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For socialist renewal!



For workers' liberty!



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SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

**Fight for
a general
election!**

Put the Tories on the dole!

*Support the Liverpool council workers' strike.
Vote Labour in Walton. Page 2 and centre pages.*

Police plan resistance to elected Labour government

By Tony Brown

Senior police at Scotland Yard greatly fear the election of a Labour government. They have drawn up plans including "non-cooperation" as an option.

A leaked internal Metropolitan Police document outlines the preparations now being made to handle Labour if Kinnock is elected. The paper, circulated to the top 100 police, takes seriously the likelihood of Kinnock beating Major.

Under the heading "How should we prepare for a

possible change of government?", Peter Imbert, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, draws up a balance sheet of those Labour policies the Met agrees with, and those it doesn't think are in the best interests of the police.

The Met agrees with Labour on domestic violence (at least that is what Imbert says), racial attacks and child protection. Otherwise "our [that is the police's] policy may prove to be totally incompatible with anything proposed by the Labour Party".

Their policy? Who makes policy, the police or the government? The police think that they do!

The paper's suggestions on how to make sure the cops get their way range from lobbying for change or compromising with Labour, to a refusal to cooperate with the government.

So much for the facade of an open democracy where the voice of the people as determined at the ballot box determines what policies are pursued, and where the unelected public institutions such as the police, army and courts abide by the decisions of the majority party in the Parliament!

What the police are saying is that they, an unelected, secretive, armed body of men will decide which decisions they approve of and will im-

plement, and which they disapprove of and will change, ignore or sabotage!

The Met have — inadvertently — let us know their attitude. But what of the secret service, MI5, MI6 and Special Branch? They are certainly planning for the contingency of a Labour victory in exactly the same way.

Democracy is fine so long as the status quo is not challenged — even by a Kinnock. They reserve the right to overrule any decision a democratically-elected government takes if they don't like it.

The paper revives memories of the public revelations of spying on Harold Wilson's Labour

government and civil servant plots against it. The leaking comes in the same week as reports show that tens of thousands of illegal phone taps are made. Those responsible are not called to account.

Labour pretends that if elected it won't suffer the same fate as previous Labour governments. It doesn't want to jeopardise its attempts to paint itself as a responsible capitalist government.

The point is this: for the police, courts, army and media no Labour government is ever trustworthy. Their class instincts are much more finely honed than that of Kinnock or Gould or Cunningham.

The lie machine



Those responsible for this Sun front page should be prosecuted for child abuse!



Thatcher is supporting Major on Europe? Like the rope supports a hanged man! Thatcher knows that Major wants to go gently into European unity without publicly defining it. She knows she doesn't, with or without definition. If she takes him by the hand on Europe now, it is by the throat that she'll take him if he bends to pressure from Europe.



Clapped-out old gangsters and movie-brat romance... The traditional British Sunday is still with us, despite the threat from Europe. It is for the tasteful little drawing around long-dead "Jack the Hat" that we show you this page, though!

Yeltsin has no answers

By Gerry Bates

When Gorbachev booted Boris Yeltsin off the Soviet CP Central Committee in 1987, he thought he'd seen the end of him.

But this week Yeltsin won the vote for President of the Russian Republic by a landslide. His victory, like those for Gavril Popov and Anatoly Sobchak as mayors of Moscow and Leningrad, was a big defeat for the Communist Party.

The question is, have the voters just opted for one bureaucrat to replace another. Yeltsin rails against the privileges of the Party bureaucracy and talks in vague terms about democracy and the market, but he has a record of shameless opportunism and a desire for the sort of rapid drive towards a private-profit economy which is already wrecking the lives of millions of workers in

Eastern Europe.

How will Yeltsin deal with the demands of oppressed nationalities who wish to secede from Russia? In Tataria, 50% of the vote went to Mintimer Shaimev, a Tatar nationalist and chair of the Tatar Supreme Soviet.

The conservatives around Prime Minister Pavlov have relaunched their fight against the Gorbachev/Yeltsin pact signed in the days before the May Central Committee meeting.

Pavlov is seeking the restoration to the Council of Ministers of centralised control over the monetary system, and the power to issue decrees binding on all levels of government. The conservatives believe that the economic plan drafted by Gorbachev's adviser Grigory Yavlinsky with US economists will remove control from their hands in return for the aid which Gorbachev hopes to get from the "Group of Seven" conference in London in July.

Support Liverpool council workers' fight for jobs

By Gail Cameron

As we go to press, 29,000 local government workers in Liverpool will be on a one-day strike (on Wednesday 19 June) in protest at redundancy notices issued to 350 of them.

The strike coincides with a special council meeting, called by the left-wing "Liverpool Labour Councillors" group, to discuss an LLC motion for withdrawal of the redundancy notices. Harry Rimmer and Alan Dean, the right-wing leaders of the official Labour Group, are refusing to move on the issue, and in all likelihood the mo-



tion will be defeated.

The GMB and NALGO are threatening to escalate their selective strikes if compulsory redundancies are enforced. From Monday 24 June, 1200 crematorium workers are set

to come out on indefinite strike. NALGO is currently discussing pulling out workers from the finance section and forcing delays on crucial repayments to Swiss and Japanese banks.

Notts jail threat to non-payer

POLL TAX

By Rosey Sibley

Tony Tise of Rushcliffe could be the first person in Nottinghamshire jailed for not paying the poll tax.

As Tony and his partner Denise see it, the Tory council is punishing them for not

being able to afford to pay.

Denise is six months pregnant and finishes work this month. The couple have a mortgage and a loan to pay off. Tony says: "We'll soon have three mouths to feed and only one wage. My priority is simply keeping a roof over our heads".

For this reason he is not paying the poll tax and is willing, if necessary, to go to jail over it. Denise fully supports him in this, saying: "If it's a

crime to be poor, I should be locked up as well."

The council's action in starting committal proceedings against Tony is vindictive in the extreme. They will not be able to force Denise and Tony to produce money they do not have. Further, Tony's employers, Pork Farms, will only allow him 28 days off if he is jailed. Should he be jailed for any longer than this, he could face the sack.

This means, as Tony says, "they'll have even less chance of getting any money out of us."

All the council could hope to achieve would be to frighten others into paying. This is not working, as Tony has received a lot of support from his local community, as well as from local anti-poll tax campaigns and the Notts Federation. Demonstrations, lobbies, public meetings and petitions have been organised to protest against the committal proceedings, ending with a lobby outside the courts on 20 June, the day of the hearing.

The campaign against the committal proceedings has shown local councils that they cannot attempt to jail non-payers without provoking further protests.

Tory retreat boosts non-payment

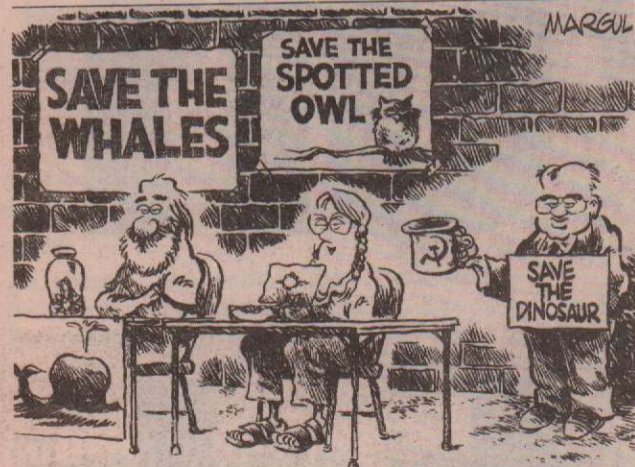
What did they expect? A number of reports from around the country indicate that more people are refusing to pay the poll tax now than did so before the Tories declared they would abolish it.

People faced with vicious bills which will continue at least until 1993 now feel encouraged not to pay. Some will also have felt encouraged by a recent survey which

reckoned that 80 per cent of poll tax bills not paid will never be recovered.

Some who had made standing orders to pay cancelled them when the Tories buckled. In Glasgow, the number of non-payers has gone up by many thousands.

There is still a great deal of working-class anger against the poll tax. But Neil Kinnock is too busy lobbying the Government to pay money to Lloyds investors to have time to think about a Labour campaign to organise the non-payers against the Government.



STUDENTS

By Mark Sandell, (NUS NEC)

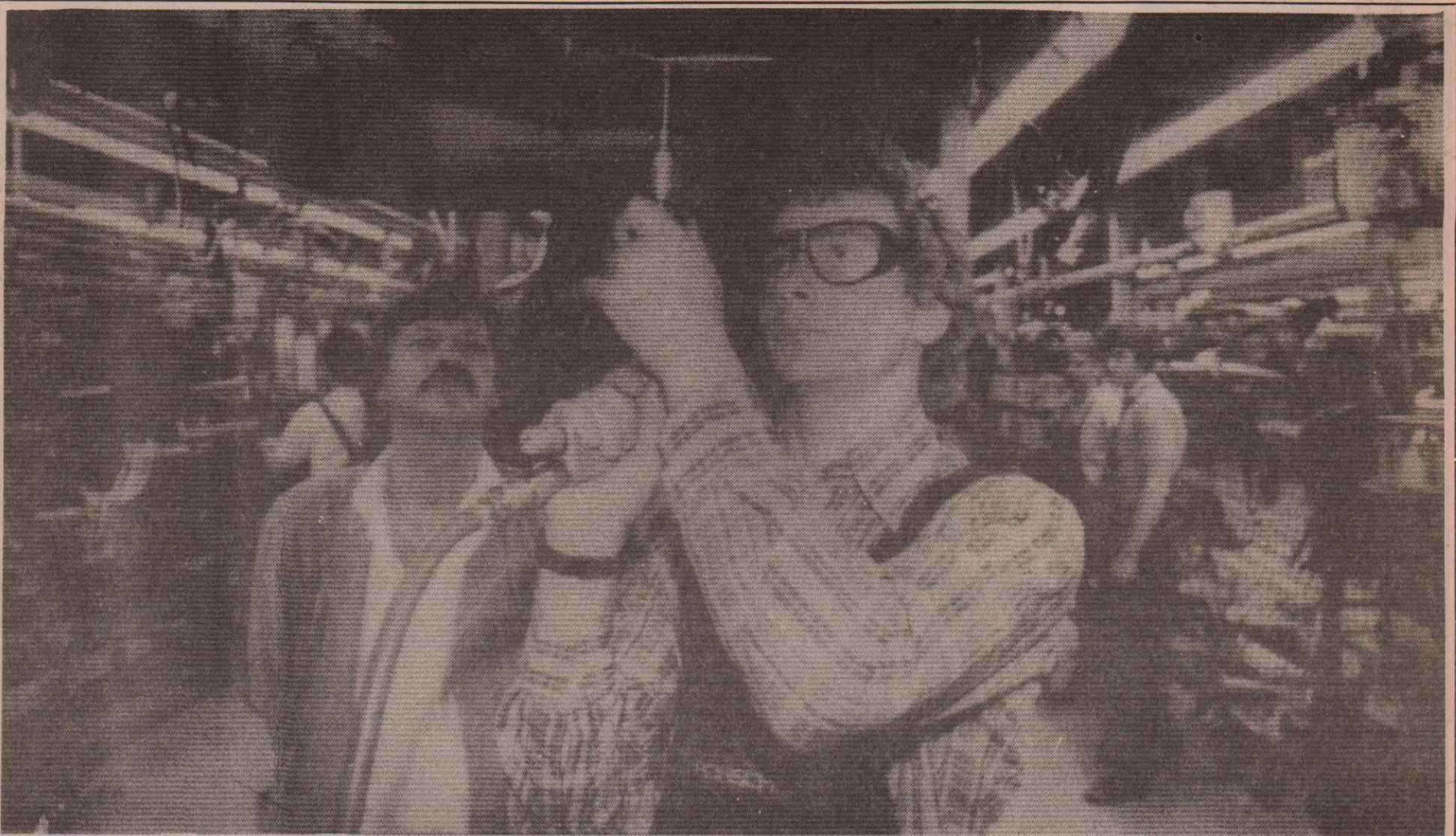
Big course cuts are being threatened at the Ruskin Trade Union College in Oxford.

Under the provisions of the Higher Education White Paper, the government is demanding the abolition of the 2 year diploma course by 1993 and its replacement by a one-year access course.

At a well-attended Student

Union meeting, with around 70 of 140 students attending, the students unanimously voted to oppose any changes to course structures. The Student Union aims to campaign together with the campus trade unions and national trade union organisations (many of whom are involved in running the College) to stop the cuts.

Ruskin Students' Union has called a conference of all adult education colleges to organise opposition to the White Paper which will badly affect this sector of education.



A worker from East Germany starts at a Porsche factory in Stuttgart

Yes, to a united Europe!

A federal United States of Europe is a good idea! That needs to be said clearly and plainly by socialists.

It is not an idea of the right wing. Historically it is one of the great ideas of the left.

We want a socialist United States of Europe. The United States towards which most of Western Europe has been inching slowly for 40 years is a bourgeois United States of Europe. But such a bourgeois union is progress, despite the capitalist waste and chaos that goes with it.

