

'While the future is behind us and prophesy most perilous, the past really is before us, so the charting of experience can bring a sense of direction. The process of a movement in transforming itself can link past and future without attempting to impose the past upon the future.'

In these words Sheila Rowbotham attempts to explain what she had set out to do in her history of the Women's Liberation Movement. With its detailed reference to source material including leaflets and documents of the time, this is certainly the most comprehensive history of the movement and a must for all feminists.

Every woman who participated in the movement of the 1970s has her own story to tell, and Rowbotham makes no apologies for the fact that 'how the past is seen depends very much on who is looking'.

Rowbotham is a socialist feminist and the book clearly holds the line against those feminists who, with the advent of the Tory dark ages, began to waver in their commitment to those principles. In particular she takes up Bea Campbell's notion that women have no interest in making alliances with male trade unionists, saying that such arguments are: 'part of a shift among feminists away from theory based on social relationships within capitalism and towards an emphasis on male workers' responsibility for female subordination at work.'

She develops this into an argument against theories of patriarchy which underlie this. According to her the use of this word 'raised more problems than

it solved. The word suggests that there are two separate systems divided along male/female lines, so that 'patriarchy' oppresses women and capitalism oppresses male workers.'

Apart from this defence of some of the basic precepts of socialist feminism, the book is thought-provoking in the balance sheets it makes of various campaigns and ideas in the women's movement.

For Rowbotham the breakthrough made by the modern Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) was the fact that it brought the personal experiences of women, especially within the family, into the politi-

We fight for the *choice* and thus hope to unite women's various *personal* experiences and feelings in a *political* movement.

cal arena and thus made them the subject of struggle. This is especially apparent when you compare this movement to previous movements of women (for example the suffragettes). But the anti-capitalist dynamic of the movement that flowed from this was also important. The lack of any bureaucracy or any bourgeois feminist layer meant that having made the personal political, the women's movement was prepared to go into confrontation with the establishment on a whole spectrum of issues.

However there are some problems in the way in which Rowbotham sees this link between personal and political which lead to mistaken assessments. Having established that it is capitalist society that seeks to draw an iron curtain between production and reproduction, personal life and public life, she argues that it is difficult to accommodate the tremendous differences in individuals personal lives and experiences within one movement. The suggestion is that it was this difficulty which split the movement. She wonders, for instance, whether the women's movement became tyrannical to heterosexual

women, whether we rather harshly implied that women who were housewives entered 'voluntary slavery', or whether we failed to understand why women go in for things like the Miss World contest.

This is the wrong way to pose the problem. There may have been a certain overzealousness and sometimes this was a result of *political* theory, such as political lesbians considering heterosexual women less feminist. But such differences were political and not simply based on differences in personal lifestyles.

Where such attitudes were to do with overzealousness or

crudeness of political analysis they were not all negative but were part of the energy and radical character of the movement. Only from the standpoint of Thatchers Britain do they seem a little extreme.

For example Rowbotham seems doubtful about the value of the Miss World protests. She argues that that they may have alienated some women and come across as rather elitist. On the contrary, I would argue that such boldness and confidence was the strength of our movement because of the challenge to the status quo.

These actions were very much the product of a young and optimistic movement and as the movement becomes broader it has to reflect the needs and demands of those within it. The discovery that the personal is political should not divide us as women; the whole point is to find political solutions to personal issues and to unite in taking action.

In that sense there are problems with many aspects of Rowbotham's view of the debate within the National Abortion Campaign (NAC). She argues that women's personal experien-

ces in relation to abortion bore a direct relation to their political stance on it and that the weakness of the campaign was that it did not take account of this. Whilst it may be true that NAC did not spend enough time discussing women's experiences, and it is definitely true that we did not take on board the demands of Black women sufficiently (in common with the many other campaigns of the women's movement), it is not true that 'there were many also feminists who simply opposed abortion on principle'.

In fact the reverse is true. Because of NAC's campaigning, abortion became a dividing line between feminists and anti-feminists, and most of the arguments used against abortion were also anti-feminist. Today, with the development of a broader definition of feminism, some women who call themselves feminist may be anti-abortion, but this is not the dominant trend and has no relevance to the debates in NAC. This is where here is a difference between the personal and the political. Many women may have many doubts about abortion for themselves and many women may decide not to have one. We fight for the *choice* and thus hope to unite women's various *personal* experiences and feelings in a *political* movement.

In relation to childcare, Rowbotham is unhappy about the demand of the women's movement for free 24 hour childcare. Perhaps for some it does rather conjure up a 'Brave New World' type image, and it is true that sections of the movement did not really understand the needs of mothers because it did not relate to their personal experience. But as a propaganda demand is it totally irrelevant? Rowbotham's attempts to challenge the relevance of such a demand are actually rather petty. She says 'Did we really imagine under-fives being delivered at ten and collected at six when women came off

shifts? Did we want 24-hour schools? What about breastfeeding? And what, indeed about the children?'

