




A monument to greed
centre pages



The left must unite
Bernie Grant
page 5

For socialist renewal!



For workers' liberty!



Basic Instinct: male fantasy
page 13



The poverty of anti-Zionism
page 12

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

Back the teachers!

SAVE OUR SCHOOLS!

"Teachers face mass sackings as schools throughout England and Wales shed jobs to balance their budgets". Thus ran the lead article in the *Independent on Sunday*, highlighting the growing crisis in the education system.

The first point to make is that the crisis affects not only teachers' jobs, but also lecturers at colleges, and non-teaching staff right across the range, from nursery school to further and adult education, not to mention the students.

The government gave local councils less money than is needed to fund this year's teachers' salary award. Instead of giving everyone an individual 7.5% rise, the government has upped the "average teacher's salary" by 7.5%, multiplied it by the number of teachers, and left the local authorities to make up the shortfall.

This sleight of hand puts pressure on schools to shed more experienced staff who earn more under the incremental pay structure than teachers just out of college.

Consequently, according to the *Independent*,

Turn to page 2

STOP THE RETREAT!

The madness of the CAP

Millions of people are starving in southern Africa because drought and war have shattered their fragile agricultural economy.

At the same time, the European Community has decided to pay European farmers to take 15 per cent of their land out of production.

That is the way the capitalist market works — the laws of supply and demand and "consumer sovereignty". More and more effort goes into concocting titbits for the overfed rich, while the poor starve because, having no money,

they count for nothing in the marketplace.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which the EC has just decided to reform drastically, was launched in 1962. It was designed to smooth out the modernisation of West European agriculture, protecting it against competition from the US and easing the impact for the farmers who were an important part of the political base of many of the capitalist governments in the EC.

Modern technology has raised productivity in agriculture more than almost anywhere else. The average farm worker in the

Netherlands produces \$40,000-worth of output per year; in the US, \$33,000; in

"The socialist alternative is public ownership of the land and the large farms"

Italy, \$18,000; in Poland, \$2,000; in Mozambique, \$73 (all figures for 1988).

Even within countries, the difference in productivity between the most modern farms and old fashioned small-holdings is much bigger

than the difference between one factory and another.

The CAP fixed high guaranteed prices for agricultural products, based on the productivity of the less efficient farms; used EC money to buy up stocks to maintain those prices; exported the resulting surpluses outside the EC at knock-down prices; and put tariff barriers round the EC to stop imports bringing down the prices.

It has succeeded in smoothing the transformation of agriculture — in France, for example, farming's share of the workforce has fallen from 28% in 1950

to 6% today — but at the cost of pumping vast subsidies into the pockets of richer farmers. These mainstays of the political right become "socialist" advocates of state welfare pay-outs as soon as their own income is at stake!

A lot of the subsidies have been passed on to landlords, because CAP guarantees push up rents on farmland. The EC has decided on reform now for three reasons. Firstly, to help get an agreement in the crucial "Uruguay round" of world trade talks; secondly, because CAP pay-outs have become so expen-

sive; and thirdly, because the decline in the farming population makes it easier to cut their pay-outs.

The reform will cut the guaranteed prices and compensate farmers by direct payments on condition that they set aside 15% of their land.

The socialist alternative is public ownership of the land and the large farms, aid to the smaller farms to operate as cooperatives, and reorganisation of farm production in line with people's hunger rather than their wallets.

Defend Ian Murch!

Earlier this year Ian Murch was elected as Treasurer of the NUT on the basis of opening the books of the union and cleaning up the union's financial mess. His message was quite clear in his election material and he resoundingly beat the sitting right wing ('Broad Left')

Treasurer, Gordon Green. There was a flurry of panic amongst the union's Officers and predominantly right wing ('Broad Left') Executive and it was clear that they would do anything to prevent Ian from seeing the books let alone take up office. Such items as unaccounted expenses on junketing, the General Secretary, Doug McAvoy's, massive 46% salary increase taking him to £63,000 a year, the waste of resources at the union's residential centre, Stoke Rochford, etc., are sensitive issues for these people.



Thailand: fighting for democracy

Police arrest pro-democracy demonstrator in Bangkok. Report page 4.

On Saturday May 16th, Ian heard that he had been "suspended from membership of the NUT for one day less than 6 months" after a rigged 'complaint' and a hearing by the Wales (other committees would have been "too favourable" to Ian!) Disciplinary Committee for

alleged charges relating to an appearance on a Channel 4 TV programme, "Class Action". Two other Executive members appeared on the programme — one was "severely reprimanded", the other was not mentioned at all! The artificial nature of the whole affair is quite clear but as things stand Ian will not be allowed to take up his post and it also removes him from being secretary of the Bradford Association/Division, a post he has held for the past 12 years.

There have been some initial moves in a campaign involving left members of the Executive, a petition and letters of protest. The need however, is for a broad-based defense campaign reaching out to members inside and outside the official channels of the union, many of whom are in a state of demoralisation. There is a short amount of time

before the summer holidays. We must rally as many members as possible to a conference which can discuss the way forward — speed is of the essence. With members and contacts of the CDFU and STA it will be the start of a campaign absolutely vital to the health of the union for the next four years. The right wing have seized their opportunity by using the most bureaucratic and arbitrary measures — we must not let them get away with it.

As Executive Member, Andy Dixon said, "this is an outrageous affront to union democracy. Union activists will be appalled and Ian's suspension will generate a wave of anger against the misleaders of the union." Money and letters of support to: 'Reinstate Ian Murch Campaign c/o 44 Damons Rd, Keighley, West Yorks BD21 5EU.

Mistakes in Manchester

By Helen Plant

Two Manchester councillors, Ray Whyte and Margaret Manning have given up on the Labour Party to form a Socialist Labour Group on Manchester City Council.

This action follows a series of attacks on the Labour left in Manchester over the past year. Margaret Manning and Cllr John Clegg were suspended by the Labour Party National Constitutional Committee last July for protesting in support of a poll tax non-payer in prison.

Election leaflets publicising Clause Four of the party's constitution have been censored by City Party officers.

And now, Labour-controlled Manchester has started jailing poll tax non-payers.

The left has fought back against these attacks. The wards represented by Margaret Mann-

ing and John Clegg have repeatedly protested against their suspension. Burnage ward tried to democratically select John Clegg as their Council candidate, but eventually a candidate was imposed on them. Rightly, John Clegg decided not to split the Labour vote by standing independently.

The formation of the Socialist Labour Group can only aid the right wing of the party, giving credence to the lie that the left are disloyal. It may spark some party members to give up demoralisation. Any fight against the witchhunt will be weakened by these councillors voluntarily ripping up their party cards.

The left of the party should be the most resolute defenders of democracy. But Margaret Manning and Ray Whyte have made no attempt to democratically consult the wards who selected them as councillors. If they no longer wish to be Labour councillors they should resign from the Council so local people have the chance to elect Labour members to represent them.

Lambeth students unite with teachers

By Jeni Bailey

Two weeks ago students occupied Lambeth Town Hall over threatened cuts in Further Education (FE). The Labour council voted to make 10% cuts in education, which will mean about £1.2 million recession worth of cuts in the FE sector.

Last week NATFHE, the lecturers' union, voted by 87% to take escalating strike action, they are also supported by council workers in NALGO.

The cuts are likely to mean around 30 job losses at each college in Lambeth, big increases in college fees and many course closures. Classrooms are already over crowded and under-resourced.

After two days of strike action supported on picket lines by many students — lecturers voted overwhelmingly for all out strike action after the half-term holiday.

Students are playing an important role in Lambeth. Despite exams, (many students are doing their 'A' levels), the solidarity shown to the lecturers has, so far, been tremendous.

At a council Labour Group meeting last week students and lecturers lobbied their councillors demanding that they don't pass on the Tories' cuts to the local community. One lecturer explained how the worst off in Lambeth will suffer most by their proposed cuts.

A student argued that Labour councillors shouldn't be prepared to do the Tories dirty work for them, and suggested that Lambeth fight the Tories over poll tax capping.

The cuts in Lambeth are not an isolated attack on education. The Independent on Sunday carried as front page news the education cuts taking place all over England and Wales.

The Tories' plans to bring market principles into education have brought big cuts already. But the worst is yet to come.

The attitude of councillors in Lambeth was that the Tories were too strong to fight now. The disappointment felt by millions when the Tories were re-elected means that people are now too demoralised to fight back. In other words we have to wait for the next election!

Students, pupils, teachers and lecturers along with others in the public sector and the community cannot wait for the next general election. The fightback has started in Lambeth. This action needs to be replicated in all the councils where the Tories are poll tax capping and Labour councils have to be forced to fight the Tories and not make

the working class suffer more.

Students will be lobbying their MP at Parliament on 4 June. The lobby is against student poverty and cuts in education and for a decent living grant for all students in full time post-16 education. The lobby starts at 2.30 on Thursday 4 June. For more details phone Jill on 071 639 7967.

Save our schools

From front page

thousands of teaching jobs are being cut, despite an increase in school roles. Already one in four primary classes contain 30 or more children. The National Union of Teachers estimates that 2,000 jobs will be cut in the North of England alone.

Up till now the norm has been for jobs to be cut by non-replacement of staff or redeployment within the same local authority. Now the cuts are beginning to mean compulsory redundancy and the unions are starting to fight back.

The prospect of thousands of redundancies in schools has already spurred one teaching union, the NAS/UWT, to ballot for strike action in some parts of the country — including indefinite three-days-a-week strike action at a Walthamstow school.

The cutting of budgets, the Government's refusal to supply funds to cover this year's pay rise, and the devolving of budgets to individual schools, all mean a squeeze on resources in many schools. Some areas of the curriculum are dropped, and special needs provision is scrapped.

Deputy heads' jobs are increasingly under threat, and such job losses would inevitably put more administration on to the shoulders of already hard-pressed classroom teachers.

The main teaching union, the NUT, has not responded so far to these attacks. It has been too busy attacking the Left in the union, and witch-hunting its Treasurer, Ian Murch.

It is down to local branches, and organised rank and file in the union (STA and CDFU), to organise for action and pressure the NUT Executive into action. Currently, a national one-day strike is being demanded of the leadership, as the start of a national campaign. Meanwhile, it is up to local associations to take action forward.
More on page 15.

The Mail
POLICE GRAB TRIPPERS
SCHOOLS RUSH TO OPT OUT

SUNDAY MIRROR
FREE!
GAY SEX ORGY AT THE PALACE

You really want to know what the Royal footmen do in their spare time, don't you? They have a "gay sex orgy" at the Palace, says the *Sunday Mirror*.

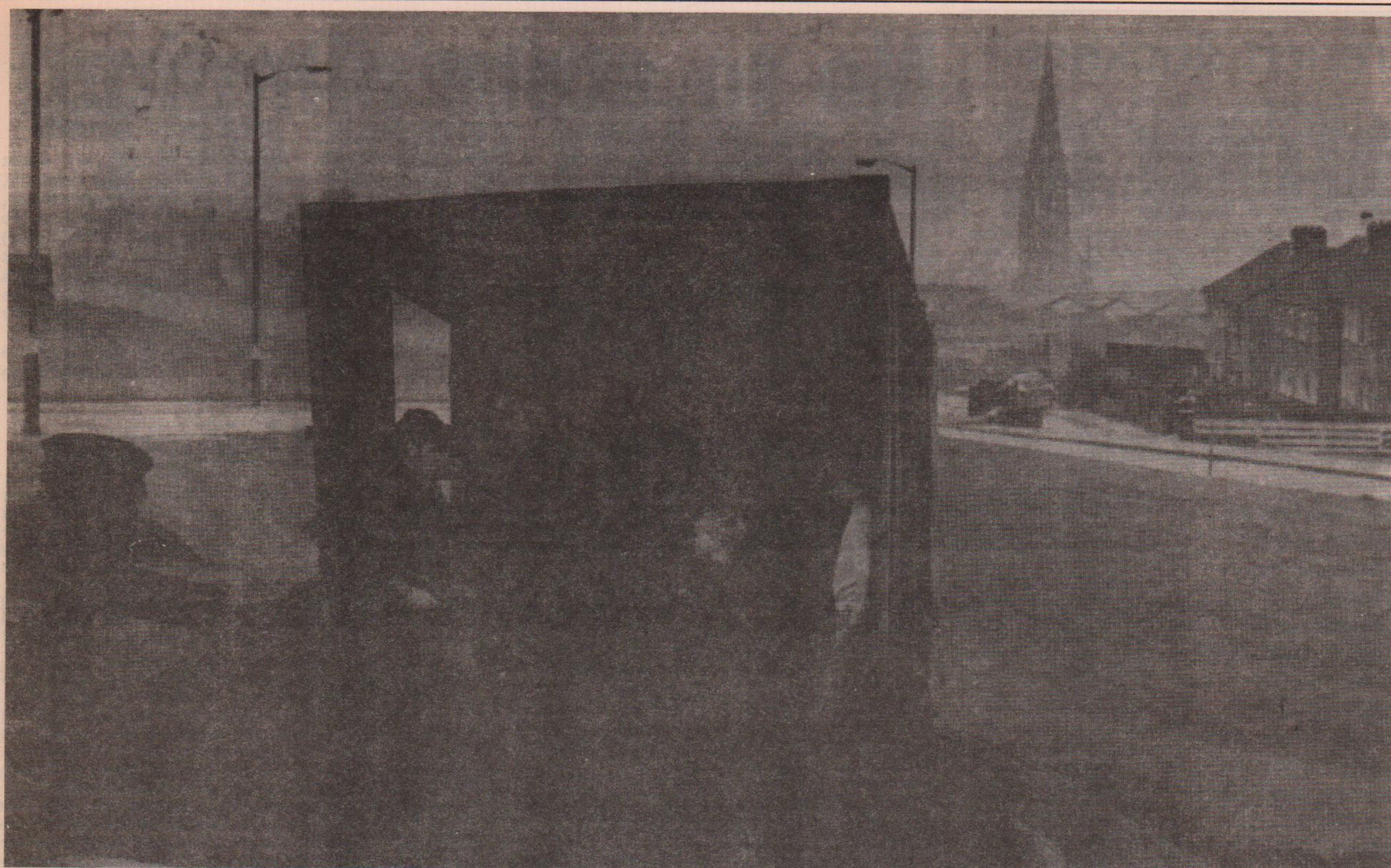
The lie machine

DAILY STAR
They came to rob my home... they left in an ambulance

NORMA'S MOMENT OF FEAR

Jeweller Malcolm Hammond disarmed and shot gangsters who raided him. He was careful to insist, "I'm not an avenging hero", but the *Daily Star* tried to bill him that way.

And the *Star* never asks why, when police — specially trained with firearms, unlike Hammond — shoot someone they consider dangerous, they always insist that they have to kill them. Hammond did not kill his attackers.



The British army is an army of occupation for the Northern Catholics

Armagh and Bishop Casey

Three recent incidents from Ireland:

● In Armagh, aggressive paratroop soldiers, specialist in attack, descend on an Irish Catholic village, Coalisland. Their faces are blackened, so that they will not be identified. They proceed to beat every man in the village on whom they can lay their hands.

This is their response to an IRA bomb blowing the legs off one of their comrades.

Later, during a demonstration at the village in protest at the beatings, paratroopers fire into a crowd of those they had earlier beaten, aiming at their feet.

● The professedly celibate Catholic Bishop of Galway,

Eamonn Casey, is revealed to have a 17 year old American son. While ignoring his son, even, on occasions, when the boy answered the telephone to him, he has given the boy's mother large sums of money — church money. In

"In Armagh last week you saw the face of the British Army that Northern Ireland Catholics often see. For a while the official cant that the soldiers are just innocent victims trying to keep the peace was thrown aside."

return for her silence, he offered her even bigger sums — close to a quarter of a million pounds!

She says he talked to her about an abortion 18 years ago.

Bishop Casey is one of the small number of men, forming the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland, who wield immense power over the spiritual and social lives of Ireland's four and a half million Catholics, north and south of the border. These men claim and exercise control over the sexual lives of all Irish Catholics; over decades they have so shaped the state's laws that Catholic rules on abortion, divorce and (until recently) contraception are enforced on those who would not choose to live by them.

Eamonn Casey and the others got their way in the 1983 referendum, and divorce is still banned in the 26 Counties. In

1982, Bishop Casey and the other princes of the Irish Catholic church succeeded in writing a ban on abortion — already illegal — into the Irish constitution, by way of a referendum.

Casey, the money he stole "repaid by well-wishers", has fled overseas.

