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ORGANISER

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Only



**socialism
can save
the earth!**

Students are worse off than jobless

Students from around the country will be starting a summer of protest by lobbying Parliament on 4 June. They are protesting against student poverty and the effects of the removal of students from the benefits system.

The lobby which is supported by several Area National Union of Students (NUS) organisations is also calling for increased funding to education and a living grant for all full-time students in post-16 education.

The lobby is not just another pointless exercise in trying to influence back bench Tory MPs though. Plans for a campaign over the summer vacation and for the start of next academic year will be discussed.

Students face another summer of hardship. They are excluded from claiming benefits and the continuing recession makes summer jobs almost impossible to find. A report by the Citizens' Advice Bureau concludes that students are

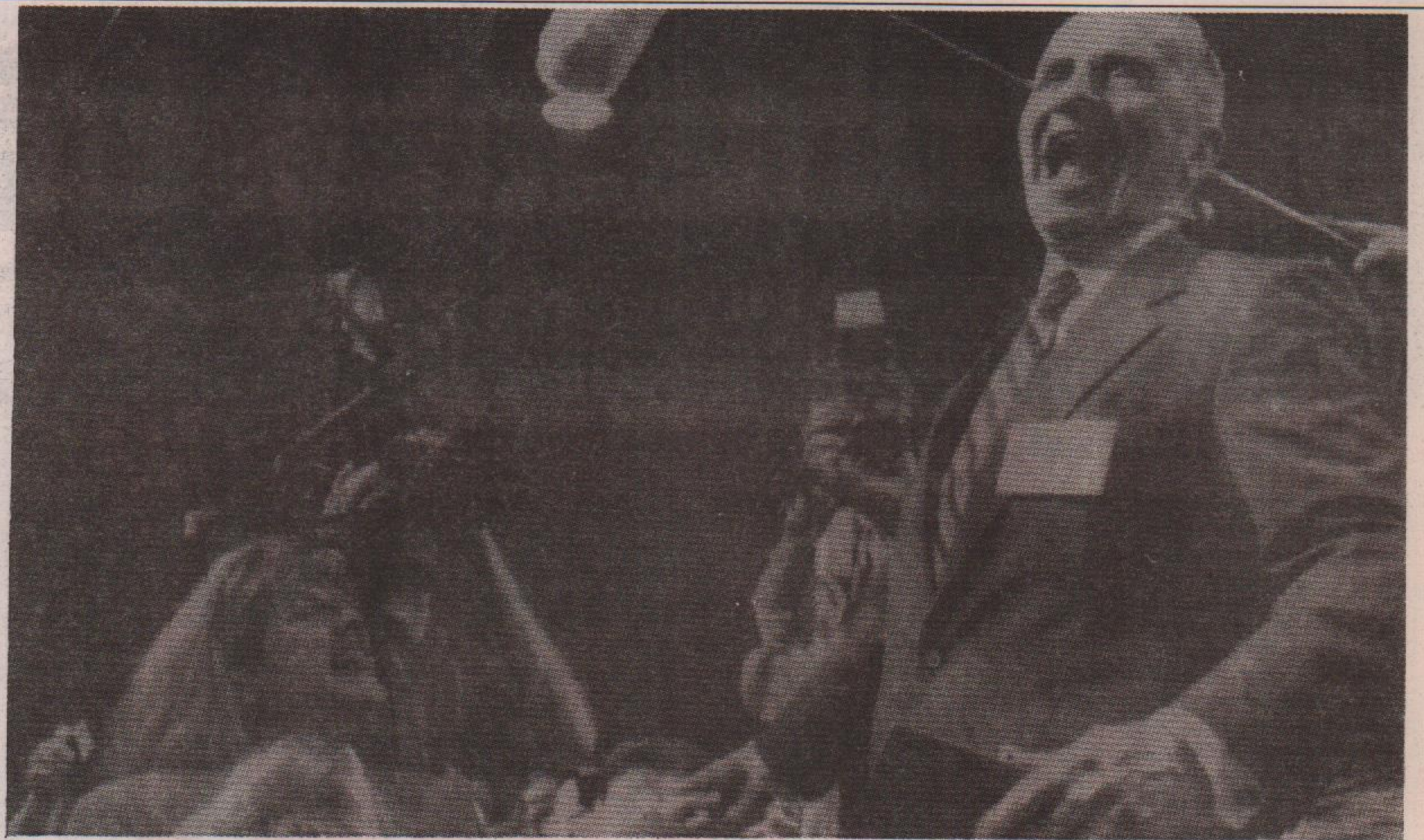
"suffering considerable distress as a result". It also nails the Tory lie that students are now better off because of the loans system: instead, they are worse off than the unemployed by an average of £500!

As a result, the report continues, this has particularly hit students whose parents are "on low incomes, themselves unemployed, disabled or pensioners; or where, in the case of mature students, such dependence was no longer possible".

The lobby and future action are being organised because the NUS leadership has failed to take the initiative. With reports in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* suggesting momentum on the Tory back benches is developing towards an attack on automatic membership of the NUS, there is little room for complacency.

If NUS fights for grants for all students, they in turn will defend their union when it is attacked.

For more information about the campaign, ring Nick Brereton, Tyne Tees Area NUS, on 091-266 1320.



Ross Perot, the maverick candidate for US President, has carried to extremes modern capitalism's reduction of politics to "image". He has no party and no programme — and he's proud of it! America doesn't need new policies, he says. There are plenty of policies around to solve all America's problems. The only trouble is that politicians and bureaucrats in Washington do nothing about

them. The US needs a man like Perot who will "take out the trash"! A clue about Perot's politics is given by two facts. The company that made his fortune, EDS, is viciously anti-union and imposes strict rules on its workers (no beards, suits and ties, etc.) And Perot has declared that if he becomes President his government will include no gays and no "adulterers".

Spanish workers mounted a half-day general strike last Thursday, 28 May, to protest against cuts in benefits, and especially unemployment benefit.

The government has also frozen wages in the public sector.

The Socialist Party who hold power in Spain were prepared to use police force to break pickets in the strike.

The strike is the beginning of what promises to be a long summer of opposition to the plan, including a one-day general strike in October.

Greek anti-war activists face 19 months' jail

By Vassili Manikakis

Into a nationalist atmosphere of hysterical proportions that threatens to lead the Greek people into the madness of a Balkan war have emerged voices of dissent — voices in danger of being silenced.

On 6 May, four internationalists and humanists from the Anti-War, Anti-Nationalist Campaign of Greece were sentenced to 19 months gaol for distributing a leaflet. Along with six other activists who were sentenced to six months jail for putting up posters of a similar content, they await their appeal. They have not been jailed yet.

They were charged with "disturbing the friendly relations of the Greek state with foreign countries", "dissemination of false information" and an "attempt to incite civil dissension".

Here are some extracts from their leaflet:

"The aggressive and racist attitude towards the neighbouring people with the pretext that they use the name 'Macedonia' must stop. This people, too, has the right to national self determination..."

"It is shameful for us to accept without protest the continued economic blockade of the neighbouring country, as well as the various 'combative' proposals for an army invasion of it..."

"It is shameful for us to allow certain people to yell about invasions and annexations of lands, using as a pretext the oppression suffered by the Greek minority in Albania..."

"We must not accept any territorial expansion promoted by the chauvinist staffs in any country..."

The main aim of the campaign is to build a pan-Balkan peace movement, and to this end they have organised forums in Athens, on 8-9 June, and in Thessaloniki on 11-12 June, that will be attended by activists from Serbia, Slavic Macedonia, Kosovo, Turkey, and Kurdistan.

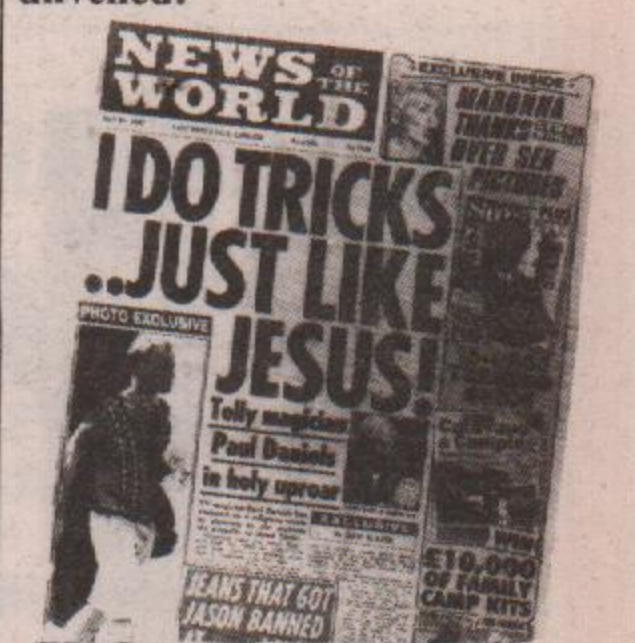
Contact: AWAC, Valtetsiou 35, 10681 Athens, Greece.

The lie machine



About 130,000 civilians were killed in Dresden in 1944 in the firestorm created by a vast air attack organised by RAF chief "Bomber" Harris. The city had no great military significance, and was full of refugees. The attack, like others on Hamburg and elsewhere, was deliberately designed for maximum civilian casualties. At the same time, the Allied commanders were refusing to bomb the railway lines leading to the Nazi concentration camps, saying that they could not spare scarce resources for targets of such small military significance.

Last Sunday (31st) peace campaigners (mostly English, despite the "Sport" calling them "Hun-scum") protested when a statue of Harris was unveiled.



Supposing they ever happened, Jesus Christ's "miracles" were probably ordinary conjuring tricks. So says TV magician Paul Daniels, a Tory supporter but, so the "News of the World" reports, a "former Methodist lay preacher turned atheist".

Keep the union link!

After the Labour National Executive's plans to weaken the trade union link (see page 4), Tony Benn and other leading activists spoke to SO

Tony Benn

The pressure on the National Executive and the statements made by the leadership candidates suggest that there is a majority at the top of the Labour Party for a weakening between the trade unions and the Party.

If this were to happen, it would deny a political voice for the trade unions. The Parliamentary Party might well go the way of David Owen's ill-fated SDP.

These are the reasons why the establishment and the mass media are so determined to present the union link as a source of electoral weakness. They know that this link is the main source of our electoral strength. The media want to see the link destroyed.

The Labour leadership has become a management team. What we actually need is more agitation and political education.

The Labour Party has managers without agitators. Without agitators, the Party will never get to power.

We are drifting towards a situation where Labour's only political reply to the Tories is "Time for a Change". This is a very shallow response to a deeply threatening economic and social crisis.

Peter Heathfield

We are obviously deeply concerned about attempts to separate the Labour Party from the parent body.

I think a lot of people in the Party — especially the Parliamentary Labour Party — need reminding that Labour's role is to represent the unions in Parliament.

These people want to distance the Party from the unions. But, no doubt, they will still be asking the trade unions to finance them.

At Labour Party conference, there will be a great deal of discussion and argument about this issue. I hope that the trade union movement with many trade unionists who represent the Constituency Parties will vote against these proposals.

Trade unionists are involved at local level in the Party. Many Labour MPs are sponsored by trade unions. These moves will have an effect right across our movement.

I think the people who are pushing the weakening of the union link are in danger of pressing the self-destruct button.

One problem trade unionists have at the moment is that prominent members of the Parliamentary Party seem to be declaring policy on the hoof. They ignore the democratic, constitutional procedures they are required to go through.

The NUM has always maintained that the trade unions should be free. We are involved in the "Unshackle the Unions" campaign. We are obviously concerned that

Labour plans to maintain elements of Tory anti-trade union laws.

Joe Marino

Our Executive has taken a strong line on Party-union links. We not only need to defend the union links, but to strengthen them.

We would be opposed to any watering down of the links. In fact we should go on a political offensive to show the need for this relationship.

We must be careful of approaching the issue by saying "no say, no pay!" We should not argue on the economics of the situation, but on the principle.

We must look to the rank and file in the unions.

We see these attacks on the union link as an inevitable expression of the Party's move to the right. The leadership sees itself as part of the Establishment.

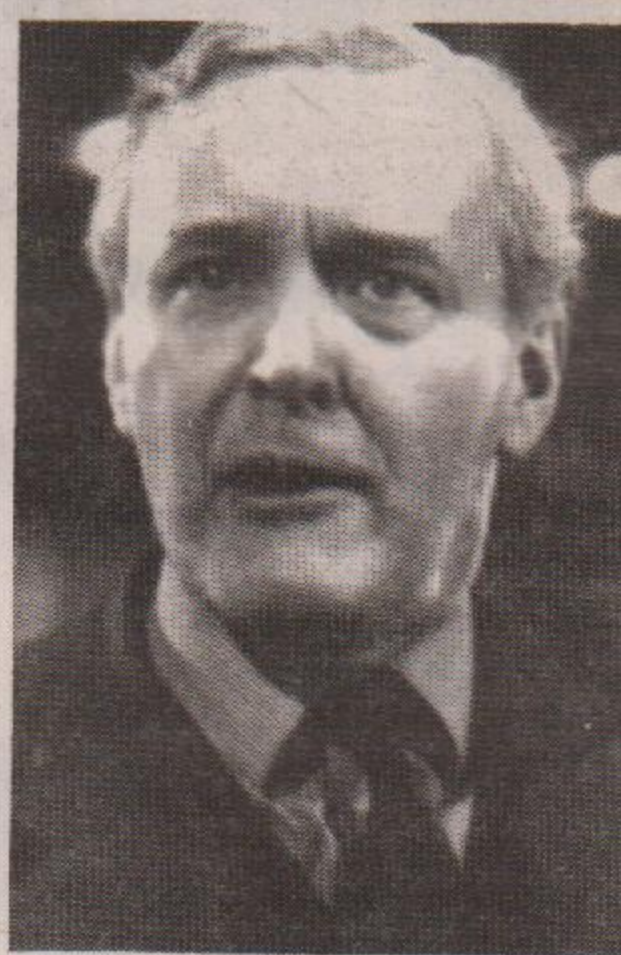
During the last two elections, the Party leadership has sought to distance itself from the union link. They see it as a weakness. In fact it is our strength.

Dennis Skinner

Only two people voted against "one member, one vote" at the Labour Party National Executive last Wednesday (27 May) — me and Tony Benn. We lost by 18 votes to 2.

The National Executive is a very right-wing group. In the last few years the union representatives have gone along with the changes.

Even at the manifesto meeting, where Tony Benn



Tony Benn

and I put forward 19 sets of amendments to the manifesto (including one which would have unshackled the unions) we were voted down. We lost by 35 votes to 2 in that meeting, because Shadow Cabinet members were allowed into that meeting.

It is ironic that Tony Benn and I — two representatives from the constituencies — have been defending the union link against those elected directly from the trade unions.

Some National Executive members kid people about their attitude to the unions. Take Tom Sawyer at the NUPE conference yesterday. According to the *Morning Star* he made an impassioned defence of the links between the trade unions and the Labour Party. But Tom Sawyer has been one of the chief protagonists, a Kinnock aide.

We should judge people by their actions rather than what they say.

What we need now is for the left to get its act together. If we do not stop falling out among ourselves, they will keep beating us.

And I mean the real left, not the sloppy pseudo-left. We do not need another layer of people who make noise but do not deliver.



The street children of Rio: they can expect nothing from the Earth Summit

Only socialism can save the earth

"Don't expect too much", said UK Environment Minister, David MacLean, to Third World countries before the opening of the UN

Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro this week. Judging by the environmental fiascos of the previous month, they would be unwise to expect anything at all!