If you want to know why, think of what US and British bombs did to Iraq a few weeks ago and then remember that large areas of Europe were devastated like that during World War 2 (1939-45). Cities like London, Rome, Rotterdam, Hamburg, Berlin, Moscow and countless others were subjected to large-scale bombing then.

The First and Second World Wars were sparked in Europe because the economies of the old nation-states — especially the German — had grown too big for their narrow national territories. Imperialist expansion, and world war to redivide the colonial empires and

spheres of influence, followed.

In the middle of the First World War Marxists such as Leon Trotsky raised the slogan of a United States of Europe.

"We need to strive for the unity of the different national sections of the European working class."

For four decades now the West European capitalist classes have been knitting the old national economies together. The walls of the old nation states remain, but they are now riddled with doors and corridors.

Now from the EC centre comes a proposal for small further steps towards political union. And for the first time what is happening in Western Europe is called by its right name — "federalism", moves towards a federal Europe.

Socialists should welcome such a move! We need to strive for the unity of the different national sections of the European working class. We need to proclaim the need for a socialist United Europe, including the countries of Eastern Europe now sloughing off Stalinism.

Immediately we need to demand an end to the rule in the European Community of unelected bureaucrats, and full powers for a democratically elected European parliament in the European Community now! Not in so many years' time if things go well — now!

The Tory division on this question creates the chance for the left to restore the question of European unity to its proper place on the

political spectrum, as a policy of the left. The left needs to wash itself free of the long disgrace of its opposition to European unity in the name of British "independence".

Britain's "independence" was long ago hollowed out into an empty pretence. Europe is uniting, and Britain is now tied to Europe by economic ties that cannot be broken short of catastrophic economic collapse.

Major and his section of the Tory party would like to move stealthily and "pragmatically" towards federalism, without saying what is happening. They express this as *opposition* to federalism, in the hope that in the run-up to the election they can quieten Mrs Thatcher's Tories, who are against federalism.

The seeming unity of the two Tory camps is a fraud. It may not last long.

The long-standing left-wing opposition to a United Europe has lately been muted. The left needs to

do more than fall silent! It needs to make a sharp break with its recent past on this question.

"We should fight to make advocacy of full European union our cause and the call for real power for the directly elected European Parliament an immediate practical issue."

We should now fight to make *advocacy* of full European union our cause, and the call for real power for the directly elected European Parliament an immediate practical issue of British politics.

Yes to a United States of Europe!

Neil, I'm ashamed to be in your Party

From back page

win a Commons vote on it, if you dared oppose the Tories!

They would then call a general vote of confidence to re-establish their majority. But Labour would have dealt a powerful blow in the campaign for a General Election.

You say you want a General Election, Mr Kinnock — but you are not willing to do anything to bring it nearer.

Mr Kinnock, you and your lousy little clique of soft-handed, sharp-suited public school boys are a disgrace to the Labour Party you lead.

As I say, it makes me unhappy to be in any way associated with you. But no, I am not going to leave the Labour Party.

It is my party, and the party of

people like me, the party of the trade unions, not your party. I will not leave and make the party safe for you and what you stand for.

If you deigned to reply you would no doubt say, "Don't be silly, Mr Markey, of course it's my party". You'd be wrong, Mr Kinnock. It seems to be your party. But that is only the appearance of things, only part of the picture.

Labour is still the trade unions' party. It is the party to which six million trade unionists remain affiliated.

Right now, many workers are willing to tolerate you and your unbelievably shameless belly-crawling act because they know Labour is the only possible alternative to the Tories, though many thousands of people in the Party and around it must find you as disgusting as I do.

They won't always be quiet, Mr

Kinnock. Once we have kicked out the Tories, *tolerance for you and yours will decline*. It will decline as working-class confidence rises once again.

You will find, if you become Prime Minister, that you are not quite as much in control of the Labour Party as you think — that the docile movement which lets you get away with belly-crawling to the Tories is not quite as docile as you think.

The movement tolerates it now only in the hope that at the end of the belly-crawling you will have dislodged the Tories. Even so, Mr Kinnock, you make Ramsey MacDonald, who finally went over to the Tories, seem like a respectable Labour leader.

Pat Markey

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"The emancipation of the working class is also the emancipation of all human beings without distinction of sex or race."

Karl Marx

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Morris victory: great news, but only a start

Bill Morris won the TGWU general secretary by a considerable majority. So he should have: he was backed by outgoing general secretary Ron Todd and by the "Broad Left" majority on the union's Executive.

A defeat for Morris would have been pretty decisive proof that racism remained a potent force in British trade unionism. As it is, Morris's victory represents a huge step forward for anti-racism in the labour movement and for common decency in British society as a whole.

For years black workers have been a bastion of British trade unionism, while the number of black union officials could be counted on the fingers of one hand and the number of black union leaders could be counted on the toes of the same hand.

It is particularly pleasing that the TGWU should be the first union to elect a black leader. Back in 1968 TGWU dockers in London marched in support of Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech, and even during the latest election campaign unofficial leaflets were circulated carrying the slogan, "Don't let the coon call the tune".

There is no evidence that Morris's main opponent, George Wright, approved of this racist filth — indeed, he is on record as condemning it. But given the extensive contacts that Wright and his supporters have with the national press, we might have expected him to be a bit more up-front in disowning his racist "supporters".

The issue of racism was not all that was at stake in the election. The TGWU has long been a battle-ground between the "Broad Left" and a secretive right-wing grouping associated with the AEU and EETPU leaderships.

Nine of the eleven TGWU regional secretaries backed Wright and several of them used their baronial power to exclude Morris and to prevent the left from campaigning for him. Such people made no secret of their contempt for the relatively liberal regime in the union introduced by Frank Cousins and continued by Jack Jones, Moss Evans and Ron Todd: they hankered after the days of Ernest Bevin, Arthur Deakin, and (in the words of George Wright) "the old-fashioned union boss".

Morris's victory has averted the immediate threat of a right-wing takeover of the TGWU, but it will not resolve the underlying problems facing the union. Membership continues to decline, and the "Link-Up" campaign, aimed at women, youth and part-timers, remains a dead letter in most of the union's right-wing-controlled regions, largely because of the indifference and even active sabotage of the regional barons. Now, with the Morris victory under their belt, the Broad Left should be turning to grass-roots recruitment and organisation, making the "Link-Up" campaign a reality.

Bill Morris has promised a "charter for members": what this will mean in reality remains to be seen, but he could make a start by ensuring that members are properly serviced by officers and that, wherever possible, officers are elected at least every two years.

The union's rule-book needs thorough revision, starting with the requirement for regional secretaries to be elected.

Bill Morris's victory has been good for the T&G left's morale, but it's only a start. The real test for the union, and in particular the Broad Left, lies ahead: recruitment, organisation, democratising the rule book and ensuring that the union's massive block vote at Labour Party Conference is cast the way the members want.

One worrying thought to end on: it is said that Neil Kinnock privately favoured a Morris victory...

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper



Aids activists demonstrate in Los Angeles against George Bush's policy of refusing admission to the USA of anyone infected by HIV

Scientists battle over royalties

The AIDS wars

By Les Hearn

In 1984, the discovery of the virus that causes AIDS heralded a breakthrough in the understanding of the disease, one which may lead to effective treatment and perhaps even a cure. However, it also unleashed a battle for recognition as its discoverer between Luc Montagnier of the French Institut Pasteur and Robert Gallo of the US National Institutes of Health.

This battle was not merely for prestige but involved rights to royalties from the blood test for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infection developed by Gallo. At present, though most royalties go to the AIDS Research Foundation, Gallo nets some \$100,000 per annum.

The dispute has centred on the following facts. Montagnier's group isolated a virus from a Frenchman with AIDS in 1983. They were convinced that it was respon-

sible for the disease but were unable to culture it. They named it LAV (for lymphadenopathy virus, from one of the symptoms of AIDS) and sent samples of it to Gallo's labs who were also working on the virus that caused AIDS.

Shortly after, in 1984, Gallo announced the discovery and culturing of the virus that caused AIDS — he called it HTLV-III (for human T-cell leukaemia virus — type III, strain B). This name was the result of Gallo's conviction, since shown to be unfounded, that the virus was related to others that caused a type of leukaemia.

At first, it seemed that Gallo's group had won the race to identify the AIDS virus fair and square — and with it the right to large amounts of money in research grants and royalties. Suspicions were raised that this might not be the case when, in 1986, the genetic codes for LAV and HTLV-III were published. They were almost identical, differing by only 2%.

Now, when it is realised that the AIDS virus (now called HIV, for human immunodeficiency virus) is extremely variable, this similari-

ty becomes inexplicable. HIV undergoes frequent mutations, a fact that makes the development of a vaccine extremely difficult, so much so that samples of HIV from any two people would differ in their genetic codes by 13% on average. The probability that two samples taken on different sides of the Atlantic would differ by only 2% is vanishingly small.

The only possible conclusion was that HTLV-III was LAV, the small difference arising through uncertainties in the sequencing technique or through mutations in the few generations that had taken place. The only remaining question was whether the confusion had occurred deliberately or through innocent, though inefficient contamination.

The relationship between Institut Pasteur and Gallo soured rapidly and eventually the Institut took the US government to court over the rights to the royalties from the patented blood test developed by Gallo, using the LAV.

This did not settle the question of the origin of the original LAV/HTLV-III, however. At present, the NIH are investigating Gallo's laboratories because of in-

consistencies in its records though its inquiry team have publicly cleared him of the charge of stealing LAV. They said he would have no motive to do so as he had plenty of samples of his own.

The row erupted again this year when Gallo's team announced that the sample of HIV sent by the French was in fact different from LAV. Stung by this apparent demolition of their case, the French searched through their samples and records and found that they had sent several samples from one patient and that one of these had become contaminated with HIV from another patient. It was the latter which later surfaced as the fast-growing virus known as HTLV-III.

The result has been that Gallo has finally admitted that the first identified AIDS virus came from the Institut Pasteur. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to be the end of a saga that has occupied the valuable time of many scientists. The various inquiries have taken up several research years and have temporarily halted some projects. Now, the battle for royalties will recommence, as will the Institut Pasteur's claim for compensation for its costs, estimated at £2m.



NEWS

Back to the future

By John Moloney

According to the Salvation Army, there are now some 75,000 'visibly homeless' people in London.

The figure breaks down like this:

- 25,000 (including 7,000 children) in bed and breakfast accommodation;
- 18,000 in hotels and 30,000 in squats;
- It is estimated that about 2,000 actually sleep rough.

The shock is that the sleeping rough figure is about the same as that in 1904!

According to Salvation Army surveys, the figure in 1904

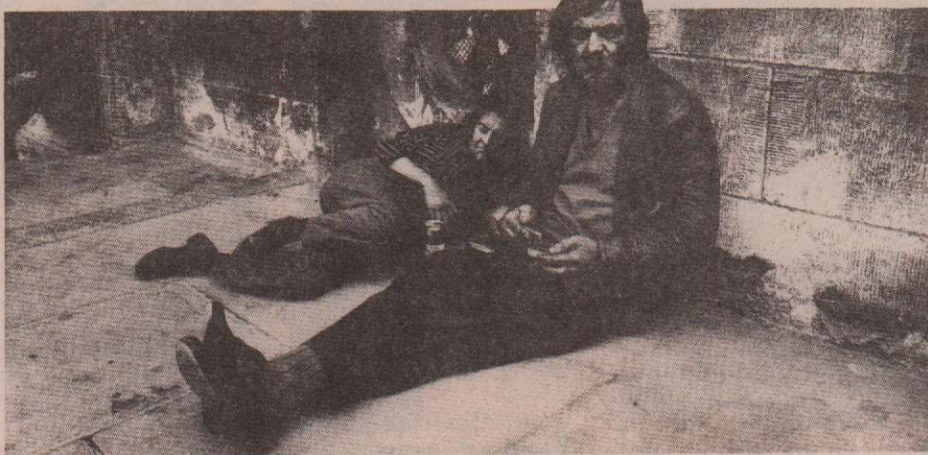
was 2,000; in 1910, 2,777, but in 1921 it had dropped to 76. In the same year, the Salvation Army Commissioner David Lamb said:

"I will venture to predict that London will never see a return of those homeless poor huddled in the doorways, stairways and arches in the cold bleak misery of the biting, cutting winds which mark our English winters."

The homeless survey carried out this year came up with the following:

- One quarter of the homeless have never had a real home;
- Three quarters are not registered on a housing waiting list;
- One in three have some sort of a job.

During the boom years



after the war, with real incomes rising, mortality rates falling, it might have been possible plausibly to believe

that 'humane' capitalism was possible, that is, the so-called efficiency of the market could go hand in hand with

real social progress.

During the '80s average real incomes increased, but the number of workers earn-

ing less than half the average wage has increased from 5 to 9 million. Mortality rates have fallen, but the gap between the death rate of professionals and unskilled manual workers increased.

Over the last 40 years, Britain's wealth has increased enormously, yet the poor are still with us.

Only a democratically-planned economy can hope to improve living standards (meaning not only real income, but housing, employment and mortality rates) for the mass of workers.