● When the regular 2,000 copies of the *Guardian* — a paper which alone amongst leading British newspapers championed Irish rights, consistently and outspokenly from the 1880s onwards — arrived in Dublin last week, they were met by a gang of Gardai: their distributor was told it would be a breach of the law if they were circulated. The reason? The *Guardian* contained a full-page advertisement for an abortion service in London.

In political terms, "Ireland" is not one but a vast and complex cluster of shifting issues. It is not always easy and sometimes it is impossible to bring the main "issues" in the "Irish Question" into alignment, and into a coherent picture, so that their real relationship is clear. These three scenes can help us do that.

In Armagh, where the big majority are Catholic and Nationalist — and which is, therefore, known to the British military as "bandit country" — the British army is an army of occupation. Its personnel know that, and sometimes they slip out of political control and act according to that. In this case, their understandable anger at the maiming of one of their number was expressed in indiscriminate, escalating violence against an entire population, in an uncontrollable eruption of military aggression against unarmed Catholics.



Noel Browne: the Catholic hierarchy blocked his 'Mother and Child' health scheme in 1950



Bishop Casey: the hierarchy still holds power today, enforcing bans on abortion and divorce

Thus it was in Derry City on 30 January 1972, when the Paratroopers fired on an unarmed crowd of peaceful demonstrators — not at their legs but with intent to kill. Thirteen men and boys died there and then, and another one died not long afterwards.

In Armagh last week, you saw the face of the British army that Northern Irish Catholics often see. For a while the official cant that the soldiers are just innocent victims trying to keep the peace was thrown aside.

In Armagh, as in not much less than half the territory making up the Six Counties, the British army, and its local Protestant-Unionist allies, are just that — an army of occupation, more or less oppressively brutal at different times but, always, an army of occupation.

Therefore, the job of socialists and all who wish Ireland well is just to campaign to get the British government and its army out of

the Six Counties — troops out now? No! Because this particular "Irish Question" — the half a million Catholics held against their will in the Northern Ireland state —

Turn to page 4

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

Karl Marx
Socialist Organiser

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French dockers fight for "Dock Labour Scheme"

French dockers are continuing their campaign to save jobs.

They have organised 30-odd strikes since last October, the last at the end of last week, and other protests.

Their struggle directly parallels the British dockers' battle to save the Dock Labour Scheme in 1989. French dockers had a 1947 port labour law which set up a

giving local freight handling companies the power to hire, fire, and put dockers on the dole as they wish, will turn the dockers into casual workers and (according to the CGT) destroy half the 8,300 port jobs.

According to French bosses, France is the last major country in Western Europe to scrap dock labour protection, and as a result dockside handling charges are 30 to 50% above the European average. With freer movement of goods across internal EC frontiers, increasing amounts of French trade are being channelled through foreign ports. Between 1983 and 1990, the share of French sea-born exports going through foreign ports increased from 15% to 29%.

The French National Assembly, dominated by the Socialist Party, has voted to scrap the 1947 law, but the dockers are continuing their fight.

If dockers' unions had been able to unite across the European Community in the run-up to 1992, they would have had formidable power, enough to force the governments and the bosses to agree to modernisation of the ports on the dockers' terms. As it is, the French dockers are left with a difficult rearguard struggle.

"If dockers' unions had been able to unite across the European Community in the run-up to 1992, they would have had formidable power, enough to force the bosses to agree to modernisation of the ports on the dockers' terms."

central port labour office, giving the CGT trade union an effective veto on job cuts and guaranteeing dockers fall-back pay when there was no work for them.

Ending this scheme, and

Thai military holds on to power

At the end of the day", according to Teresa Poole reporting from Thailand (25 May), "the power of the armed forces remains undiminished.

"The military line-up behind the suppression remains intact, the largest party in the lower house was effectively set up by the air force, and the Senate is composed of figures hand-picked by the former military regime".

Huge protests in Thailand last week, defying troops who killed hundreds of demonstrators, have forced the resignation of the prime minister, and an agreement by the military-dominated parliament to appoint an elected MP as his successor.

However, the military retains power, as it has done for decades, with a brief parliamentary-democratic interlude in 1973-6. And Thailand remains, for the West, a favoured site for tourism and for low-cost production by multinationals.

According to British press reports, the protests were dominated by students and the middle class. The Financial Times reports that "Mr Somsak Kosaisook, one of the leaders of a state-enterprise labour

organisation dissolved following [the military] coup last year, said he had met with other union officials to discuss a strike...

"According to The Nation newspaper, a group of oilfield employees attempted to strike this week... The company said that crude oil production had been briefly disrupted".

As yet, the growing Thai working class seems to have no well-organised independent voice.

Despite the gleaming skyscrapers and rapid growth of Bangkok, Thailand remains an underdeveloped country, with 80% of the population living in the countryside and mostly dependent on agriculture.



The power of the armed forces remains undiminished

No to state pimping!

LETTERS

Jean Lane (SO 522) is wrong to think the Mothers' Union's decision to debate the legalisation and regulation of prostitution - as a way of combating the spread of AIDS - is a new departure.

Since the nineteenth century middle-class women's organisations

male prostitutes; is the Mothers' Union proposing they have their own brothels? That would be a departure.

Those bourgeois women know whose side they're on. Jean should think about the implications of her position.

Any socialist/feminist stance should start from

solidarity with those women in prostitution. It's not the answer, but they are still our sisters and deserve at least to be listened to.

Overwhelmingly, prostitute organisations call for decriminalisation, not legalisation and regulation. They do not want compulsory testing and control of where they live.

If resources are made available - free condoms, HIV testing, health checks, needles, contraception, etc - they will (and do now) use them. They do not want state pimping which leaves them open to abuse by policemen and other agents of control.

Gerry Byrne
South West London

"Any socialist/feminist stance should start from solidarity with those women in prostitution."

have seen it as their business to press for state control of prostitutes to prevent the spread of disease.

Spread to whom? Middle class women, via their husbands who use prostitutes, ie. locate the problem with poor, largely powerless women rather than powerful men. In the process, increase the power of the state (representing those same powerful men) against the poor women.

Jean doesn't mention

We should back Livingstone!

I find it hard to believe that *Socialist Organiser* refused to back Ken Livingstone for Party leader.

Once the Campaign Group adopted Livingstone, then all socialists should have called for a vote for Livingstone.

Socialist Organiser's valid criticisms showed why the left MPs organised in the Campaign Group of MPs should not have adopted Livingstone. There are a whole host of MPs in the Campaign Group who would have been politically better candidates.

Tony Benn would have been the best choice. However, Tony Benn declined to stand. Ken Livingstone was the only available left candidate.

What is the difference between Livingstone and

Smith and Gould? Both Smith and Gould believe Labour should move further to the right, and erode its links with the trade unions.

Livingstone defends the links with the trade unions, believes Labour needs to shift to the left and adopt a more radical programme, and has called for a commitment to cut defence spending. This is far from being a Marxist programme, but it is better than what Smith and Gould offer.

Of course, Livingstone's anti-democratic manoeuvres by declaring his candidature before the Campaign Group had made a decision were a disgrace, and the left must not forget this.

Many of Livingstone's economic proposals are quack proposals and deserve a sharp critique from any journal claiming to be

Marxist. Livingstone's view that the tax proposals lost Labour the election is nonsense. Even the *Economist* states that Labour's tax plans did not cause the defeat. Labour's absence of a radical programme led many voters to stick with the devil they know.

The reaction of the left to the election defeat should be to argue for radical socialist policies to convince voters to break from the Tories. Central to this is the defence of the trade union link.

In the past *Socialist Organiser* has called for a vote for Livingstone in the NEC elections as he was standing as part of a left slate. The same argument applies to Livingstone's leadership candidacy.

Cleo Hill
Manchester

We need left unity, not sniping

Issue 522 contains a pointed little piece on Ken Livingstone's appearance at a *Morning Star* rally.

Whether it was trying to taint Livingstone by association with the *Star*, the *Star* by association with Livingstone, or *Socialist Action* by association with both, I'm not sure, but what it does reveal is a deep vein of pointless sectarianism running through *SO*.

Yes, the *Star* is a Communist paper, but it's still widely read by many rank and file trade union activists, and consistently supports the vigorous promotion of socialist policies within the Labour Party, something no *SO* reader can argue with.

Yes, Livingstone was a joke leadership candidate, and it's a tragedy that there is no one credible around to pick up the mantle of Benn, Heffer, etc. However, should Ken be criticised for seeking to look beyond traditional sectarian boundaries towards a united post-Stalinist left?

Socialist Organiser would emerge with a great deal more credit by realising that there are many unattached left militants who agree broadly with much of what *SO*, the *Morning Star*, and *Socialist* have to say. Instead of sniping at such proposals, you should be encouraging any attempts to forge left unity... we're going to need it!

Toby Kinder
Branch Secretary
Wandsworth NALGO (personal capacity)

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WILLIAM BLAKE



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Armagh and Bishop Casey**“The key thing is to unite the Irish working class.”****From page 3**

is entwined and interlinked with another “Irish Question” — the question of the Protestant minority in the whole island.

Two thirds of the people in the Six County state — numbering one million — want the British army there: the hated “British army of occupation” in Armagh is “our army” in Antrim and Down and other areas where the Protestant-Unionists are the overwhelming majority.

If that army were to withdraw without a political settlement — in basic terms, if the existing state were to abdicate — replacement states would be created in what is now the Six Counties by way of open war between Catholics and Protestants for control of villages, towns, bridges, hills, roads. You would get what you got between Arabs and Jews when the British state abdicated in Palestine back in 1947-8.

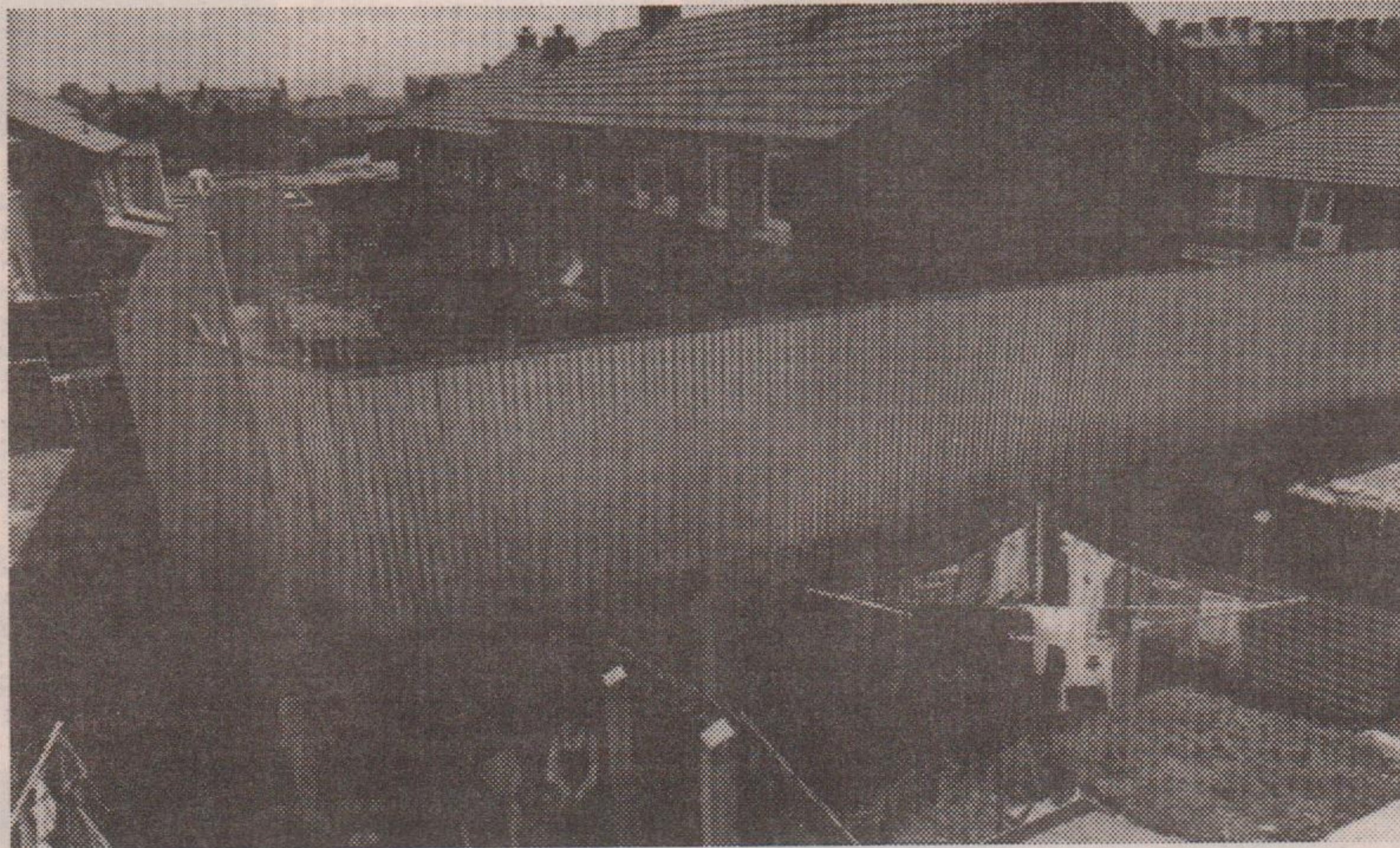
You would get what you have now in the former Yugoslav state: communal war in the form of free-wheeling sectarian-ethnic murder, and what in the former Yugoslavia is now called “Ethnic Cleansing” — the killing and driving out of pockets of aliens in territory controlled by “the others”.

A “Yugoslav scenario” would be a certainty — unless: unless some other military force were to play the role Britain plays now; the United Nations, a European army. Should the 26 Counties attempt to do it, you would most likely get a Protestant IRA doing what the Provisional IRA does now — against a “Dublin” army. It is one of the central patterns in 20th century Irish history that there is migration of postures and attitudes back and forth across the Protestant-Unionist, Catholic-Nationalist divide. The first Irish to revolt against Britain this century were the Protestants, who organised and armed — backed by the Tory Party — to stop the pre-World War I Liberal government setting up a Home Rule government in Dublin, with control over the whole of Ireland.

In a “Yugoslav scenario” sizeable chunks of the Six Counties — areas like Armagh — would probably secede to the “Southern” Irish state. The Protestants, having been expelled from the United Kingdom — that would have to be the first act of the scenario summed up in the slogan “Troops Out Now” — would form a state of their own.

So, if we do not want that, we must support the status quo as the best we can get? But the status quo is monstrous, untenable except by the repression of the Six County Catholics!

Britain has stopped sectarian civil war for the last 20 years — using systematic violence against the Catholics — but, by maintaining the partition framework that collapsed in sectarian disorder in 1969, it has simultaneously been priming, and continues to prime, a Catholic-Protestant civil war on



The sectarian divide. Photo: Andrew Moore

the Yugoslav scale.

The people of the Six Counties need a radical, democratic solution, not bloody stop-gaps.

So then, since the present Six County “solution” is unviable, we should demand that Britain takes the only other option: “troops out, soon” — that Britain should announce a date for British withdrawal and force the Protestants into a united Ireland under Catholic majority rule?

This is — paradoxically — what both the Provisional IRA and Fianna Fail, the main nationalist party in the South, demand,

“The Bishop Caseys still rule Ireland as the clerical hand in the pseudo-Republican political glove.”

though the demand is not always put in plain English. Both Provisional IRA and Fianna Fail belong to the old strain of Irish politics which looked for a British solution to the intra-Irish conflict: that was what the pre-World War I Nationalist Home Rule Party stood for, turning itself into a helpless appendage of the British Liberal Party, which was expected to coerce the Protestant Irish into a united Ireland. The Liberals betrayed them, uniting with the Tories to partition the country along the present grotesque lines. It is Northern Ireland’s one-third Catholic population — a bigger minority in the Six Counties than all of Ireland’s Protestants would be in a 32 county state — which has

been coerced and oppressed for 70 years.

Can our conclusion be that Britain has been coercing the wrong Irish people? That a united Ireland now is the only solution, and if the one million Protestants have to be coerced to get it, then so be it?

This is where Bishop Casey and the banning of the *Guardian* must be brought into the picture. They tell us why the idea of a forced unity in a majority — Catholic — run 32 County Ireland is as big a nonsense as the present Six County partition settlement is, and why a 32 County state on the basis of coercing the Protestants could not be any more tenable or viable than the present Six County state is.

Protestants believed that “Home Rule would be Rome Rule” and — though there was more to it — refused to be a minority in a united Ireland. 70 years of 26 County “Home Rule” has proved them right, not wrong.