The grandiosely named "Earth Summit" takes place in an atmosphere of chaos, without even a final programme days before its commencement. It was only a fortnight before that George Bush, President of the most environmentally crucial nation, the US, agreed to attend. Previously, he had vacillated in a successful attempt to get key proposals dropped from a measure to cut the emission of greenhouse gases.

Also, on the eve of the conference, the US declared that it would not sign the agreement designed to try to preserve the diversity of life on Earth. This was followed in dog-like fashion by UK government representatives.

And it was a Tory minister who bewailed the fact that the

"unprecedentedly deep" recession in western countries meant that they would be unable to afford the \$125 billion needed for (a bit of) environmental protection in the Third World. In this statement, he perpetuated the idea

"From Rio will come no threat or challenge or condemnation of the rulers of those capitalist societies that condemn the poor to eke out a bare existence on the rubbish tips and in the shanty towns around the cities."

that environmental damage is a Third World problem.

It is, in fact, largely a result of power and financial imbalances between the capitalist giants and their Third World victims.

As an illustration, it is sufficient to point out that during the '80s, the Third World returned ten times as much to the West in interest payments but still ended up owing more!

What, then, are the issues that will be tackled (or avoided) at the Earth Summit? They are issues concerning the climate, the diversity of life (including the destruction of the tropical rainforests), the protective ozone layer, pollution of water supplies, food production, population levels.

One thing will be certain. From Rio will come no threat or challenge to the power of multinational companies which at present despoil much of the resources of the Third World. From Rio will come no threat or challenge or condemnation of the rulers of those capitalist societies that condemn the poor to live in the margins around the big ranches, or eke out a bare existence on the rubbish tips and in the shanty towns around the cities.

Rio will show up, once

more, the chaos of weak, feeble and irresponsible ecological "policies" with which the capitalist rulers of our world confront the grim threat of ecological disaster. It will show too the crying need for socialist economic and ecological planning on a world scale. Otherwise the sign at the entrance to the brave new post-Stalinist bourgeois world will eventually read: "Barbarism".

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

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Labour and the unions: the mood changes

As he flailed around in post-election rage and despair, Neil Kinnock seems to be doing a passable impersonation of King Lear in one of his more self-pitying moments.

Everyone was to blame but himself. Publicly, the tabloids bore the brunt of his anger — which was at least understandable. But privately, Kinnock and his clique were more than ever convinced that the party's union links were the real cause of defeat.

Even as he was throwing in the towel as leader, Kinnock was preparing for a renewed drive to distance Labour from the unions. At first it looked as if the process was unstoppable: one member one vote for constituency selections of parliamentary candidates, ending the unions' 40% block vote there, went through May's meeting of the Labour National Executive with minimal opposition. The same meeting also agreed to dust off the 1990 plan to reduce the union block vote at conference from 90 to 70 per cent.

Meanwhile, Smith and Gould were engaged in a public Dutch auction to play down their union connections and to present a vision of a new-look, union-free Labour Party (though that did not prevent Smith from accepting the backing of the AEEU leadership, who did not feel it necessary to consult their members on the matter).

In the last week or two things seem to have changed. John Prescott, the only candidate to have clearly defended the union link during the leadership contest (although for several years he has backed Kinnock consistently on the National Executive), has emerged as a possible front-runner in the deputy leadership race. The executives of NUPE, the GPMU and the RMT have all backed Prescott; ASLEF and UCATT are expected to follow suit.

At the recent MSF conference, no final decisions on the leadership elections were taken, but a distinct pro-Prescott mood was in evidence. At NCU conference this week Gould seemed to have made a "left turn" to head off Prescott, no doubt helped by his detailed knowledge of BT and its functioning.

More importantly, there is a growing feeling among activists throughout the unions that Kinnock's union-bashing has gone too far. Tom Sawyer, deputy general secretary of NUPE and for many years Kinnock's closest confidant in the union bureaucracy, is a useful weather-vane.

In a remarkable speech at NUPE's conference, Sawyer came out with the catchy little slogan, "No say, no pay". For anyone who didn't get the message, Sawyer spelled it out: "While we fund the party, we'll have a say — it's as crude as that".

It was a big change from his earlier kite-flying for Kinnock, and a close examination of Sawyer's speech reveals that he said nothing specific at all about last week's National Executive vote. But what else are weather-vanes for?

Bill Morris of the TGWU has been a little more diplomatic, but arguably clearer. He wants a "council of peace between the unions and the Labour Party, before irreparable damage is done".

Delegates at the recent round of union conferences are all reporting the same thing: rank and file activists (including those who in the past have been critical of the way the block vote has been manipulated) have had enough of Labour's union-bashing. There is a growing understanding that while the block vote may need to be reformed, it has to be defended. At stake is nothing less than the future of a political labour movement in Britain.

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper



No jobs, no hope, no future?

The entrance to a netherworld

AGAINST THE TIDE

By Sean Matgamna

A few weeks ago I gave evidence at the Old Bailey during the trial of two youths charged with murder.

At lam on a Monday morning last June, I found an old man, Giuseppe Melito, semi-conscious on the pavement across the road from where I live in South London, (as I reported in this column soon after). His head lay in a pool of blood, one knee doubled upright, the foot drawn in under him, his right arm waving feebly, as he struggled back to a final brief state of consciousness and, with my help, rose to his feet and sat on a low wall.

Shocked and confused, he repeated in a weak voice "What happened? What happened?"

What had happened was that he was attacked by a group of youths who met him by chance and robbed him of about £100. They smashed his head with one blow from a club, took his wallet, and ran off, leaving him bleeding and unconscious by the roadside, as they might in a different mood have shattered a street side lamp with a stone and ran off leaving the broken pieces where they fell.

Struggling back to consciousness, Mr Melito displayed a great will to pull himself together, and walked, with help, to the ambulance. But the will to live was not enough. Soon afterwards he fell into a coma brought on by internal bleeding from which he never awoke. He died two days later. He was Italian, an unemployed waiter, 62 years old.

When I saw that old man, with the rivulets of blood which had worked through his hair running down his face, rising up out of the bloody mess on the pavement, struggling to regain control of his faculties, walking slowly to the ambulance as if balancing a great weight, I felt that I could myself have smashed the heads of the savages who attacked him. I felt that way for a long time afterwards.

"The urge to hit out and retaliate is a natural one. But no-one, and especially no youngster, should be consigned to the medieval archipelago of Britain's prison network..."

And now, there they were in the dock, a few feet from the witness stand in which I stood, two clean-faced and sensible-looking boys, one 17 and the other 16, children essentially, sitting still and impassive in sharp formal suits as the shape of their future lives was being determined by officials dressed in strange, archaic clothes and wigs.

They had been on bail for a year, and now docilely turned up to submit to the court.

I no longer felt like doing them over. I was not sure what I felt.

They had been willing to plead guilty to manslaughter, that is, to killing as an unintended and accidental byproduct of the robbery, which they admitted. The Crown prosecutor insisted that it was murder.

I had not seen the killers even from a distance, so my own evidence had to do with finding Mr Melito and the state he was in. I did not have to ask myself if I should help convict boys who might in some way have been victims of a police frame-up.

The doctor who took the dead man's skull and brain apart insisted that the damage could only have been done with a powerful and deliberate blow from a club or a stone.

They used photos to illustrate the evidence. In one of the photos taken the morning after the attack, the pavement where Giuseppe had lain is covered with red dog-paw marks all around the thick slick of blood at the centre.

The argument in court was between, on one side, very feeble defence attempts to argue that Giuseppe Melito might have broken his skull by accidentally hitting the fender of a car at the footpath's edge as he fell, and on the other gruesome medical evidence of the nature and effects of the blow which killed him.

After a trial lasting three days, the jury brought in a guilty verdict. The 17 year old boy who struck the blow was sentenced to be detained at "Her Majesty's Pleasure" — and the 16 year old to four years detention. I was not in court to see what that did to their composure.

Last June it had seemed to me unlikely that the attackers would ever be caught. There were no witnesses who could identify them.

They were caught because one of the gang, in circumstances I do not know, told on the others and gave evidence against them.

An edgy, glum boy of maybe 19, with a little clipped moustache, he seemed a lot more disturbed and unhappy, as he hung around waiting to have his say, than did the two composed, or hardfaced, boys in the dock.

Given the way the British police operate — as shown recently in the Birmingham Six case — was I right to "help the police" and give evidence, even of the sort I gave? I think I was, though there is a fine line on the other side of which it would not have been right.

We are not anarchists. The state is necessary. It is right, other things being equal that highway robbers and murderers should be suppressed, even by those courts and police whose prime activity is to preserve bourgeois property.

The fate of the two young murderers, condemned to the hellish conditions of British prison life, is a separate question.

All my urges towards vengeance or retaliation were gone, or paralysed, at the sight of those youngsters in the dock. The older of them would not long ago have been on trial for his life, facing the hangman with his State-licensed rope, and now there he was facing an eternity of painful days in a dehumanising, brutalising prison system.

The trial was a quaint pantomime, from the splendid scarlet-robed judge, looking like a cartoon but intelligent and businesslike, to the more tackily-costumed penny-plain black and white barristers.

It was all quite unreal and far removed from Giuseppe Melito's bloody head and the unseen blood seeping out inside his head, killing him; all removed, too, from the hellish netherworld to which it was the entrance for those two boys.

The urge to hit out and retaliate is a natural one. But no-one, and especially no youngster, should be consigned to the medieval archipelago of Britain's prison network — to a torture and degradation from which he can not possibly emerge a better or a more civilised human being, more fit to live with his fellows.

ENVIRONMENT

Real and imaginary issues at the Earth Summit

By Les Hearn

Too many people?

The 19th century clergyman Thomas Malthus argued that whereas human populations would increase exponentially (like compound interest on a loan), the supplies of food could only increase arithmetically (ie steadily, like simple interest). The result would be poverty, famine and a crash back to previous levels of population.

Malthusian ideas remain popular, being simple and apparently logical. They also tend to place the blame for poverty etc, on those who are having large families, usually people in the Third World.

Even though this hypothesis was the catalyst to the formation of Darwin's theory of evolution, it has been comprehensively disproved in the ensuing years. The population supported by the Earth is some 10 times that at the time of Malthus and yet, at a global level, there is enough food and more, to feed it. Malthus had reckoned without the revolutionising effects of capitalist methods and technology on agriculture.

He also reckoned without the self-limiting factor that leads couples to restrict the size of their families when infant mortality falls and when economic pressures that favour large families abate. So, along with the Catholic Church, we have to say that the size of the world's population is not the

"So, along with the Catholic Church, we have to say that the size of the world's population is not the major factor in causing poverty, malnutrition and pressure to cultivate forest areas."

major factor in causing poverty, malnutrition and pressure to cultivate forest areas.

However, the availability of birth control is an important issue of human rights to control fertility. It should be available (but not enforced, as it has been in India and China).

If there is a population problem anywhere, it is in the developed countries where the amount of resources consumed per head is ten times, twenty

times or even more than that in the Third World.

Global Warming

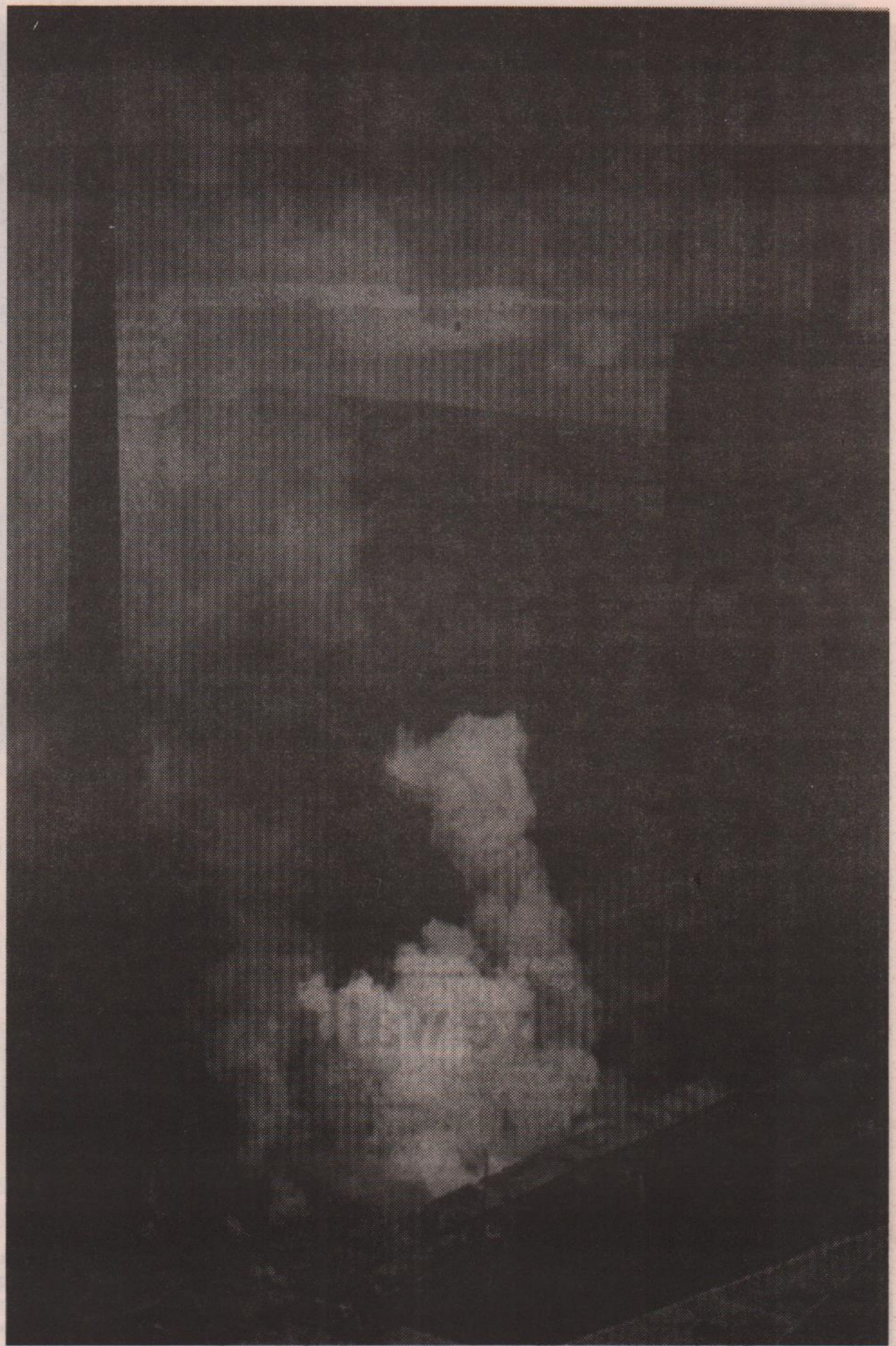
There is almost universal agreement among climate scientists that emissions of "greenhouse" gases, most notably carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels, have set in train a warming of the atmosphere.

There is also almost universal agreement that this will be, on balance, bad for the world's climate, sea levels, agriculture. And yet the USA has forced the dropping of a key section of the Climate Change Convention, due for signing at the Earth Summit.

This would have laid a legally-binding commitment on signatories to merely "stabilise" CO₂ emissions at 1990 levels by 2000. That would be nowhere near the 20% cut called for by many scientists. It was however too much for the USA and the target has been replaced by a "guideline". Now Western governments will only take action if everyone else does first!

Biodiversity

The incredible range of animal and plant species in tropical habitats is



A coke foundry in Poland spews out fumes that contribute to global warming.

only now being appreciated. For instance, in one Peruvian bush, 43 species of ant have been found, more than occur in the whole of the British Isles. A survey in the forests of Brunei has found 400 species of beetle in one tree, and 120 species of tree in one hectare. This represents a resource whose importance is incalculable.