What a terrible state of affairs we have reached where, in 1991, it would be claimed a huge success to reach the sleeping rough figures of 1921.



At last a victory!

With the Tory press overjoyed that strikes are at their lowest level for 50 years, it's great to report a victory on the industrial front. This picture shows workers from Hull West DSS preparing to go back to work after winning a whole series of concessions from management. Full report page 15.

Left unity and the left slates

COUNTERPOINT

By Dorothy Macedo

In recent years the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs has usually gone through a rather ill-defined consultation process with the leaders of selected left pressure groups (notably those involved in Labour Left Liaison) about the make-up of the left slate for the NEC.

This year, even that limited consultation failed to take place.

One reason was the bitter after-taste left by the manoeuvrings which surrounded the Committee to Stop the War in the Gulf. Most left MPs had been quite disgusted by the appalling antics of members and associates of *Socialist Action*, who seemed determined to exclude other left groups. What should have been an exercise in maximum left unity during the biggest crisis for years became a hideous example of sectarianism.

Of course, some will say that MPs don't need much excuse to

avoid consulting lesser mortals!

This year there were two vacancies on the left slate because Audrey Wise, recently elected president of USDAW, is standing in the trade union section, and Jo Richardson has moved even more firmly into the Kinnock camp. The Socialist Campaign Group (SCG) replaced them with two men: Jeremy Corbyn and Dave Nellist.

LLL decided it could not support the new slate. At a meeting with SCG representatives, the Labour Women's Action Committee said that while it wanted four women and three men, a slate of four men and three women would be acceptable,

for this year only, provided all the candidates supported positive discrimination for women and black people. In other words, Nellist would have to go.

The next SCG meeting voted nem con to reaffirm the original seven names. Meanwhile, Labour Party Black Sections decided to put forward Greenwich councillor Kanta Patel in place of Nellist. This alternative slate was backed by the Labour Party Socialists national committee.

The Briefing Editorial Board has now voted twice to support the SCG slate, despite the problems mentioned earlier. It did so because it believed the left

will look ridiculous if it can't agree on a credible, united slate: the only winners will be the right wing.

The Briefing EB was particularly conscious this year, for the first time, CLPs are supposed to ballot all their members to determine how their conference delegates vote in the NEC elections. We therefore need a nationally-organised, well-resourced and vigorous campaign if we are to secure a strong left vote.

Realistically, only Benn and Skinner stand any chance of being elected. The existence of more than one left slate will be a dangerous diversion from maximising their support.

Is it worth creating divisions over other candidates who aren't going to be elected?

Some have argued that, in that case, we might as well use this year to promote relatively unknown women. The need to promote more women is undeniable, but the answer surely would be for them to stand (this year) for the Women's Division of the NEC. Last year there were no left candidates at all in this section.

This does not mean that we are insensitive to the problems with the SCG slate, nor do we accept that only MPs are suitable candidates for the NEC. But let's be honest, comrades, there have always been problems with the left slate and the way it's been drawn up.

Last year, many people were unhappy about Jo Richardson being on it and it would certainly be possible to criticise other candidates on this year's slate.

Socialist Organiser, for example, which supports the replacement of Nellist by Patel, admits that "we disagree with other people on the slate at least as much". The reason they give for picking on Nellist, ie. his association with *Militant*, looks unpleasantly like sectarian rivalry. Given that both groups are being witch-hunted, this is unfortunate. If we don't hang together, we shall certainly all be hanged separately. The fact that *Militant* has not defended *Socialist Organiser* does not mean we should return the compliment.

One thing is certain: Walworth Road and the LCC will be delighted by any evidence that we are squabbling amongst ourselves.

• This article first appeared in *Labour Briefing*.

Organising the Labour club left

By Paul McGarry

Fifty students from 18 colleges attended the Manchester Polytechnic Labour Club Conference at the weekend. The conference was organised for the many Labour supporters dissatisfied with the present situation in the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS).

It was resolved to campaign on three main areas: for the democratisation of NOLS, for re-

juvenating the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS), and for organising around the General Election. A small committee was elected to carry out the work, and a recall conference is planned for October. A workshop on democracy in NOLS proved to be a useful exchange of information.

Many Labour Clubs are excluded from NOLS, because if they are on the left, Walworth Road systematically misleads college activists. A Charter for NOLS democracy was felt to be the best campaigning tool.

Model motions and a newsletter will be produced to build up that support. Many similar concerns on

the behaviour of NOLS in NUS were voiced. Plans to extend accountability in NUS were agreed.

The General Election is the priority for most Labour Students now. This was reflected in the proposal drawn up to help co-ordinate activity designed to maximise the Labour vote amongst students and young people. Most FE students are eligible to vote, and this was one area that the "official" campaign has ignored.

Most of those present haven't been involved in the LPYS. The leadership effectively closed it down four years ago. It was common ground that new LPYS branches should be established in the run up

to the General Election and that the campaign should push for a democratic youth section.

More generally, it was felt that the poor state of NOLS and the issues involved should be led into the local CLPs and trade unions. Leafletting for Party Conference in October and a big push for Labour Youth Conference are planned.

Most of those present felt that such an event was overdue and were positive about taking the campaign back into their colleges.

For more information, contact: Manchester Polytechnic Labour Club at the Students' Union, Mandela Building, Oxford Road, Manchester.

GRAFFITI

Joe Haines: lame-brain and three cards short



Degsy says 'Vote Tory'

GRAFFITI

Ever since Derek Hatton was disqualified from holding local government office in 1987 he has been trying to change his image.

But advocating a Tory vote! In line with Militant's current phase of trying to compete with Labour in Walton, Hatton has told the *Times* (14 June) that Labour under Kinnoch "will probably do far more harm to Britain than the Tories". His conclusion? Labour isn't committed to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, therefore if Britain is going to remain capitalist, you'd be better off voting for a party who are the best managers of the system. Degsy says 'Vote Tory'.

It appears that it's not only the walls that have ears. So too do the coffins of IRA members. British agents bug the coffins hoping to pick up loose talk from IRA mourners at funerals. Frederick Forsyth, in his new book *The Deceiver*, claims that British Security forces have picked up valuable information this way. It's a macabre ploy but one the IRA claims to have been suspicious of for some time. Forsyth has just confirmed what they have always known British agents are capable of doing.

The poll tax has obviously taken its toll on the Tories' electoral chances. But the costs of the unfair tax to those who rely on council services are going to increase for at least another few years. The Government's Audit Commission estimates that by the time the tax is abolished another £1 billion will not have been collected. Already poll tax arrears total £1 billion and there are 4.5 million summonses out for non-payment. In addition, if the timetable for its replacement, which the Auditors say is 'extremely tight', is held up at all then the delay will cost the public sector another £800 million a year. The Auditors go on to report that for councils to collect the

£6 tax for those on income support costs £15 per head. Now that's market efficiency for you. Not surprisingly, the Auditors support Labour's call to abolish the compulsory 20% minimum contribution for those on income support. It's a pity that Kinnoch and Gould don't stop playing legal niceties and demand the scrapping of the tax altogether now.

Last week *Graffiti* noted that Germany had recorded its first trade deficit for 10 years. This week the USA has recorded its first trade surplus (\$10.2 billion) for nine years. It's not the start of a new boom however. The surplus had a bit of help from America's Gulf War allies. America basically acted as a mercenary army for its allies and demanded payment for doing so from Japan, Saudi Arabia and others. So when you subtract the \$26.2 billion received in cash payments for the war from the \$10.2 billion surplus, the figures don't look so good after all.

Now that the Neuphoria and hype surrounding the US victory parade in New York has subsided, it's back to the reality of political alienation for almost half of the American electorate. The Kettering Foundation, a non-partisan research institution based in Ohio, has just completed a report on Americans' attitude to the political process. The main finding was that Americans would like to participate in politics but feel they no longer have access because the system is driven by money, not votes, and run by a professional class that pursues its own interests. So frustrated were many of those interviewed that they no longer believe that they live in a democracy. Unfortunately most people opt out of politics rather than organising. At the mid-term elections last November, 110 million simply didn't vote. This confirms a long-term trend. Since Ronald Reagan was elected in 1980 less than 50% of the electorate has bothered to even vote. It makes it a bit difficult then for Reagan or Bush to claim that they represent the majority.

PRESS GANG
The Guardian
DAILY MIRROR
STAR

Joe Haines, the Maxwell hagiographer and *Daily Mirror* columnist, likes to present himself as a man of wit and words.

When the last *Mirror* editor, Roy Greenslade, brought in John Diamond as "Britain's Wittiest Columnist", Haines's fury knew no bounds: everyone knows that *Joe Haines* is Britain's Wittiest Columnist. Eventually, Haines succeeded in persuading the Cap'n to sack both Greenslade and Diamond and secured a twice-weekly spot for his own hilarious and erudite column, into the bargain.

"Joe Haines does not appear to understand that opposing arbitrary and foolish linguistic codes is not a licence for racism and sexism".

More than once this literary giant of our age has taken the *Sun* to task for pandering to the basest prejudices of its readers. So it was with some surprise that I turned to Mr. Haines' up-market column this Monday only to be confronted with a list of well over fifty offensive words. *Socialist Organiser* is a family newspaper, so I will not reproduce the Haines list in its entirety; the following may give you the general

flavour: "Paddy... Polack... Frog... Gippo... Eyetic... Wop... tart... scrubber... slag... whore... homo... poof... poofter... queer... fagot... dyke..." and so on. And on. And on.

What was the cause of this bizarre outburst from the great man of letters? It seems that Haines has heard about the "Politically Correct" movement and its campaign to impose a list of banned words upon American campuses and newspapers.

Haines does not mention that the "Politically Correct" campaign is (so far) an American phenomenon: the implication is that honest British wordsmiths like himself are *already* being subjected to the kind of campaign that recently resulted in the *New York Times* imposing a "style book" that substitutes the term "adult male" for the word "man".

From what I've been able to find out about the "Politically Correct" movement, it sounds like a thoroughly silly and counter-productive fad. It has even been suggested that the whole thing is a right-wing conspiracy to discredit anti-racist and anti-sexist norms of public discourse in America.

But Haines doesn't consider any of this. He simply gives notice that "I'll use any of the above words if the mood strikes me." The words he's talking about are not "man" or "burly" but "Polack", "slag" and "poofter".

Joe Haines does not appear to understand that opposing arbitrary and foolish linguistic codes is *not* a licence for gratuitous racism and sexism. In fact, if I were into conspiracy theories, I might suspect that Mr. Haines had some interest in encouraging the emergence of the "Politically Correct" movement in Britain. But on balance, I tend to the view that Haines is simply a "lunatic, loonie, nut-case, screwball, lame-brain and three cards short of a pack".

The "Politically Correct" movement may or may not cross the Atlantic, but the *National Enquirer* already has.

This is the 'newspaper' that published a front-page photo of Elvis Presley in his coffin,



"The National Enquirer" staff came from Britain originally. Now they have - unfortunately - come back again.

named the alleged victim of the still-unresolved "Kennedy rape" and destroyed Gary Hart's presidential hopes by publishing a photo of him with Donna Rice on his knee.

The *Enquirer* has been described as a cross between *Hello!* magazine and the *Sunday Sport*. It sells over 4 million copies in America and is now being imported to Britain, where it hopes to sell 250,000 copies at 65p a throw.

You will not be surprised

to hear that Mr. Rupert Murdoch is a part-owner of this interesting publication. You may be more surprised to learn that the editor comes from Scotland and that while the *Enquirer* was building its circulation in the 60s and 70s, 60% of its reporters hailed from these shores. That figure is now down to 20%, as more American journalists get the hang of tabloid muck-raking.

Who says that unpleasant trends only travel across the Atlantic from West to East?

Tory economic theory gone mad

WOMEN'S EYE



By Liz Millward

Over the last few months a high proportion of my

friends and acquaintances have found themselves jobless. Happy, once prosperous households have been wrecked.

My work involves managing the homes of 200 families. At least once a week I get a letter saying that someone has been made redundant. A proportion of these people will lose their homes as a result. Because the work I do is closely related to the construction industry, I know a lot of firms which have gone under.

One consequence of this is that when I try to order repairs, there are hardly any

contractors left to do them. I am using a firm of plumbers to repair a roof, because I can't find any roof-repairers to do the job. All the roof-repairers, it seems, are on the dole.

This is Tory economic theory gone mad. High numbers of repossessed homes will keep property prices down. Fear of losing jobs makes people unwilling to move, with the same effect on prices. Low prices mean fewer homes will get built, which means that more people will lose their jobs. With more people on the dole, there will be less public money available for public

works - meaning even more people on the dole. The housing crisis will go on getting worse.

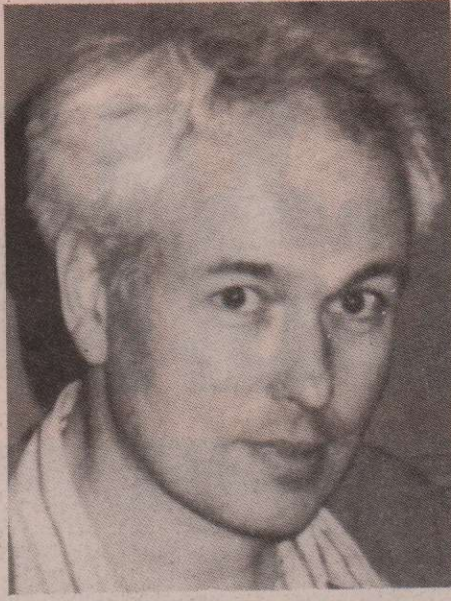
And that's just the construction industry.