Again the question revolves around the issue of choice. Under capitalism, everyone, regardless of personal preference, is forced into a certain pattern of child rearing which by and large requires the subordination of women. If proper facilities are on call, then every woman can make a real choice as to what she wants to do and when.

Rowbotham correctly points out that in order to remain as 'living politics', feminism must extend its scope. There were many discussions within the old movement about the need to relate to broader layers of women, and to a large extent the ideas of the movement have spread far and wide. There is a need to guard against a doctrinaire feminism and take on board new demands, welcoming the broadening of the movement rather than mistrusting it.

However this has to be done without allowing the class politics of the movement to alter; battle lines must be clearly drawn. Feminism must not lose its radicalism but extend it to embrace new issues and new experiences. Rowbotham seems to emphasise the prefigurative aspects of the movement as reflecting the true unity of personal and political, and downplays the campaigning side of the movement because it seems to threaten that unity.

A history of the WLM is long overdue and it seems fitting and hopeful that it has been written by a woman determined to stand by the principles of socialist feminism and 'keep their head when all around are losing theirs'. It is to be hoped that socialist feminists will also take the lead in renewing and reshaping the broadest possible movement in the future.



True blue murder

Paris By Night

A film by David Hare

Review by David Grant

She is an ambitious Tory MEP. Beautiful, quick-witted and tough, she is Clare Paige, darling of the ideological hard-right. But she is also a politician with a murky past. It catches up with her at a Conference in Paris. An ex-business partner turns up. He seems intent on exploiting her meteoric rise by extorting money from her in exchange for his silence. It appears that she and her husband off-loaded large debts on him under dubious circumstances. To survive she must kill.

Promising stuff, you might imagine. Unfortunately, this attempted investigation into the moral and political world of the Thatcherites falls apart as a result of a totally unbelievable plot.

This is not because the main character is asked to carry out actions that any self-respecting neo-liberal would refuse to do. After all, the ex-partner was so weak and venal that he almost had 'Kill Me' etched on his forehead and would have almost certainly died sooner or later of his own account. Anyway, he really should have known better than to tangle with a woman whose lipstick and overcoat were so red as to scream 'Danger' at you from the screen.

And Clare's affair is certainly by no means an unheard of matter

within even the present Cabinet. Indeed, you could speculate that Cecil Parkinson's excess of energy in this regard may yet be harnessed and proposed for privatisation, but what is certain is that it is a matter of public record. And, yes it's true, most of us probably would have drawn the line at screwing with a young lover in Paris while young sonny-boy was undergoing an emergency operation in London, tended only by his drunken father (give us a break!), but then the point is that people like Clare Paige are thoroughly unpleasant and unscrupulous. But then this is also their fascination. Unfortunately, this is not the central fascination of the plot.

Hare decides to invest Clare Paige with an almost schizophrenic longing to uncover a tender, loving side to her personality, a crisis we are presumably to assume is brought on by her shock at committing murder. The tension thus created is intended to be the motor force for her internal collapse, but the whole project just does not work. Paige's reactions to events become ever more improbable to keep the whole structure of the film afloat. Fortunately for Hare, Charlotte Rampling has been cast in the woman-falling-apart role so many times before that she, at least, seems to know what is going on and why. The rest of us are left with our disbelief decidedly un-

suspended.

The central problem is that Paige's own particular brand of right-wing individualism is quite sufficiently full of internal contradiction to provide us with combustible material to fuel her downfall. As it is, events which have a disquietingly external feel keep intervening in order to push her towards her fate. In the end, therefore, you have a rather reactionary message that here is a woman who overstepped the limits and deserved what she got. The film becomes a judgement of Paige's morals rather than her political philosophy.

In fact, if the film had followed its chosen, if flawed, logic in a stricter fashion, Paige would have survived, indeed, come out triumphant. Such people always manage to suppress their moral dilemmas in the name of self-interest and preservation. Of course they *deserve* a nasty end, but here this is wishful thinking rather than a logical outcome.

British film makers, it seems, have yet to explore our ruling classes with the incisive gaze that some Italian and German directors have turned on their respective political establishments. Like British social democracy, all we ever seem to get from British 'thrillers' is the timid, ritualised prodding at safe and rather stale stereotypes. It is high time we demanded more from both.



Maria Barranco as Candela, Antonio Banderas as Carlos, and the telephone plays itself in a scene from the film

Is the 'new man' on the right line?