The same survey in Brunei

has found 162 plants of food or medicinal value so far. The Third World is a major source of genes for improving food crops and of new medical drugs. For example, the Madagascan periwinkle is the basis of a \$160 million per year industry of anti-leukaemia drugs.

The agreement on preserving biodiversity due for signing at the Earth summit

would have required signatories, mainly Third World Countries, to catalogue and protect their wildlife and would have required richer countries to compensate them for the extra expense of doing this.

This the USA was unwilling to do, despite the overwhelming benefit its drug and food giants have derived from Third World sources.

Canary Wharf:

The wrong thing in the wrong place at the wrong time

By Liz Millward

The Canary Wharf tower is a lasting monument to Thatcherism — a visible symbol of how to build the wrong thing in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The banks and insurance companies will probably hang photographs of Europe's biggest penis in all their lending offices for many years, to serve as an awful warning.

But any scaffolding erector working at Canary Wharf who chanced to look west from the 10th floor would have seen the white elephant of the last property boom — Centrepoint.

With a pair of binoculars, the "To Let" signs would probably be visible.

Part of the scandal of the spec-built office blocks of the '60s and '70s was that these buildings were using up land and money which could have been used for homes.

The bitter irony is that part of Centrepoint is now used as a referral agency for young homeless people.

But there is a difference between Centrepoint and Canary Wharf. In the '70s speculators made money from empty buildings. Inflation was higher than interest rates, and property values seemed as if they would rise for ever.

So the developers could build without worrying about letting the offices — as long as the boom lasted they could still make a huge profit.

Canary Wharf is more com-

licated. It was not built to sit empty, but to be filled with thousands of workers. Yet, amid all the grandeur, the workers would not have found their quality of life improved by working there. Public transport is poor, and the roads inadequate — getting there would have been a nightmare.

There is only a tiny bit of green space for summer lunchtimes, the lift queues will be a nightmare, and impossible in a wheelchair.

That grand design makes an attractive cardboard model but will be just as horrible to work in as any '70s system-built tower block.

Now it looks as if Docklands will soon be as "dead" as it

was when the docks first closed.

There will be a local community which has been abused and ignored by the developers, and a load of buildings which are no use in their present form and too expensive to convert.

The Tory "plan" for Docklands was to have no plan. They would provide the sort of incentives which encouraged developers to build Centrepoint, and then see what happened. Thanks to the property boom the speculators came buzzing round like flies...

What will happen next is anyone's guess; mine would be that the Isle of Dogs will be abandoned like Centrepoint, and in 10 or 20

years time the whole process will begin again somewhere else.

The loss of what could have been is incalculable — you don't have to be a yuppie to want to live by the river or enjoy canoeing on the old docks.

The Isle of Dogs could have become a resource for all Londoners, with new housing, parks, good transport, shops — and, yes, a 52-storey office block to relieve pressure on the City.

With proper planning, Docklands could have been a shining example of the best in city living.

But as long as profits come first our people will live, their lives more impoverished than they need be, and our land-

scapes will continue to be blighted by Canary Wharves and Centrepoints.

Canary Wharf con

By a DoE worker

The government has announced its intention to move 5,000 civil servants from the Department of Environment's Marsham Street Office s to Canary Wharf.

Civil Service workers are expected to pay for the government wasting £8 billion of public money by having their travelling time and therefore working week increased by 6 hours at the very least. No chance.

The Tories also hope to use the move to hive off DoE messengers jobs. This Friday's mass meeting must back industrial action to stop the move.

Down the Italian road

GRAFFITI

18 months ago the Italian Communist Party was born anew as the Democratic Left. Out went the hammer and sickle, in came... well, old-style, right-wing, Stalinist politics but with a new shine put on them.

This was known as "la svolta", the turnround. But, without the Moscow gold, it didn't take long for the ex-Communists to force their way into the main stream of Italian politics — they are now at the centre of a huge financial scandal in Milan running into tens, possibly hundreds, of millions of pounds. The Democratic Left are now talking about a new "svolta".

The British CP consciously modelled its transformation into the Democratic Left on the Italians. Surely they've enough experience in chicanery, double dealing and dishonesty to follow the "Italian road" to the end.

Maybe it is a little unrealistic to expect Britain's home-grown Stalinists to aspire to the heights of their Italian namesakes. However their paper, *New Times*, has done its little bit for getting money by any means possible: the latest issue contains an advert for Pergamon Books — yes, the Pergamon Press everyone on the Left has been boycotting for years because of their sacking and victimisation of trade unionists.

Another lump of the sewage now floating dangerously close to the beaches of life since the break up of the CP is ex-*Marxism Today* editor Martin Jacques, who has bobbed to the surface in the *Guardian* of late.

Jacques is proceeding to make his peace with "the Thatcher Revolution": "For the vast majority of people, life is surely better. There is more opportunity, more choice". Exactly the sentiments of Conservative Central Office. "It is no use regretting the underclass and preaching altruism: the Left has to establish links with, and gain support from, the most dynamic groups in society". And who are these groups? Property developers, and young entrepreneurs perhaps? And maybe the occasional enterprising Milanese politician.

Kind of ironic that the monument to the Unknown Thatcherite, Canary Wharf, symbol of free enterprise, the free market and corporate prestige, should be filled with 5,000 civil servants. Not, of course, that civil servants don't deserve the best offices that capitalism can build, but it is ironic to see which Departments are being lined up for a Docklands relocation.

There's Michael Heseltine's new home, the Department of Trade and Industry — the tower is more a symbol of the collapse of trade and industry than its success. Then there's Environment — Canary Wharf is an eye-sore visible all over London, giving a metaphorical finger to all the Capital's have-nots. Then there's Transport — something which you can't get

to Docklands (a survey recently found that most people would rather be relocated to Leeds than suffer the daily purgatory of a trip on the Docklands Light Railway). And, finally, there is the Department of National Heritage — speaks for itself.

"I don't care too much for money, because money can't buy me love" sang the Beatles once in one of the least searing critiques of capitalism of modern time. But, it seems, even this is on the marketplace now. Busy Japanese executives don't have so much time for their aging relatives.

Now a company called Japan Efficiency Headquarters have come up with the answer — for the merest £635.59, old mum can be visited by highly-trained, substitute sons and daughters, with grandchildren thrown in for good measure if necessary.

For three hours the stand-in relatives submit to cuddles, take granny for a walk in the park and suffer false reminiscences. And how do the wrinklies react? Overjoyed, claims the company's president. In fact some even summon the hired relatives at their own expense.

There is another growth market — neglected offspring can hire surrogate mums and dads.

If you've still any money left after having your parents serviced, why not get a \$1,000 "Remote Key". This latest gadget from Canada allows you start your car and warm up its engine on those cold winter mornings from the warmth of your bed.

Around the globe is a group of people renowned for their crass stupidity in the face of reality and often heard saying that "politics should be kept out of sport" — sports officials.

One such official from Yugoslavia surely deserves the Mike "I'm just a cricketer and don't understand politics but South Africa seemed like a great country to me" Gating Award for daft remarks.

On the sports boycott, he said: "Banning the Yugoslav football and basketball teams really makes the average guy think". Is there anyone in Yugoslavia (besides sports officials) who hasn't already thought about the civil war?



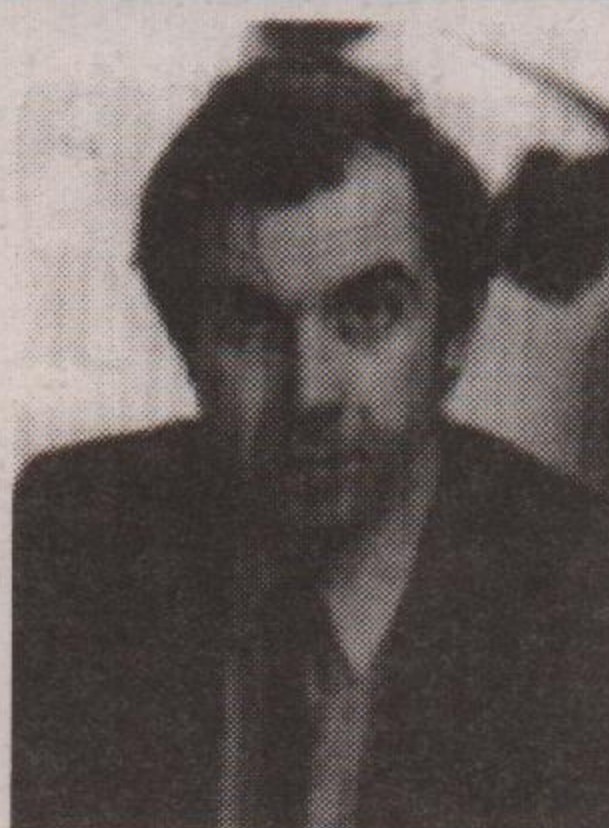
Martin Jacques — raw sewage floating on the bouillabaisse of life

GRAFFITI

Peter Jenkins:

The journalist as Walter Mitty

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

There are few more nauseating spectacles than that of the journalistic profession keening over one of its own. Almost invariably, the posthumous recipient of all those plaudits was deeply unpopular and widely-resented within the profession.

The political commentator, Peter Jenkins, whose death last week occasioned a more than usually fulsome batch of "appreciations", was widely-regarded as a pompous, self-important bore. For "distinguished", read "arrogant"; for "authoritative", read "tedious"; for "insider", read "Walter Mitty".

The true feelings of many of his contemporaries were hinted at only by that old curmudgeon, Peregrine Worsthorne, writing in the *Daily Telegraph*: "Never, for Peter, the gadfly approach; if a stylistic fault he did have, it was to become, on occasion, a bit elephantine — a tenden-

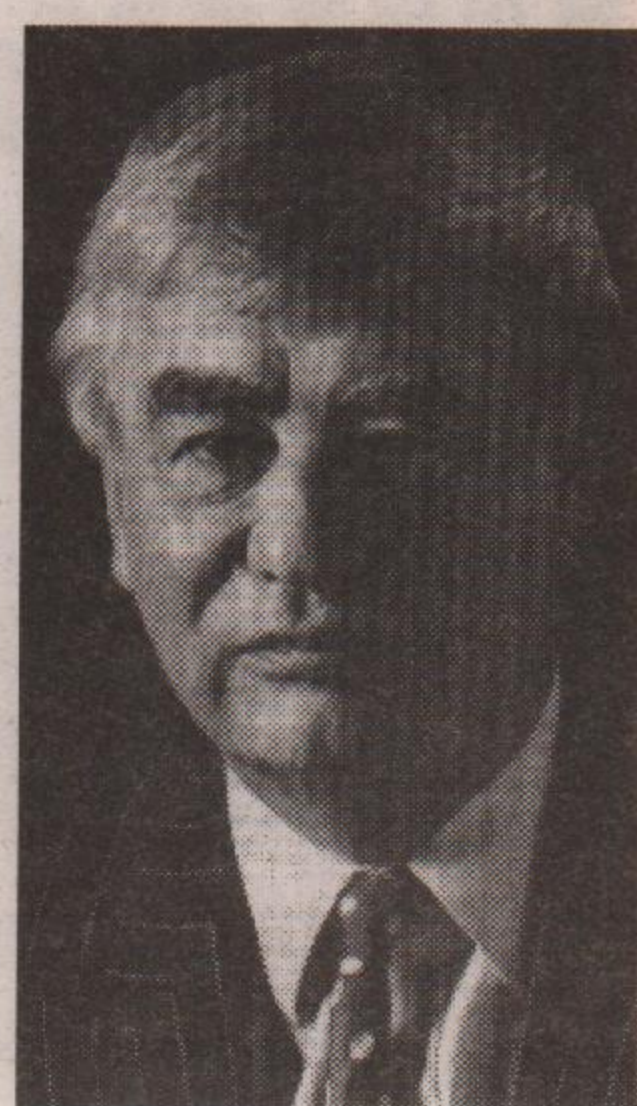
cy which working on the *Independent* did nothing to restrain."

Jenkins was a classic example of the journalist as politician manqué: he believed that he knew more and was possessed of better judgment than most of the politicians he wrote about. This is not, of course, such an outrageous belief to hold except that Jenkins himself really didn't have anything that could be called a coherent political philosophy: for him, the trappings of bourgeois politics were all-important — the dinners with 'leading players', the gossip and the intrigue. It was ironic that while his paper, the *Independent*, had taken the brave step of boy-

guru of British post-war social democracy. According to Jenkins, Crosland's work, "The Future of Socialism", with its vision of capitalist economic expansion leading to a gradual redistribution of wealth and resources, "gave inspiration to a whole generation of socialist reforms that provided new foundations for an ethical socialism centred on the pursuit of equality". The Wilson government's economic crisis of 1976 effectively shattered that particular dream and Crosland himself died in 1977, a bitter and disillusioned man. The IMF crisis left Jenkins politically rudderless: he was writing for the *Guardian* and *New Statesman* and was generally regarded as a "left winger" but his was a radicalism without any motive force — crucially, he supported Barbara Castle's anti-union "In Place of Strife" and the electoral college that took power away from the MPs.

Naturally, he identified with the 'Gang of Four' and the SDP, only to fall out with David Owen over unity with the Liberals: "The virtuoso one-man-band performance which in the last Parliament made him the most impressive politician after Margaret Thatcher, has degenerated into a display of megalomania", wrote Jenkins.

Disappointed at not being appointed editor of the *Guardian*, Jenkins joined the *Sunday Times* and dutifully crossed the picket-line throughout the Wapping dispute. Once Murdoch had crushed the print unions, Jenkins declared the Wapping regime to be excessively authoritarian and left to join the *Independent*. According to Jenkins, the



Peter Jenkins — political Brain of Britain

Digger (like Mrs. Thatcher) had done a necessary job, but had gone too far.

Jenkins was, of course, a brilliant, authoritative (etc.) political analyst: in the days immediately before the 1992 general election he predicted a Labour victory, commenting on Neil Kinnock: "words must now be eaten, for it can no longer be said that he is a man unfit to be Prime Minister". After the election, Jenkins decided that Labour had been unelectable all along: "the surest way for Labour to make sure of losing yet again is to plan now to fight the last war... its days could yet come again, but that will require a transformation of both structure and purpose..."

How sad that at this difficult time, we are to be deprived of such a profound political mind. But still, the *Independent* does have Peter Kellner to uphold the Jenkins tradition.

"The IMF crisis left Jenkins politically rudderless: crucially he supported Barbara Castle's 'In Place of Strife'."

cutting Bernard Ingham's unattributable press briefings, Jenkins was operating a private "lobby system" all of his own.

In all of this, Jenkins was not unlike Alan Watkins, the *Observer's* political commentator. Except that Watkins has the saving grace of seeming not to take himself too seriously. Jenkins took himself very, very seriously.

I said that Jenkins didn't have a coherent political philosophy. That isn't strictly true: his early political hero was Anthony Crosland, the

"Cut to swirling willies!"

WOMEN'S EYE



By Rebecca Van Homan

Last month saw the launch of a new glossy magazine, *For Women*. Run by *Penthouse*, it is a soft porn magazine aimed at women.

It promises "bold, provocative" examinations of women's sexual issues and pin ups of naked men.

All women's magazines use sex in the competitive circulation wars. This month's *Cosmopolitan* has an article "All hands on dick"; *Company*, "Exciting, extraordinary sex. Do you want it? Can you handle it? And do you have the confidence to get kinky?", etc, etc.

So is this new magazine just going further down the line? An inevitable step now "feminism has killed off romance"? — as Angela McRobbie, a sociology lecturer at West London Poly states: "If romance goes, what is most immediately available is the semi-pornographic, voyeuristic material."