The point is that although the problem is made worse by the Tories' idiotic policies, such periodic crises are the fault of capitalism as a system.

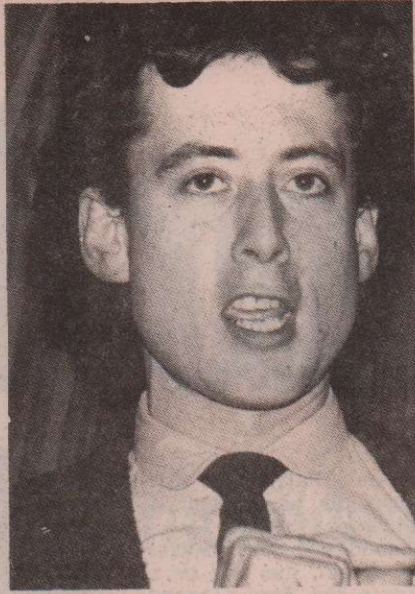
Even if John Major manages to sort out the economy (and it's a big if) he will only sort it out in the short term. He is only interested in ensuring that the big companies continue to make vast profits - the rest is just window-dressing.



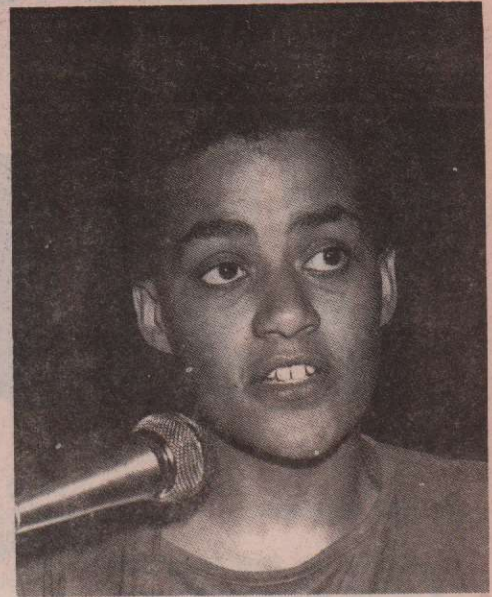
Jeremy Corbyn MP speaks on "After the Tories - the Socialist Alternative"



Robin Blackburn tells the story of the Haitian slaves' revolt in his session on "The Black Jacobins"



Peter Tatchell outlines a lesbian and gay agenda



Gail Cameron looks at black nationalism

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The issues for socialists

Vote Labour

By Gail Cameron

The big job now facing the British labour movement is to get rid of the Tory government. And there is no working-class-based alternative to the Tories except a Labour Government.

If Labour should lose the Walton by-election it will seriously damage Labour's credibility as the alternative government, and greatly help the Tories.

The split in the Labour vote caused by the *Militant* candidate, Lesley Mahmood, may let in the Liberal Democrat. That is why all those for whom the fight to get the Tories out is central must back Labour in Walton, and, where possible, do so actively.

It is why the *Militant* candidacy in Walton is a stupid and irresponsible adventure, and why that needs to be said plainly.

One measure of what *Militant* is doing is their lying leaflet (see this page) falsely claiming — by way of tricks played with words — that Lesley Mahmood was chosen by the Labour Party in Walton and the official Labour candidate, Peter Kilfoyle, was imposed by the na-

tional Labour Party. In fact Kilfoyle won the nomination in Walton; Mahmood lost it.

If Mahmood helps the Liberal Democrats to win, that will be a direct help to the Tory Government. By pulling left-wingers out of the Labour Party, *Militant* and its Broad Left are helping make the Labour Party safer for Kinnockism.

But, they say, the election campaign will help the council workers who are fighting sackings. Quite the opposite: when Mahmood is defeated, the Tories and the Labour right-wing will claim that as a verdict against the council workers.

Militant's Walton candidacy makes sense neither in terms of the overall fight to kick the Tories out, nor in terms of the fight against Kinnockism inside the Labour Party, nor in terms of the struggle of the Liverpool council workers. It can only cause damage on all three fronts. It makes sense only as a self-promoting *Militant* stunt — and then only in the short term.

Workers in Liverpool should demand that Mahmood step down now, before she risks helping the Liberal Democrats and the Tories deal serious blows at Labour's chances of defeating the Tories in the upcoming General Election.

Vote Labour in Walton!



Council workers strike against job cuts. Supporting them doesn't mean backing Mahmood's adventure.

The truth about the Broad Left in Walton

By Anne Field

Newcastle and Glasgow accents, amongst others, were much in evidence in Walton last weekend as *Militant* began a national mobilisation in support of its Walton by-election candidate, Lesley Mahmood.

On her election material Mahmood describes herself as "the real Labour candidate democratically selected by Walton Labour Party members." She is "the people's choice", who will "continue the tradition of Eric Heffer".

In fact, Mahmood was selected as a candidate by a meeting of Walton CLP Broad Left (BL). Less than 75

people attended the meeting, not all of whom were Labour Party members. Mahmood got less than 50 votes, whilst the two other contenders for the nomination picked up 18 and 7 votes.

(It is ironic that *Militant's* "real Labour Party" has already implemented what Kinnock has yet to achieve: the ending of trade union involvement in the Labour Party, and "one member, one vote" in the selection of Parliamentary candidates.)

As for Mahmood's claim that she will "continue the tradition of Eric Heffer", what separates her from Heffer is in fact "rivers of blood", to use Trotsky's expression.

Heffer was a consistent anti-Stalinist. Mahmood, on the other hand, regards the now-collapsing Stalinist states as "workers' states", and even supported the

Soviet Union's bloody occupation of Afghanistan.

In the Liverpool-wide BL (membership of which is by invitation only, and "expulsions" from which occur — without any question of a fair hearing even so much as arising — if a member falls out of favour with *Militant*) some members are unhappy about putting up a candidate in Walton, whilst others are unhappy about Mahmood being the candidate.

Militant attempted to get a

number of its supporters accepted as eligible to vote in the Walton BL selection meeting even though their connection with Walton was somewhere between tenuous and non-existent.

As one BL member put it: "I didn't throw in my Labour Party card so that one mob in London could start telling me what to do instead of another mob."

Another BL member has described the situation as "getting out of control". He is right to do so.

At the close of last year, non-*Militant* members of the BL were arguing in favour of standing independent candidates in this May's local elections. *Militant* argued firmly against this but, unusually, lost the vote in the BL.

Although *Militant* mobilised heavily in support of the six independent candidates (415 people campaigned in support of the six, probably about half of them *Militant* supporters from outside of Liverpool), *Militant* was apparently

Why Militant is wrong

By Peter Taaffe (editor of *Militant*) and Tony Mulhearn (chair of the Liverpool 'Broad Left')

This is an extract from "Liverpool: The City That Dared to Fight", by Peter Taaffe and Tony Mulhearn. It recounts a debate in *Militant* in 1985 which has great relevance for its decision now on the Walton by-election.

There were differences inside *Militant* over how the Liverpool labour movement should respond to the inquiry by the Labour Party National Executive Committee.

Some, including Derek Hatton, believed that the colossal authority enjoyed by the District Labour Party would have enabled it to have defied the disbandment edict of the

National Executive Committee. They argued that thousands of workers would have rallied to the DLP despite any 'expulsions' of leading DLP figures or delegates to this body. The majority of active workers in the Labour Party, a significant section of active trade unionists as well as other leading figures in the movement, would have supported the DLP. Any rival organisation that would have been established by the NEC, at least in the first instance, would have been a very feeble affair.

This would have enabled the DLP and the Labour group to have continued virtually undivided in its task of defending the city against the Tory onslaught.

The DLP would have been temporarily 'isolated' from the Labour

Party's official organisation at national level. There have been times in the past when precisely such a development has taken place. Thus when Stafford Cripps was expelled from the Labour Party with Aneurin Bevan in 1939 for campaigning for a 'Popular Front', he took with him the Bristol Labour Party. The rival 'official' Labour Party in the area was a still-born affair. The Bristol Labour Party was taken back into the fold when Stafford Cripps, along with Aneurin Bevan, was allowed to rejoin the Labour Party.

The contrary view was advanced by leading local and national *Militant* figures. They argued that it was an unquestionable fact that the DLP would have rallied a significant layer of workers to its banner, possibly numbering 10,000. But an act of defiance of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party, particularly given the swing towards the right on the NEC, albeit of a temporary character, would allow the right wing to separate some of the best

Walton REAL Labour

LESLEY MAHMOOD is the REAL Labour candidate democratically selected by Walton Labour Party members.

There are two Labour choices in this election:

People's Choice

LESLEY MAHMOOD

She will continue the tradition of ERIC HEFFER

LESLEY MAHMOOD will campaign on socialist policies. As a councillor she has said:

- ✗ NO to the 1,000 compulsory redundancies.
- ✗ NO to using bailiffs against poll tax non-payers.
- ✗ NO to rent increases.

The other candidate is

Kinnock's 'yes' man

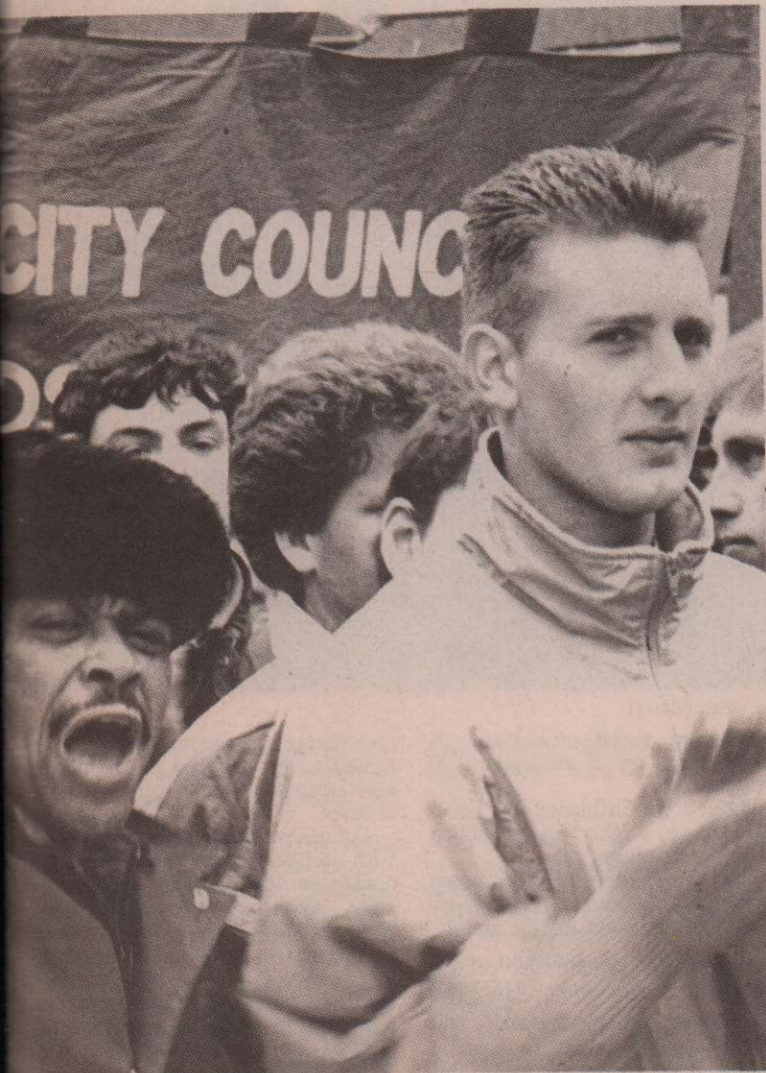
endorsed by party officials in London.

A candidate who said:

- ✓ YES to the 1,000 compulsory council redundancies.
- ✓ YES to using bailiffs against poll tax non-payers.
- ✓ YES to rent increases.

Honest, Lesley Mahmood is the Labour Party candidate...

in Walton!



Oppose the redundancies and campaign for Labour!

An interview with a member of Liverpool Labour Party Socialists canvassing for Labour in Walton

How can you justify campaigning for a witch-hunting Kinnockite loyalist like Kilfoyle?

It's not a question of canvassing for Kilfoyle as an individual, but of campaigning for a vote for Labour. Kilfoyle is a right-winger, but so are a lot of other Labour MPs and aspiring MPs. A Kinnock-led government will be right-wing — but does that mean you should not campaign for Labour in a General Election? In any case, Mahmood's left-wing credentials are not all they are cracked up to be.

Do you think left-wingers should just make a few token appearances in Walton to show their support for the Labour candidates?

No, I think the opposite. The left should be out in Walton as much as possible.