The Bishop Caseys have ruled independent Ireland; the Bishop Caseys still rule Ireland as the clerical hand in the pseudo-Republican political glove. Casey has fled, but the *Guardian* cannot get past the customs because it tells Irish women who want one where and how to arrange an abortion in defiance of the diktats of the other Caseys.

The Bishop Casey business is ugly beyond words: a sexually normal man agrees in boyhood to undertake a life of self-suppression; he then evolves into the sophisticated, rich and worldly prince of the modern church who breaks the rules he enforces on other people, and lives a life of malignant hypocrisy. It is the tale of a cold-hearted father and of a hurt, revengeful ex-lover, which became the centre of an awful media circus: all of it is ugly and hateful and pitiful.

In the course of Catholic-Nationalist Ireland’s struggle for

independence, the Catholic clergy gained tremendous power and influence. Long persecuted, the priests of Irish Catholicism merged with the people. The bishops attacked revolutionary nationalists — hell is not hot enough nor eternity long enough to punish them, said one bishop of the Fenians — but the priests, on the whole, kept in step, a little behind, with the people.

Bishops — such as Dr. Fogarty — as well as priests played a central role in building up the Sinn Fein movement that won three quarters of the Irish Parliamentary seats in the election of November 1918 (for less than 60% of the vote). The Irish clergy had more than a little in common with the Iranian mullahs who set up the Islamic Republic in 1979.

“If the Army were to withdraw without a political settlement... you would get what you have now in Yugoslavia.”

Partition cut off the bulk of the Protestant population — including the big bulk of the Irish proletariat, and thus, amongst other things, it crippled the labour movement south and north of the border. In the Dail debate on the *Guardian* affair, one deputy talked of the 26 County state as an “infantile theocracy”. In fact, 70 years ago, the 26 County state did evolve into something not far from a theocracy — a theocracy mediated through the form of a liberal-democratic state,

but more a theocracy than a modern liberal-democratic state. Many things have changed since then — the Catholic church has changed — but the Catholic church still has immense power in the 26 Counties.

The Irish state is not now a state into which the Six County Protestants will peacefully agree to merge or be merged.

Neither defence of the status quo; nor advocacy of forced union; nor the irresponsible Troops Out Now (and then we will see after the big bang) — none of these are acceptable policy for socialists:

The key thing is to find a way to begin to unite the Irish working class, Protestant and Catholic, north and south of the border.

The only way that can ever be done is through consistent democracy:

* mutual recognition of the legitimacy of each other’s fundamental traditions by Protestant and Catholic alike;

* commitment to fight chauvinism in both camps and an active campaign against the oppression of the Catholics now;

* commitment by the Catholic workers to oppose any future oppression of the Protestants — the future oppression which they fear in a unitary Irish state where they would be a helpless minority.

The “war” of the Provisional IRA is now almost wholly a war against the Irish Protestant unionists, and it should be condemned — in the same breath and for essentially the same reasons as we condemn the Protestant murder gangs — by all who care about Ireland. The “Constitutional Question” dominates the north of Ireland to the virtual exclusion of everything else.

The two sectarian “solutions” to the “Constitutional Question” — the status quo, or a unitary, all-Ireland state, against the will of the Protestants if necessary — are central elements of the present crisis: neither of them can ever be a solution. We repeat: the key thing is to provide a political basis on which Protestant and Catholic workers might unite.

The solution has to be one which rises above the present impasse: a consistently democratic solution can only be a United Federal Ireland in which Protestants have self-governing autonomy, if they want it, in their areas, and Catholic groups in mainly Protestant ones can have it too, if they want it. The other necessary part of a “constitutional framework” within which the working class could begin to unite is increasingly a reality: resumption of appropriately close voluntary links between Britain and Ireland.

That is the way the workers of Ireland — victims now of exploitation, unemployment, emigration, and poverty — will begin to put themselves in a condition to fight and win the necessary radical solution to their problems under capitalism north and south of the border — a socialist solution!



By a remarkable feat of new technology we bring you this picture from the future: it shows Ken Livingstone - who lost his Brent seat to Tory candidate Derek Hatton - being cheered by Sun journalists after being nominated by John Smith for the House of Lords. Asked about his relationship with Smith, Livingstone smiled demurely: "We are just good friends."

Ken sucks up to Smith

GRAFFITI

All those doubting Thomases and fainthearts who thought that Ken Livingstone would do a deal with Bryan Gould (right-wing candidate without the Scottish accent) should have known that "our Ken" is made of much sterner stuff than that.

On TV-am's *Frost on Sunday* he described John Smith (right-wing candidate with the nice Scottish accent) as a unifying leader for the Labour Party (on the condition that he doesn't back means-testing of universal benefits).

Ken Livingstone is a well-known Sun journalist and political impersonator.

Britain is about to receive a large amount of noxious substances from Australia - no, it's not a new series of *Home and Away*, but the most recent contribution to Britain's last surviving growth industry, hazardous waste disposal.

1,000 tons of the stuff that even the less than environmentally friendly Australians balk at disposing of in their own hemisphere.

Last year Britain took care of 44,000 tons of international effluence - which was variously incinerated, causing rain that makes buildings dissolve, dropped down disused mineshafts so that it can get into drinking water, or simply left lying around in barrels and forgotten about.

There's no privatisation in the NHS part one: London's Charing Cross Hospital is offering half price cosmetic surgery, removal of tattoos and birthmarks, correction of irregular features, and many other services that used to be available on the NHS.

But with the squeeze on spending because of trust hospitals and fund-holding GPs there seems to be a lot of "spare capacity" in cosmetic surgery - add to this the fact that to reduce waiting lists many cosmetic operations are no longer available on the NHS and there you go, perfect market. Supply and demand created in one neat little package.

There's no privatisation in the NHS part two: the Southern Group Laboratory is an NHS-run laboratory making bacteriological products, nearly 90% of which are used by the NHS. However, the lab is now under the

control of the Guys and Lewisham Hospital Trust, who want to sell the land that the lab is on to developers.

And the products that are produced there? They will have to be bought in by the many hospitals that use the lab's products from the private sector at far higher prices. Still, they'll probably put up some lovely Wimpey homes there.

It's good to see the Tory cutting machine turned on a target worthy of their attention - the police. The thin blue line which is all that separates us from a world where innocent people are allowed to wander the streets.

The cost of making arrests is apparently far too great - the average copper in the Metropolitan Police finds less than one "criminal" a month at a total cost of £10,593 per head. Perhaps this puts a rather more sinister light on the decision not to pursue any prosecutions of the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad - a team of highly efficient operators guaranteed to get cost effective results.

But Tory plans to rationalise the police force should not be taken lightly: imagine getting home after a brush with the law and finding a whacking great bill from the local constabulary's "customer care" department.

You may have thought that you'd heard the last word on the causes of the LA riots, but Dan Quayle has come up with something new.

American sitcoms, or rather one American sitcom, the very subversive and dangerous *Murphy Brown*. The sitcom, you see, is undermining American values and the family way of life, leading to all sorts of social problems. The lead character, the *Murphy Brown* of the title, is a female journalist who is left by her husband.

Finding herself pregnant she decides to go through with the pregnancy. "Out of touch with mainstream America," remonstrated the Vice-President, "mocking the importance of fathers", using it as an example of the decline in the moral fabric that led to the riots.

Assuming that Quayle would not have had *Murphy* having an abortion (he is, of course, anti-choice), we can only assume that he wants morally uplifting sitcoms with nothing but happy nuclear families. Now that should keep people off the streets.

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

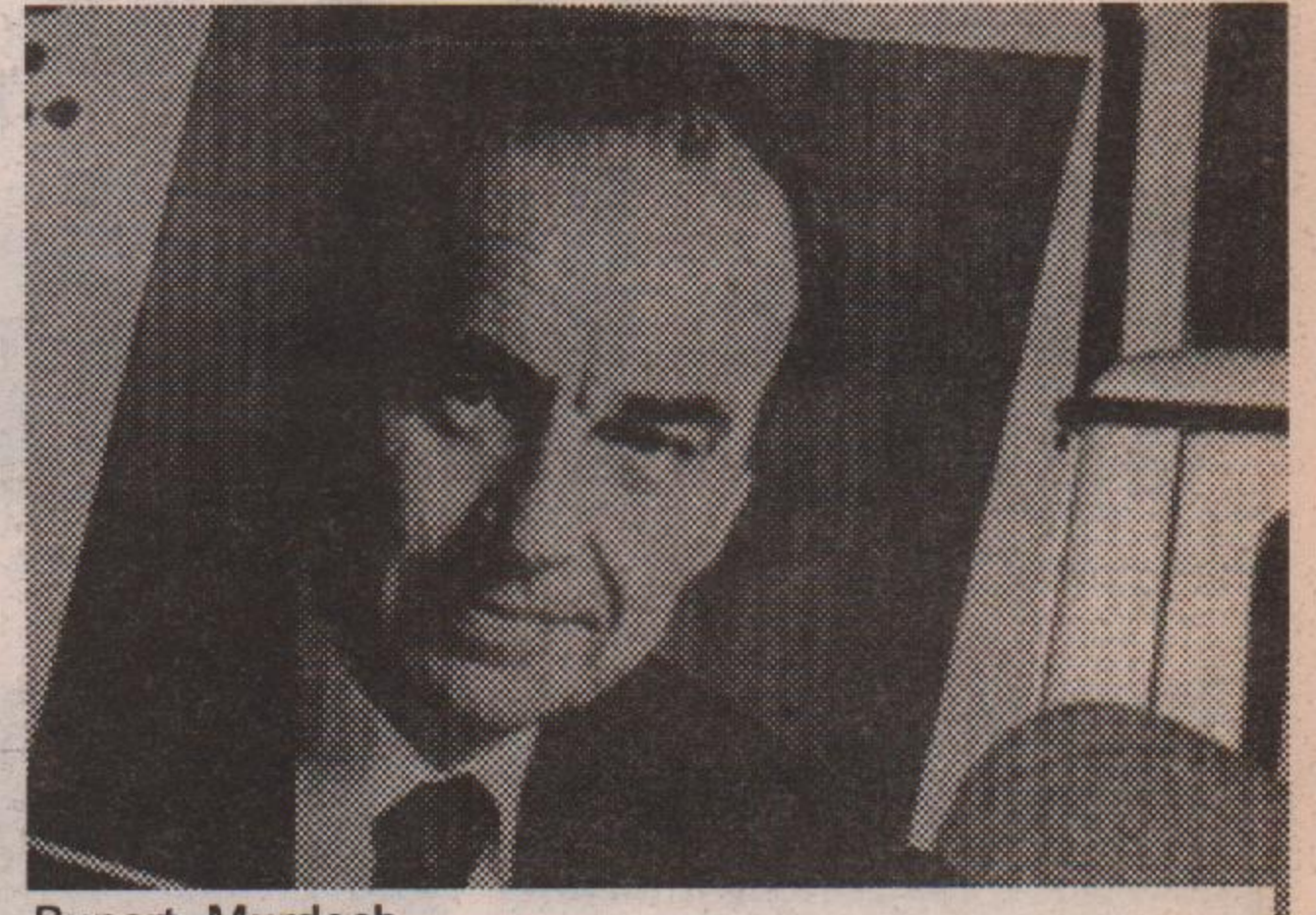
You don't have to be personally outraged in order to recognise something as being outrageous. I did quite well out of the poll tax, for instance. And as someone who has never understood the attraction of watching grown men kick a ball around a field, BSKyB's deal with the Premier League football clubs is not in itself a

matter of great concern to me.

Nevertheless, the deal plainly stinks. Millions of fans have been sold down the river by the seedy businessmen who run the Premier League. Free live football on TV may not be an inalienable human right but the fans have every cause to believe that they've been stitched up good and proper by the chairmen and by Rupert Murdoch.

Having to pay £250 for a dish is just the start: it's only a matter of time before they begin charging extra for the big matches and/or impose a separate subscription.

The role of Mr Alan Sugar bears some examination. As well as being chairman of Tottenham Hotspur, Mr Sugar also happens to be the boss of Amstrad, the company that supplies all those dishes. When he was handed ITV's improved bid just before the chairmen's meeting, Mr Sugar rushed to a public phone and was heard bellowing: "Do you understand what I am telling you, you



Rupert Murdoch

don't sound as if you are taking it in...get something down here quickly to blow them out of the water."

Shortly afterwards, BSKyB upped its bid to £304 million - well above ITV's £262 million.

It turns out, however, that the Digger's boys probably knew about the ITV offer anyway, because the Premier League's chief executive, Rick Parry, also tipped them off. Mr Parry's reasons for favouring BSKyB are not quite as blatantly mercenary

as Mr Sugar's, but no less instructive: he was, it seems, greatly impressed by the Digger's promise of "the full backing of the 40 million editions of his (Murdoch's) newspapers each week" if the BSKyB offer was accepted.

In other words, Murdoch's cross-ownership of five satellite channels and five national newspapers gave him a built-in advantage and may well have clinched the deal. That's the good old free market for you.

Stop the Child Support Act!

WOMEN'S EYE



By Janine Booth

The Child Support Act is promoted by the Tories as an expression of sympathy for single mothers. The facts show otherwise: the Act attacks single mothers, and the working class as a whole.

The Act establishes a Child Support Agency responsible for tracking down "absent fathers". Agency offices are to be located in Belfast, Birkenhead, Dudley, Falkirk, Hastings and Plymouth.

The powers bestowed upon the Agency include the right to get information on fathers, income taxation and housing from local authorities, the Inland Revenue and employers (including by walking into a workplace and asking questions of bosses and fellow workers); to dock benefits, wages and student grants and loans; and to recommend to a court the imposition of a fine or a prison sentence.

The Act is aimed directly

at women on benefits - one of the poorest sections of society. The Agency will only chase the father if the mother is a claimant. If women who are not on benefits want the Agency's assistance in tracking down the father of their children, they will have to pay for it.

When "absent fathers" are successfully tracked down and forced to cough up (no matter how poor this may make them and any dependents), the state will claw back most of what is paid. They will keep all maintenance monies paid to women on Income Support, and some of the monies paid to women claiming Family Credit, student grants and loans, or Disability Working Allowance.

And under a provision of the Act that comes into force in April 1993, women who refuse to give DSS officers the name of the father of their child(ren) will be fined £7.93 a week.

The Child Support Act attempts to force women to maintain contact with former partners against their will. Many mothers - and their children - will be made vulnerable to reprisals from violent men. Lesbian and bisexual mothers are increasingly likely to face custody challenges from former partners.

The Act also targets black families. Almost half of Afro-Caribbean families are single-parent families, and the number of Asian single mothers is increasing. And because of the effects of racism, black men are likely to be poorer than white men, and will therefore be harder hit by demands for maintenance money. In addition, it is possible that the Home Office may consider failure

to maintain children as grounds for deportation.

As a piece of legislation that undermines benefit provision, the Child Support Act also threatens wage levels. Single mothers who will feel that their and their children's safety is threatened by the Act may well feel forced to take on very low paid or even illegal work as an alternative. And the insistence that men hand over maintenance money can be seen as a way of making individual men subsidise women's low wages.

Ideologically, too, the Child Support Act serves a purpose for capitalism.

"The Act seeks to bolster the notion that everyone should live in heterosexual nuclear families and the work of raising children should be carried out within that unit."

Central to its message is the idea that children should be brought up by their biological parents. It is an abrogation by the state of its responsibility towards the care of children - after all, if the Tories sympathise so much with the finances of single parents, why is Child Benefit so pitifully low? The Act seeks to bolster the notion that everyone should live in heterosexual nuclear families, and the work of raising children should be carried out within that unit.

The ideology behind the Child Support Act is also an example of the state trying to tell people what sort of relationships they should have -

in this case, long-term, monogamous, child-rearing and heterosexual. The ending of a relationship is seen as an irresponsible act, rather than something that should be perfectly acceptable and the decision of the people involved, with a sexual relationship being as long or as short as people choose, with as few or as many partners as people choose.

The Parliamentary Labour Party has thrown its full support behind the Child Support Act, congratulating the Tories on their move to "make fathers pay". Two years ago at Labour Women's Conference, Clare Short MP moved a resolution calling on the Tories to introduce such an Act! Labour Party activists should raise this issue in the Constituencies and fight for a change in the party leadership's attitude.

Trade unionists in the DSS and local authorities should take up a policy of non-cooperation. And all other unions should fight to prevent co-operation with Child Support Agency snoopers.

In addition, it is important that we let single parents know their rights. Many reports have been received of women being harassed by DSS officers, told that they have to name the father of their child(ren). This is an illegal, premature implementation of the Child Support Act. One woman was even asked if there were any witnesses to the conception!