For Women is undoubtedly not for therapeutic purposes, but an attempt by *Penthouse* to broaden the porn market and increase profits. However, while I am not condoning the porn

industry and its exploitation of women workers in it, and recognising the hypocrisy (erect penises cannot be shown, for example) I think porn for women is a positive step.

"As for feminism killing off romance, if by romance McRobbie means going back to the 1950s when women lived in ignorance of their bodies and got pregnant without knowing what was going on, give me soft porn anytime."

Women should be allowed to buy pornography if they want it. The number of women buying pornogra-

phy has mushroomed over the decade and the average 20% increase in circulation of women's magazines is proof that sex sells. If it gives women confidence to assert what they want in their sex lives, then good for them.

I can remember smuggling my dad's "One for the Ladies" page from his porn mags into school for the rest of the teenage girls intrigued by what a full frontal man actually looks like, and cries of "Eugh!", "It's disgusting!", "I'm never going near one!" were heard, but at the same time our knowledge had been expanded (and no doubt many were disappointed with the reality).

As for feminism killing off romance — if by romance McRobbie means going back to the 1950s when women were "courted", lived in ignorance of their bodies and sometimes got pregnant without knowing what was going on, give me soft porn anytime. "Cut to swirling willies!"



Will there be an end to the repression? Funeral for a shop steward killed in police custody.

South Africa: towards the final showdown?

"You are going to see mass action on a scale you have never seen before".

That's how Nelson Mandela spelt out the new confrontational approach that the leadership of the African National Congress seem to have adopted towards their erstwhile negotiating partners, the National Party government of F. W. De Klerk.

The ANC leaders are now talking about a general strike. They want to force the Pretoria regime to back down from some of its more outrageous attempts to build in a white veto during what is rather euphemistically called "the transition to democracy".

It would be tempting to dismiss all this as so much hot air: yet more ultimatums from the ANC, yet more threats of mass action designed merely to get negotiations going again. Especially when Nelson Mandela has talked of working class resistance as "the most reliable deadlock breaking mechanism".

But that would be a big mistake. As David Beresford, a *Guardian* journalist, normally sympathetic to the ANC, has put it:

"Peace has never seemed so far away as now; the political killings are running at an average of about 12 a day and the government's attitude towards the climate of violence is reflected in its continued failure to act over allegations that the head of military intelligence is a brutal murderer and that the head of the police forensic services is a mass poisoner..."

"On the admission of the government's own officials, the hope of the De Klerk administration is to lock the country for a decade, if not longer, into a transitional constitution, which — as interim compromises already being urged by Pretoria would suggest — would fall far short of a democratic ideal..."

Beresford then goes on to suggest ever so obligingly that the ANC leadership are both over-optimistic and rather complacent.

"There is an argument, much

used by ANC officials, that there is a dynamic in South African society which will force the government into a settlement acceptable to the majority of the population. 'The government is in a crisis so deep that it has no choice but to settle,' was how their chief negotiator, Mohammed Valli Moosa, put it in the immediate aftermath of the breakdown of talks at Codesa.

"But that is a perception the government may not share. On present evidence it seems quite happy with only half a miracle, seemingly in the expectation that it will still be enough to have its international audience on their feet, cheering."

So, it could just be in Pretoria's interest to draw the ANC, and the broader liberation movement, into

"In short, the Interim Government everybody is prattling about is more likely to be a military government than anything else."

confrontation. A general strike would open up a series of possibilities:

- the government backs down, the action is called off and the ANC are able to force the pace of change; this will only delay confrontation since significant concessions will rekindle the far-right;

- Pretoria digs in its heels. The general strike passes beyond the level of a controlled protest and takes on the dimensions of May '68 in France; the question of 'who rules?' is raised;

- a massacre of the poorly, if at all, armed black workers' movement, as the clock turns back to 1948;

But the most likely scenario by far is:

- a military government of a spe-

cial kind (MGOASK). To quote the South African socialist paper *Vukari Basebenzi*:

"While more and more people are beginning to speak about the possibility of a coup, most of them still talk about a counter-revolutionary right-wing coup. But this is muddled political thinking. The further development of capitalism in SA requires that certain social, economic and political changes have to be brought about in a world, by the way, where the immediate threat of socialist revolution is absent. If such changes cannot be brought about by peaceful and democratic means, they are going to be brought about by violent means, i.e. by means of military government."

"In short, the Interim Government everybody is prattling about is more likely to be a military government than anything else."

"Such a MGOASK would 'level the playing field' and after a while call together a Constituent Assembly. The Assembly would meet under circumstances where most of the genuinely representative organisations of the oppressed and exploited people, including the trade unions, would have been destroyed, handcuffed to the state or capital, or weakened through decapitation. Under such circumstances, a 'non-racial', 'democratic', even if disunited, South Africa will emerge from the 'Constituent Assembly', one that will be 'safe' for capital and for imperialism."

Such a government could expect to continue to get the support of foreign capital. That is the logic of Beresford's argument when he talks about the international audience cheering "only half a miracle".

Vukari Basebenzi has underlined this point:

"We are living through the most dangerous period of our history. In saying this, we are not even thinking of the hardships that our people are suffering. We are not thinking of the mindless murder, the state-inspired and state-supported terror against activists and

civilians. We are not thinking of the soaring crime rate, the muggings, rapes, brutal robberies and murders. We are not thinking of the chaos in most black schools. We are not thinking of the shameful unemployment, the many grown men and women who sit along the roads begging for work or for food.

"All these things, and many others, are but the symptoms of a system that is dying rapidly but is not yet dead."

"We are thinking of something that more and more people are beginning to speak about openly, if belatedly. We are thinking about the spectre of military rule in South Africa. While everyone fondly expects that before the end of 1992, we shall have a (not democratically-elected) Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) 'in place', one in which the ANC and the NP will be 'the main players', some of us are less certain."

"We have said before that there is not only one outcome to the present situation. Just because most people *desire* a peaceful negotiated settlement, this does not mean that it and it alone will happen. So far, we have had much negotiation but precious little peace..."

"In our view the highly likely outcome of the process of transition is in fact a military government of a special kind..."

"Whatever De Klerk & Co. say, they represent only a tiny fraction of the people of this country..."

"This is not a fairy tale. We are very likely to be faced with this reality. For those of us on the left, this means that we have to consider our strategy and tactics much more carefully. We would make a fatal mistake if we were to think that the peaceful negotiated settlement is 'the only game in town' as every liberal in South Africa is telling us every day."

A note

Vukari Basebenzi is produced by the Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA), a broadly Trotskyist South African grouping.

The truth about Japan's bosses

By Colin Foster

A bank worker was forced to remain standing for half a day as a punishment.

Another was forbidden to eat lunch for a week: his boss said that if he had time for lunch, he was not working hard enough.

A third had to get down on his knees and bow in apology to the boss for making a mistake.

These examples of bullying by bosses in Japan's banks, reported by the *Mail on Sunday* (31 May) from a number of recent best-selling books in Japan, are being exposed now because the banks are in trouble and discredited.

Their holdings of shares and property have lost value — Tokyo share prices have halved, and property prices have dropped by around 40% — and many of Japan's big banks are now technically bankrupt by international standards. Widespread corruption has been revealed.

More workers are now willing to speak out against the semi-feudal way their bosses treat them.

Japan's car factories are notorious for overwork. A journalist who worked in a car factory for six months reported that he would

"Centuries of a tightly-organised feudal regime, which survived until 1868, followed by military fascism in the 1930's and the battering of the unions in the late 1940's, moulded this 'culture', which is the flipside of Japan's capitalist success."

crawl upstairs to his hostel room after each shift, his body aching, too exhausted to do anything but lie down.

Office workers also suffer overwork, though, until now, with less protest than factory workers.

"Karoshi" — death from overwork — is now officially recognised as a work hazard, and a government survey in 1987 found 83% of all workers, in factories and offices, complaining of symptoms likely to cause "karoshi". 67% felt physically exhausted, and 73% mentally exhausted.

Offices in Japanese banks and other companies are always much more crowded than Western offices. Office workers are bullied into working four or five hours' overtime a day, arriving at the office early, leaving late, and skipping breaks and holidays, while claiming only one hour of overtime.

In Tokyo, travel to and from work adds two to four hours to each work day.

Centuries of a tightly-organised feudal regime, which survived until 1868, followed by military fascism in the 1930s and the battering of the trade unions in the late 1940s, moulded this "culture", which is the flipside of Japan's capitalist success.

But, as scandal follows scandal, and Japanese industry falters, more and more workers are questioning the system.

A question of leadership

By a Central Line guard

Most readers of *Socialist Organiser* will have seen our articles about the current attacks on tubeworkers. Since November last year when the Company Plan was announced, we have had regular and in-depth coverage of the bosses' attempts to implement their plan and the response of the unions.

The Company Plan would mean 5-10,000 job losses, workers forced to reapply for their own jobs, personal contracts, performance pay, contracting out, massive productivity changes... the list goes on.

It represents the most fundamental attack on the jobs and conditions of tubeworkers in the history of the Tube.

An attack on this scale clearly requires a response on a wider scale if there is to be any chance of defeating it. And a determined fight from the tubeworkers would have helped to rally the broader movement and stop the retreat.

Nevertheless, as we reported last week, the RMT NEC has now called off strike action against the plan. Now is a good time, not to hold a post-mortem, but to ask some serious questions about how

"Most importantly, the left needs to be able to do some honest political accounting, and give honest accounts of its own role in this debacle."

we come to be where we are now.

Most importantly, the left needs to be able to do some honest political accounting, and give honest accounts of its own role in this debacle.

If you were to read some of the left press you'd get a rather strange view of what's happened on the Tube. There have been some curious omissions and some reports which can't be reconciled with the facts. This is particularly the case with the most recent issues of *Socialist Outlook*. It is no coincidence that, as the pressure increased, so did the slippage between *Outlook's* paper position and their actual practice in the real movement.

At the April District Council of the RMT Pat Sikorski, a prominent *Outlook* supporter, and full-time District Council Secretary, argued strongly in favour of going back to management to ask for negotiations. He reasoned that socialists aren't opposed to negotiations (true, but banal) and that it would give us time to build for the strike. (Only true if that was really what the RMT NEC and District Council leadership intended.)

In *Socialist Outlook* of 16 May, however, it argued that "talks with employers became unavoidable" because management had sent a letter to all workers offering to negotiate within existing machinery and to keep the Promotion Transfer and Redundancy (PT&R) agreement, including the principle of seniority.

The problem is that the District Council met on 28 April, while the letter was not issued until 7 May. In any case, the letter sets out a new PT&R without seniority, and insists management will "discuss implementation", not negotiation. So one position is argued in the union while another is for public consumption.

As we now know, the next thing that happened is that management did offer negotiations, and no more,

to which the RMT NEC responded by dropping the strike. As we said — a disaster for tubeworkers.

But not everyone thought so. At the May DC Patrick Sikorski argued that on a "mature assessment of the balance of forces" it had been correct to call off the strike (of course no mention is made of this in *Socialist Outlook*), and that we had in fact won a victory because the threat of a strike had supposedly saved the PT&R including seniority, kept the policy of no compulsory redundancies and ensured all negotiations would take place through the current machinery.

However, both the machinery of negotiations and the PT&R are up for negotiation immediately! Management have made it clear they want them to go. There's no concession here.

The claim about compulsory redundancy is breathtaking in its cheek: management said "it remains LUL policy to avoid compulsory redundancies... it will only be possible to maintain this policy if there is no disruption to the running of the railway", ie. no strikes!

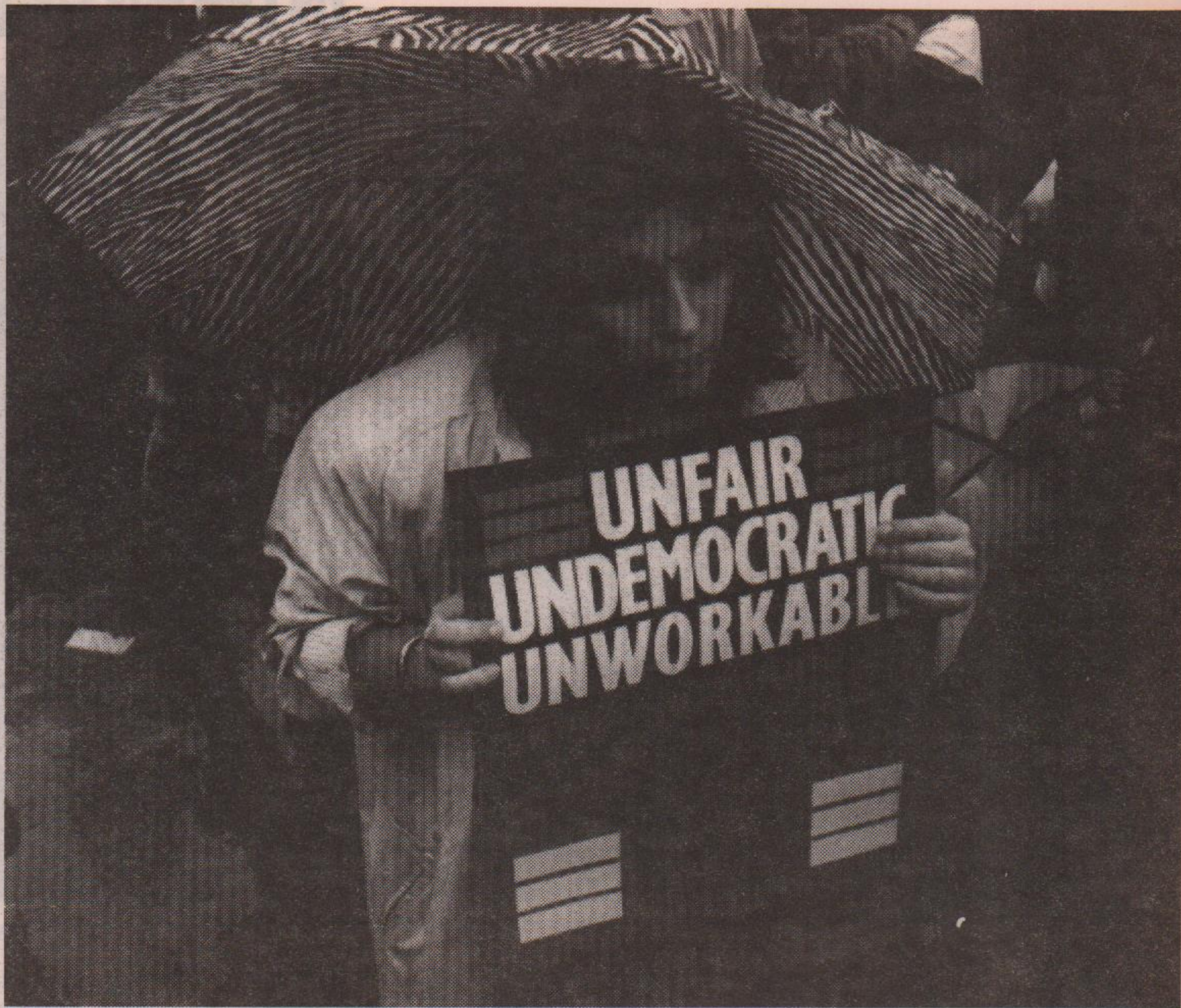
Are *Outlook* arguing for a no-strike policy? No, they are trying to put the best gloss possible on their position of opposing the strike. In so doing, however, they have to paint up this miserable deal as a victory. What is more, there is nothing "mature" about throwing away a 2-1 legal ballot majority for a generalised fightback against the Plan and opting instead to wait till one section have their backs against the wall. Anyone with the most limited experience of trade union affairs will know that management usually tend to attack the strongest sections only when they have softened up the weaker ones first, thus making a generalised unofficial fightback that much more difficult.