The left should be on the doorstep arguing that you can oppose compulsory redundancies amongst the council workforce, that you can oppose Kinnock's sell-outs at national level, and still be a member of the Labour Party. Not to do so means handing the campaign over to the right wing. If Mahmood does well, it will only encourage silly people elsewhere to run independent candidates against Labour in a General Election in safe Labour seats. This will result in activists being pulled out of campaigning in Tory marginals, thus increasing the chances of the

Tories being re-elected. Dead-end sectarians who don't care about the result of a General Election won't be worried about this. Socialists who live in the real world will be. Mahmood must not only be defeated, but be decisively so.

What has been the response on the doorstep so far?

It's dangerous to generalise from the limited amount of canvassing I have done so far, but the vast majority of responses have been pro-Labour. Even some traditional Liberal and Tory voters have said that they might vote Labour just to make sure Mahmood does not get in, and to show what they

"A Kinnock-led government will be right-wing — but does that mean you should not campaign for Labour in a General Election?"

think of Militant. The handful of Mahmood supporters I have come across say they are voting for her because of Kinnock's record and the issue of council redundancies. It's very much a passive protest vote. Anyone who thinks it is a vote for Militant's "bold socialist programme" is living in cloud-cuckoo-land, along with the people who decided to put up Mahmood.

The problem for socialists is that because Militant is equated with the left, opposition to Mahmood easily flows over into opposition to left-wing politics in general. Kilfoyle and his fellow-travellers are only too happy to encourage this. Again, this underlines the importance of left-wingers getting involved in the by-election campaign.

What kind of campaign is Mahmood running?

A thoroughly dishonest one. She is claiming to be the real Labour candidate. You would also think, going by her election material, that this was a council by-election rather than a parliamentary by-election. Her focus, so far almost

exclusively, is council redundancies, council rents and the poll tax. The doorstep patter of her canvassers seems to be: there are two Labour candidates in this by-election. A real Labour candidate opposed to redundancies on the council, and an imposed Labour candidate who supports redundancies. Which one are you voting for? Mahmood wants to try to make the by-election a referendum on compulsory redundancies, whilst conveniently keeping quiet about the fact that the council budget she voted for involved setting a poll tax and freezing 50% of all council vacancies.

Mahmood has only two things going for her. One is the number of people Militant is pumping into the constituency. The other is the fact that the issue of council redundancies is very important in Walton. Walton is a white, working-class area and, as a result of proven racist employment procedures by the council in the past, many council workers are drawn from this part of Liverpool. Of course, you don't find Mahmood attacking racism in Liverpool City Council.

What is the SWP doing? Even before Mahmood was selected, the SWP in Liverpool agreed to go out and campaign for whoever the Broad Left candidate was. Their only concern, of course, is to sell their paper and pick up recruits. Militant are sectarians but they're not stupid. I get the impression that SWPers have been given the spade-work of distributing Mahmood's turgid election material, whilst Militant go off and canvas and sell their turgid newspaper.

Who will win the election? Nothing is ever certain in politics, but it looks like a Labour victory. A split Labour vote and a high profile Liberal campaign might see the Liberals come up through the middle. Mahmood has only an outside chance but, as I said before, it's important that she is humiliated rather than just defeated.

However, once the by-election is over, the problems for the left really begin — the need to fight a new wave of mass expulsions, and to fight the policies pursued by Rimmer on the Council and Kilfoyle in Parliament.

not convinced of the wisdom of standing independent candidates.

Only one out of the six independent candidates, for example, was actually a non-Militant supporter, and he stood only after an unsuccessful attempt to get a non-Militant to stand in the ward concerned.

Five out of the six independent candidates won. The non-Militant members of the BL believed, however naively, that by standing independent candidates and winning they could negotiate their re-

admission to the Labour Group on the City Council from a position of strength.

But the degree of success went to the heads of many members of the BL. It certainly went to the heads of Militant supporters. When Eric Heffer died and Peter Kilfoyle was endorsed as the Labour candidate, Militant jumped in with both feet to ensure that Mahmood was put up as a candidate.

The rest of the story is history — and electioneering.

in Walton

fighters from the Labour Party nationally.

An 'independent' DLP would undoubtedly meet with initial success, they argued, in the short term, but would have undermined the long-term struggle to transform the Labour Party in a leftward direction.

Through the trade unions, the Labour Party possesses a big reservoir of support.

Six million workers are affiliated to the Labour Party through the political levy. Superficial commentators, both of the capitalist class and the ultra-left fringe outside of the Labour Party, usually dismiss this as being a mere relic of the past political allegiances of workers to the Labour Party. However, when the Tories attempted to break the link through enforced political fund ballots, the results not only astonished them, but also the leadership of the movement and the assorted critics of the political levy.

Every single union with a political fund recorded majorities, sometimes of a quite spectacular

nature, in favour of retaining the levy. Some trade unions that did not even have a political fund adopted them as a result of the Tories' attempt to break the link between the unions and the Labour Party.

The mass of the working class, so the Militant Editorial Board argued, while passively supporting the Labour Party, had not yet actively moved into its ranks.

They argued that for one worker who had supported an 'independent' DLP, there would be another five, ten and perhaps 100 at a later stage who would move into the official Labour Party. These workers would be denied contact with the best fighters who would have constituted themselves into an 'independent' DLP.

This left wing, particularly with the tremendously rich experiences of the last three and a half years, could be a vital yeast for the rise of an even more spectacular mass movement in Liverpool in the future.

Things have changed since 1985.

when the discussion reported by Taaffe and Mulhearn took place. Every change, both in Britain generally and inside the labour movement, strengthens the arguments against breaking with Labour and speaks to condemn Militant's little adventure in the Walton by-election.

The Tories have been in power for five and a half additional years. The left in the Labour Party has declined considerably. Strike figures are the lowest for 50 years. The Militant-led left has heavily discredited itself.

The whole Liverpool District Labour Party does not back Militant in Walton. Militant had not enough support in Walton to win the nomination there. They are "forced" to lie in their election leaflets, suggesting that they won the nomination but Kilfoyle was then imposed from London.

The Walton candidacy is not part of an advancing offensive working-class movement. It grows out of defeat and weakness, and out of Militant's growing sectarianism.

If Militant is right to split the Liverpool labour movement now, then Derek Hatton was right in 1985!



Derek Hatton (left) and Tony Mulhearn, back in 1985

Fight for a general election!

For a Labour government!

By John McIlroy

Getting rid of Thatcher and agreeing to replace the poll tax have not solved the Tories' problems. But the left has its own problems, too.

The development of general election fever has been accompanied by an outbreak of incoherence and a rash of adventurism.

The three major factors in the run-up to the general election are the growth of a broad consensus between Labour and Tory leaders; the instability, exhaustion and loss of vision of the Conservatives; and, crucially, the economic recession and its impact on the working class.

The first six months of Major's premiership have seen an increasing convergence of the three main parties.

Since 1983 Kinnock has moved Labour to the right and increasingly adapted to Thatcherism. Major has now attempted to move the Tories away from Thatcherism and meet the "new" Labour Party.

But the new "social market" consensus is still limited and contradictory. Major's pledge to end the poll tax, the pumping in of billions to reduce poll tax bills in the meantime, the small reforms in taxation and minor increases in welfare (such as abolishing tax relief for top rate mortgage payers and indexing child benefit), the talk of a citizen's charter, all these represent a move only to a pallid parody of the EC social market.

The aspirations symbolised by the appointment of the Christian Democrat Chris Patten as chair of the Tory Party is constrained by internal opposition among the Tories but, above all, by the economic situation. To take one example, a rise in unemployment of 100,000 produces an increase in spending on benefits of £350 million.

Increased unemployment has

thus cut into the Treasury's contingency reserves and limited the possibilities of increasing expenditure in electorally sensitive areas such as the NHS and education.

The legacy of Thatcherism still stalks the land.

Similar problems afflict policy on Europe. Major and his cabinet have taken a clear decision to go for monetary union at the EC inter-governmental conference in December, although they intend to negotiate hard.

They have had to indulge in manoeuvre and subterfuge to defuse internal opposition. The sniping of Thatcher, the fulminations of the Bruges group and

reforms of the 1945 Labour government.

Labour, too, is now the party of the market against planning; of privatisation against public ownership; of incentives and efficiency against redistribution and equality; of individual rights against trade union "privileges".

As the policy document *Looking to the Future* states: "We welcome and endorse the efficiency and realism which markets can provide."

Increases in public expenditure will depend on growth. Labour's language is taken straight from Thatcher's larynx: "We will not spend nor will we promise to spend more than Britain can afford." There will be "no irresponsible dash for growth".

Anti-union laws will stay in place and the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) will be the central weapon for disciplining the working class, "creating a new framework for wages and costs."

The continued differences between Labour and Tories in the new consensus centre on the degree of state intervention in economic decision-making.

Major will still have none of such Labour policies as the National Economic Assessment, the National Investment Bank, Skills UK, a more interventionist Department of Trade and Industry, and a new panoply of quangos. Major wants to privatise coal and parts of the railways. Kinnock doesn't.

The choices within the new consensus have little to offer the working class. But the present position may prove temporary. After the coming contest — whether in government or in opposition — Labour will face an explosive situation which will provide greater opportunities for the left.

A Conservative victory will provide Major with the opportunity to

"Those caught up in adventures and short cuts can only weaken the fight for a Labour government."

Ridley, the motion signed by 105 MPs, attempting to tie Major's hands on monetary union — all these demonstrate the difficulties the Tory leaders face in sloughing off the legacy of Thatcherism.

So Labour is reaping the benefits of the new consensus. It is increasingly portrayed in contrast to the Tories as sane, sensible, stable and firmly under leadership control.

On the home front Labour has become "arguably", as the *Financial Times* puts it, "the most conservative force in British politics."

Kinnock has accepted the fundamentals of the Thatcher settlement. He stands to it as Churchill and Eden stood in 1951 to the



The slump returns...

consolidate social marketism. A defeat may see a resurgence of Thatcherism.

The left can influence this situation. We can do this best by making a choice, by taking sides.

The Tories are still the main enemy. And Labour is still the party of the working class and the unions.

The Tories remain the central party of the ruling class. The Labour Party's Finance and Industry group claims to have in membership "over 100 senior industrialists who back Labour". But at the moment these remain mavericks and should not distract attention from the fact that the great mass of capital is totally for the Tories.

This is not because of any belief that Labour's policies would endanger capitalism. The capitalists' true concern is that while Labour's policies are capitalist, its support is working class.

The party — and indirectly a Labour government — is organisationally and financially dependent upon the bedrock working class organisations — the trade unions.

Kinnock has worked wonders in limiting this crucial problem. He has weakened Labour's links with the unions, curbed internal democracy, centralised power and circumscribed the rights of CLP activists. As far as capital is concerned, he has not gone far enough and the danger remains.

The recession which began in mid 1990 is still deepening. We have just witnessed the fourteenth monthly increase in unemployment. It now stands officially at 2.24 million, almost 8%.

The key problem for the Tories is the difficulty of engineering any qualitative change in the economic situation before an election.

The *Unemployment Unit* reports there are already 3.3 million unemployed on the basis of calculation used before 1979, and that the figure will top four million in 1992.

This unemployment is not concentrated in manufacturing and the North. It is affecting service industries and the South very severely; 48,000 of the 113,000 seasonally-adjusted increase in the jobless figure in March came from London and the South East.

The six recent cuts in interest rates bringing base rates down to 11.5% have not improved the situa-

tion. Large scale redundancies continued to be declared in engineering, electronics and former public utilities.

Company insolvencies rose by a fifth in the first quarter of 1991 compared with the last quarter of 1990, and two-thirds compared with the first quarter of last year. Investment in both manufacturing and service industries continues to drop, and the government predicts a 9% fall in manufacturing output in 1992.

The only comfort for the Tories lies in the inflation and earnings figures. The UK's annual inflation rate dropped to 5.8% in May, the lowest figure since summer 1988.

However, this drop, produced by the disappearance from the figures of the poll tax effect of April 1990, lower mortgages, and a squeeze on retailers' margins, still leaves UK inflation higher than the EC average of 5%.

Moreover, if mortgage interest is excluded, the "underlying" rate of inflation is 6.6%. This underlying rate has been increasing and no significant fall is expected in the near future.

The CBI's pay databank shows the average level of wage settlements in the second quarter of 1991 running at around 7% compared with an expected 8%. Incomes Data Services estimate that the majority of pay deals are now between 6% and 7%.

The first Thatcher recession of 1979-82 enabled Thatcher to make a breakthrough in utilising unemployment and legislation to weaken the unions.

There are clear differences this time. The Tories have overdrawn their credibility.

However, the working class is weaker and the left is weaker. There are four million fewer trade unionists today than there were in 1979. We still live in the shadow of important defeats, from the miners' strike of 1985-5 to the docks dispute of 1989.

On the other hand, many workers have seen their living standards increase in the late 1980s as wages outstripped inflation. Both sides of the coin induce caution.

The number of strikes in 1990 was the lowest since 1935. There have been no major confrontations over job cuts. Workers have acquiesced in pay freezes at Michelin, Philips, IBM, and Thomas Cook,



The Tories want to privatise the railways and weaken the rail unions.