Through effective mobilisation, we can defeat this Act by making it unworkable. We also need to expose the politics behind it, and to fight for the overthrow of the system that creates such pernicious legislation.

"We need a convention of the left"

Bernie Grant spells out the way forward for the left in the Labour Party.

The leadership have given no explanation for the election defeat! Whatever they say, don't trust them.

They're the architects of the defeat — they won't blame themselves.

The left needs to understand that the party has been taken over not by straight right wingers, but by these soggy so-called lefties — careerists, PR and media people. We have to expose those people and those who've been supporting them — the Bryan Goulds and the David Blunketts. We must place the blame where it belongs.

"There's no way I'd support Gould for leader. He represents the section of the party which is most opportunist and careerist. I wouldn't trust him."

I agree with *Socialist Organiser's* call for a convention of the Left; it is necessary.

My main priority is the Labour Party. The left must get its act together. The Socialist Campaign Group has called a conference on the 20th [of June] in Leeds, to discuss policies for the next few years.

We need a united front against capitalism! Capitalism is in deep crisis.



Gould

We are going to see more and more struggles of working class people, young people are going to have problems, the unions are going to be forced to fight.

Labour must keep the union links. Some of the union leaders want the kind of relationship big business has to the Tory Party. They want to be the pay master with a special line to the Labour Party leadership. We should say clearly the Tories are the party of big business, we are the party of the unions!

I think the block vote should be trimmed a bit and that we should democratise the unions. The majority of union membership should be represented at Labour Party conference. The left needs to fight for that kind of democracy.

There's no way I'd support Gould for leader. He represents the section of the party which is most opportunist and careerist. I wouldn't trust him.

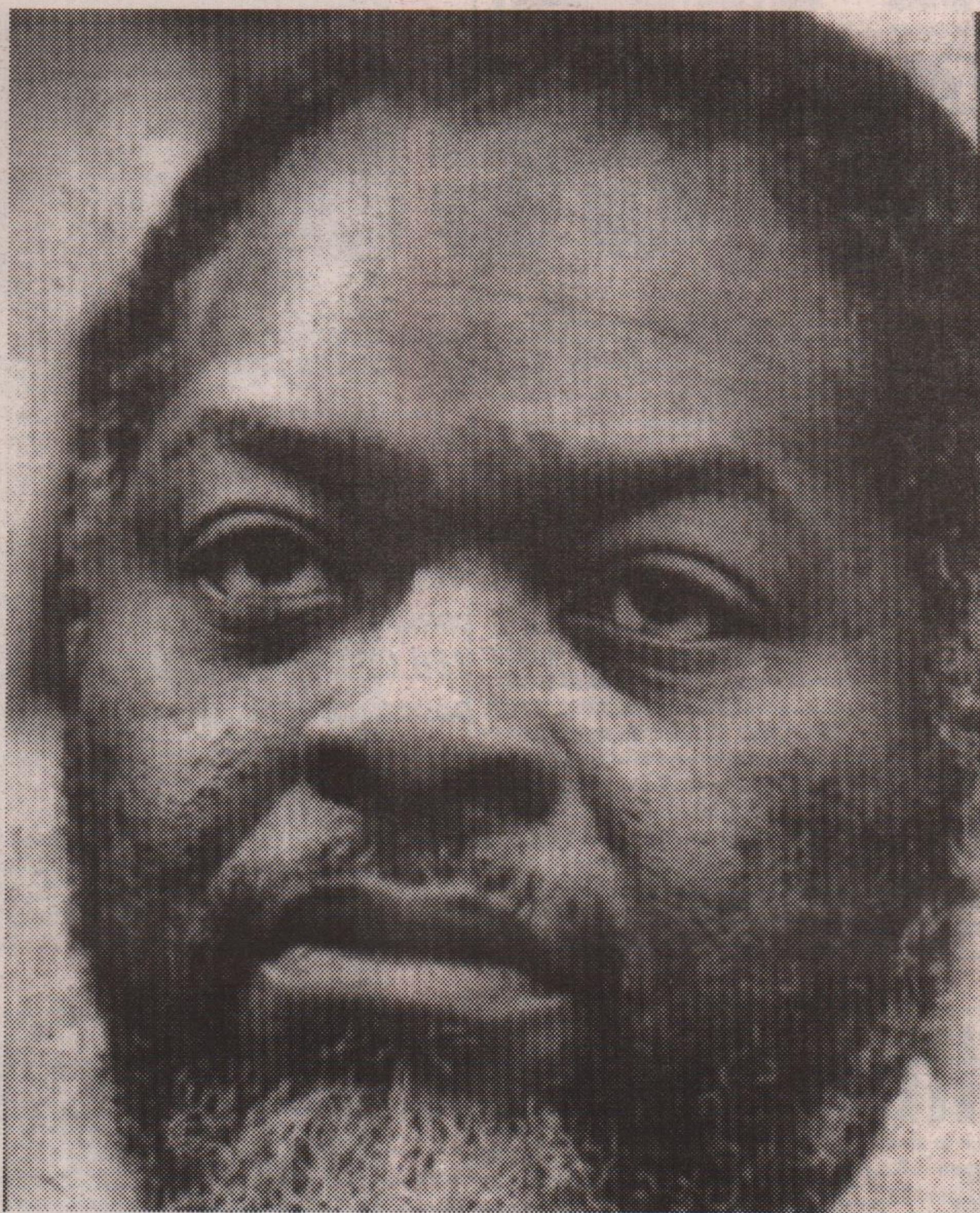
I might vote for Prescott, though he seems lightweight on the political front.

Benn and Skinner would have had more support than Livingstone and myself, but they wouldn't have made the 55 MPs. The Campaign Group has 'members' who don't want to be publicly associated with the Campaign Group!

We've got a problem in the Campaign Group, and we're going to tackle it: the Campaign Group is a group that's working for power, we want to be able to run the Labour Party. So whilst we might have different positions say on PR, on elections, I don't see how you can have a



Smith



Bernie Grant: "all those who left the party should come back now"

group that goes different ways.

The Campaign Group has been hammered in the last few years, we've lost a lot of people — with deselection, deaths, expulsions. The group has done well to survive. We have voted against the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the defence estimates, on the Gulf War, we had a principled position.

The PLP is a nonsense. Kinnock has made the PLP into an image of himself. There's a lot of little Kinnocks! It's a lost cause. Some on the left think there is some worth in developing something. I think our job is out in the communities and the unions.

To all those comrades that have left the party I would say they should come back now. With Kinnock gone there's an opportunity to offer a different view of the Labour Party. Our conference in Leeds, we hope, will be a watershed where we can begin to pull people on the left together and begin to offer them some hope.

There is going to be a lot of action in Britain over the next five years. I'm quite hopeful!

In Britain now we are

rapidly creating an underclass like they have in Los Angeles.

Some of the issues there which sparked the LA explosion — poverty, unemployment and bad police relations — exist in the inner cities here too: we have 60% unemployment amongst black people! 'LA conditions' exist here too. They are developing anyway.

"...Unless something is done we will see an 'LA' situation here... a main left priority must be getting some kind of youth organisation going."

We have jury racism here too: I have got cases where all white juries convict black people for crimes they haven't committed — the miscarriages of justice are terrible.

We do not have the huge influence of the drug pushers here, fortunately. But the recent skirmishes in Coventry give a flavour of what will happen here — not only amongst black youths but amongst white youths as well because of unemployment.

Thatcher and Major have done nothing in the inner city areas. They've cut back on equal opportunities. Unless something is done we will see an "LA" situation here — on a smaller scale and with less intensity, maybe, but the same sort of situation.

The left must see as one of its main priorities getting some kind of youth organisation going. We have to get closer to the people and begin to offer some alternative. I think we can do it.

We should discuss these things at the Leeds conference, what we need on the left is to build a different kind of relationship with the people. In the old days we'd turn up and shout a few slogans and that was it. It is not. And we absolutely must build bridges to the black community!

Bernie Grant MP was talking to Paul McGarry

Bloody climax in Bosnia

By Steven Holt

Following the fighting in Slovenia and then Croatia, the third stage of the wars following the break-up of Yugoslavia on national chauvinist lines seems now to have reached its bloody climax in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The ethnic Serb militia and their allies, the mainly Serb Yugoslav Federal Army, have engaged in brutal land-grabbing that has given them control of most of the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina and expelled a quarter of a million Muslim and Croat refugees (in addition to a similar number of refugees produced by the war in Croatia).

Although fascist militia from Croatia have been involved in the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina, most of the blame for the fighting must be laid on the Serbian chauvinists within Bosnia-Herzegovina and their backers in the Belgrade Stalinist regime.

Bosnia-Herzegovina had little chance of surviving as a national state after the break-up of Yugoslavia, owing to its position between Croatia and Serbia and its ethnic mixture (about 42% Muslims, 31% Serbs and 17% Croats, about 10% of mixed parentage or other ethnic groups). These ethnic groups, as in the rest of Yugoslavia, had lived together peacefully for 40 years, working in the same factories and intermarrying freely. Most people in Bosnia-Herzegovina wanted to maintain a Federal Yugoslavia, and the Bosnian leader, Izetbegovic, only went for independence after the insane rantings of the nationalists in Zagreb and Belgrade had led to war and the breakaway of Croatia and Slovenia.

After that, to stay in the smaller Serb-dominated Yugoslavia would have meant discrimination against the interests of the non-Serbs.

The logic of the current fighting is probably that areas will be carved out as a Serb enclave which will join the rump Yugoslavia (now consisting only of Montenegro, Serbia and two regions annexed in 1990 by Serbia (90% Albanian) Kosovo and Vojvodina).

A Croat area will also be carved out and, if they are very lucky, the militarily weak Muslims may be able to take control of a small area.

A fourth stage of fighting is likely to occur towards the South; either in Albanian-populated Kosovo, where the 10% Serbian population run an apartheid-like police state, or in Macedonia which has declared independence but which has no international support except from Turkey.

The people of Kosovo illegally elected a parliament on 25th May and are likely to suffer further Serbian repression.

The Macedonian population is ethnically divided between Macedonians, Serbs, Albanians and Turks. The threat would come from Serbia stirring up ethnic Serb unrest or from a border war with Greece.

Greece does not recognise its own Macedonian minority and a recent anti-Macedonia demonstration in Thessalonika was attended by 100,000 Greek nationalists.

A monument to greed

By Colin Foster

Building the Canary Wharf offices in London's Docklands has cost the developers, Olympia & York, about £3 billion.

Yet nobody needs Canary Wharf. Anything that can be done with it, could be done just as well with other offices now lying idle in central London.

The offices are almost empty, with a few tenants pulled in by sweetheart deals, and Olympia & York, the world's biggest property developers, have effectively gone bust.

The waste does not end there. Between 1985 and 1995 the Government is committed to spending about £5 billion on Docklands. Most of that will go

on upgrading the Docklands Light Railway, completing the hugely expensive Limehouse Link road (at £3000 an inch), and extending the Jubilee underground line to Docklands.

This public spending on Docklands transport is many times more than the total spent on all the rest of London! The Government is threatening to stop the Jubilee Line extension, but, having come this far and spent so much already, may have no choice but to complete it.

The total of £8 billion could pay for building 160,000 new council houses or flats, or renovating 800,000 of the 2.9 million homes officially reckoned to be in poor condition across Britain.

In fact that £8 billion has been mostly wasted, by any reckoning other than that of the consultants,

lawyers, architects, and accountants who have siphoned off a share.

Every square foot of office space in Canary Wharf is

"The £8 billion wasted in Docklands could pay for building 160,000 new council houses or flats."

matched by nine square feet empty in central London. Canary Wharf has 4.5 million square feet, with another 6 million square feet planned but now unlikely to go ahead, while central London has 40 million square feet empty

(one-fifth of all office space there), and planning permission for another 100 million square feet to be built.

Canary Wharf has become an ironic monument - a modern capitalist equivalent of the medieval cathedrals, for which the lords, bishops and merchants of the time squeezed the starving peasants and workers to provide every lavish decoration and luxury possible for the supposed glory of God. Only Canary Wharf is a monument to the God of private profit.

The £8 billion wasted in Docklands could have made a huge difference even spread across the whole of Britain. Even a fraction of it would have made a huge difference in Docklands itself, if geared to people's needs rather than developer's profits.

The ruling passions of capitalism

Why is the Canary Wharf tower so tall - the tallest building in Britain? Why is it so luxuriously fitted out, with marble everywhere?

Why is it air-conditioned, when there is little traffic noise and, in the British climate, opening windows and using fans and heaters will do the job more cheaply and healthily? Why did the developers, Olympia & York, risk so much on one huge project, built at breakneck speed, instead

of proceeding a bit at a time with more varied buildings?

We know why medieval bishops or Absolute Monarchs went for marble and luxury. But why do hard-headed, cost-conscious, profit-squeezing capitalists do the same?

Karl Marx outlined the reason in "Capital".

"At the historical dawn of capitalist production - and every capitalist upstart has personally to go through this historical stage

- avarice, and the desire to get rich, are the ruling passions. But the progress of capitalist production not only creates a world of delights; it lays open, in speculation and the credit system, a thousand sources of sudden enrichment.

"When a certain stage of development has been reached, a conventional degree of prodigality, which is also an exhibition of wealth, and consequently a source of credit,

becomes a business necessity... Luxury enters into capital's expenses of representation".

The big capitalist wants his headquarters office building to be tall, luxurious, gleaming, and overbearing, to present a shiny, hard face to the world - he wants all those things for their own sake, quite apart from finding space for his headquarters staff's desks.

He wants them in order to impress customers that his company is big, successful, well-established, a reliable supplier; to impress banks and creditors that he is credit-worthy; to impress governments that they should listen to him, and to impress trade unions that they face a mighty power.

And if he has doubts, the property developers are there to push him along.

The property developers deal not only in steel, concrete, and marble, but also, and more importantly, in land. They become rich by buying land and buildings where rents are cheap, and transforming them into "fashionable", "prestigious" addresses where rents can be high.

That is why so much of Canary Wharf was built all at once, so fast. No big capitalist wants his headquarters "out in the sticks", however luxurious the marble panelling. Olympia & York had to make Canary Wharf big enough, and plan to attract enough big companies, that it would become a prestigious address.

Alternative plans were blocked

London's once-bustling docks closed down in the 1970s, and the business moved down-river to Tilbury, where the new container cargoes could be handled more cheaply.

The East End of London, around the docks, had always been a poor working-class area. The workplaces other than the docks were small and paid low wages. Unemployment was high. Housing was poor. A lot of the population were immigrants.

Public transport was poor. The Underground system went nowhere near most of Docklands, and there were few buses.

The closure of the docks made almost half the land in the area - 2,700 out of 5,500 acres - available for redevelopment. But the Tories and the property developers were not the only people with ideas.

The "London Docklands Strategic Plan" of the late 1970s, worked out by a joint committee of the then Labour Government and local Labour councils, proposed:

- 23,000 new homes, mostly council houses, to add to the 15,000 households already in the area, building up to a population of 100 to 120,000.

- 33,000 new jobs, with substantial training and retraining for local

workers.

- "At any point in development a viable community should be able to live in the area, even if development proceeds no further".

It was shelved, but in the early years of the Docklands Development Corporation there were vigorous campaigns against it and for alternative plans.

Local groups in Newham drew up a "People's Plan" for the Royal Docks, as an alternative to the City Airport built there to help businessmen from the City and Canary Wharf save a few minutes on flights to Europe.

They proposed industrial development, a zone for workers' cooperatives, parks, open spaces, water recreation, a small dock and ship repair workshops, and new council housing.

The Labour Greater London Council in the early 1980s publicised and assisted with such plans.

For the property developers and the Docklands Development Corporation, the important thing about Docklands was that it was almost empty. Local people, and even local small businesses, were inconvenient complications for them, rather as the Indians were for the European settlers in North America. They wanted clear sites for big, shiny

developments which could make big profits.

The local plans started from a different angle - from the people in the area, their needs and their abilities. Those plans could have helped to develop a productive community and an attractive place to live.

They failed not because they were "too expensive", but because they went against the grain of capitalism.

The Docklands Strategic Plan was shelved because of the cost, but that cost was estimated at £1.2 billion of public investment and £0.9 billion of private investment, maybe the equivalent of £5 billion now, to create a fully-employed, well-trained, and well-housed community of 100 to 120,000 people.

In the event £8 billion is being spent to create a huge and useless monument to capitalist greed, surrounded by run-down housing, high unemployment, and decaying public services.