In weighing up the blame for the situation we are in now, it is obvious who is lies with: the RMT full-timers who ensured there was no dispute before the election, the right-wing dominated NEC who run from struggle at every chance, the ASLEF and TSSA leaderships who shamefully failed their memberships, refusing even to ballot.

We expect them to behave as they did: RMT to huff and puff and do nothing; ASLEF and TSSA to make a principle out of doing nothing. What about RMT's DC leadership, though? They backed down from an official strike despite a 2-1 majority for action. Class struggle leadership? Hardly.

And what about other issues? Earlier this year a rank and file Tubeworkers Action Group was formed. Since it began Sikorski has boycotted it because it is prepared to criticise the DC. Are *Outlook* in favour of building rank and file groups? Only if they keep very quiet!

Before the election Sikorski was 100% convinced that if Labour lost, the ballot would go down. Well, Labour lost, but we still got a 2-1 majority. Tubeworkers have more determination than *Outlook* give them credit for. *Outlook* of 30 May ends its article: "when management come back demanding more changes only unofficial action that breaks the law will be effective". And who's going to be capable of organising that action: the District Council leadership, who threw away a 2-1 majority that united all RMT grades, or rank and file tubeworkers united across unions and grades?



It is time to fight back against the onslaught on education

Time to stop the retreat:

Fight to sa

Teachers sacked, curriculum cut, books and facilities unavailable, "special needs" pupils suffering — that's the Tory future for schools. Ian Holling worth reports on how teachers are fighting back.

The National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers has already held or threatened strikes in 25 schools. It plans to hold strike ballots at schools in Merseyside, South Shields, Cornwall and York.

NUT members at Walthamstow Girls School, East London, have voted to strike indefinitely for three days a week

unless proposed redundancies are withdrawn by 1 June.

The delegation of budget responsibilities from local authorities to school governing bodies under the "Local Management of Schools" (LMS) scheme imposed by the government is serving to fragment the fightback and must be resisted by joint union action. Not only the teacher unions themselves (of which there are too many), but also the unions representing non-teaching staff, such as NALGO and NUPE, must get together to resist at local and national level.

Lessons slashed

Where jobs are retained, this is often at the expense of areas of

the curriculum being cut back — for example swimming may no longer be on offer to a particular year group. It is not only a short-fall in salary funding that is hitting the schools. An £80 million deficit in book funding, for instance, means that no school can afford to give a pupil a book on science, maths, history or English for home study, says a report by the Book Trust (Times Educational Supplement May 15).

One example of how not to fight back is shown by eight teach-

"The mass movement of schools to grant maintained status is another tidal wave on the horizon threatening to destroy the education service as we know it."

ers at Hordle Primary school in the New Forest. This Church of England school has a high proportion of experienced and therefore expensive staff. They have voted to give up their non-contact time (time away from class for planning and preparation) in order to save the school £6500 and maintain the full complement of staff.

This piecemeal response cannot be the way forward. The staff should unite with other schools in the area through their unions, rather than try and just solve things in their own back yard. New teachers coming to the school in the future will find conditions worse than the current

The Way Ahead

Meanwhile it is up to the localities such as Waltham Forest to take the struggle forward. Socialists must hammer home to teachers the need to do certain things immediately:

- Ballot the members at the earliest opportunity for strike action against threatened redundancies. This works.
- Press to extend the action across the borough and into the national arena. This is a national Tory onslaught and needs a national response. The Socialist Teachers Association's call for a one-day strike should be supported.
- Argue for funds to be made available to meet the real needs of the schools — both for salaries and curriculum, not notional figures

cooked up in Whitehall. Poll tax rises are no answer to this problem either: don't fall into the trap of making the working class pay by another route for the system's crisis!

● Link up with other trade unionists under threat, teaching and non-teaching alike. Here it is more than a matter of elementary trade union solidarity. The education of the child does not finish at the classroom door: cutbacks in lunchtime supervisors, for example, are another resource denied the child.

● Fight any moves to "go it alone" as in Hordle Primary School. Such moves can only lead to increased pressure to "opt out", and that fight is big enough already.



Only united union action can stop the Tories' attacks

A lesson from Lambeth

Tony Cisse, NALGO steward at Brixton College, explained the situation in Lambeth, where workers and students fought back against compulsory redundancies and course closures.

NATFHE and NALGO members voted decisively in favour of strike action, and a series of one and two-day strikes and escalating action was launched.

When the strike action was well under way APEX also voted in favour of strike action.

The students' union held meetings to discuss the dispute and voted resoundingly to support the action, later occupying the college in support of the strikers.

Hundreds of people lobbied council committees and the Labour Group and a march was held that successfully blocked the traffic.

After four negotiation meetings the council climbed down completely and the strike won its demands and stopped the redundancies and the proposed course cuts.

Against the cynicism of the new realists and the backdrop of the recent Tory election victory, united union action has shown the power it can wield.

In the long term there will be more capping of council budgets and further, increasingly vicious, attacks on jobs and services, but this victory puts us in a good position for future fights.

If you fight to win, you can win. Every struggle can be built from the grass roots and will be won by the ordinary workers on our terms.

Save education!

staff have enjoyed.

This piecemeal approach is being repeated up and down the country. It will increase the pressure for schools to opt out of local authority control all together.

The mass movement of schools to grant maintained status is another tidal wave on the horizon threatening to destroy the education service as we know it.

Special Needs Ignored

Special Needs pupils will be among the first to suffer as a result. Grant maintained schools do not have the same statutory responsibilities to care for children with disabilities as local authorities have. It should not be forgotten that one in five children develops a special need of some kind during their school life.

LEAs will only be responsible for special needs children in grant maintained schools who have been through the process of having their needs "statemented". This accounts for only 2 to 3 per cent of children. Other special needs children who do not have a statement will have to be paid for by the school.

Deputy Heads Targeted

One group of teachers who appear to be increasingly vulnerable under the new budgetary arrangements are deputy heads. Some of them find their jobs disappearing as head teachers rejig the management structure. (Indeed, such is the "Americanisation" of the teaching field since Kenneth Baker was Education Secretary that many

Heads now refer to themselves as "line managers")

Deputy heads are often unpopular figures with the rest of staff, but they are still part of the "shop floor". Their deletion could easily lead to increasingly autocratic head teachers, devolving the tasks now done by deputies onto others, without extra pay.

This concerted attack on education by the government is part of the same process that is threatening a million public sector workers' jobs (see SO 523).

The Union Response

How is the main teacher union, the NUT, responding so far? Recruitment could be stepped up now that teachers see the union as

"This concerted attack on education by the government is part of the same process that is threatening a million public sector workers' jobs."

their main line of defence; but just at this moment embarrassing revelations about the conduct of Doug MacAvoy, the general secretary, have come to light.

Secret salary rises of 46% over the last two years mean that "Doug the Slug" is now on £64,212 a year!

Allegations of financial mismanagement in the NUT were made on a Channel 4 programme by the newly elected left wing

treasurer, Ian Murch: the Broad Left majority on the Executive suspended him from office! (For Broad Left read Communist Party, which is the right wing in teacher politics). A campaign has just been launched for Ian Murch's reinstatement.

For Rank and File Unity!

The over reliance of the Broad Left on the hoped for Labour Government we might have won on 9 April has left them with no strategy against the renewed Tory onslaught. Now is an ideal time for the left in the rank and file of the NUT to press home their advantage.

In order to do this the main left wing grouping, the Socialist Teachers Alliance must actively work towards unity with the smaller left wing Campaign for a Democratic and Fighting Union.

It does no good for the STA to feel superior because they raise issues of a more wide ranging nature than the CDFU. If the CDFU is not "political" enough, the STA comrades can educate them in joint struggle: they should stop wasting time carping about them in public.

The STA is beginning to organise the struggle in the localities.

Wandsworth, the Tory flagship London Borough is planning to turn its three remaining comprehensive schools into specialist or "magnet" schools. They fully expect these schools to become oversubscribed in which case they will happily introduce selection (ie the 11 plus by another name).

Another three secondary schools in Wandsworth have already opted out and of the three

remaining, one is pursuing this path.

The STA plans to hold a public meeting in Wandsworth during this term focusing on the defence of state education. This will form part of the build up to a national conference on the same theme for the Autumn.

Conferences at Great Barr School, Birmingham, for schools which are opting out will be lobbied by the STA on 30 May and 13 June.

Other interventions planned are: Campaign for State Education Conference on Class Size, University of London Union 20th June, and NUT Education Conference on 5th July. Pressure is being put on the NUT leadership for a national one day strike involving all areas facing redundancies and a national lobby of Parliament as the start of a national campaign.



We need the united action of students and education workers

When the Bishop Caseys told an Irish government

Noel Browne and

By Paddy Dollard

Noel Browne has been aptly described as "Ireland's Nye Bevan". He was for decades the main Irish voice of reform socialism. He tried, valiantly, as Minister of Health in the 1948-51 Dublin coalition government, to build an Irish National Health Service like the one Labour Minister of Health Nye Bevan was building in Britain.

Unlike Bevan, Browne failed. He failed because the Irish Bishops opposed his plan, and set out to crush him; and, when the Bishops moved, because his colleagues betrayed him, and tried to hound him out of public life. His party, Clan Na Phoblachta, led by Sean McBride, was one of a group of small parties — including two Labour Parties — clustered around the big Fine Gael to form the coalition. It expelled Browne after a ludicrous "trial".

Within weeks the coalition fell. Until he retired in 1983 Browne was regularly sent to the Dail for South Dublin.

Browne himself might be a character out of a Charles Dickens novel. He was born in 1915 into a big poor family afflicted with consumption (TB), the deadliest mass killer of the time. His father died, and then his mother, dying, fled to London with her children, to keep them out of the workhouse. Her 20-year-old eldest child, Eileen, had a job in London.

Her strength exhausted by the effort to save her children from being sent to the workhouse, Noel Browne's mother died almost immediately, and was buried in a pauper's grave. The family was partly dispersed.



James Connolly, trade union leader, socialist, republican, spent much of his political life fighting Catholic reaction

In his autobiography, *Against the Tide*, (1986), Noel Browne tells the almost unbearable story. His older brother Jodie was hump-backed and tubercular. He died aged 21, after a terrible life, when a workhouse doctor, needing experience, decided to operate on his cleft palate: Jodie did not survive.

And then miracles happened for Noel Browne, the pauper child himself likely to develop consumption and die of it. (Eileen, too, died of it at the age of 29).

His sister worked in an institution catering for the children of British colonial administrators; they offered to educate Noel, without fee. Afterwards he won scholarships to the very bourgeois Catholic Beaumont College, and, Dickens again, the family of one of the penniless boy's friends then offered to pay his way through medical school.

He did develop consumption but, nursed in wartime England, he survived.

Working in British hospitals in the later period of the war he says that he shed much of the snobbery he had picked up in the course of his education. His socialism, like that of a whole generation of British reform socialists — Michael Foot, for example — was heavily influenced by life in war-time Britain.

In his book, Browne movingly shows himself to be a socialist dominated by tender feelings of human solidarity, and anger at the vile, warping, inhuman ethics that go inseparably with capitalism.

After the war he went back to Ireland and joined Clan Na Phoblachta — a "New Start" leftist Republican party, led by Sean McBride and others who had been

the leaders of the IRA a decade earlier.

Clan Na Phoblachta was to prove itself part of the old story of post-civil war Southern Irish politics, not the start of a new one, as Noel Browne was to learn painfully. But first came tremendous achievement.

As Minister of Health Browne made war on TB and in an amazingly short time came within sight of wiping out this disease which had been killing tens of thousands every year. That achievement alone would mark Browne as one of the greatest men in Irish history.

Then he turned to creating a new health care system. But now his "Mother and Child Scheme" brought him smack up against the Bishops. After 30 years of 26 County independence, the Bishops had the real power, and were used to exercising it.

They objected to doctors and paramedics instructing women on matters to do with sexuality and children: sexuality and children were moral questions; morality was the preserve of the Church. Hold on, Mr Browne!

And they objected most emphatically — hand in hand with the Irish medical establishment — to Browne's insistence on making the services free: a means test was essential, they insisted. Anything else was immoral.

Ordinarily it would have been enough for the Bishops merely to pronounce their judgement. Politicians would obey. Browne was made of better stuff. I will let Browne tell what happened.

"On 10th October 1950, I was peremptorily ordered to Archbishop [of Dublin] McQuaid's palace by a telephone call from his secretary. I was told to attend a meeting, to be held on the following day, concerned with the proposed mother and child health service and the bishops' position in regard to it.

"I could not understand why any bishop should not be prepared to meet a government minister in his department. Yet my Cabinet colleagues informed me that it was in fact the practice, under Irish government protocol, for a minister to be expected to attend, when told to do so, at a bishop's palace. There would be three bishops present while I, though requesting permission to do so, was bluntly told that I might not bring my Departmental Secretary.

"In opening the conversation Dr McQuaid chose, of all subjects, to discuss child prostitution, informing me: the little child prostitutes charge sixpence a time. Concluding this strange interlude, he invited me into a larger and more imposing room, where two bishops were introduced to me as Dr Staunton, the Bishop of Ferns, and Dr Michael Browne, the Bishop of Galway. As soon as we were settled, a letter from the hierarchy was read to me by Dr McQuaid.

"Dear Taoiseach [Prime Minister], The Archbishop and



Noel Browne

Bishops of Ireland at their meeting on October 10th had under consideration the proposals for a Mother and Child health service and other kindred medical services. They recognise that these proposals are motivated by a sincere desire to improve public health, but they feel bound by their office to consider whether the proposals are in accordance with Catholic moral teaching.

In their opinion the powers taken by the State in the proposed Mother and Child Health Service are in direct opposition to the rights of the family and of the individual and are liable to very great abuse... If adopted in law they would constitute a readymade instrument for future totalitarian aggression.

"His socialism, like that of a whole generation of British reform socialists — Michael Foot, for example — was heavily influenced by life in wartime Britain."

The right to provide for the health of children belongs to parents, not to the State. The State has the right to intervene only in a subsidiary capacity, to supplement, not to supplant.

It may help indigent or neglectful parents; it may not deprive 90% of parents of their rights because of 10% necessitous or negligent parents.

Gynaecological care may be, and in some countries is, interpreted to include provision for birth limitation and abortion. We have no guarantee that State officials will respect Catholic principles in regard to these matters. Doctors trained in institutions in which we have no confidence [this meant students — like Noel Browne — at Trinity College, the "Protestant University", where Catholics were then forbidden to study] may be appointed as medical officers under the proposed services, and may give



Disgraced Bishop Casey

gynaecological care not in accordance with Catholic principles...

The Bishops desire that your Government should give careful consideration to the dangers inherent in the present proposals before they are adopted by the Government for legislative enactment'...

Dr Noel Browne continues:

"Having read the letter to me, the bishops appeared to assume that the interview was over. In spite of this I chose to tell them that there were a number of mistaken assumptions and assertions..."

Browne talked back!

"Dr McQuaid asked why it was necessary to go to so much trouble just to provide a free health service for the 10% necessitous poor. This comment was not only wrong, since the percentage involved was thirty and not ten, but surely represented a strange attitude from a powerful prelate of a Christian church towards the life and death of the 'necessitous poor' and their children... As a doctor, I believed that a free health service was an essential pre-requisite to an effective and a just health service..."

"Bishop Browne then took up a question dear to his heart, that of the burden of rates and taxation. He claimed that it was unfair to tax the rest of the community in order to give the poor a free health service. I pointed out that taxation was surely not a matter of morality; as far as I was concerned, it was a problem for the government, the Minister for Finance and myself..."