Our orientation might be expressed as follows:
'You think Kinnock will deliver a little bit more? We think you will have to fight for every penny you get and for every small improvement.
'Let us fight together. Vote Labour and prepare to fight!'

(5) For a critical vote for Labour. The stability of capitalism, the downturn in struggle, the weakness of the left, the nature and success of Kinnockism — all of these mean that campaigns centred around "For a workers' government" or "Labour to power on a socialist programme" do not meet the needs of the situation.

We are far from 1945, 1974 or even 1983. Only an idiot believes that Kinnock will introduce socialist policies.

Our orientation might be expressed as follows: "You think Kinnock will deliver a little bit more? We think you will have to fight for every penny you get and for every small improvement.

"Let us fight together. Vote Labour and prepare to fight!"

(6) Our Campaigning Demands. At the same time we should be raising wider demands and socialist alternatives and answers within our campaign for a Labour government. But we should not impute their realisation to Kinnock.

Central are the fight against wage controls and the fight for a "workers' charter" to replace the Tories' anti-union legislation with positive rights to organise, to strike, to picket, and take solidarity action.

(7) Stay in and fight! Get in and fight! To comrades leaving or thinking of leaving the Labour Party, disillusioned or worn out by the blows of Kinnockism and the defeats of the left, we say, "Don't commit political suicide at the very moment the means of deliverance are being pressed into your hand".

The best means of influencing and controlling a Labour government is through activity in both the unions and the Labour Party.

(8) There is no alternative! For the maximum Labour vote! The election could be close... The future of the working class is involved. Every vote counts.

There is no present alternative to Labour, and no immediate possibility of building one.

Neither the Socialist Movement nor the SWP nor the Liverpool

Broad Left is even the embryo of such an alternative.

Those caught up in adventures and short-cuts can only weaken the fight for a Labour government. Those who, like the SWP, abstain from this struggle only help the Tories.

Those who argue that whether we support Labour Party or "alternative" candidates depends on an examination of each case — on the local strength of the left and the base for defiance (suitably viewed through magnifying glasses) — will be seen correctly as *dilettantes*. They will cut themselves off from any influence with the majority of Labour-voting workers, weaken the credibility of the left and ease the way of the witch-hunt. We are against "protest politics in one neighbourhood"!

(9) No coalition! No pacts! In the event that no one party has enough seats to form a government, we are opposed to Labour entering coalition or forming a minority government as part of a pact with Major or, more probably, Ashdown.

In a coalition Kinnock would be able to blame his partners. He would become directly answerable to the bourgeois parties, not labour and the unions.

(10) Don't write the Tories off! The Tories could still win. There is still a long way to go.

Just as we need to arm the workers against a Kinnock government so we have to contemplate the possibility of a further period of Tory rule.

This would unleash major struggles within the Labour Party, but it could also lead to demoralisation — particularly amongst young comrades whose expectations are likely to be higher — unless we guard against it.

A campaign on this kind of basis around "Socialists for Labour" can enable us to unite the left — or at least those on the left who wish to eschew diversions, adventures, stunts and salon politics, in favour of the fundamental objective of removing the Tories and replacing them with a Labour government.

tion! General elections are important to the working class and important to us.

The right to vote for a government once every five years shows how far the working class has to go and the limits of democracy. But it represents a gain and a right which must be exercised.

The question of *who forms the government* is one of burning importance.

Every day the Tories stay in government sanctioned by the so-called prerogative of the Prime Minister to set the election date, they are enabled to deliver further attacks on the working class. We are for the old demands of annual, fixed term parliaments. We campaign for their practical realisation by campaigning to kick out the Tories and for a general election.

(2) Don't wait for an election! Campaigning for an election does not mean for one minute that we soft-pedal the direct struggles that are going on now against the bosses and the state.

We are for strengthening action on the industrial front, against the poll tax, and against the leadership's attempts to throw out socialists and suppress activity and democracy within the Labour Party itself.

(3) The Tories are the main enemy. We must avoid a simplistic anti-Toryism which polishes up Labour. Nonetheless, the originators and orchestrators of the most powerful and successful attacks on our class this century has been the Tory party, and this has been even more so since 1979.

Yes, Labour too will attack the working class. But despite its capitalist policies and its desire to make the producers bear the cost of Britain's economic decline, it remains the *organised expression of the working class movement, linked organically to its primary institutions of struggle, the trade unions.*

The Labour Party is supported by the majority of the working class and by the majority of working-class activists. For them and for us a Labour victory in the election is the only available means of removing Major, Lamont and Heseltine.

(4) For a Labour government! The election of a Labour government may produce few and slim immediate benefits. In fact, few sections of the working class have great expectations of Labour.

A recent report on the UK by

Nomura, the leading Japanese securities house, rightly rubbishes Tory propaganda that Kinnock has some hidden left agenda.

It argues that in the aftermath of an election victory he would swing further right and go back on the limited promises he has given. Pressure on the pound in the ERM after a Labour win at the polls might well produce higher interest rates, downward pressure on growth, increased unemployment and a pause on public expenditure.

This is all perfectly possible, even very likely. We do not urge a vote for Labour because a Labour government will of itself deliver reforms and improve the position of the working class.

We urge such a vote because with Kinnock in government and attacking the workers in practice, rather than as now on paper and in wordy rhetoric, the prospects of awakening the movement and organising a fight back will be better.

We urge such a vote because the election of a Labour government will improve the terrain on which the class fights, boost its fighting ability and enable a minority to see the need to go beyond Kinnock.

The AEU reported a loss of 90,000 jobs in manufacturing between February and May with minimal resistance.

On the other hand, wage deals running at 6-7% when 3 million are unemployed show that the employers too are exercising caution — witness the partial retreat at Rolls Royce.

The recession is driving the working class into political opposition to the Conservatives. However the blows of the Thatcher years mean that workers look towards Labour with few illusions. They expect only small improvements. We do not have the great hopes and the great demands of 1945 — or even 1964 and 1974.

The working class is looking essentially towards a general election and a change of government. That underlines the importance of *politics* but it should not blind us to the dangers of not fighting now.

If job losses and wage cuts are not resisted now, and the second Thatcher recession works through like the first, it may mean a fundamental weakening of the unions and an important restructuring of the working class in the interests of capital.

We must fight for a general election, and fight the effects on the working class of the recession.

Labour stands at around 44% of the vote. The Conservatives, at 34%, are only one point up on their rating the day before Thatcher went. Since January the Tories have lost an 11% lead.

And little more than a year ago Labour's lead over Thatcher was 22%. The present 11% lead could be clawed back in the coming months; as an election approaches there is usually a tendency for support to swing back to the governing party.

A swing back is all the more likely as the present Labour lead is motivated by a negative reaction to the Tories, not a positive embrace of Kinnockism.

There is no room whatsoever for complacency. There is still a lot to fight for and when the election comes every vote will count.

We should organise our involvement over the coming period around the following ten key points:

(1) Campaign for a general elec-



Unemployment is spiralling. A co-ordinated fightback is needed.

Ireland: their talks and ours

The mainstream political parties in Northern Ireland are talking to each other for the first time in 15 years, at talks organised by the London and Dublin governments. The different factions of the British and Irish left have had little dialogue, too. But last Saturday's (15 June) Labour Party Socialists meeting decided to sponsor a new debate, and began with an exchange of views there and then. Stan Crooke reports.

Bob Whitehead (*Socialist Outlook*):

We are socialists in Britain addressing the current government or a future Labour government. We are in a country which is oppressing another country on the other side of the Irish sea.

That oppression must cease. "Troops Out" might sound simplistic, but it means more than just military withdrawal. It means total British disengagement and an end to all forms of oppression. It means the removal of Britain from Ireland.

Irish people in this country are bitter towards the British left and the Labour Party because of their record on Ireland. The Irish community experiences anti-Irish racism. We must relate to the Irish community in a very principled, democratic and comradely way.

The situation has gone full circle since 1968. The bringing down of Stormont was the high point of the struggle. Things have gone downhill since then, with the exception of the hunger strikes. The mass nationalist movement in Ireland is no longer on the streets.

The Brooke initiative is a fraud because the anti-imperialist party in the North has been excluded. It is an attempt to strengthen partition and the border.

Only in the period 1918-21 and during the hunger strikes did the Labour Party take up a half-decent position on Ireland. These were periods in which the Labour Party was shifting to the left.

We do not have a mass audience, only a layer of people, to address. We need to relaunch debate on Ireland in the labour movement. We must be prepared for the next shift to the left in the Labour Party.

Martin Thomas (*Socialist Organiser*):

The question of the troops is simple. They have carried out repressive policies and we need to be for their withdrawal. But we need a positive policy as well as a negative policy.

"Troops Out" does not mean a united Ireland under a Sinn Fein government. Sinn Fein has the support of just 4% or 5% of the population. "Troops Out" on the basis of the present relationship of forces would mean civil war and repartition.

The Protestant community, or whatever you want to call it, has a clear sense of identity and is heavily armed. The removal of the apparatus of the British state would not mean the disappearance of that community. A minority would fight. There would be a civil war leading to repartition.

This would be a step forward only from a British nationalist point of view; if you work on the basis that what's bad for the British state is good for socialists.

The status quo is unacceptable; in fact it has prepared the ground for civil war. So what is the answer?

Five alternatives are put forward on the left:

(1) to deny reality, for example by being blind to the existence of the Protestant community;

(2) to call for socialist revolution as the immediate way to overcome division; but you cannot have this without a united working class;

(3) to claim that the problems are not as great as they are made out to be; but this is wishful thinking and a denial of the evidence of the last hundred years;

(4) to call, in the manner of Sinn Fein, on the British state to coerce the Protestants; but



A democratic solution to the conflict between the communities in Ireland is needed. Socialists must debate the issues. Photo: Martin Shakeshaft.

this is the opposite of self-determination, and Britain has neither the desire nor the ability to do so;

(5) to link the call for "Troops Out" to a programme for a democratic solution to the conflict between the communities in Ireland, a federal united Ireland with regional autonomy. This is not a policy for implementation by the British state, but a programme of action for unity to be carried out by the Irish people, by the Irish labour movement, and, in the first instance, by the Irish left.

A federal united Ireland with regional autonomy might not be the best solution but no-one has come up with a better one. The important thing is to at least recognise the problem and seek a solution.

"Neither the Protestant nor the Catholic communities are homogenous. In British politics there was no interest in Ireland before 1969: so much for the Labour front bench's argument that if only the violence stopped, then a solution could be found. 'Troops Out' is not the be-all-and-end-all."

Debate

Dorothy Macedo: Neither the Protestant nor the Catholic communities are homogenous. In British politics there was no interest in Ireland before 1969: so much for the Labour front bench's argument

that if only the violence stopped, then a solution could be found. "Troops Out" is not the be-all and end-all. We have the right to come up with solutions, but we do not have the right to say that we won't support the demand of the Irish people for self-determination unless they support such and such a particular solution.

Bill Hamilton: Socialists in Britain should fight to have an input into the creation of a new Ireland, to make it as socialist as possible. The problem about federalism is that the Protestants don't want to be reconciled with the Catholics. But there should be the maximum amount of local democracy in a new united Ireland.

Ruth Cockroft: Unless we address the issue of the Protestant community we will not build a movement in this country for a united democratic Ireland. Aspects of the Southern Irish constitution are institutionalised Catholicism. We need to address such issues, not just say that we're for a united Ireland. "Troops Out" is irresponsible if raised by itself, as it ducks the result of what "troops out" means by itself.

Tony Serjeant: It is wrong to see Ireland as a classic colonial situation. British banks are active in Southern Ireland, but Japanese banks are even more active in America. Does that make America a colony of Japan?

Terry Conway: The fact that I think Ireland is an oppressed nation does not mean that I don't recognise the existence of a Protestant community. But Ireland is not the only place in the world where imperialism has created a settler population.

The Protestant community is not homogenous. It is divided, not least along class lines. It does not help to use labels like Protestant and Catholic in a discussion as this trenches such identity.

No-one is talking about gluing together the 6-county and 26-county states. The laws in Northern Ireland on women and the rights of lesbians and gays are terrible. Martin referred to the "unity of the Irish trade union movement" but this is mainly unity for collaboration with the states North and South, and for selling out struggles.

Ruth seemed to be saying "we don't support 'troops out' unless..." which is not what Martin was saying. You cannot support conditionality.

Nof Tlofias: There's nothing unusual about a trade union bureaucracy selling out struggles, but that doesn't make unity irrelevant.

Hopefully we agree that there are two distinct communities in the North. But what Terry says clouds over that, as religion is a part of the identity of those communities. If partition were, somehow, to disappear, then those communal identities would not disappear.

Bill is right to say that the Protestants don't want conciliation, but we do. We need a programme or a policy which begins to talk about that.

"Federalism should be put forward as an option, not as a prescription. We need to widen out the debate, and debate with sections of the Irish left."

Declan O'Neill: The crucial question is why Britain is in Ireland. I am increasingly convinced that Britain has no economic, political or military interest to stay in Ireland. It would pull out if it could do so without creating instability.