Women On the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown

A film directed by Pedro Almodovar

Review By Alex Anderson

Women On the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown can be seen simply as the whimsical speculation of a male director about what happens to women when they wait for the phone call from the man of their dreams. The phone call that will draw them back from the verge, away from ambivalence and into the arms of their hero. We as an audience can be grateful that the phone call never comes, and the film adds up to a lot more than that.

Women On the Verge opens with our main woman, Pepa, deeply submerged in a drug-induced sleep, oblivious to the ticking alarm clocks and the ringing telephone. Her unfaithful lover, Ivan, slips through her fingers, leaving a dulcet-toned message on her answering machine. She is late for a voice recording session where she has to dub Spanish dialogue onto a Joan Crawford melodrama. It is the pre-recorded voice of Ivan whom she must

play opposite. One gets the feeling that direct communication is going to be difficult in this film.

The film catapults itself through a plot that is both farcical and bizarre. It involves mistaken identities, a long lost son, Shi'ite terrorists, numerous taxi rides with a wonderfully eccentric taxi driver and countless changes of clothes. The answering machine has a starring role.

The phone call doesn't come so in a fit of feminine pique the phone goes out of the window. The phone must be repaired to be ready for the expected call, and in walks Carlos, the long lost son of the unfaithful lover, who as a boy/man is genetically equipped to repair the telephone.

Meanwhile, a waif-like friend of Pepa's has taken refuge in Pepa's flat as she fears the police are after her for harbouring Shi'ite terrorists. It is decided that Pepa must go to a feminist lawyer to plead her friend's case.

Up to now we can see the film as a 'new man's' comic celebration of women's true grit; their passion and resilience when confronted with the failings of men, but with the introduction of the feminist lawyer, this 'new man's' politics begin to reveal

themselves. The feminist lawyer has no sympathy with a woman who has got herself into such a plight because of her emotions. The woman is a fool, and must go to gaol for it. The meeting ends with Pepa slapping the feminist, and, lo and behold, she finds she feels much better for having done so. Having rejected feminism, she feels refreshed and unencumbered, ready to re-enter the internecine battle with men. Give me a break.

It is here that we come to the heart of the film's message. It is the arch-woman that is being celebrated here, the feminine caricature. The woman who because of her trusting and loving nature, (as played by Pepa's friend, Candela), suffers at the hands of men. Yet it all ends happily as this collection of feminine caricatures, armed with a jug full of lethal gazpacho, overcome their pain and disappointment to become stronger, wiser women, ready to love again.

One of the interesting variations on this theme is Carlos' mother. Left by Ivan when Carlos was a baby, she has spent the greater part of the intervening twenty years in a loony bin. To be loony is a desirable state for

her because she claims that 'when you are crazy you have no memory, to be sane you have to remember'.

However, remembering seems to make her crazy. She decides she wants to shoot Ivan and commandeers a motorcycle and driver and careers her way to the airport chased by Pepa in the now familiar taxi. Pepa saves Ivan from his well-deserved fate, while Ivan's wife, having pulled the trigger, seems happy to be carted away to the safety of an asylum. A sensible option, given the circumstances, though she's treated as a big joke by the film maker.

Reactionary as the message may be, the film is about women (up to a point) and in these post-feminist times we must be grateful. As the plot untwists there are some wonderful comic moments and delicious coincidences. I share with the film maker his fascination with feminine accessories; high heels walking across a carpet, lipstick being applied, clothes being taken off and earrings being put on. But as I leave the cinema I can't help but think that I would be a lot happier with these crumbs if a woman had baked the cake.

Shylock's message for today

The Merchant of Venice.

Play by William Shakespeare, produced by Peter Hall with Dustin Hoffman as Shylock

Reviewed by Judith Arkwright

The greatest thing about Shakespeare's plays is their ability to endure through generations

Peter Hall's production of *The Merchant of Venice* at the Phoenix Theatre till September, highlights all the issues that would interest a modern audience: racism, sexism, the heartlessness of a society obsessed with money are all given an airing in this most tragic of all Shakespeare's comedies.

The focal point of this production is the tragedy of Shylock, the Jewish moneylender seeking revenge on the hypocritical and racist Venetian traders with whom he is obliged to deal. The central metaphor of the play is money and the way it dominates

all relationships including relations between Christians and Jews. The interpretation of Shylock given by screen actor Dustin Hoffman, who brings all his pathos mixed with pride to the role, further underlines this theme.

The play was written against a background of mounting and institutionalised racism against the Jewish community. In 1515-16 the Venetian State had decided to confine the entire Jewish community to one area — one of the first ghettos. Jews were not allowed to own land and were caricatured and lambasted for turning to money lending. As Shylock points out the rich traders and landowners of Venice were not above borrowing money to finance their ventures and then promulgating racist propaganda and insults against those who lent them the money.