So far their concern had been strictly with temporal issues.

In fact, the hierarchy proved adamant: they insisted on a drastically diminished, mean-tested service. They peremptorily refused to answer the question why they had not denounced the British National Health Service which Northern Ireland Catholics used. Together with the medical profession, they organised a tremendous campaign to break Noel Browne.

Browne continues his account: "In Cabinet I decided to make a stand on two issues: the fundamental rights of the electorate, with power coming from the people to the elected government, and

what to do:

the Bishops



The Citizen Army began as a trade union militia to defend workers — some of whom fell, clubbed to death by police — during the 1913 Dublin Lockout. When James Connolly led the Army into the 1916 Rising, they did not go out to fight for the anti-working class Ireland which the bourgeoisie and the Catholic Church created when they assumed power after 1921

the right of the public to a proper health service. Under no circumstances could we concede to the bishops the right to set aside a law already passed by the Oireachtas.

“Archbishop Kinane of Cashel... is quoted in the *Irish Independent* of 2 June 1951 as saying: ‘I have recently emphasised that certain graduates of TCD, while openly parading their Catholicity, have, at the same time, publicly set themselves up in opposition to a fundamental part of Catholic religion, namely the teaching authority and the bishops. These people are now claiming the right to determine the boundaries of their jurisdiction. They should not oppose their bishop’s teaching by word or act, or by any other way, but carry out whatever is demanded by him. They must carry out political, social and economic theories which are in harmony with God’s laws’.

“I was the only impediment to the joint plans of the hierarchy and the medical consultants to deprive the public of a fine health service; the hierarchy had become the factual instrument of government on all important social and economic policies in the Republic. Our prospects for the preservation

of an effective Cabinet and a badly needed health scheme were now changed utterly.

“The bishops objected most emphatically — hand in hand with the Irish medical establishment — to Browne’s insistence on making the services free: a means test was essential they insisted. Anything else was immoral.”

“Of the two issues involved, the more important was no longer the mother and child scheme. The real challenge being mounted by the hierarchy was their implicit claim to be the effective govern-

ment... As Sean O’Faolain was to observe so acutely about the power of the hierarchy: ‘The lightest word from this quarter is tantamount to the raising of the sword...’

“Mr Sean MacBride [leader of Browne’s party, Clan Na Phoblachta] insisted that I should call on Dr Michael Browne, a member of the Episcopal Committee. [Dr Browne was one of Bishop Eamonn Casey’s predecessors].

“Dr Browne was a big man, well over six feet tall, his height enhancing the long black soutane with its thousand and one split pea-size scarlet buttons. Meeting him, I wondered how on earth he’d have the patience to do and undo all those buttons. A concealed zip, perhaps?

“The bishop had a round soft baby face with shimmering clear cornflower-blue eyes, but his mouth was small and mean. Around his great neck was an elegant glinting gold episcopal chain with a simple pectoral gold cross. He wore a ruby ring on his plump finger and wore a slightly ridiculous tiny skull-cap on this noble head. The well-filled semi-circular cummerbund and sash neatly divided the lordly prince into two.

“He handed me a silver casket in which lay his impeccable hand-made cigarettes. ‘These cigarettes’, he intoned, ‘I had to have made in Bond Street’. Then he offered me a glass of champagne. ‘I always like champagne in the afternoon’, he informed me in his rich round voice... My feeling of awe was mixed with a sense of astonishment that this worldly sybarite considered himself to be a follower of the humble Nazarene [Jesus Christ].

“I reflected that one more Judas was bad enough, but twelve of them must be some kind of record, even in Ireland.”

“Our discussion on the mother and child health scheme was cursory. He showed no sign of having any serious interest in or objection to the scheme other than its cost...

Our discussion was mainly concerned with what he feared must be the increase in the ‘burden of the rates and taxes’ needed to pay for the scheme...

“Finally, on 31 March I set out to meet Cardinal Dalton, of Armagh. He was a pleasant, withdrawn, scholarly-looking man. Our conversation was stilted, formal, and with the exception of one brief period, banal and inconsequential. The Cardinal gave the impression that he was politely wondering what on earth he was doing sharing his luncheon table with this odd, earnest, young man who was clearly preoccupied with an abstruse and awkward health problem... It is important to note, however, that the Cardinal made no attempt to answer the one crucial and pertinent question that I did put to him, about the use of Aneurin Bevan’s National Health Service by Catholics in Northern Ireland. His disdainful reply smacked of royalty standing on its dignity: ‘We are prepared neither to apologise, nor to explain.’”

The coalition Cabinet bowed to the hierarchy. Browne was forced to resign. Let Noel Browne describe his Cabinet meeting:

“...I reflected that one Judas was bad enough but twelve of them must be some kind of record, even in Ireland.

“Grudgingly the Taoiseach allowed my request that I ask every one of the Cabinet the question ‘Do you accept?’... First I asked the Labour leader Everett, then the patrician McGilligan. Difficult to believe, there was no difference between the landlord and the peasant. Then from [Labour deputy] Norton, prostrate obeisance. Michael Keyes, a Labour minister... was the only one to demur meekly, ‘They shouldn’t be allowed to do this’. But he too nodded his head. Sean MacEoin [a hero of Ireland’s war of independence] was outraged that I had even dared to question him. Angrily he blustered, ‘How dare you invite me to disobey my church?’ The hierarchy had spoken, in no uncertain terms.

“He asked, ‘Who would oppose the positive teaching of those entitled to teach?’ Then he went on ingenuously, and with a welcome edge of blacksmith’s humour, ‘I don’t want to get a belt of a crozier’...

“Later Taoiseach [Prime Minister] Costello was to say, ‘As a Catholic, I obey my authorities.’ [Sean] MacBride was quoted as saying, ‘Those in the government who are Catholics are bound to accept the views of their church’. Mr Costello shrugged off any claim he might have had to being Taoiseach in a sovereign government by the letter he sent to the Archbishop saying that the government would readily and immediately acquiesce in a decision of the hierarchy.”

And they did just that.

Their polemics and ours

EYE ON THE LEFT

By Sean Matgamna

Strange people, those who run *Socialist Outlook*! Every so often we invite them to debate with us, or work with us where we have political agreement. Year after year we have invited them to come along and debate with us at the annual Workers' Liberty event.

Year after year the organisation and its leaders refuse! Always. On every subject.

There is one exception. Over two years ago they did consent to debate with us. We had two debates, in Manchester and London, on the class character of the then USSR. Then they reverted to their old position: no debate.

We repeat the invitation this year: come to Workers' Liberty '92 and debate!

Socialist propagandists who believe in their own ideas are normally keen to find an audience, but not the shy boys and bashful women of *Outlook*. Why?

Perhaps there is — as they sometimes put it — “no point”. Maybe they think that the Alliance for Workers' Liberty consists of hardened middle-aged incorrigibles, whose minds closed 15 or 20 years ago? No, they don't think that. They insist publicly that the AWL is based on students and other young people; indeed, they exaggerate, pretending that we neglect trade union work.

Our trade union work is probably better than theirs (compare the coverage in the two papers). But it is true that the AWL is mainly young people. The average age of the AWL is at least 10, possibly 15, years lower than the average age of *Outlook*. If there is a moribund group of tired older people here, then it is *Outlook*, not the AWL.

It is upon open-minded, young people that the venerable leaders of *Outlook* refuse to bestow their political wisdom, refusing them even the right to hear their “official Trotskyist” criticism of the AWL. Strange people, *Socialist Outlook*!

Their strange attitude to the AWL is expressed in the following snatch of dialogue a year or so ago, between Mark Osborn of the AWL and Phil Hearse of *Outlook*, at an anti-war meeting. *Outlook* and the AWL had a more or less identical attitude to the Gulf War.

It went approximately like this. Osborn: ‘The differences between us do not justify your sectarianism towards us. Here we are with an identical position on the war. In fact a good case could be made for the fusion of the two groups. Within a democratic organisation, the differences would be containable.’

Phil Hearse, who, I understand, is editor of *Outlook* and the political leader of the main tendency in *Outlook*, replied: ‘Says the wolf to the sheep!’

Those were his exact words, I'm told, not in a friendly private conversation, but in a wrangling confrontation with a known factional opponent!

Strange dialogue! Strange people! Strange fear! Evidently they scare themselves with their own propaganda demonising the AWL.

To help the reader bring this into focus, I should add that there seem to be more of them than there are of us, though most of them don't do much.

So the explanation, then, is that the leaders of *Outlook* are a bunch of peaceful, plodding, tired old political herbivores, content to graze their hedges and green borders, uninterested in political combat, polemic, or even comradely dialogue to try to unite the forces of Trotskyism — just a timid bunch of well-meaning wimps who do no harm to anybody but themselves?

Unfortunately, no. They run and hide from confrontation, they refuse debate — but then they try to regain their own political self-respect by sniping at us in the pages of *Outlook*.

But, you say, written debate is good! It might be, but it isn't. Even their sniping at us is just another form of running away!



The truth is: we supported Yeltsin and the people against the authoritarians, and this without abandoning our politics

They do not debate with us — take up what we really say and do, and then discuss or refute it.

They write silly polemics, denouncing us for positions we do not hold and could not hold, and for things we have not done and could not do.

They wax publicly indignant, attributing to us ridiculous “positions” which they “prove” by “quotations” made up in their own editorial office. They merely pretend to debate with us; it is not us, but figments of their own imagination, they debate with.

“Why does all this matter? Hearse's polemic is a product of a radically disoriented tendency from under whose feet the political ground has been well and truly cut by the collapse of Stalinism. They are people who will, in real debate and discussion, either radically rethink the theoretical basis of the revolutionary socialist politics we share with them, or disappear.”

In a minor key it is all curiously like what the — then still political — Healyites were doing in the mid 1960s.

Outlook no. 21 had just such a piece of polemic nonsense, signed by Paul Clarke, which I believe is a pen-name of bold Phil Hearse.

Strange people, *Outlook*! Take this passage: ‘Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams lost his West Belfast seat at the general election, a fact greeted by *Socialist Organiser* (SO 520) with the headline: ‘Good news from West Belfast’.

‘For *Socialist Organiser* this amounted to a ‘rejection of sectarianism’ by West Belfast workers.

‘At the level of facts this is absurd. Adams lost his seat despite the fact that his vote, absolutely and in percentage terms, went up. Some hundreds of loyalist voters switched to the SDLP to vote Adams out.

‘SO supporters say the SDLP is the ‘party of the Socialist International’. It may be thus affiliated, but it is not, like the Labour Party, a party based on the workers' movement. It is a bourgeois nationalist party, full stop.’

Of the three passages in single quotes, one, ‘Good news from West Belfast’, is accurate. The other two passages are wholly invented!

They are not honest summaries of what we say, put into single quotes for economy (*Outlook*'s style, anyway, is to use only single quotes for all quotations). The words they invent for us flatly contradict what we believe and what we said. We said: ‘The SDLP is a bourgeois party’.

From what I've seen of him in two debates, Phil Hearse is an over-cautious, serious fellow, bordering on the pompous, who prepared and fussed over detailed notes before debating a subject he must have debated a hundred times before. How then does this careful, painstaking man wind up inventing quotes in the style of Gerry Healy and his “red professors” — Cliff Slaughter and others — of the mid 1960s?

On Ireland, and on other things, there are important differences between *Outlook* and us. They do not deal with them.

About West Belfast we say — to spell it out — that both the SDLP and the Provos are bourgeois nationalist organisations. The Provos are now a narrowly and murderously Catholic-sectarian organisation which pursues the “count the Catholics” politics of the pre-1970 Nationalist party in tandem with an “armed struggle” which supplements those “count the Catholics” politics with a “shoot the Protestants” policy.

The bourgeois SDLP is, without ceasing to be bourgeois, closer than the “Republicans” are to Wolfe Tone Republicanism, which was also bourgeois, but whose irreplaceable starting point was and must be recognition of the equality of all the Irish, “Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter”.

Such things as the Provos' killing of Protestant workers as “collaborators” are indefensible from a socialist, an anti-imperialist, or a Republican point of view.

Our views may be wrong. They may be criminal. They may be open to refutation at the level of fact, logic, or principle, democratic, socialist, or both.

Outlook, disagreeing with our views, should feel a responsibility to tell its readers exactly what is wrong with what we really say. Instead they invent quotes which sum up neither what we think nor what we say, and indulge in junior-school Gerry Healy style polemics. They spread silly political smears, and try to foment a hate campaign.

In other words, they run away, comforting themselves with the polemics they could justly write if only their opponents were idiots, using fantasy polemics, pretend polemics, to wall themselves off from the world they do not know how to make sense of, and from questions we raise they cannot deal with.

Hearse also accuses us, though without an invented quotation to back him up, of giving “almost uncritical support to Boris Yeltsin”.

We say Yeltsin is a Mussolini! We urge the left in Russia to push him aside. Here too *Outlook* is running away, flinging abuse over its shoulder.

Here too, it tells us more about *Outlook* than the AWL. At only one point have we ever expressed positive (not uncritical, nor politically self-denying) support for Yeltsin — the moment when he, with admirable courage and determination, made himself

the focus of resistance to the attempted coup last August.

Then we supported Yeltsin and the people — against the authoritarians. In the same way we would support bourgeois democracy, even a Mrs Thatcher, against a fascist coup, without abandoning our own politics or preaching confidence in the bourgeois democrats or in bourgeois democracy. There is a big Marxist literature on the question.

If we were wrong to back Yeltsin in August, why, according to the basic politics of Trotskyism in such cases, were we wrong? The only possible reason would be that despite their authoritarianism, the coup-makers represented something good — the defence of what *Outlook* still, I believe, call the workers' state.

I think the point here is not that we “support” Yeltsin, but that a lot of people in and around *Outlook* had to stifle in themselves an urge to back the coup as the “last hope” of the workers' state (and they did: *Outlook* “supported” Yeltsin just as we did).

They resent us for posing things clearly. Here it is themselves they are running away from.

There is a lot of other nonsense in Hearse's polemic, which is aglow with outrage that we dare be rude to Ken Livingstone — and another invented quote, too — but it is not worth pursuing.

The current issue of *Outlook* (no. 22) carries a letter from Martin Thomas about Hearse's article. He accuses *Outlook* of inventing quotations. They publish the accusation without comment!

Implicitly, it would seem, they plead guilty as charged. If not, then they would surely defend themselves. But they offer not one word of explanation! They seem to be unaware that explanation is called for.

But no, they are aware of it all right. They handle it like kids in a playground who respond to a jeer by throwing it back: you too!

They publish a mildly hysterical letter about *Socialist Organiser*, and make a headline of a phrase in it describing SO as a “Red Lie Machine?” The question mark is the editor's.

There, you see! We've been caught out inventing quotations, but still, the real liars are *Socialist Organiser*!

But SO has not lied! (The alleged “lies” are to do with our interpretation of *Outlook*'s politics, which the writer rejects). We do not invent quotations. If, inadvertently we misrepresent or simply misunderstand, then we allow those who object the right of reply. (On at least two occasions in the last year, *Outlook* refused us that right).

The casual way *Outlook* deals with being caught out inventing quotes, as if they are not aware of the enormity of it, reminds me of a well-known piece of verse:

‘For how can you compete,
Being honour-bred, with one
Who, were it proved he lies
Were neither shamed in his own
Nor in his neighbour's eyes’.

Why does all this matter? Hearse's polemic is a product of a radically disoriented tendency from under whose feet the political ground has been well and truly cut by the collapse of Stalinism. They are people who will, in real debate and discussion, either radically rethink the theoretical basis of the revolutionary socialist politics we share with them, or disappear.