Federalism should be put forward as an option, not as a prescription. We need to widen out the debate, and debate with sections of the Irish left.

Cate Murphy: The Protestants are a distinct community and have rights which we should protect, whilst being against any privileges for them. Unless you recognise the existence of a Protestant community, you're not talking about self-determination for all people in Ireland, but only for Catholics.

Pete Firmin: We have a right to say what we think of events in Ireland, but this needs to be put into context — that of solidarity with the struggle against British oppression in Ireland.

If the left has not built a mass movement on Ireland because of its own political mistakes, why could it not win over public opinion in the Gulf war when it had a correct position? Martin assumes that the working class in Ireland will always be the way it is now, without challenging the way they think. Federalism is a sop to their present consciousness, but not one which gets to the roots of the problem — the loyalty of the Unionists to the British state.

Socialist Organiser does not campaign for a Scottish Assembly, although Scottish people want one. But it calls for federalism in Ireland, although Irish people are not demanding it. There is a contradiction there.

Martin Thomas: There is no one solution which has majority support amongst even one community in Ireland. 70% of the Irish population (in Southern Ireland) already have self-determination. 20% of the population (the Protestant community) have self-determination, as they want to be part of the British state. 10% of the population (the Catholic community in the North) are opposed to the status quo. "Self-determination" is just a meaningless word unless you explain how it will be achieved.

Bob Whitehead: Ireland is very volatile politically. The essential problem is political, hence the use of terms such as Loyalist and Nationalist. It is a political conflict generated by an unresolved national question.

The way forward for Loyalist workers is a united country and a socialist future. I don't say it very loudly because I'm in Britain.

Rights for Protestants? Yes. Religious freedom? Yes. The right to a house in preference to Catholics? No.



Sean Penn as tough cop

Penn mightier than the film

Cinema

Tony Brown reviews "State of Grace"

State of Grace is being promoted as a film noir that has the atmosphere of the 1950s and the gritty realism of the 1990s.

It boasts a terrific cast with Sean Penn, Ed Harris and Gary Oldman as the main players. Penn is the central character and despite his habit of picking poor films he gives a characteristically good performance. That's the positive part of this review.

The film is a gratuitously violent, confused mess. It lacks plot, direction, consistency and credibility. It's far too long and could easily have been cut by a third just by deleting every second use of the word "fuck" and half the murders.

Set in Lower Manhattan, the story is about the local Irish hoods trying to make a deal with the more professional Italian mafia. The gang, headed by Ed Harris's Frankie Flannery, already control their relatively small local area, known as Hell's Kitchen. Flannery proposes that his crew will act as the mafia's proxies in return for a cut of a larger cake.

While negotiations are proceeding, Terry Noonan (Sean Penn)

arrives back in town. Terry had grown up with Flannery and was his brother Jackie's best friend. But he left suddenly 12 years earlier, abandoning Kathleen, his lover and Frankie's sister, because he couldn't be part of the scene. Now he's an undercover cop and his job is to nail the Flannery boys.

Of course Kathleen (Robin Wright) provides the romantic interest. After walking out on her 12 years earlier it takes Terry only one night to woo and bed her. And we're asked to believe that Kathleen is a strong, independent woman who has moved away from her brothers because she is repulsed by the things they do!

This is only one of many jarring

scenes that demand the viewer abandon all critical faculties.

In an earlier scene, Flannery leads his gang into a bar to stand over an old man to force him to buy highly-priced whiskey. But within minutes the bar owner is bewildered as everyone in the gang is throwing punches and yelling at each other. And we're expected to believe that the mafia want this lot as partners!

Inevitably Terry is confronted by the personal dilemma of being a cop who is now required to turn in his best friend. In order to win the Flannery's trust, he has had to stand over people, assault them, and torch a building site. There really isn't any difference between him and the gang.

One would expect rising tension as the climax nears when Terry has to resolve his dilemma about Jackie and win Kathleen's love, and the gang realise that there is an intruder in their midst.

It doesn't happen. The story is too slow, the action too plodding.

In the end Terry throws in his badge and confronts the gang single-handedly, like a man.

The final scenes are like a homage to Peckinpah. A gross ballet of death and carnage, reverentially filmed.

The story could have been good. What a waste.

From Boys From The Blackstuff to boredom

Television

Kevin Feintuck files a progress report on Alan Bleasdale's "GBH"

If the *Guardian* is to be believed, Derek Hatton is attempting to have Alan Bleasdale's series *GBH* banned in case it prejudices his trial. If the second episode (shown 13th/16th June) is typical of the rest of the series there may well be a case for withdrawing the programme in order to save us from more "Greatly Boring Humbug".

The first episode, for all its faults, had established its two main characters and laid the basis for a story. It would not have been about

the Labour Movement as we know it, but would have kept a fair number of us tuning in if only to see Michael Murray come to an inevitably sticky end.

Unfortunately, the second episode offered very little in the development of the main story line. Much of the 90 minutes was spent reinforcing points which had already been established in the first episode. There was also a minor smattering of tuggery organised by supporters of the mysterious group headed by academic guru, Melvin Sloan (played by Paul Daneman).

On the political manipulation front Sloan and his lieutenant, Lou Barnes (Tom Georgeson) have been busy laying the seeds for rioting by the black communities in Murray's city. Murray who prides himself on his anti-racist credentials, at first tries to resist, and suggests they try Cardiff instead!

In terms of character development we have seen Jim Nelson's hypochondria coming along in

leaps and bounds. His stressed condition is causing him to wander into cupboards and tool sheds at night and prevents him from driving over bridges. Never the less, he has stuck to his task defying the weekly pickets, to run his school single-handedly.

Poor old Michael Murray's obsession with the father he never knew is becoming more evident and we have also had it confirmed that his downtrodden chauffeur is in fact his elder brother. The episode did have a couple of worthwhile moments.

I think my favourite was young Michael's mother (Julie Walters) being wooed by her son's headmaster who attempts to charm her by reading from T.S.Eliot. A close second was headmaster Weller, as an old man, using his brolly to damage the obnoxious gutter press reporter.

Some of the unanswered questions from last week are beginning to become clearer.

Yes, there is a state conspiracy going on (not surprising).

Yes, Murray is on the make from building firms (less surprising).

No, the organised working class has yet to appear, let alone assert itself (not surprising but still disappointing).

As for future episodes my tips are:

- Lou Barnes and/or the nasty thug played by Andrew Schofield are the state agents;

- The mysterious fair-haired woman is none other than Murray's childhood temptress, Eileen Critchley;

- When Murray's wife Maureen is finally shown we will see that Murray the brutalised boy has turned into Murray the brutal man.

My last prediction is that despite the second helping being so dull, I won't be the only reader to waste my time watching the third episode.

(Kevin Feintuck was a Liverpool City Councillor from 1987 to 1990)

Three poems

Verse

By Mike Jenkins, author of "A Dissident Voice", published by Seren of Bridgend. All the proceeds from his collection go to the Welsh anti-poll-tax union.

Sean and Raffy

Foam on the water
Smoke in the sky:
How could two
Such good friends die?

Famous on the bridges
Sprayed their names everywhere,
Famous on the walls
Willing people to stare

The Head said "A prank!"
The coppers called them louts
The coroner blamed statistics
But we didn't know owt

Till a mother by a fireside
Pieced together their note:
'Depression' and 'unemployment'
The letters wrote

They'd gone to the river
In a stolen car,
Their lives like pollution:
White chemicals, bursting stars

They'd fixed up the tube
And the gas came in:
They'd covered so much space
It had lost any meaning

In every town, by every train
I'll write it for all to see!
As loud and large as they once

were
SEAN AND RAFFY, R.I.P.

Cardboard Coffin

Find a sheltered corner,
too numb to shake any more:
I lay my bed
I lay my grave,
I'm drifting with the snow.

Waking is the worst time
the dawn's light boots my face
which is the colour
of a copper's uniform,
my lips won't behave.

I slap my skin to see
if I'm still living:
I feel nothing,
though my belly
moans like a tube-train.

I'm a subject of documentaries,
all of a sudden I'm news:
they don't want a corpse
in the doorway of a shop
that fashionable people use.

I'm a hostage to their hand-outs
dying nerve by nerve.
My coffin's a cardboard box:
the warm mannequin stares,
dressed in my ragged reflection.

Fagash Debbie

Fagash Debbie in sitting-room smog,
the baby's always screaming,
there's a leak in the bogs.

The bills are hidden behind the clock,
her savings baked in a pie,
the carpet's strewn with toys and
socks.

She sits back and has another drag,
pulling her in every direction
her children tear her like a rag.

Open University, foundation and brick
but no time for the roof:
yet again pregnant and feeling sick.

What she could have been in life
hangs melancholy over the chairs,
puppets and cuddlies designed through
strife.

The bailiff's on the doorstep, if he
hustles in
all that's left is a frozen chest
and layers of shedded skin.

She threatens her husband with the
snip,
he treats his privates as a Sergeant
would:
the eldest daughter's giving him lip.

Fagash Debbie, there are too many
holes,
too many problems to sew:
turn up the TV, it'll tell them what to
know.

Catholic Trotskyism?

WRITEBACK

Eric Heffer's (and my own) anglo-catholicism was/is not quite as eccentric in revolutionary circles as you suggest. In Britain, Trotskyism originated from anglo-catholic socialism.

The Reg Groves/Stuart Purkiss group (initially with Fr St. John Groser) was a breakaway faction of the Catholic Crusade, (of which Fr Conrad Noel of Thaxted was the leading light).

The Crusade was founded (on a democratic centralist basis) in 1916, itself a breakaway from the Church Socialist League, of which Noel had previously been national secretary. When the Communist Party was founded in 1922 the Crusade was a constituent grouping.

Noel was however what the International Left Opposition elsewhere (eg Lore in the US or — ironically — Ridley in Britain) thought of as a "premature Trotskyist"; so the Crusade disaffiliated, in (I think) 1924.

A faction, (known to Crusade members as the Stalinist Faction,) disapproved, left the Crusade, and re-entered the CP, whose new rules insisted that they did so on an individual basis. A year or two later it re-emerged as the Balham Revolu-

tionary Front.

A subsequent stalinist faction in the Crusade around Jack Puterill and Stanley Evans caused a split in the '30s; the Noel faction, Stuart and Reg reunited as the Socialist Christian League which existed until 1961, members of which subsequently launched *Jubilee* (after the "Year of Jubilee" in Deuteronomy, wherein all wealth was returned to common ownership) which still exists and of which Ken Leech is the moving spirit.

Sammy Bornstein's account of the Reg Groves group's history and evolution is only lacking in that he assumes that Reg (and, for a shorter time, Stuart) abandoned anglo-catholicism while in the CP and in the Left Opposition — he didn't. Moreover, he told Trotsky, when he first contacted him, that the group was predominantly christian-socialist (anglo-catholic socialist).

Reg was sensitive to allegations by the CP HQ that his group only existed because of its religious connections, and so (unlike Stuart) he didn't widely announce the fact that he was religious, except in the context of christian socialist meetings (where there was no secret about his Trotskyism); and so, though he made theoretical connections between the two beliefs, he did not make organisational connections, and consequently did not take the theoretical connections to the point of a theory of organisation.

This lack struck Conrad Noel as theoretically sloppy and was



Like Heffer, many early British Trotskyists were anglo-catholics

probably why, even though the Noel and the Groves groupings were reunited after the '30s split in a new christian socialist organisation, he still — until his death in 1940 — referred to the Groves group as the "Stalinist Faction".

I would argue that such was the degeneration of the CPGB in the mid-twenties that no oppositional faction could arise within it, unless its members had some non-Party point of contact and loyalty. Except for Roy Merritt (the Bukharinist Group, which consisted of two brothers and a brother-in-law), all other oppositional factions came together after people had left the CP, or

were formed within party front organisations, not within the Party itself.

Nor, incidentally, was this tradition the only anglo-catholic one within the far left; for instance, Jackie Prynne who was in *Socialist Review* and later the SLL, in the late '50s and the early '60s was anglo-catholic but, until she met me, unaware that she belonged to a wider tradition. There were several "spokes" in the YCL at that time. Fr Michael Scott was in the CP in England and South Africa, and broke with it because of its compromises with racism.

Laurens Otter Salop

SWP: cynical on Labour Party

I attended the same SWP meeting that Mark Osborn reported on in SO 487. I think Mark missed an important point: the SWP's characterisation of the Labour Party.

At one point, in reply to a question on what the SWP will advocate at the General Election, Cliff argued "voting Labour is the expression of working class people wanting something better".

By that criteria, the SWP will be happy advocating a vote for the Democratic Party in the US. It was hardly a scientific analysis.

Cliff then appeared to be moving in the right direction when he said that the Labour Party was a "capitalist workers' party". It was bourgeois because of its policies, dominant ideas, etc. Yes, I agree, but what made it a workers' party? Cliff remained silent, except to say that a (decreasing) number of workers were members of the Labour Party. But workers are members of other parties, too.

The question was raised again at a meeting I spoke at a few days later. The local SWPers accepted the Labour Party was, in Lenin's words, a "bourgeois workers' party" but by virtue of its social composition. Using that criteria the SWP is a bourgeois party! And anyway, he argued, the Labour Party was losing its working class base.