But that is how capitalism works. Without a Labour government determined to challenge capitalism, there was no force to push through the local plans. All social weight and power was concentrated behind the strategy which seemed, even illusorily, to promise big profits.



The Tories

The Docklands fiasco comes from a combination of two intermeshing strategies.

The Tory government's initial plan was to use minimum state intervention in Docklands, and to trust to "free enterprise" rebuilding the area almost spontaneously.

They cancelled the planning powers of the elected (Labour) local authorities over the area, and set up an unelected Docklands Development Corporation.

Land previously owned by the local authorities was transferred to the Development Corporation, and it was given additional money to buy up more land, to provide infrastructure - and then to sell the land to developers. The Development Corporation's remit did not include providing houses or public services for the local people.

The Isle of Dogs, the central area of Docklands including Canary

While local communities suffer



and the property developers

Wharf, was declared an Enterprise zone, which meant that for ten years from 1982 there would be no development land tax, building costs would be offset by tax allowances, and all rates and property taxes would be paid by the government.

Development Corporation funding was small, compared to what is under way now - £205

For ten years from 1982 there was no development land tax, building costs were offset by tax allowances, and all rates and property taxes were paid by the government."

tion in 1981-5. The Docklands Railway was built, but on a small scale (which means that it has become hopelessly overloaded, with Canary Wharf half-

At first the new businesses coming in were all small, apart from the newspapers which had decided to move to Docklands before 1979. Very few of the jobs went to local people. The Development Corporation may have destroyed more jobs for local people than it created, by buying up the sites of local businesses in order to clear them for bigger developments.

There was housing, privately-developed, and targeted at well-paid office workers.

Homelessness, and the decay of 1960s tower-block housing, continued to increase all around the new islands of prosperity. So did unemployment: job training, too, was no part of the Development Corporation's remit.

Then in 1985 the American property developer G Ware Travelstead launched the Canary Wharf project, immediately dwarfing all previous plans for

Docklands.

It was launched at the height of the 1980s boom in international high finance. International markets in bonds, shares and currencies were expanding hugely and being computerised. A new office-building boom was starting in the City of London.

Travelstead argued that the boom must spread beyond the City. In Docklands he could build impressive luxury offices on a scale impossible in the congested City, and at much lower cost.

In 1987 Travelstead's financial backers pulled out, but the immensely rich Olympia & York took over the project.

Other office developers followed after them.

According to Vanessa Houlder in the "Financial Times", "Well over half [the] buildings never found tenants, making Docklands a developer's graveyard".

Germany: the strikes continue

"There hasn't been a wage round like this in Germany since the war...", an article in the weekly "Die Zeit" commented, "The Federal Republic always belonged to the countries with the fewest days lost in strikes." The breadth and determination of West German workers' action has buried the government's hopes of introducing a semi-official incomes policy. Yet despite this victory, the actual gains made by the trade unions in the public sector an engineering have fallen far below what was possible and what was expected by the rank and file. Once the employers have given up their "unnegotiable" positions, they have quickly been able to reach, what are in financial terms, relatively modest settlements.

It now looks as if the threatened strike in the engineering industry will not take place following a last minute agreement between the union IG Metall and the employers in the area which has traditionally set the going rate for regional engineering negotiations. The unions managed to smash through the 3.3% offer and won a wage rise of 5.4%. IGM also kept the agreement made in 1990 to reduce the working week to 36 hours, despite the employers' wish to postpone the reduction to 1993. The agreement is however less beneficial than it looks, given that the union agreed to extend the length of the contract from 12 to 21 months. In the last 9 months of the contract there will only be a 3% increase and over the whole 21 months, the increase will only work out at 4.8% - exactly the same as the current rate of inflation.

The rank and file of the public sector union OeTV gave their view of the compromise 5.4% deal negotiated by their leaders after an 11 day strike. In an almost unheard of result to their ballot, only 44% of the members voted to accept it. This was a major humiliation for Monika Wulf-Mathies, the chair of the union, who had assumed that the deal, which included some extras for the low-paid would be welcomed by the majority of the union. It seems that, on the contrary, the largest votes against the deal came from the manual workers and the lower paid. The press and government saw this as a fit punish-

ment for having "around too high expectations" among the rank and file, while still being themselves worried about what this signified for the mood in the working class.

There is a catch however. Though the vote rejected the deal, it could not restart the strike, which would require a new ballot with a 75% majority. In this Catch-22 situation, the employers could then just sit back, refuse to make a new offer and leave it to the union leadership to explain that however much they dislike the settlement, the members just had to lump it. In addition, some of the other public sector unions did narrowly accept the deal (Post 51.4%, Police 59.6%); while in other the same constitutional con trick held (like the white-collar DAG, with 41.6% for). While OeTV could realistically have carried on on its own, this split was used to justify the decision to call off action despite the ballot result.

However, the result is itself an indication of the deep dissatisfaction with the economics of reunification. Die Zeit points out that "The big conflicts (in the past) were almost entirely about qualitative demands; sickness pay, shorter hours and work conditions. This time however - and this is what is special and frightening - it is exclusively about more wages and salaries." The origins of this go back before 1990. Between 1980 and 1990 the income of wage and salary earners went up by only 47% while those of the employers went up by 122%. In 1991, despite average rises of 6.6%, most workers suffered a fall in real wages because of increased taxation. There is a real feeling that the government and employers are calling on the workforce to tighten their belts without making any sacrifices themselves.

Despite the end of the larger dispute in engineering and the public sector the selling of the 5-6% norm for the wage round is unlikely to be the end of the wave of industrial action unless the employers decide that there is no further point in resisting. But workers have been undertaking a round of warning strikes which has led to many papers only appearing in thin editions. Their claim has now gone to arbitration as has that of 240,000 building workers. In retailing there has also been warning strikes.



Public sector workers demonstrate at the height of the strike

Why Smith and Gould are yesterday's men:

How Labour broke

Cautiously but clearly, Bryan Gould and John Smith are proposing that the Labour Party should cut loose from the trade unions.

The idea is not new. It was canvassed after Labour lost its third General Election in a row in 1959. This reply, by Brian Pearce, was published in the Trotskyist weekly *The Newsletter* in January 1961.

The attempts then to cut links with the unions came to nothing: with a mass movement developing for unilateral nuclear disarmament, the rise of the Young Socialists, and increasing rank-and-file industrial militancy, the Labour Party's shift in the early 1960s was to the left rather than the right.

This week we reprint Part Two of the article which we began in *Socialist Organiser* 523.

The Liberal Party, reflecting the hardened attitude of the employers towards the workers became colder than ever towards the attempts of trade unionists to get themselves adopted as 'Liberal-Labour' candidates. Some quite insulting rebuffs were handed out. This is what Ramsay MacDonald meant when he wrote explaining why such as he had taken the path of independent labour politics which they didn't feel at all enthusiastic about: 'We didn't leave the Liberals. They kicked us out, and slammed the door in our faces.'

The 1897 engineering lockout, the ruthless beating down of the engineering workers and imposing upon them of humiliating terms of settlement (the basis for the 'York Memorandum' still with us), designed to make plain who was master in the works, left many of the most conservative section of the British workers in in those days with little grounds for doubt that times had changed.

In 1900 the socialists of the Independent Labour Party and

other groups made their historic first breakthrough into an organized relationship with the trade unions, with the establishment of the Labour Representation Committee. A limited number of trade unions at last agreed to associate with the socialist societies in promoting parliamentary candidates who should be independent of either of the ruling-class parties.

It was the ruling class which, still not grasping what was happening 'down below', gave several more still hesitant trade unions the necessary final shove to bring them in behind the Labour Representation Committee. Following a series of articles in *The Times* which called into question the very existence of trade unionism, the House of Lords upheld against appeal a judge's decision which dealt a practical blow, in terms of hard cash, at the whole functioning of trade unions. This was the 'Taff Vale judgment', when the railwaymen's union found themselves forced to pay out enormous damages to a company which had incurred loss through a strike they

had called. If this was the law, no strike could take place anywhere on any issue without the risk of financial ruin for the union concerned. At long last a number of trade union leaders saw the point - the working class must put itself in an independent political position from which it could compel changes in the law in its own interest, instead of relying on the sweet reasonableness of one or other group of the ruling class. In 1901 and 1902, after 'Taff Vale', the Labour Representation Committee received a big accession of strength - though still, it is worth recalling, the miners remained wedded to Liberalism and did not come in until eight years later, after a lot of 'unofficial' activity had been put in at lodge and district level. The decision to create and adhere to the Labour Party was not hastily or lightly-taken by the British working class.

"The working class must put itself in an independent political position from which it could compel changes in the law in its own interest, instead of relying on the sweet reasonableness of one or other group of the ruling class."

As already mentioned, a lot of the leading men in the movement had had to be pushed every inch of the way into their new political stand, and they wanted even now to separate from the Liberals to as small an extent as possible. Few had any idea of operating as more than a 'pressure group' - though now at least nominally *outside* the Liberal Party instead of inside it. They did not in the least contemplate supplanting the liberals as one of the two major parties in the country and of course there could be no question in their minds of becoming the government of the country. When, therefore, the Liberals, shocked at last into awareness of the working class getting out of hand politically, took steps through private negotiation to show themselves 'conciliatory', a man like MacDonald, secretary to the LRC, was only too pleased to meet them halfway.

MacDonald's correspondence with the Chief Liberal Whip had to be kept a secret from all but a few of MacDonald's colleagues, lest some crude-minded types might take exception to it. So early began the practice of talks between Labour leaders and the ruling class behind the backs of the movement as a whole. The outcome was a 'gentleman's agreement' for the LRC to restrict its candidates to certain seats, in return for which the Liberals



Ashdown advocates retaining the anti-union laws. Now Labour wants to go along with the Liberals on this - forgetting the history of a fight to become independent of the Liberals

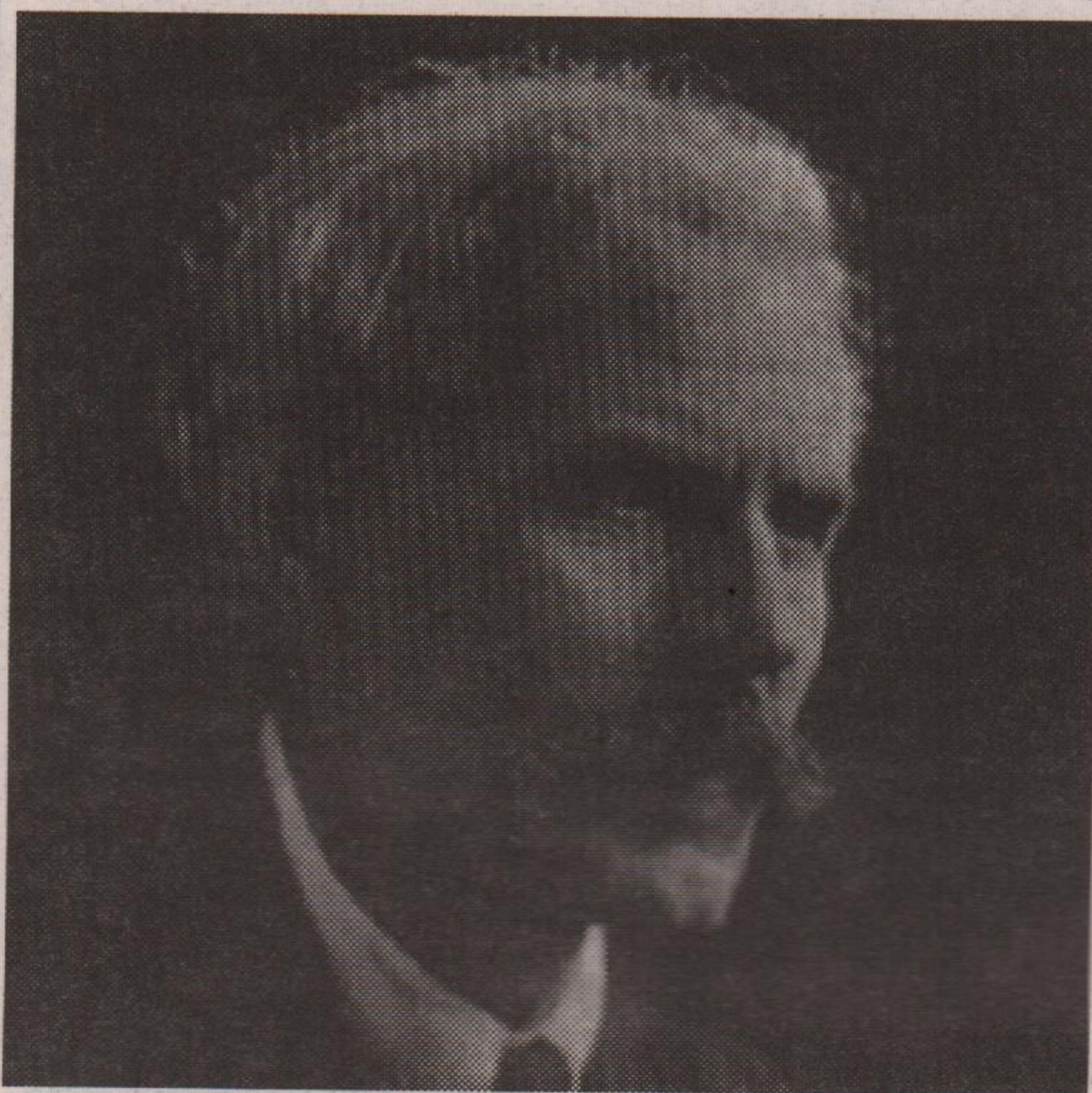
would not oppose them in some of these. Characteristic was Macdonald's reaction to the news of Arthur Henderson's victory as a Labour candidate at Barnard Castle, over both Liberal and Tory opponents: he welcomed it as strengthening his bargaining power in dealings with the Liberals, but hoped it would not encourage the 'wild men' to demand openly that Labour should go it alone in every possible constituency. Just sufficient life in the working-class movement to give them something to use in horse-trading with the capitalists, and no more; that has always been the ideal of the Right wing.

When, therefore, a group of 50 Labour MPs were returned in the 1906 general election, which gave a Liberal majority, there was heavy dragging of feet to do no more than accord critical support to the new government, merely pressuring it a bit in the direction of social reform. The socialists in the Labour Party (as it was now formally called) faced the task of forcing the pace against this entrenched resistance. In 1907 the socialist Victor Grayson was run as candidate, against Liberal and Tory, in a traditional Liberal seat, by local Labour organizations who defied the ban imposed by headquarters. His triumphant success encouraged the Left in the movement but infuriated the 'statesmen' of the Parliamentary Labour Party. They received him into their select company in the House of Commons with the same enthusiasm as the Gaitskellites lately received Michael Foot. A typical incident occurred in 1908 when Grayson tried to protest in the House

against the welcome by the Liberal Government to a visit by the Tsar of Russia, but the official Labour spokesman at once got up to move the closure!