As in Thatcher's Britain, money dominates every character's fate. Shylock symbolically demands a pound of flesh in payment of his debt from Antonio. Antonio shows his love of his

friend Bassanio by giving him the money he borrowed from Shylock. Portia, being a woman, sees through all this, and remarks ironically to her lover Bassanio when offering to help pay the debt that 'Since you are dear bought I will love you dear'.

One cannot help feeling that in drawing out and emphasising this theme Peter Hall must have had in mind the fate of British theatres under Thatcher, now dependent on private sponsorship, and not all with the ability to attract big name stars like Dustin Hoffman to grace their productions.

Hoffman's Shylock plots his revenge in a quiet, calculating way but he is not portrayed as cruel in demanding his pound of flesh — he is proud in fighting his humiliation at the hands of the racists who spit upon him and torment him.

He is motivated in this, not by money or material gain but by grief at the loss of his daughter who has gone and married one of these yuppies, and by a determination to restore his lost pride. Like all Shakespeare's heroes he

does not win out, and to modern audiences there is a disappointment in not seeing the racists get their just desert. But as with Lear or Hamlet or Macbeth, Shylock's heroism lies in his humanity — his ability to feel deep passions and to struggle to the bitter end.

The passage in which Shylock challenges the racism of Venetian society has all the rhythm and eloquence of a Martin Luther King speech.

In many of Shakespeare's plays, the women are only able to act on their world and show their true abilities when they are dressed as men. Portia, played with great energy by Geraldine James, is on the wrong side against Shylock but she is one of the best of Shakespeare's strong women, combining a sharp wit and intellect with an ability to experience human emotion.

If you can get tickets for this sumptuous production, it's well worth a visit. It is beautiful to look at and intelligently and sensitively interpreted. Return tickets may be available on certain days because of the effects of the rail strike!

SOCIALIST OUTLOOK

LETTERS

Socialist Outlook In duff headlines scandal

I wish to disassociate myself from the heading to my article on South Africa in *Socialist Outlook* 16 — 'Mandela and Moscow join in ANC policy switch'. This is the sort of headline one would expect to see in the tabloid press, not in a serious political journal, and completely distorts what I wrote about Mandela.

Far from ascribing Nelson Mandela a pivotal role in conjunction with the Kremlin, I simply expressed an opinion that 'the pro-negotiation tendency must have been further strengthened by (his) letters to the British Ambassador... (and) Buthelezi'.

This is a far cry from what is implied by the sensationalist headline, and I think my own title 'South Africa — Changing Perspectives' would have been more appropriate.

A small point; paragraph 2 suggests that 90 organisations have been banned in the current state of emergency, when the number is 32. My original referred to 90 organisations banned since Sharpeville in 1960.

Charlie van Gelderen, Cambridge

Long arm of Delors

I fear that if socialists are not to miss new opportunities in the 1990's they will need to move on from defending 'maginot' positions on Europe. The left prides itself on internationalism, but has failed to be in the vanguard of addressing new problems politically. *Socialist Outlook* 15 goes some way towards redressing this by defining what a positive policy for a socialist Europe might look like. However, it is simply untrue to say that all ETUC officials constitute 'treacherous leaderships': we could do without such abstract a-priori thinking in a serious journal.

Later we are told that social democratic reforms are all empty 'facades' because capitalism is still in power. Does that mean that we object to the NHS? The answer is obvious, and likewise for Delors 'social charter'; it is foolish to counterpose reform to revolution (Luxemburg), especially when Thatcher, isolated in Europe and her party split, is digging her own pit to fall into.

Chris Madoc

Short and sharp

It's wonderful that *Socialist Outlook* has finally started to take culture seriously — bringing in someone to review a collection of short stories who 'hates short stories' (Jean Reilly, SO No16).

This is a genuine breakthrough in developing a revolutionary socialist critique of literature and could be followed up by film reviews from someone who hates the cinema or someone writing about television programmes who doesn't have access to a television. I'm sure it would be every bit as successful.

Leaving aside content, there are political considerations about the form of the short story that relate to class, race and gender.

The oral tradition of storytelling, where the narrative is purposefully shortened and the conclusion made particularly incisive, is a direct and dialectical progenitor of the short story.

The time that is available to individuals for reading or writing — not to mention their developed skills relates to that person's socio-economic status.

The short story is not implicitly a revolutionary form of expression. But it can be.

Steve Taylor, Camden

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- Durham NUM.
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- Construction Safety Campaign.
- Hazards 88.
- NALGO Broad Left.
- Socialist Teachers Alliance.
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Which Way for Socialists in the Unions?

Sheffield Poly

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