“Disappearance” can mean either dissolving or turning into a destructive and irrational — and congenitally stupid — sect of the Healyite or Lambertist sort, who are characterised in politics above all by charlatanism — pretend politics, and by the substitution of words and phrase-mongering and of textual “orthodoxy” for Marxist analysis of reality.

Those, on the whole, have not been the methods of the tendency of which *Outlook* is part. It is no part of a Trotskyism capable of living and growing in the new conditions.

As far as we can judge, the motive for Hearse's Healyite polemics is to stop *Outlook* working “on the ground” with the AWL, as many of them do now. The Healyite poison-pen polemics had a similar motive.

I will return to this subject next week.



Mrs Wilcox (Vanessa Redgrave) and Mr Wilcox (Anthony Hopkins)



Stalin through the looking-glass

Television

By Martin Thomas

Vaclav Klaus's party, the right wing of the umbrella movement which led the revolution in 1989, may well keep its control of Czecho-Slovakia's government after the election this week.

As one of its leaders told Channel 4 TV ("Dispatches", Wednesday 27 May), it promises "Wild West capitalism". The prospects for Czecho-Slovakia's workers are not much better than for the American Indians.

Klaus is determined to privatise at breakneck speed. Shops, cafes, and so on are being sold to individuals by auction (the "small privatisation"); for bigger enterprises (the "large privatisation") the procedure is more complex.

According to law, only Czecho-Slovakian citizens can buy businesses in the "small privatisation". Since many businesses have gone for prices far exceeding the maximum any Czecho-Slovakian citizen could possibly have saved from legal earnings, clearly crooked bureaucrats and black-market profiteers from the old regime are the chief buyers, along with wealthy foreigners.

Under the "large privatisation", successive selections of enterprises are obliged to present to the government plans for privatising themselves. The shares for which they cannot directly find individual buyers - foreign capitalists, banks, or whatever - have to be distributed to the population through a voucher system.

Every adult citizen can buy a book of vouchers for about £20, and with those vouchers buy shares in the businesses being privatised, the price of the shares being fixed by supply and demand.

This "people's capitalism" is a poor bargain. The voucher-holders only get the shares which individual capitalists will not buy; and, unless they have "inside" bureaucratic connections, they can get no information about the businesses being privatised.

The voucher scheme was saved from collapse by the rise of "investment funds", which take people's vouchers and promise to invest them knowledgeably.

But a lot of the "investment funds" are certain to prove to be rip-offs: people who want to cash in their shares will find that the "fund" boss has disappeared. Those that are not straight rip-offs will be eager for quick cash, so will use their shareholding power to "asset-strip" businesses. The TV researchers estimated that 40% of the privatised companies will go bust.

Czecho-Slovakian government economists know all this and accept it. Yes, they said philosophically, there will be mistakes and swindles, but central planners would have made worse mistakes and swindles!

Privately, I guess, they are glad that the crooked bureaucrats and the black-market mafia are buying up businesses, and thus coming into the realm of the purging, cleansing, efficiency-making free market.

These free-market economists are strange mirror-images of the enthusiastic central planners of high Stalinism. Regardless of the human cost, the mass pauperisation, the ruined lives, the hideous waste, everything must be subordinated to the magic mechanism of economic progress, be it free market or central planning.

They are getting their way, at present, because the alternative of democratic workers' control and planning has few advocates in Eastern Europe. Employee share-ownership schemes are the most radical venture of Czecho-Slovakia's trade unions - so far.

A clash of values

Film

Belinda Weaver reviews "Howards End"

"Howards End" could well be a lesson in literary adaptation for the screen. It's faithfully done, following the text and tone of the book fairly closely - but it doesn't engage you.

Based on the 1910 novel by E. M. Forster, it's about the clash of values between two middle class English families, the Schlegels and the Wilcoxes. The Schlegels, half-German, don't grub in the world of business. Living on their income, they indulge their taste for literature, music and "ideas"; they see their lives as leisurely, cultured.

The Wilcoxes go in for business. They're practical, matter of fact people, no nonsense types. They know who they are, and what they want - simply the best of what's going.

The bridge between the two is Mrs Wilcox, who befriends Margaret Schlegel, and tries to leave her her house, Howards End. When Mrs Wilcox dies, Margaret becomes the second Mrs Wilcox, and the film shows her coming to terms with what that means for herself, for her sister, Helen (who despises the Wilcoxes), and for her own values and beliefs.

The battleground for the clashing values is a clerk, Leonard Bast, whom the Schlegels "take up" and try to help. To them, Leonard is no ordinary clerk. He has dreams and yearnings, about literature, about nature, about a life beyond

the narrow confines of his poverty.

They romanticise him, and harm him in the process. By the end Leonard realises that to live

"To us, the Schlegels and the Wilcoxes are all of a piece, only one lot have more of a bleeding heart."

like the Schlegels takes money. The Schlegels, whose wealth allowed them to take so much for granted, could never understand Leonard's circumstances.

Henry Wilcox understood them, but felt no pity, and found the Schlegels' patronage of Bast absurd

and out of place.

This clash forms the heart of the story. The Schlegels represent the waning tradition of "noblesse oblige", transmitted through the leisured rentier class. They feel responsible for the poor, and try pathetically (and ineffectually) to help. The Wilcoxes, as working capitalists, are more up to date. The poor will always be there, one's sorry for them, but there they are - that's the Wilcox way.

Both Margaret and Helen rail at this heartlessness, but they themselves are just as bad. For all their breastbeating, they do Bast no good at all; he's worse off for having known them. Henry's view - materialistic, selfish and self-serving - carries the day.

Perhaps what's dreary about the film is the narrowness, the weakness of these opposing views. To us, the Schlegels and the Wilcoxes are all of a piece, only one lot have more of a bleeding heart.

The film seems to be looking back to a more caring England, a time when private profit was not the order of the day. It's hankering for a more settled world, where rich and poor have their place, but the rich help the "deserving" poor.

When Bast says he had his niche, and should have stayed in it, it's the voice of Forster yearning for the certainties, the secure hierarchies of an earlier age.

The house, Howards End, is meant to represent, in brick and stone, traditions, a settled attachment to home, to land, to nature - all the things that get lost in the hurly burly of capitalist speculation and grab.

If only people could get off the rushing, money-making treadmill, and find "true" values again, then a Leonard Bast would be worth as much as a Henry Wilcox - that's the message.

As "Howards End" was written, in 1910, trade union battles were becoming fiercer and fiercer, right up to the outbreak of World War 1. In those class battles, workers were claiming access to literature, art, and leisure by right, not by individual patronage of the rich. Forster never understood that.

Workers of Ireland

Verse

Jim Connell, author of *The Red Flag*, published this song in Jim Larkin's paper, the *Irish Worker*, in 1911. Larkin was the founder of the modern Irish labour movement. He was aided by men like James Connolly, who succeeded him as secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union in 1914, when Larkin went to America.

They organised the so-called unskilled workers of Dublin, building One Big Union. By way of solidarity strikes and mass pickets, they greatly improved the lot of Dublin's workers.

Workers stood together; no group of workers was left in isolation to fight a rich and powerful boss. Solidarity transformed the previously broken-up and atomised Dublin working class into a tremendous force.

Then in 1913 the employers struck back. Led by the prominent Irish Nationalist William Martin Murphy, owner of the *Irish Independent* newspaper, 400 of them banded together, outlawed "Larkin's Union", and locked out Dublin's workers when they said that

they would stick with the union.

Dublin's eight-month labour war followed. A number of workers were beaten to death by the police, and the union organised its own guard - the Citizen Army - to defend its members. The union, wounded, survived.

Larkin's paper, the *Irish Worker* was a raw offensive, abusive, libellous publication, whose militant trade unionism was heavily coloured by Irish Nationalism. It was often in the libel courts, but eventually won a circulation numbered in the tens of thousands. There has been nothing like it since!

"Workers of Ireland" goes to the tune of "O'Donnell Abu".

Workers of Ireland, why crawl ye like cravens?

Why clutch an existence of insult and want?

Why stand to be plucked by an army of ravens,

Or hoodwinked forever by twaddle and cant?

Think on the wrongs ye bear,

Think on the rags ye wear,

Think on the insults endured from your birth;

Toiling in snow and rain
Rearing up heaps of gain,

All for the tyrants who ground you to earth.

Your brains are as keen as the brains of your masters
In swiftness and strength ye surpass them by far

Ye've brave hearts that teach ye to laugh at disasters,

Ye vastly outnumber your tyrants in war:

Why then like cowards stand.

Using not brain or hand

Thankful, like dogs, when they throw you a bone!

What right have they to take

Things that ye toil to make?

Know ye not, comrades, that all is your own?

Rise in your might, brothers, bear it no longer,

Assemble in masses throughout the whole land;

Show these incapables who are the stronger,

When workers and idlers confronted shall stand.

Through Castle, Court and Hall

Over their acres all

Onward we'll press like the waves of the sea!

Claiming the wealth we've made,

Ending the spoilers' trade;
Labour shall triumph and Ireland be free!

Jim Connell

Build the Alliance for Workers' Liberty

Tuesday's *Morning Star* (2 June) carries an article headlined: "Sawyer urges: Stop and think" - a front-page piece about Tom Sawyer's NUPE conference speech. Sawyer is reported as saying that severing the union link would "undermine and damage" the Labour Party.

Sawyer makes a "left" speech and the *Morning Star* dresses it up for him. We live in a labour movement where leaders - as a way of life - cut and shape their politics for short-term advantage. Bureaucrats like Sawyer make dissimulating speeches which cover their real actions.

It is a matter of fact that Sawyer has been a central

figure in the Labour leadership's push to the right over the past few years.

Socialist Organiser and the Alliance for Workers' Liberty have entirely different standards. We say exactly what we mean - even if we become isolated by telling the truth. Witness the "outrage" we created by refusing to go along with a fake like Ken Livingstone.

Many of the labour movement bureaucrats now want to begin to sever the union links 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.

tion.

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;
- rebuild the NHS;
- win a poll tax amnesty;
- build opposition to the Asylum Bill;
- win a Workers' Charter of union rights;

● 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.

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 working class to take power.

Why not join our organisation?

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

The left we need?

PLATFORM

By Dave Osler

At indeed that Sean Matgamna's colourful anti-Livingstone polemic "The 'Left' Pantomime Candidate" (SO 521) and "The Left and Ken Livingstone" (SO 523) speak of "the left we have and the left we need"; the articles illustrate the difference perfectly.

There is wishful talk of a "draft Benn campaign". Yet Benn - who is now 67, and by all accounts only stood for the leadership in 1988 under extreme pressure and against family wishes - took the understandable personal and political decision not to run. That, surely, is his right.

Why assert that Benn "could probably - given reasonable time - have got over the '55 MPs barrier'"? Only 38 MPs backed his bid four years ago, and the new intake contains few left-wingers.

"Privately, very few people on the left - inside or outside the Labour Party - have a favourable word for Livingstone", Matgamna continues, before branding him "an unreliable self-serving cynic with few scruples and some very flexible loyalties".

Many on the left privately voice strident criticisms of Matgamna; I know neither man personally and therefore offer no judgements in either case. But since when was personal like or dislike of an individual a relevant factor when considering whether to back a political project?

Having some sort of Campaign Group intervention into Labour's leadership stitch-up - however imperfect one might consider it - is surely preferable to no left activity in the so-called "contest" at all.

Matgamna correctly mentions SO's "isolation on the left" in openly attacking Livingstone, then contradicts himself with the claim: "The only 'movement' Livingstone has behind him is a small cluster of 'left' sects: the strange Stalinoid grouping Socialist Action, Briefing and the elderly legions of the *Morning Star*."

Livingstone is also backed by Labour Left Liaison, which includes the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Black Sections, Labour Women's Action Committee, and Labour CND - an integral and significant section of Labour left opinion, influenced by but certainly not reducible to Socialist Action. Principled, crucial support has also come from Socialist Outlook and Socialist Worker, despite Livingstone's frequent attacks on the SWP in the Sun.

When Matgamna points to the differences between Livingstone's own policies and the Campaign Group platform Livingstone sought to stand on, he only underlines that the campaign goes well beyond a fan club affair. Whether or not it serves as a catalyst for a rejuvenated Labour left depends crucially on the attitude existing left activists take towards it.

By all means stridently criticise Livingstone and his co-thinkers' project for realignment inside the Labour Party (as indeed I did in socialist, 12.2.92), or their confused ideas of socialist economic strategy.

But please do it in a serious and comradely manner, without deriding anyone as a "scumbag". "The left we need" is a left that debates differences openly, without stooping to playground-style name-calling.

Alliance for Workers' Liberty meetings

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

Tuesday 16 June

"Fighting student debt". Barnsley College AWL meeting. 1.00
"Fighting student debt" Sheffield University AWL meeting. 6.00

Wednesday 17 June

"Backlash - feminism on the defensive?" London AWL Forum

7.30 Calthorpe Arms, Gray's Inn Road.

Wednesday 24 June

"Labour and the leadership" Manchester AWL 8.00 Town Hall.

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.

Meeting to discuss the leadership contest: Tuesday 23 June, Lambeth Town Hall, London SW2. 7.30pm.

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.

The Unions

Socialist Movement Trade Union Conference: 18-19 July, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London.

Fighting the racists

* 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.

* A demonstration to oppose the racist Asylum Bill is planned for October. For details/speakers contact the Refugee Ad hoc Committee for Asylum Rights (RAHCAR) 071 251 5675.

£8,000 for Socialist Organiser

In the last week supporters and comrades have sent £355.00 towards our £8,000 fund drive. We have raised £2,344.03 of our target. Socialist Organiser and the Alliance for Workers' Liberty are raising money to help our expansion programme. If you enjoy reading Socialist Organiser why not make a donation to help our work?

Send cheques to "Workers' Liberty", PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Thanks this week to Nottingham AWL, £60; Hull AWL, £30; East London AWL, £20; Manchester AWL, £60; Liverpool AWL, £30.

Thanks to friends and members in CPSA for £155 towards our fund.

Workers' Liberty '92:

IDEAS FOR FREEDOM

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 ● Backlash - feminism in retreat - Jill



Bernie Grant

Mountford ● 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 Warszawsky and the AWL

Debates:

□ what is the nature of Stalinism? - Michel Warszawsky, Hillel Ticktin, Martin Thomas and Tom Rigby
● should Scotland be independent? - Stewart Hosie (SNP) and the AWL

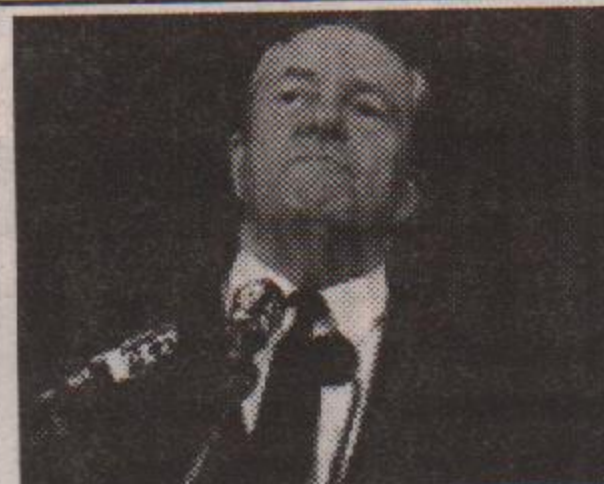
Questions of life:

□ 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 Cockcroft

Sunday

Sessions:

□ Queer Politics - Janine Booth ● the history of AIDS -



Fighting fascism: Le Pen

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? - Cathy Nugent ● South Africa in crisis - Tom Rigby ● 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

Workers' Liberty Bookclub

Our bookservice is offering Mike Davis' damning indictment of life in Los Angeles, "City of Quartz" for £8.99 post free.