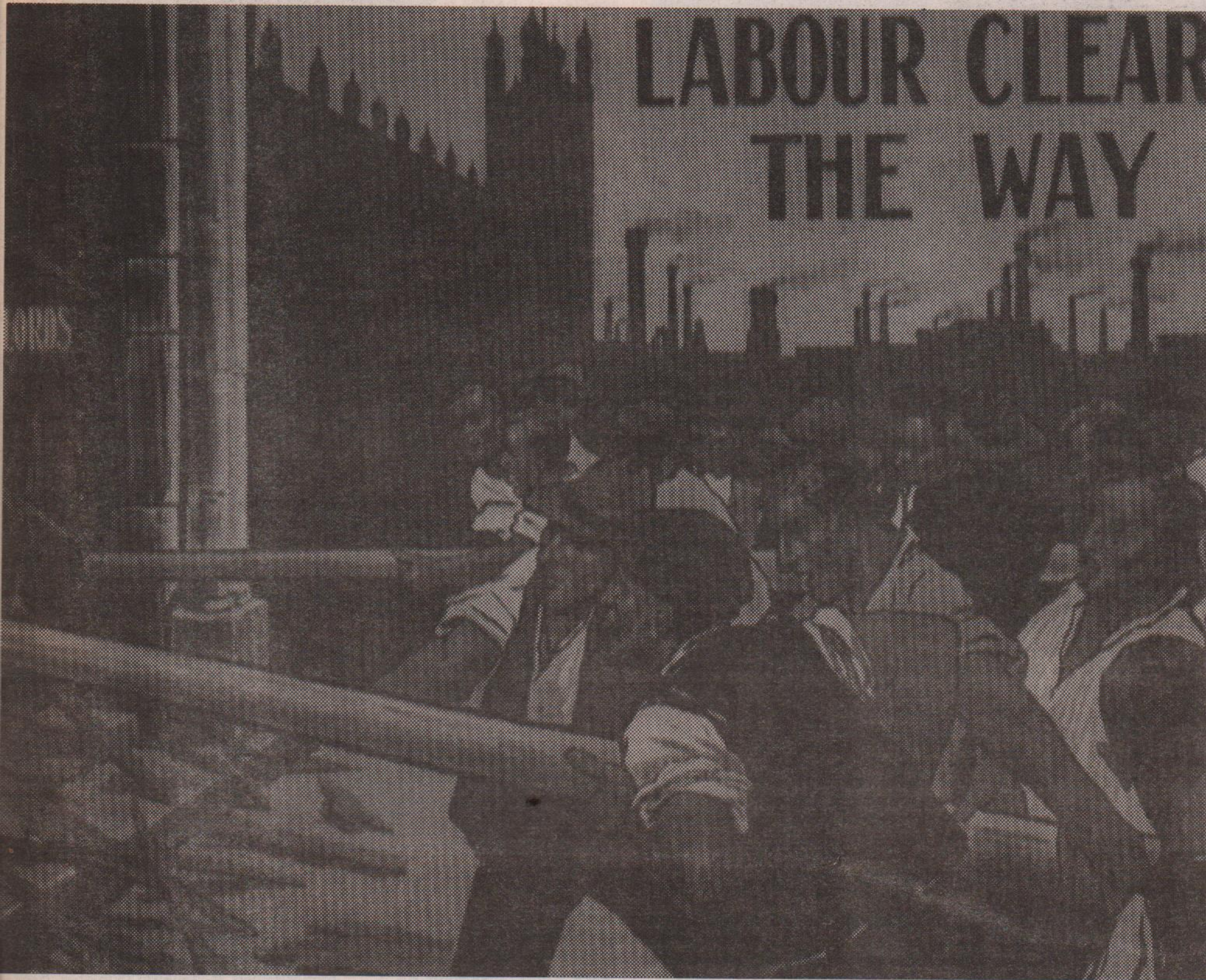
"Every move to divorce the party from the unions, from whichever side it comes, needs to be resisted tooth and nail... the rights of the socialist societies, such as had initiated the very creation of the party, need to be restored and confirmed."

Nevertheless, the growth of socialist influence within the party compelled the leaders to apply for admission to the Second International, so associating the Labour Party with openly socialist parties in other countries. This was the occasion on which Lenin proposed that the Labour Party be accepted into membership of the International on the carefully-defined grounds that it represents the first step on the part of the really proletarian organizations of Britain towards a conscious class policy and towards a socialist



Ramsay MacDonald: his ideal was a labour movement just sufficiently lively to give him something to use in horse-trading with the capitalists - and no more

with the Liberals



The Labour Representation Committee was set up in a period of intense onslaught on British workers by their bosses and by the state. This poster is from 1913

workers' party'.

The fight to get the Labour Party to adopt socialism as its aim instead of merely tolerating socialists as members along with others had to go on for another ten years. Among important landmarks in this struggle was the formation of the British Socialist Party, in which the old Social Democratic Federation came together with significant breakaway groups of the LP in a new organization under at least nominally Marxist leadership, and this affiliated to the Labour Party in 1914. During the first world war the BSP followed, after 1916, a different line from that of the official one of support for the war, but was not disciplined for this, much less expelled; such was the freedom for working class trends of all kinds allowed in the party in those days as a matter of course.

The BSP was allowed to carry on its propaganda for socialism, which was helped by the harsh experiences of the workers at the hands of the Liberal-Tory coalition government. And though the Labour Party leadership accepted its place in the coalition, an attempt by Arthur Henderson, 'Labour's Minister', to keep in with the growing international anti-war feeling of the workers led to such rude treatment of him by his capitalist colleagues - the famous 'doormat' incident when Henderson was kept cooling his

heels outside the Prime Minister's door till it was convenient to have him in - that life on these terms was made very hard for the Labour leaders concerned. The co-operative societies, too, which had held aloof until now, were forced during the war to align themselves with Labour by the discriminatory policy of the Government in its working of the rationing system and its application of excess profits duty.

"For the very reason that the ruling class and its agents within the movement are striving so hard now to smash the Labour Party... all socialists and class-conscious workers need to strive in the opposite direction."

The Russian Revolution gave the final jolt, and in 1918, at the con-

ference of that year, the Labour Party formally adopted socialism as its aim, in the historic Clause Four of a new constitution. The Right wing tried to offset this concession by depriving the socialist societies of their reserved places on the party executive, in connection with the starting of individual members' sections, the future local Labour Parties. This ousting of the socialist societies from their place in the party was followed up in 1931 by driving the ILP right out of the party; in 1937 by banning the Socialist League, which had taken its place; and in 1946 by introducing a rule prohibiting the affiliation to or formation within the Labour Party of societies such as had initiated the very creation of the party. (It was under this rule that Victory for Socialism was forbidden to form branches and the Socialist Labour League was banned altogether).

The Labour Party became the chief opposition party in 1922 and the largest party in Parliament in the following year. The first Labour Government, 1924, marked a new phase both in the advance of the working-class movement and in the degeneration of its leadership...

Since then the party has had many ups and downs which it is not the purpose of this article to trace. What is important is that we are now entering a period which has something in common with

the period in which the Labour Representation Committee was first set up, a period of intense onslaught on the British workers by their employers and by the state which serves those employers - an onslaught which will be even fiercer than the first for the reason already stated, that an easing of the pressure at the expense

of the colonial peoples cannot be managed so easily now.

"We are now entering a period which has something in common with the period in which the Labour Representation Committee was first set up, a period of intense onslaught on the British workers by their employers and by the state which serves those employers."

In such a period it is imperative to strengthen and consolidate the Labour Party, to remove from it all those weaknesses and anomalies which represent the ceaseless attempt to sabotage it from within, and to develop and clarify both its links with the trade unions and its organized basis among men and women of socialist convictions. Every move to divorce the party from the unions, from whichever side it comes, needs to be resisted tooth and nail; and the rights of the socialist societies need to be restored and confirmed - in the first place by lifting the ban on the Socialist Labour League, the body which carries forward the banner of the Marxist pioneers of the 1880s who began the struggle for a socialist party of the British working class. For the very reason that the ruling class and its agents within the movement are striving so hard now to smash the Labour Party before the main battle is joined, all socialists and class-conscious workers need to strive in the opposite direction.

Glossary

Ramsay MacDonald: a leader of the ILP, and leader of the Labour Party in 1911-14 and 1922-31. In 1931, he went over to the Tories.

"As the Gaitskellites lately received Michael Foot": Michael Foot, later leader of the Labour Party (1980-83), was then a leader of the strong movement in the Party for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Victory for Socialism: a "broad left" movement of the time.

Socialist Labour League: the major Trotskyist group of the time, launched in 1959 by activists around Gerry Healy who had been working in the Labour Party for some time. Always somewhat sectarian and theoretically crude, it later degenerated: by the late 1960s, it was a crazy, ranting sect, and from the late 1970s (renamed WRP) it took money from Iraq, Libya and other regimes.

The poverty of anti-Zionism

By Brigitte Stora

The point here is not to polemicise about our current political positions on Israel and the Palestinian question. Israel has given itself the most reactionary government of its history, and the Palestinian people need our solidarity now more than ever.

But, for many decades, shady areas have remained both in our awareness and our assessment of the fact of Israel. It is of that we wish to speak here.

For many years, anti-Zionist violence allowed people to escape "white man's" guilt cheaply. Directing anti-colonialist thunderbolts at the former oppressed allowed them to evade the responsibility which the West should rightly feel about the Holocaust.

The Trotskyists of the time followed behind, and despite violently anti-Zionist slogans, the Trotskyists were sometimes accused of... Zionism.

It is true that for a number of the Trotskyists there were big issues here. They were concerned to step up their anti-Zionism in order to distance themselves from any suspicion of belonging. Thus, for those militants of Jewish "origin" (the expression behind which these ashamed Jews hid themselves), Jewishness found no place in their commitment. Although their Jewish identity and Auschwitz represented, in many cases, the starting point of their rebellion, that identity, experienced as the shame of a religious particularism, or, worse, a political (Zionist) particularism, could not decently be taken up.

To be suspect, as a Jew, of belonging to an international plot rather than a people, was alas not new.

Zionist hydra, State of many tentacles: the words speak for themselves. No other State in the world, however racist and colonialist, has ever received such adjectives. The demonisation of Israel can only remind us that here we are dealing with a special

"Zionist hydra... No other State in the world, however racist and colonialist, has ever received such adjectives. The demonisation of Israel can only remind us that here we are dealing with a special State... a Jewish state, perhaps".

State... a Jewish state, perhaps.

Official anti-Zionism is only the presentable display of the secular anti-semitism of many countries.

In the bookshops of Arab or Latin American countries, one can without fear of any censorship (that which is called anti-imperialism is not condemned here) find openly anti-semitic works such as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. In Cairo, Mein Kampf, that celebrated Third-Worldist work, is freely on sale in Arabic.

It is true that the nation of the late Nasser (who widely influenced Arab nationalism) granted the Jews a delay of a few days to leave the nation: all, bourgeois or proletarians, communists or others, had to be deprived of their nationality. They could be stateless in France, in Britain, in the USA... or choose the only country which, in spite of them not choosing it, chose them



Solidarity with Palestinian youth is our starting point. But the anti-Zionism of the left will not help fight any oppression

despite themselves and offered them citizenship, Israel.

[After 1948] the Jews of the Arab world could no longer envisage a return to the ancestral ways: a half-muted life in the shadow of the Islamic crescent which, after the departure of the European powers, affirmed itself as the bulwark of a new-found identity.

Real refugees, many of them - Syrian, Iraqi, Egyptian Jews - Jews who were refugees in their heads, because they came from countries where there was no longer any future possible for Jews - these people found Israel rather than choosing it. As the outlet for their exile, much more than the cause of their departure, Israel represented, for two-thirds of the Israeli population called oriental Jews, the only possible country.

Anti-Zionist discourse prefers to talk about the blond Western warriors. The idea of Israel being the "spearhead of imperialism" gives credit to this partially erroneous thesis. Although Israel's policy corresponds today to imperialist interests in the region, it is false to consider the creation of the state as a simple manipulation by the imperialist West. It took wars, years of negotiation, and struggle against British power, before the State of Israel was recognised. The Soviet Union was the first state to recognise this "puppet state"... of imperialism.

The rhetoric of Arab nationalism has not hesitated to identify Israel as a new Crusader state, and thus to give another symbolic meaning to expelling the "foreigners" from the sacred land.

It is an obvious historical error, because the Jews who arrived in Israel were not emissaries of a Christian and Western empire, but refugees and survivors from one of the greatest massacres of our time, victims of that "barbarous West" whose racist and imperialist ideology would find its most

violent and total form in Nazism.

It is almost dumbfounding to observe that the argument [that certain peoples are not real nations with rights] although no longer applied to the Palestinians [as it was by the Zionist pioneers] continues to figure in the ideological array of some militants.

The Jews are thus not a people, much less a nation, but at most a religious minority who can enjoy freedom of worship in the democratic - and Arab - Palestine.

It seems odd that, for internationalists

"It seems odd that only one people in the world can be an exception to the common analysis - the Jewish people - that the right of self-determination cannot function in this case."

like us, only one people in the world can be an exception to the common analysis - the Jewish people - that the right of self-determination, which seems in the light of history to be one of the apposite of Marxist principles, cannot function in this case.

Finally - and this would deserve a longer discussion - it may appear regrettable, for the Jews as for the other peoples, that the Holocaust should have contributed so heavily to a form of national identification.

For sure, there should be no question of accepting Israel's claims of direct inheritance from the Holocaust. The memory of the victims of the Holocaust belongs to no-

one, just as it has served no end: this untypical massacre cannot explain anything, for it simply is not explained itself.

Nonetheless, it remains true that Israel, more than any other State, can claim a portion of legitimacy from it.

Those are the fruits of history: a history which we did not write and in which we had so little influence!

To us it falls to transform that history, without forgetting and without obsession, knowing that oppression engenders oppression and that no one oppression can justify another.

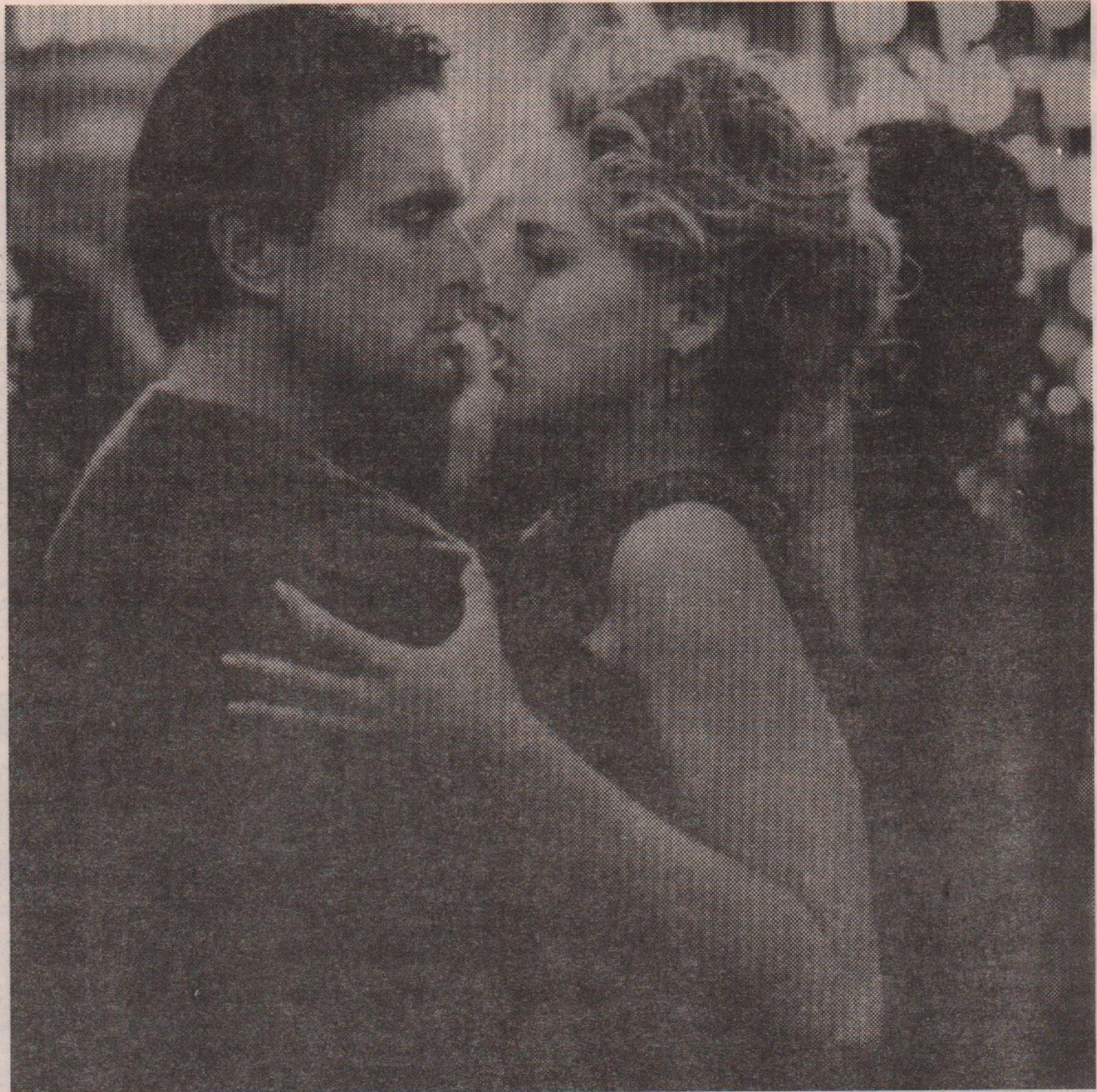
This article is translated and abridged from the April-May issue of "Critique Communiste", magazine of the French Trotskyist group LCR. Almost the whole issue is given over to Palestine, Israel, and Zionism. Besides interviews and historical articles, there are two other articles debating current attitudes to Israel.

The Lebanese Trotskyist Salah Jaber criticises a book by Abraham Serfaty for refusing to recognise that an Israeli Jewish nation exists, and that "any real democratic solution of the Israel-Palestine question must include the recognition of the fact of an Israeli nation and guarantee it the rights of a nation, and thus the freedom to maintain itself as a separate entity on the express condition that it be no longer founded upon the national oppression of the Arabs".