There are three points to be made here. First, that the SWP makes a sociological analysis of the Labour Party, rather than seeing its organic trade union links, what makes it a workers' party.

similar to the liberal academics who argue that class politics are fragmenting.

Thirdly, it indicates that many, if not most, SWP members have little knowledge of their own organisation's history.

The Cliff group, active in

the Labour Party in the '50s and '60s, argued it was "obligatory" for socialists to work in the Labour Party as long as working class politics was found there. History has been re-written. The forerunners of the SWP were in the Labour Party because they were small, I was informed

by the same SWP full-timer. Cliff's method of using political arguments as functional for organisational questions couldn't be clearer. Yes he is a cynical, lying old creature.

Paul McGarry South London

Don't blame Dylan!

I thought that the article penned by Paul Mellelieu was too puerile and abusive on the subject of Bob Dylan to be worth replying to.

However, having read Colin Foster's pathetic attempt to support Dylan, I am forced to put pen to paper.

Colin Foster basically concedes all Mellelieu's case — ie. Dylan has done nothing worthwhile for the last 15 years, but draws the slightly

more charitable conclusion that Dylan's early work more than makes up for the last "15 or even 25 years".

Why did he bother? By dismissing anything since *Blonde on Blonde* he ignores what is critically regarded as Dylan's finest album, *Blood on the Tracks*, plus *Street Legal* (1975), *Empire Burlesque* (1985), and *Oh Mercy* (1987) to name but a few.

I am sick and tired of Dylan being boxed into one particular slot, ie. protest singer; granted, these occur

throughout his work, but his music is more diverse than any other artist still performing today.

If you want to do a hatchet job why not concentrate on those who deserve it — ie. The Rolling Stones?

One final point to make: it seems grossly unfair to blame Dylan, who is not a self-publicist, for some of the more stupid and pretentious things written about him.

Jane Hinchliffe Birmingham

WHAT'S ON

Thursday 20 June

"The case for socialist feminism", Middlesborough SO meeting. Teeside Poly, 6.00
"Nothing to celebrate", candlelit vigil in opposition to the "Victory Parade". 9.00-midnight, Trafalgar Square. Organised by Women Against War in the Gulf, Labour Against War and others
"Racist Britain — what's the answer?", Sheffield SO meeting. SSCAU, West St, 7.30. Speaker: Gail Cameron
"Save the NHS", Leeds SO public meeting. 7.00, Swarthmore Centre, Woodhouse Square

Friday 21 June

"Women and violence at work" Conference, Birmingham Trade Union Studies Centre, Floodgate Street, Digbeth. Details: 021-666 6169

Saturday 22 June

Socialist Movement TUC TGWU members meeting. 1.00-5.30. ULU, Malet Street, Euston, London

Wednesday 26 June

"Socialists and the Labour Party", East London SO meeting. Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, E2, 7.30. Speaker: Maxine Vincent

Thursday 27 June

"Fighting council cuts", Merseyside SO meeting. 7.30, Unemployed Centre, Wallasey
"Women and the fight for socialism", SW London SO meeting. 7.30, Lambeth Town Hall

Wednesday 3 July

"We stand for workers' liberty", London SO Forum. 7.30, Lucas Arms, Gray's Inn Road, Kings Cross

Thursday 4 July

"America: the prospects for socialism", Leeds SO meeting. 7.30, Leeds University Union

Saturday 6 July

Socialist Campaign Group peace conference

Monday 8 July

"Lessons of the Iranian revolution", Manchester SO meeting. 8.00, Town Hall. Speaker from CARI

Saturday 13 July

Manchester Anti-Cuts Demonstration, called by Labour Against Cuts and Poll Tax

Thursday 18 July

Luton Socialists for Labour meeting. 7.45, Union Street. Speaker: Cate Murphy

Lustings on the hustings

EYE ON THE LEFT

By Dale Street

Not for the first time in their political lives, members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Liverpool have recently had to perform yet another political somersault.

When *Militant* and the Liverpool Labour Party Broad Left first publicised their intention of standing independent Labour candidates in last month's local council elections, the SWP dismissed it as a waste of time.

It was written off as "manoeuvring in wards". Chasing after seats on the City Council was an empty diversion. The real struggle was on the picket lines, fighting the City Council's attempts to axe a thousand jobs.

When five out of the six independent Labour candidates who stood got elected, the SWP softened its line, of course, said the SWP, they had been quite right to stand. Of course, said the SWP, it was good that they got elected. (So why did the SWP not go out and canvas for them?) But, even so, they were really still wasting their time messing around on the Council.

Then the SWP sniffed potential recruits. The 25 members of the breakaway "Liverpool Labour Councillors' Group" (LLCG) got expelled. The SWP read that another 150 Labour Party members were under threat of expulsion. Here, surely, was a rich seam to tap for potential recruits. (What's more, for a change, they would not be students.)

The inevitable "Open Letter" soon followed, headed — rather prematurely in many cases — "Where Now for Socialists Outside the Labour Party?"

The "Liverpool Labour Councillors (LLC) were quite right to stand against the official Labour candidates," says the "Open Letter".

The LLC, continues the "Open Letter", understood you could not fight Rimner's attacks from within Labour's ranks".

Obviously the SWP has every right to indulge in dead-end sectarianism and cut itself off from the struggles in the Labour Party. But to suggest that it is objectively impossible to fight within the Labour Party against the right wing is politically illiterate.

There's plenty more of that on the way.

The "Open Letter" is at pains to stress that "the real Labour Party is not the party of the (LLC) rebels, but that of the witch-hunters." And as proof we're told that "the Labour Party has never (their emphasis) called a strike."

Nor has the SWP*. And the trade unions have never won a general election. (Nor has the SWP). So where does this discovery get you? Only to discover that the

British labour movement has a political wing (the Labour Party) and an industrial wing (the trade unions). Only SWP members are oblivious to this pretty obvious fact.

The "Open Letter" goes on to deal with the split by the Independent Labour Party (ILP) from the Labour Party in 1932. The ILP failed "because it tried to ride two horses at once: was it to be an electoral alternative to Labour, or a party based on the struggles of workers?"

If the SWP bothered to read Lenin, they would know that he advocated that revolutionaries ride not two, but three horses at once: the political, the economic and the ideological.

The ILP breakaway from the Labour Party was a fiasco which quickly ended in a political wilderness. Whilst being much larger than the SWP of today, it was not a credible alternative to the Labour Party. For obvious reasons, the SWP, which spins its own fantasies about being an alternative to the Labour Party, prefers not to acknowledge this fact.

"Even if the LLC," continues the "Open Letter", "take control of the Labour council and win a couple of Parliamentary seats," it will not be strong enough to take on the Tory government or a Kinnock-led Labour government.

"The ILP breakaway was a fiasco. Though much larger than the SWP of today, it was not a credible alternative to the Labour Party".

So what's the alternative? Yes, it's that old favourite of "join the SWP": "We urge all those socialists who have stood up to Kinnock's attacks not to follow the path of the ILP in the 1930s but to join with us in building a real socialist alternative."

If the SWP bothered to read a couple more history books, they might discover that they are pretty well advanced along the path followed by the ILP in the 1930s (and the Workers Revolutionary Party in the 1970s).

The SWP's recent chasing after Liverpool Broad Left reminds me of their last lustings after 'Militant'. This little ditty was composed at the time:

(To the tune of 'What a wonderful world it would be').
Don't know much about history,
Marxism's still a mystery
Don't know the line that Lenin took
'Cos I've only read Tony Cliff's book
But one thing I know for fact
If we got together and passed
an Enabling Act
What a wonderful world it would be...

* With one exception. An SWP-dominated "Rank and File Conference" in 1977 called a one-day strike in support of the firefighters. It was a miserable flop.

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Kinnock backs hand-out to the rich

Neil, I'm ashamed to be in your Party

An Open Letter to Neil Kinnock



The Tories want to soften up the rail unions and the NUM to make way for the privatisations planned for British Rail and British Coal

Railworkers plan action to save jobs

By Joe Motherwell (ASLEF member and freight train guard)

Eighteen thousand train drivers and other train crew workers are to be balloted for strike action against the

threat to their jobs.

It is the most important stand yet taken by trade unionists against the developing jobs massacre.

The conference on 15-16 June of the train crews' union ASLEF decided unanimously to

All out to win

call a ballot on action short of an all-out strike in response to the threat to jobs posed by Tory Government plans to break up and privatise British Rail.

- Privatisation will mean:
- fragmentation of the national network;
 - a reduction in services;
 - an unbalanced network, investment in highly profitable routes, decline elsewhere;
 - job losses, a reduction in wages and worsening of conditions;
 - asset stripping of the industry for profits (with stations relocated to the periphery of city centres);
 - the operational impracticality of competing operators on the same tracks;
 - even less public accountability;
 - closure of lines.

The Tories have already cut government grants to the railways drastically. The "Public Service Obligation" (PSO) was £1,011 million in 1984-5; it will be £334 million in 1991-92; and £309 million in 1992-93.

Investment is much lower than in other European rail networks; and the percentage of costs covered by fares is the second highest in

Europe, at 71.2%.

The decline is being used by BR to justify privatisation. The most drastic effect will be the reduction in staff. A planned 5,000 will go by 1993-4; 4,000 on the railways and 1,000 in ancillary activities.

At root is a belief that the free market is efficient. But the market takes no account of environmental concerns, transport planning, integration or regional development.

The market also leads to more roads being built and rail being neglected. The Department of Transport employs 16,000 people on roads and only 200 on railways.

We need a safe, effective, accountable rail system, something the market can never provide. Privatisation means less accountability, less safe and even less effective railways. We need democratic workers' control over the industry.

Given the implications of privatisation, probably nothing short of an all-out strike is good enough. And ASLEF members should remember the results of the London Tube workers' strike of 1989. The metropolis is the key.

Socialist Organiser will not appear next week, as most of our supporters and sellers will have their time taken by the Workers' Liberty 91 summer school.

When I first read reports that you and the Labour Party leaders are backing Tory MPs in their plan to get Government money for the upper-class spivs of Lloyds, I couldn't believe it.

But it is, it seems, the incredible truth! The Labour front bench has backed the plan to offer public cash to the super-rich who invested their money in the Lloyds insurance market and, for once in a while, came out with a loss. It is a crying disgrace, Mr Kinnock!

I am an engineering worker, unemployed for the last 3 months since I was victimised for trade union activity. I've been a supporter of the Labour Party for 12 years. I've voted Labour in every election since I became old enough to vote. I am a member of the Northampton Labour Party.

I haven't liked many of the things you and your friends have done to the Labour Party over the last few years, far from it. But, until now, Mr Kinnock, I have never felt thoroughly ashamed for the Labour Party.

I never felt an unpleasant feeling in my guts at the thought that I am connected with it.

Until now, I have never felt any sympathy for those socialists who have abandoned the Labour Party in protest at what you have done to it. The opposite, in fact: I condemned them as deserters from the struggle whose desertion would make the Labour Party safer for you and your kind.

Now — and I'll put it bluntly — I'm half inclined to join them myself.

The Lloyds "names" are rich and highly privileged people. I read that about sixty of them are Tory MPs.

The Tories who plan to donate large sums of Government money to make sure these people remain as rich as before are the same Tories who, for a dozen years, have made a savage and bloodthirsty religion out of the principle of Government non-intervention.

Let the market decide, they proclaimed. The well-being of millions of children, women and men has been sacrificed to that principle.

God knows how many working-class lives have — literally — been lost because of the Tories' stony-hearted devotion to the principle that the market must decide.

Now those same Tories forget their principle of Government non-intervention, forget that "the market must rule", and rush to dole out large sums to the members of their own class in difficulties at Lloyds. And Labour backs the Tories!

Mr Kinnock, you are in favour of hauling working-class people who cannot afford to pay the poll tax through the courts and forcing them to pay! You are in favour of Labour councils sending bailiffs to seize their small possessions!

And now you back the filthy Tories who still operate the poll tax — even after they have had to admit that the tax is unjust — when they want to give a massive handout to themselves and their friends!

Even most of the Tory newspapers are against the Tory MPs here, Mr Kinnock! As I write, the Tory front bench has not yet decided to back the MPs who are pushing for the handout! But the Labour front bench has!

Why? Is it just that you are so pathetically spineless that you see this as one more chance to show the bosses how "respectable" and "reliable" you are, and how sympathetic to the concerns and interests of the bankers and industrialists who run Britain?

That, I guess, is it! Don't you want to dislodge the Tories, Mr Kinnock? The 60-odd Tory MPs with a direct interest could be debarred from voting on this business — so Labour might

Turn to page 3

Socialists for Labour

Labour Party Socialists has launched a campaign to rally *Socialists for Labour*, designed to mobilise the maximum vote for Labour and at the same time to organise for socialist policies and to prepare a fight for working class demands against a future Kinnock government.

Vote Labour! Fight for socialism!

Tear off this form and send to Cate Murphy, 58 Florence Road, London SE14

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TU/LP position _____

I want to sponsor SFL/please send me details for SFL