Christian Picquet also declares that "it cannot be a matter of answering one injustice by another. It cannot be denied that a long and complex historic process has ended up giving birth to the fact of an Israeli nation". However, he refers to a left-wing Palestinian programme of the early 1970s, "a democratic state in which Arabs and Jews would enjoy equal national rights and the same responsibilities", without saying whether those national rights should include the right to separate.

THE CULTURAL FRONT

A package of fear, lust, and male fantasy



Nick Curran (Michael Douglas) closely questions murder suspect Catherine Tramell (Sharon Stone)

Cinema

Belinda Weaver reviews *Basic Instinct*

The American gay and lesbian protesters who disrupted production of "Basic Instinct" were on the wrong scent. What's offensive about the movie is not that Catherine, the prime murder suspect, is bisexual (thus implying, that Hollywood sees gays as ice-pick wielding loonies) but the film's use of her sexuality as a male turn-on.

When Catherine fondles her female lover, Roxy, in front of Nick, a detective on the murder case, it's like something out of a porno movie - two women together, the most popular male fantasy. It's presented as titillation, something she does to taunt him, not as something she simply wants to do (and which has nothing to do with him).

Because of this, there's an edge when Nick finally gets to bed Catherine; he wants to make her pay for this "humiliation".

And that sums up the movie - it's a power struggle, between the screwed-up, hyper-macho Nick and the cool, provocative Catherine.

Are there women like Catherine? I doubt it. She's a projection of male fantasies and desires, a creation of fear and lust (the only real emotions in this movie). We're not meant to know her or understand her; all we know is she drives Nick crazy.

The plot is nothing new. Nick the cop becomes obsessed with the sexy murder suspect; the film is a did she? didn't she? tease. It has lots of sex. It also has car chases, ambushes, and expensive cars and houses. All very swanky, but with not much apart from the heavy breathing going on, it's a little tedious.

"Basic Instinct" isn't interested in why the murder happened. Director Paul Verhoeven and writer Joe Eszterhas never come up with a motive for the killing; they

don't even try. From the number of murderous women tangled up in the plot, none of whom "know why they did it", it's as if they're saying motiveless killing is just something women do.

If that isn't misogyny, I don't know what is, and that, not homophobia, is the real problem with "Basic Instinct".

It's also rather sloppily put together, relying heavily on stale thriller conventions rather than plot. The film seems to promise a grand plan on the part of someone, with the "super-intelligent" and "diabolically clever" Catherine as the obvious suspect, yet no-one bothers to tie up all the loose ends that would explain what was really going on.

The biggest weakness is the relationship between Catherine and Nick. At fist, she's firmly in control, pulling all the strings, with Nick fascinated. But then the film betrays everything it has led up to. Purely as a sop to male vanity, Catherine has to seem ambivalent about Nick, so that he isn't left

looking like a vain fool.

It doesn't add up, and it trashes the Catherine character, but that seems to be okay with the boys at the helm. Verhoeven/Eszterhas

"Three orgasms in four minutes in anatomically incorrect positions - of course it's a male fantasy"

show positive contempt for psychology, which may be their way of ducking explanations.

Verhoeven and Eszterhas should be nervous about psychology - you can tell a lot about them from this movie.

When Nick's friend, Gus, finds out Nick has slept with Catherine, he's appalled - not out of horror that Nick has bedded a possible

murderer, but because Nick might get killed. He's worried about the risk, not the morality.

Nick, though he has gunned four people down himself, takes the moral high ground with Catherine, and Verhoeven/Eszterhas go along, presenting Nick as "good" while Catherine is "evil". To hell with psychology, they say, it's as simple as that.

For them it is. What's "wrong" with Catherine is not that she's a killer or a bisexual but that she lives life on her own terms, doing what she wants, not only sexually, but in every way.

Catherine represents the free, independent woman, a woman who laughs at men, a woman who therefore must be "evil" and must be punished. The film is incredibly hyped up, so much so that you only notice its ludicrousness later. Catherine, like the mad nanny in "The hand that rocks the cradle", has a very Hollywood, photogenic madness. She doesn't talk to herself, or exhibit any upsetting signs

of craziness. She's like those terminal patients in Hollywood movies who look fabulously well till they die.

The film is also over the top with stunts, effects and the rest. Nick the superman gets run over twice but gets up straight away in hot pursuit. It's so silly. What on earth are these men trying to prove? Nick has to be the best lover, the toughest driver, the heaviest drinker, etc, etc.

All the same, the movie is on his side, against the woman, against all the women, who aren't real anyway, but projections of men's misogyny and fear.

Sharon Stone, who plays Catherine, was realistic about her role. "Three orgasms in four minutes in anatomically incorrect positions - of course it's a male fantasy". Unfortunately, she went along with it.

Forget the hype, the sex, the blood, the advertising. "Basic Instinct" is a backlash movie. It's women who should be up in arms about it.

Should Ecstasy be legal?

Television

By Geoff Ward

Methylenedioxy-methamphetamine, better known as Ecstasy, was the subject of BBC 1's Everyman programme last Sunday, 24 May.

Ecstasy users were given sympathetic treatment, and many were interviewed.

Ecstasy was patented in 1914, but never reached the market then. It was re-discovered in the '70s when some psychotherapists recommended it as an aid to therapy, claiming that it lowered patients' inhibitions and increased their insight.

Today, the therapeutic benefit of the drug is disputed and initial tests seem to demonstrate long-term, pos-

sibly irreversible, effects on the brain which apparently involve a severe reduction in serotonin levels.

However, Ecstasy users have not waited for clinical trials. There have been comparatively few deaths, 12 or so, and "bad trips" are rare and probably caused by other substances mixed with the drug, so users value the euphoric effects above the risk.

Ecstasy has been given a similar classification to drugs like heroin, but there is reason to believe it is less addictive. Increased usage results in the body building up a tolerance, so people need to take more to achieve the same euphoria, and suffer more down-side effects from the drug. One woman threw herself off a building while under the influence of the drug; one youth in the programme developed a paranoia; another became physically wrecked.

The drug can be produced with

laboratory equipment in a garden shed, and may be mixed with anything.

The Everyman programme seemed

"I think that if the tests carried out on Ecstasy already are valid, then that would rule it out being produced for the mass market."

to make a good case for decriminalisation without openly stating a view one way or the other. That does not necessarily mean that we should be

in favour of the drug being legalised; mass-produced by a company like ICI, and sold on the market.

Comparisons can be made with drugs like alcohol and tobacco, which do a lot of harm to millions of people, but are heavily advertised and promoted. I think, though, that if the tests carried out on Ecstasy already are valid then that would rule out it being produced for the mass market.

The issues are complex, but ways need to be found to reduce the risks to users. The system where addicts can get drugs on prescription from a doctor should be re-introduced. More information needs to be made available, and possibly the places established where the drug can be bought without the threat of arrest, and where the drug can be monitored and tested. Holland has gone a long way in this direction with cannabis.

ORGANISING

Build the Alliance for Workers' Liberty

Kim Howells, speaking on radio last Saturday, said that the Labour Party must change. Links with the unions are passé; in fact, organisations based on producers should go: the power of consumers is the coming thing.

It reflects Kim Howells' position quite nicely. Here is a man who has done very well from our labour movement, first from the South Wales NUM, then becoming a Labour MP.

Probably he does worry about the power of consumers: it must be difficult working out how to spend an MP's salary! Howell saves up all his vitriol for Arthur Scargill and the labour

movement's class struggle left.

The leading positions in our movement are — in large part — occupied by people like Howells. Some are worse. As a species they are cowardly in front of the ruling class, arrogant towards the rank and file.

Now many of these people want to cut the union link at the core of the Labour Party — the ties which anchor the party to the working class.

They must be stopped — just as they were in the late '50s and early '60s — before the Labour Party is destroyed as a working class organisation.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty and our paper

Socialist Organiser exist to fight these people as a part of the struggle to politically re-arm our movement.

Inside the Labour Party and through our fractions in the unions we are organising to:

- turn the unions into organisations which fight militantly for wages and rights in the workplace;

- transform Labour into a party which stands up to the Tories;

- win a well-funded NHS;

- win a poll tax amnesty;
- build opposition to the Asylum Bill;

- win the repeal of all anti-union laws;

- weaken the bosses' state by democratising the

police and judiciary;

- democratise the unions and the Labour Party.

We need accountable leaders who are paid at the wage levels of rank and file workers. (In their way, people like Kim Howells will have less of a problem worrying about their power as consumers).

Our organisation and paper exist to think through the class struggle using the lessons from previous battles to help our movement fight. This can only be effectively achieved collectively. We need to build an organisation — scattered individuals, however good they are, won't do the job.

Our organisation seeks to help organise working class

battles, we fight on big issues and on limited issues, which are capable of moving large numbers into action.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty is part of the movement; it is not another "left" sect, parasitic on that movement, and ultimately irresponsible towards it.

Our immediate actions are part of a long-term commitment to, and a steady on-going fight for, a socialism based on the self-activity of the working class. In a word, we exist to help the

To join the AWL write to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

Workers' Liberty '92

IDEAS FOR FREEDOM



Malcolm X

Friday

Price and Profit

□ a four part introduction to Marxist economics — Martin Thomas

Fighting fascism

□ a three part discussion of the rise of fascism during the 1930s — John O'Mahony

Sessions:

□ modern British racism and how to fight it — Marc Wadsworth and Dion D'Silva

● Ireland: what solution? — Tony Dale

● what will socialism be like: — Belinda Weaver

Debates:

□ did Lenin lead to Stalin? — Robert Service and Tom Rigby

□ what should socialists say about pornography?

Saturday

Labour movement

□ the left after the election — John O'Mahony

● how to fight contracting-out ● Labour and the union link — Bernie Grant

MP

Fighting racism

□ slavery and anti-racism — Robin Blackburn

□ the roots of anti-semitism — Nic Brereton

□ can we stop LePen?

□ Malcolm X and the black nationalists — Sab Sanghera

Sessions:

□ the Tories, sex and the family — Martin Durham

● should we save the *Morning Star*? — Al Richardson

● was Keynes right? — Peter Kenway

● Ennis: an Irish town — John O'Mahony

Discussions:

□ what solution in the Middle

East? — Michel Warshawsky and the AWL

Debates:

□ what is the nature of Stalinism? — Michel Warshawsky, Hillel Ticktin and Tom Rigby

● should Scotland be independent? — Stewart Hosie (SNP) and the AWL

Questions of life:

□ does God exist? — Martin Thomas

● is this the end of history? — Jim Denham

● their morals and ours — Pat Murphy

● where do ideas come from? — Ruth Cockroft

Sunday

Sessions:

□ Queer Politics — Janine Booth

● fighting AIDS — Kevin Sexton

● Hollywood's view of history — Dan Judelson

● the history of International Socialists — John O'Mahony

● what do we say to Essex man? — Chris Hickey

● how do we deal with the union bureaucrats? — Jim Denham

● is Politically Correct correct? — Martin Thomas

● a defence of dialectics — John Pike

International forum: □ Cuba — socialism on one island? ● South Africa in crisis — Tom Rigby ●



Fighting AIDS

socialists and Zionism — John O'Mahony

Socialist classics discussed: □ *The Communist Manifesto* — John Moloney

● *State and Revolution* — Caroline Henry

● *Lessons of October* — Mary Cooper

● *Stalinism and Bolshevism* — Jim Kearns

For more details, see back page or ring Mark on 071-637 7967

£8,000 fund target

Comrades and supporters have raised £938.50 in donations and fundraising during the last ten days.

This brings our total so far to £1989.03 — or 25% of our £8,000 target.

We aim to reach our £8,000 target by our Workers' Liberty '92 event on 3-5 July.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty and our paper, *socialist organiser*, are raising funds to help our expansion drive.

If you enjoy reading

Socialist Organiser why not make a donation?

Send donations to: AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA (cheques made payable to "Workers' Liberty").

Thanks this week include: £40 South East London AWL; £50 Leeds AWL; £50 Newcastle AWL; £45 Glasgow AWL; £30 Manchester AWL; £62 Sheffield AWL.

Thanks too for donations from supporters in York, Luton, Northampton and Sheffield.

200 Club

Workers' Liberty runs a 200 Club draw. Each month entrants stand to win £100. The excess money goes to help the paper.

You can join our 200 Club for as little as £1 per month. Details from your local *Socialist Organiser* sellers.

This month's 200 Club winner lives in Nottingham.

AWL Public Forums

Thursday 28 May

"The Case for Socialist Feminism", Nene College, Northampton, 1.00. Speaker: Alice Sharp

"Keep the Union Link", Sheffield AWL meeting. SCCAU, West Street, 7.30.

Speaker: Jim Denham

"What is Working-Class Culture?", Glasgow AWL meeting. City Halls, 7.30

Wednesday 3 June

"The Legacy of Malcolm X", AWL London Forum. Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Road, 7.30. Speakers: Dion D'Silva and Lee Jasper

Thursday 4 June

"Los Angeles — the American Dream?", Merseyside AWL meeting. Unemployed Centre, Wallasey, 7.30

Saturday 13 June

Marxist Dayschool, Nottingham AWL event. ICC, Mansfield Road, 10.30-4.00

Students

Lobby of Parliament to demand an end to student poverty. Thursday 4 June, 2.30. Details: Kev Sexton and Jeni Bailey: 071-272 8900

Labour Party

"Labour's Socialist Alternative", meeting organised by Labour Party Socialists. Monday 15 June, Brighton Unemployed Centre, 8.00. Speakers include Bernie Grant MP

Campaign Group of Labour MPs Conference. Saturday 20 June, West Indian Centre, Leycock Place, Leeds

The Unions

Socialist Movement Trade Union Conference. 18-19

July, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London

Anti-Racist Convention

The Anti-Racist Alliance is holding a conference, Saturday 13 June at ULU, Malet Street, London WC1. Registration is £6 (delegates)/£4 (individuals)/£1.50 (unwaged) in advance. Get your organisation to delegate you. Write to ARA, PO Box 2578, London N5 1UF or phone: 071-607 3988

Tubeworker

The AWL produces regular workplace bulletins in a number of factories, depots and workplaces.

The bulletins are produced by workers in each workplace who provide inside information.

The bulletins are distributed by members of the AWL.

Our latest initiative is "Tubeworker", by and for workers on London Underground's Central Line. So far, 400 copies each of 3 issues have been produced.

The bulletin has gone down extremely well. Workers are looking for information and ideas as they face the potentially devastating "Company Plan".

Any London Tube workers who want to help produce or distribute "Tubeworker" are urged to contact us at PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Black and white must unite to fight capitalism

PLATFORM

By Mark Osborn

I heard Manning Marable's speech (History of Malcolm X, SO 523). He spoke for 80 minutes — and very effectively, too. But the only way the word "white" was used was as a demagogic way of saying "reactionary". So Clarence Thomas is not "right wing", he is "white". (And his behaviour is "white" — by which I understand sexual harassment is "white" too).

Marable has either given up on whites or thinks they are irrelevant.

Marable's nationalism has dissolved the class in his socialism. You will not find the words "working class" in his speech.

Manning Marable has replaced a workers' movement — a democratic movement of the vast majority — with an "alliance of African-Americans with other oppressed people: Native Americans, Hispanics, Chicanos".

But how can this alliance of minorities which is itself still a minority and a mish-mash of classes replace capitalism with a democratic collectivism?

The bulk of the US poor are white workers. At the moment many do not agree with us; many are racist — but any socialism which

"Any socialism which rests on working-class self-activity and aims to win majorities must relate to white workers."

rests on working-class self-activity and aims to win majorities must relate to these people.

Manning Marable's anti-capitalist black nationalism is actually less rational than the conservative black nationalism he criticises. "Black power" is at least coherent when it advocates the creation of black capitalists.

A final comment about the meeting. There was a lot of anti-semitism around. The Farrakhan people were selling their paper *The Final Call* with a back page advert for a book dealing with the "Jews and the slave trade", a "true account of Jewish involvement in the 400-year-plus Black Holocaust. Compiled from actual Jewish documents".

One more mainstream Muslim talked about the need to oppose "usury" — he was not complaining about bank charges.

A disaster for tubeworkers

By a Central Line guard

On Tuesday 19 May, RMT and London Underground management agreed a document which RMT felt was good enough "to effectively resolve the industrial dispute that existed between the union and London Underground Limited".

Consequently the 2-to-1 strike vote over the Company Plan will not be used, and no industrial action will be taken. But have the bosses raised the white flag over 55 Broadway? No! All they have agreed is to abide by the currently existing machinery of negotiations in progressing the Company Plan. That's all. Not a single proposal in the Company Plan has been withdrawn. The RMT leaders are nevertheless painting this as a great victory.

It is not. Management have made a small concession — no more — and one that can be withdrawn just as easily as it has been made. On the other hand, we have thrown away a two-to-one mandate for action. This is a disastrous decision which will make the fight against the Plan far more difficult. The way it was made without reference to the membership also underlines the bureaucratic nature of the supposedly "left" RMT leadership



at both local and national level, as well as the vital importance of fighting for democracy in the union.

National Communications Union conference Time to meet job threats

By a BT engineer
(Westminster NCU branch)

Thousands of jobs are being cut at British Telecom, despite the minimal reduction in profits announced this week by the BT Board. 24,000 jobs are to go this year, 10,000 in London alone. The job reductions are part of the long-term plan to increase the profitability in an already highly profitable company, at the expense of the customers and the staff. Under the latest version of

the voluntary redundancy agreement between BT and the NCU — "Release '92" — the staff "surplus" has been imposed on us, not negotiated. Interest in the scheme is high, mainly because of the atmosphere of uncertainty in the workplace. Redeployees and others who see management strategy will take away their work, reason that it is better to leave now with some money than to be sacked later with none. We don't have to take it. The result of the General Election, and the lack of opposition to management strategy by the NCU nationally, leaves us in a situation where there appears to

be no avenue to fight back. However, the low morale in the workplace is accompanied by a (healthy) distrust of management's assurances and frustration at how they treat us with contempt. When negotiators from the NCU met BT to arrange the annual increase in London Weighting this year, they were told that, as BT had no problems recruiting and retaining staff, they wouldn't be giving us an increase! The union nationally has made clear to BT its opposition to compulsory redundancies. But the price extracted for this seems to be acquiescence to any

scheme the board comes up with. The development of resourcing companies (a new form of contractor) is the latest scheme with the potential to undermine our job security and working conditions. At NCU National Conference next week it is time to start turning round the mood: we must recognise that BT is on the offensive against our jobs and conditions of work. We need to respond by making counter-demands. BT is making mega-profits. They can afford our pay claim, they can afford our shorter working week claims; they can afford our job security. These are our priorities.

Bury anti-union victimisation

Bury NALGO branch secretary, Rob McLoughlin, has been suspended and faces the threat of the sack in an anti-union victimisation by the Council.

Rob was suspended on 13 May after he refused to comply with an instruction from the Chief Executive to withdraw branch publicity promoting anti-cuts rallies and giving information on a dispute over the Council's attempts to shift their pay date. The background to the victimisations is Bury's financial crisis following the BCCI crash. Bury lost £6.5 million through BCCI; nationally this was the second biggest loss by any local council. This irresponsible investment cost Labour votes on 9 April.

The Council is now trying to make the workforce pay for the its cash crisis. So far, NALGO has successfully campaigned against and prevented compulsory redundancies. Now, the Council has hit on a new way of saving money by pushing their pay date back from the middle to the end of the month. This would mean the workforce giving the Council an interest-free loan of two weeks wages. In response to this pay cut threat, Bury NALGO have run a very effective campaign. The

central focus of the campaign has been a series of satirical posters. The dispute is described in the form of a fairytale. In the tale Madge the Witch and her son Majea the Magician taxed the people; the local giants were terrified of the witch and her son; the giants were very stupid and were ripped off by the wizard Abcci; the giants tried to cut the wages of the servants of their castle; the cook organised a meeting of the servants; and now the giants plot against the cook. NALGO's anti-cuts campaign has been very effective. NALGO

stands in the way of the Council making more cuts and so we end up with the NALGO branch secretary being suspended and facing a disciplinary. Rob is on full-time secondment to union duties. He has been suspended as a council employee. As an individual social worker he is being held responsible for the collective actions of the NALGO branch. The whole suspension and disciplinary is out of order. Rob is getting full backing from NALGO locally and at district level. This anti-union victimisation must be stopped.

Stand-off at Walthamstow Girls' School

By Ian Hollingworth
(Waltham Forest NUT)

unions in Eastern Europe was passed. Rumours that outgoing General Secretary Ken Gill received a model T45 tank as his farewell present have been hotly denied.

UCW

Despite doing their best to bore everyone to death, Tuffin and new boy Alan Johnson kept on getting overturned. Among the rank and file victories were support for the REM 11 and total opposition, backed by industrial action, to the introduction of team working.

FBU

Very quiet indeed. Ken Cameron, treasurer of ARA, was defeated when Conference voted for a unified anti-fascist movement and agreed to affiliate to both ANL and ARA.

Two lively lobbies of the governing body of Walthamstow Girls' School in East London, and a strike

vote of 33-0, appear to have staved off the immediate threat of redundancies due to budget shortfalls.

The initial deadline for issuing redundancy notices, 22 May, has passed with the governors responsible still in a dither. If the final possible deadline (1 June) passes and the redundancy threats have not been officially withdrawn, then strike action is due to start from 3 June.

The NUT in Waltham Forest is currently building the campaign across the borough to extend strike action if the threat of redundancy spreads. This is having an effect, as several governing bodies at other schools are coming out on the side of the teachers and refusing to be drawn into setting a job-cut budget.

Striking teachers, however, must realise and accept that as the struggle widens, strike support pay, relatively generous in the NUT, could dwindle. Hardship funds can be organised where necessary.

Coupled with strike action is refusal to cover for absent colleagues, either by giving up preparation and marking time away from the classroom, or by absorbing extra children into the remaining teachers' classes. Absences are normally covered by "supply" teachers, and there are borough agreements with the unions to provide this support.

With the passing on of budget responsibilities under the government "Local Management of Schools" scheme, governing bodies have now been told by the Local Education Authority that they do not have to respect those agreements any more. Hence the relatively vulnerable supply staff are at risk, and the no-cover action is designed to protect them.

At the time of writing, the latest news is that NUT pressure has worked to the advantage of members in Walthamstow Girls' School. The downside is that non-union members of the teaching staff are now being targeted for the chop.

It is vital that school union groups pre-empt this tactic and go for 100% unionisation immediately.

North Circular roadworks: support this picket!

"If we had some proper backing from the TGWU and UCATT, we would have won this dispute by now. As it is, we have stopped a few deliveries and are putting the pressure on".



That's how one of the chippies summed up the situation three weeks into their strike at Balfour Beatty's North Circular Road job. The subcontractor they were working for, Baseform, went bust owing some carpenters up to £1,200. The 20 strikers are demanding that the main contractors, Balfour Beatty, pay up. Strange things keep happening on the North Circular. Last

week, two cars broke down simultaneously, in the middle of the rush hour and right outside the site offices. Traffic on the busy North Circular was brought to an immediate standstill. It must be the weather... Join the picket: 7.30am onward, on North Circular Road — turn left 300 yards out of Hanger Lane tube station.

CPSA conference shows wide gulf between leaders and activists

Last week's CPSA conference in Brighton saw the gulf between union leaders and activists widen spectacularly.

In an attempt to rush through an appalling 4.25% pay deal, the top table seemed determined to deny Conference the right even to discuss it. The National Executive relented only to announce after the debate that Conference's 2-to-1 decision to recommend a "no" vote was meaningless. Union president Marion Chambers and her colleagues would instead hold an inquiry into the branches that submitted emergency motions!

The anger on the floor of Conference found expression in a meeting of over 350 delegates called to discuss pay. It was agreed unanimously to issue a leaflet in the name of Conference explaining to members why they should vote no. (See

back page). Meanwhile, back in Conference, a new right-wing National Executive was elected, with General Secretary and ardent witch-hunter Barry Reamsbottom getting the vote of less than 11% of the membership. This did not prevent the top table engaging in an excruciating display of self-congratulation. The rest of the Conference saw good resolutions passed — like on contracting-out — which received "qualified" NEC support. That means they will do nothing about them! A motion giving support to the offshore workers' union OILC was passed overwhelmingly. Conference ended with the bizarre spectacle of President Marion Chambers singing "You'll never walk alone" to outgoing General Secretary John Ellis. Accompaniment was provided by a karaoke machine.

CPSA "moderates" call for Tory help

The CPSA's National Executive and full-time officer positions were once again won by the "Moderates" on a pathetic 24% turnout. Since the introduction of postal balloting, turnouts have dropped. NUCPS: now win the pay ballot!

With the General Secretary proclaiming, "if we stop running perhaps the Tories will stop chasing", NUCPS Conference (11-15 May) voted to ballot members for an all-out three day pay strike, with further action to follow. The combative "left" speeches of the leadership were reflected in the mood of delegates, who clearly understood the Tories' determination to take the civil service unions apart over the next few years.

Unfortunately the National Executive gave no similar lead — however limited — over the Tories' plans to contract out public sector services. While a reasonably good resolution was adopted, the Executive gives every sign of leaving groups and branches to be picked off one by one.

In the face of the Tories' declaration, in last November's *Competing for Quality White Paper*, Assistant General Secretary John Sheldon declared that the Executive would deploy the successful strategy of... the last 15 years!

As delegates realised, the Tories' pay proposals are intimately linked to contracting out. The first crucial task is to win the pay ballot for positive action, pulling CPSA and IPMS behind us.

dramatically — in the 1986 re-run workplace ballot, there was a 65% turnout! Within CPSA workplace balloting still exists for Section Executive Committees in departments like DHSS, DE, etc. The turnouts in those ballot are consistently higher. Votes are cast in meetings, ballots are delivered to work addresses, and less is left to chance or vulnerable to members forgetting to post their papers. Bigger turnouts and workplace discussions also result in victories for the Broad Left.

The re-elected CPSA National Executive want to scrap these workplace ballots and, according to the *Mail on Sunday* (24th), they have turned to the new Tory Employment Secretary, Gillian Shephard, for help. They want her to amend the 1988 Employment Act (which brought in postal ballots for National Executives) to include Sections.

They say that workplace balloting leads to undue pressure being put on by reps, and outrageously suggest that reps fill in ballots for members.

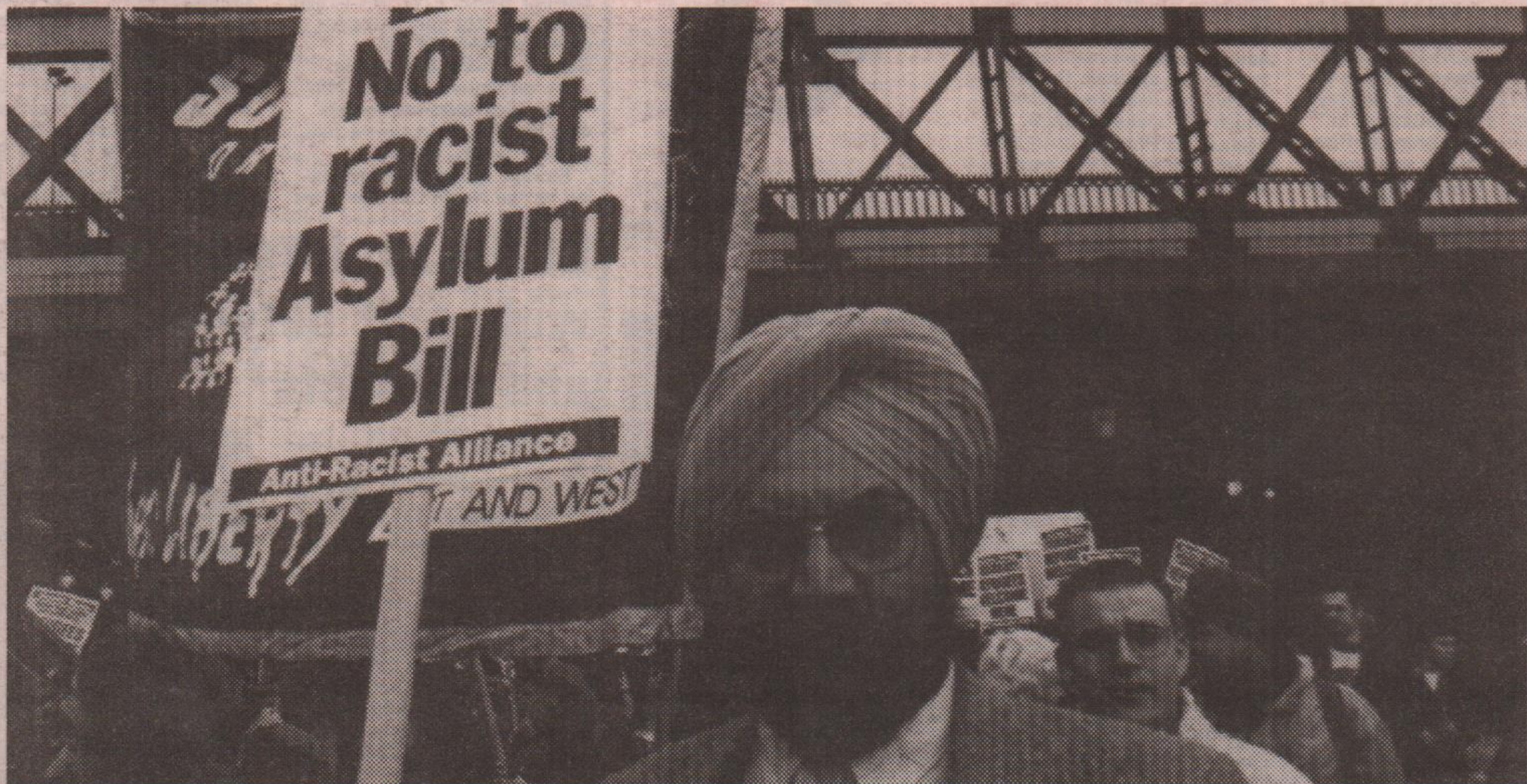
This ignores the facts that each branch's voting is conducted by independent scrutineers, and each ballot paper has to be signed (except in some right-wing controlled branches where the officers can do what they like!) Results are then double-checked at CPSA HQ.

By contrast, the postal ballot register favoured by the right wing is notoriously out of date, and therefore undemocratic.

The new General Secretary, Reamsbottom, and the new National Executive, want to drive the Left out of the union. We must unite as never before to stop them.

Civil servants:

Reject this pay insult!



Unite to fight fascism

Ideas for Freedom is a three day event — 3-5 July — in North London. It is organised by the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

Ideas for Freedom will take up all the major discussion on the left. All these issues will be debated out. (For a fuller agenda turn to page 14).

In particular, Workers'

Liberty '92 will look at how to fight racism and fascism. We will examine the roots of fascism and ask: why is the European right growing? What can the left do to respond?

Black activists will take up the question of defeating modern British racism. We will look at the legacy of Malcolm X and the black nationalists.

We will tackle the question of anti-semitism and the left's lousy record. Israeli Trotskyist Michel Warshawsky will examine the question of Zionism and the left's response.

Attend "Ideas for Freedom" and discuss the issues for socialists with the AWL.

Details about Ideas for Freedom

Friday 3, Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 July at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way,

London N19.

Facilities

There will be a professionally-staffed creche at Workers' Liberty '92. Accommodation can be provided.

There may be transport from your area (phone 071-639 7965 for details)

Food, drink and entertainment are available.

Tickets

Before the end of June tickets are cheaper. For the 3 days, £7 (unwaged)/£11 (students and low waged)/£16 (waged). Subtract £1 (unwaged) or £2 (other from these ticket prices for Saturday-Sunday only tickets).

Agenda

For a full agenda (out in 2 weeks) or more details of the event phone Mark on 071-639 7965.

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By a civil servant

This week is a significant one in the history of the Civil Service. If the government's pay deal is accepted it will mean the end of national pay bargaining, increased emphasis on performance pay and the end of automatic increments.

The national union of Civil and Public Servants (NUCPS), at their conference a fortnight ago, voted to reject the deal and begin a campaign of Public Services Association (CPSA) used every trick in the book to prevent a discussion at Conference and push through their "yes" recommendation. Last week, CPSA Conference rejected the deal by 2:1, despite the NEC. The NEC then made it clear they would see hell freeze over before recommending a "no" vote.

Conference delegates must now campaign in the branches to reject the deal and link up with NUCPS in a campaign of industrial action.

The end of national pay bargaining is directly linked to the contracting out of Civil Service jobs. It is an attack on our jobs, pay and conditions. It is also a real threat to our national union. The Tories hope to weaken us through divisive pay deals and turn us into a docile workforce, fearful of fighting for our rights. We must stop them. The rejection of the pay deal and a campaign of industrial action is vital. It will also lay the groundwork for a cross Civil Service union campaign of strike action to beat contracting out.