For a full booklist write to the Bookclub, AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Get educated

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty runs an intensive week-long Marxist "crash-course" twice a year.

The next school will be held from Monday 6 - Friday 10 July in London.

Details from: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Shorter working week is the key

NCU: time to stop the retreat!

Why thousands want to go

By a NCU conference delegate

BT announced last week that their latest redundancy scheme, "Release 92", is oversubscribed.

A staggering 50% of the workforce have expressed an interest in leaving.

What sort of employer manages to achieve such a low level of staff morale that thousands of workers would rather take a chance on getting another job in the present economic climate, than stay?

The facts are that many BT employees have been working in a climate of uncertainty and worry about their jobs. The last few years of reorganisation followed by reorganisation, and the increasingly aggressive management policies, have altered the atmosphere at work. Workers are put under pressure for taking sick leave, disciplinary action is more widespread, overtime has been cut.

All this has left us not knowing where we will be working or what we will be doing, if we stay. The existence of surplus staff groups, "special

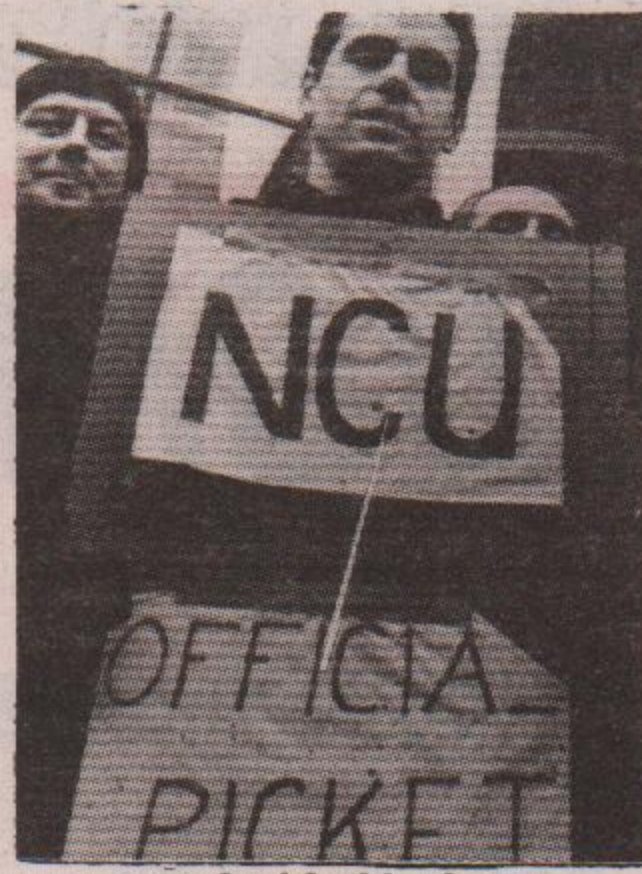
project" groups, "support" groups, etc. is ominous. Many workers and managers believe these staff are being targeted for future compulsory redundancy.

NCU conference this week found delegates complaining of these "dumping grounds" being allowed by the union.

Unfortunately some in the union leadership don't seem to be aware of the facts of working life in these groups — the lack of rights to training and promotion, and the fear that our members have to put up with.

This is typical of how the union leaders have failed to acknowledge the seriousness of the job situation for our members. Workers are disillusioned and do not feel that there is any point in putting up resistance to management. The danger with this atmosphere is that when the fight against compulsory redundancy comes, we will have to persuade workers that there is a point in taking any action at all, let alone national strike action to defend jobs.

Over the last few years, new technology in BT has changed the nature of our jobs, with massive deskilling and cuts in workloads. The union has



cooperated with this change — but where are our benefits?

There has been no change in working hours for BT engineers since 1979. All attempts to gain a shorter working week have failed. New technology has meant BT is mega-profitable. The shareholders have gained. We have not.

The waste of billions of pounds of profit that could have improved our working lives, and the lives of all the people in this country, is criminal. One NCU delegate at this week's conference summed it up when he said, "We are not proud to work for BT".

Telecom workers vote to fight sackings

By an NCU conference delegate

At the National Communications Union conference this week, the policy of a national strike ballot in the event of any member being declared compulsorily redundant by BT won overwhelming support.

The union was united on sending a message to BT management that any move to compulsory redundancies will mean a confrontation with the NCU, the union covering the majority of BT's staff.

There was division, however, on the issue of Resourcing Companies. The National Executive was supporting the NCU's involvement in negotiating with Manpower UK to offer ex-BT staff work as a form of contractor for BT, with no guarantee beyond three months of pay rates and working standards.

However a position calling for rejection of any negotiations to establish resourcing or franchising companies was carried. Conference was well aware that the break up of BT undermines our working conditions, and has instructed the National Executive not to cooperate in negotiating redundancies by the back door. A motion calling for

industrial action on the continuing use of contractors at a time when BT is shedding its own staff was unfortunately lost, though a proposition opposing competitive tendering in logistics (stores, etc.) was passed.

Despite frantic manoeuvring by the National Executive, Conference decided to affiliate to the Anti-Nazi League. Delegates supported this affiliation, and affiliation to the Anti-Racist Alliance, on the basis of a pluralist approach to fighting fascism — though sectarianism reared its ugly head in the National Executive's ideological commitment to not working with anything the SWP was involved in!

ASLEF conference

No ballot, no hope

By a West of Scotland ASLEF member

The London Underground's Company Plan affects all tube workers, just as privatisation of British Rail affects all railworkers.

If the Company Plan goes through, it will be a disaster for railworkers. Performance-related pay, loss of seniority, contracting-out of jobs and services, and "committed hours" (which involves drivers being forced into other duties to push their real working week up drastically, as part of the introduction of individual contracts), will take our conditions of service back to before 1919.

Most members think that the battle against privatisation of the London Underground and in BR has already been lost. That is not true. Our conditions of service are still intact. But it

is the eleventh hour.

Delays over balloting as a result of prioritising what is happening within the 1956 machinery of negotiation by the ASLEF leadership could prove fatal.

It will create even more cynicism among the membership about their ability to beat the Tories and the bosses.

There is not a condition worth talking about that was not won through industrial action. The eight-hour day, which is now under threat, was gained through nine days of all-out industrial action in 1919. We need the same type of action now!

- Ballot against the Company Plan now!
- Ballot against the butchery of the national network in BR now, and fight for a massive majority in the ballot!
- Maintain the present conditions of service and the existing machinery of negotiations on London Underground and BR.

Public sector: democratise, not marketise!

By a civil servant

The Tories claim that contracting out will improve public services, reduce costs, and give more "power to the people".

This claim is part of the ideological offensive from the Right that tells us that the market is the only way to regulate human society. That is the meaning of the "Citizen's Charter".

The labour movement must resist these attacks, but we must do more than just defend the status quo.

We need to make it clear that the only way really to improve services is the democratisation of the public sector. Marketisation is no answer.

We should draw in the users of the public services so that, alongside the users, they can consciously plan genuine improvements and extensions of the services.

Local health authorities should be genuinely democratic, and the hierarchy of authority in hospitals — from consultants through junior doctors and nurses to ancillaries — should be broken down.

School students, teachers,

ancillary workers, and parents, alongside elected local authorities, should decide how schools are run, instead of the head teacher being a capitalist-style manager.

Activities already "contracted-out" should be brought under public ownership and control, with the nationalisation of the drugs industry, for example.

The bottom line for all this must, of course, be a big increase in

public spending.

For instance, a levelling-up of benefits to the best level in the European Community would be of far greater benefit to claimants and workers in the DSS offices than ludicrous stunts like name badges, which are designed to scapegoat workers for the system's inefficiency.

We also need to point out that the extension of the market and market

testing to the civil service will almost certainly spawn a whole new layer of management bureaucrats, as it has done in the Health Service, while reducing the number of workers who actually provide services.

The best way to run the public sector is to put it under the democratic control of committees of the users and producers of public services.

jobs in the coming years. (If they had done so it is doubtful they would have gone elected!)

Reamsbottom has no right to take the snapshot of public opinion represented by the result on April 9th as showing that over the next 5 years the Tories have an absolute right to rule and to do whatever they like.

Finally if we measure democracy by the extent to which it furthers control from below by the majority, then the civil service trade unionists who want to fight contracting out are surely justified. They face the destruction of their organisations and rights built up over many years.

We must fight

Newly elected General Secretary of the CPSA Barry Reamsbottom, who took up his post this week (June 1) has pledged to roll over and die in the face of the Tories contracting-out onslaught against civil servants.

"We totally oppose the contracting out of services because of its effect on jobs and quality. But if it comes we will negotiate the best possible framework possible and prepare ourselves to win the contracts".

In other words Reamsbottom is saying that he will politely ask the Tories to stop and then when

they don't he will collaborate in imposing compulsory competitive tendering and contracting out on his own members.

His justification, that you can't resist a democratically elected government is in reality deeply anti-democratic.

The Tories only go 41% of the vote, they are not even a majority government. (Even if Major had 51% of the vote he would have no right to dictate to minorities. Minority resistance is the only way to prevent majority dictatorship).

The Tories did not clearly and openly say that they would axe up to 1 million public sector

Will Strathclyde council sack half its teachers?

By John McGee (EIS)

Strathclyde Regional Council, which is the largest local authority in Scotland and has a secure Labour majority, has told the Department of Employment that it intends making teachers redundant. 450 is the figure required to balance the books.

The council also intends to

break national agreements on cover for absent teachers and to institute local bargaining, which ties in well with Tory strategy.

Head teachers are being provided with revised staffing complements, and are being requested to nominate teachers "surplus to requirements". The council has made it clear that "last in, first out" will not be accepted.

The major teaching union,

the EIS, is opposed to compulsory redundancies, and is balloting on strike action as a response. 9 June is the designated day of action.

After the disappointment of the General Election, Strathclyde's council leader made a speech in which he talked about civil disobedience and claimed he would not preside over further redundancies caused by Tory policies. On the subject of teacher redundancies he has been quiet.

The message to all Regional Council employees is that the

Labour council is willing to make redundancies and break national agreements as a response to Tory underfunding. And this is only year one of the new Tory government! Any savings made this year through such policies will only provide a new benchmark for the Tories to demand further cuts.

Before it becomes trapped in this spiral, the council should initiate discussions with all the local authority unions to devise a joint strategy for responding to Tory policy on local government.

Westminster fights cuts

A 140-strong Westminster ALGO Social Services meeting on Monday 1

June voted to confront plans by Westminster's Tory council to cut £6 million from the Social Services budget.

127 workers voted in favour of a motion calling for a ballot for non-implementation of the council's "Review and Reorganisation" cuts document and for a rolling programme of

strikes in opposition to the Review's plans.

If senior managers are able to implement the Review, some areas of social services will be devastated. Top managers have not yet given any assurance that there will be no compulsory redundancies.

On Tuesday 2 June the Westminster ALGO branch agreed to support any worker victimised for non-implementation.

The Industrial Front

AEU members have occupied the union's district office in Burnley, in protest at a decision to sell the building. Also affected are offices in Oldham and Blackburn.

Meanwhile, the AEU has excluded building workers it snatched in Scotland, and advised them to join their former union. The move is so that the AEU can remain in the Scottish TUC.

The Bank of England may face industrial action from members of the

BIFU finance union in response to the 41 compulsory redundancies imposed on computer staff whose work will be contracted out.

Members of the civil service union IPMS are to be balloted on strike action. Nuclear scientists working on the Joint European Torus experiment in Oxford are in disagreement over pay.

The North Circular road builders' strike continues. Pickets have moved to another Balfour Beatty site at Farringdon Street in central London. Strikers are demanding their pay from Balfour Beatty after subcontractors Baseform went bust, leaving them owed up to £1300.

A new ambulance dispute?

In mid-May ambulance staff voted to reject management's pay offer. A Merseyside ambulance driver and NUPE shop steward spoke to Socialist Organiser

Management's pay offer of 4.75% was rejected by an overwhelming majority. This was the case in all four unions (NUPE, CoHSE, TGWU and GMB) with members amongst ambulance staff.

I think there were two main reasons for the ballot result. Firstly, because all other aspects of the pay claim — such as a new pay formula, a shorter working week, and increments for length of service — had been dismissed out of hand by management.

Secondly, because what was clearly a well-presented and balanced claim had been treated with contempt by management. The cash claim was for 9.5%, in order to get back in line with firefighters.

At present the introduction of trust status for ambulance services has not affected national pay bargaining. The only exception is Northumbria, where most ambulance staff have signed individual trust contracts. In Norfolk the ambulance service is also bringing out a trust contract for its staff, but this is not yet fully effective.

By April of next year, however,

Apology

We made a mistake on page 2 of SO 524, last week. The three-days-a-week strike action ballot at the Walthamstow school was organised by the NUT, not the NAS/UWT.

about 75% of the country's ambulance services will have trust status. If their staff sign individual trust contracts, then national pay bargaining will be effectively finished.

But this year, at least, we are still talking about a national pay claim. Management will now consider whether or not to improve their offer. They may offer something extra on increments for length of service.

On the other hand, most other NHS workers have settled for 4.75%. This might strengthen management's resolve to stand firm.

The union side will be meeting with management again on 9 June. If there is no improvement in the pay offer, then there will be a ballot for industrial action.

Around the Conferences

NUPE

Conference voted for a weak motion calling only for the repeal of Tory union laws which break the ILO conventions. Total repeal was defeated, with the justified case for "positive rights" misused, as an excuse to keep unacceptable Tory laws. The left should claim the ground of positive rights for itself, and expose the executive's limited imagination.

UCATT

Branches are to be rationalised, i.e. merged and made even more remote from the members. The real issue of building strong on-site organisation to rebuild the union was not really addressed. But at least a Broad Left executive means groups like the Construction Safety Campaign are welcomed. Norman Willis fudged like mad, saying nothing specific at all on the issue of the re-affiliation of the EETPU, which has tried to undermine UCATT on the sites.

Civil servants: *Fight to stop contracting out!*

IDEAS FOR FREEDOM



We must have knowledge of past battles in order to defeat the capitalists in future struggles: GEC strikers, 1992

How to fight back

How do we defeat the Tories? How do we get socialism? What sort of socialism are we fighting for?

These are basic questions to which socialists must have clear answers. If socialists only have a vague idea of what we are fighting for, we will never beat the bosses. The workers' movement must have sharp, clear politics: we must have knowledge of past battles in order to defeat the capitalists in

future struggles.

Workers' Liberty '92, Ideas for Freedom, is part of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty's drive to build a critical, thinking socialist movement.

At the Ideas for Freedom event we will debate and discuss all the major issues facing the working class (see agenda on page 14). Ideas for Freedom will be held on Friday 3-Sunday 5 July at Caxton House, North London.

● 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 7967 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 (others) from these ticket prices for Saturday-Sunday only tickets.

● Agenda

For a full agenda (out next week) or more details of the event phone Mark on 071-639 7967.

By a civil servant

"Tories plan to privatise Whitehall" "Civil Servants to bid for their own jobs". That's how the *Independent on Sunday* and *Guardian* have reported the Tories' latest offensive on public sector workers.

Internal Treasury papers show that all government departments must draw up plans for up to 25 per cent of their activities to be put out to competitive tendering.

Contracting-out is a political step, designed to undermine the trade unions and attempt to create a docile workforce, fearful of striking in case they don't meet the "contract". It is a fact that contracting-out means lower wages, worsening conditions and job losses. For civil servants it will mean the freezing of pensions and the likely loss of redundancy rights.

Contracting-out is not new to the Civil Service. Cleaners and Security Guards have already been contracted-out in some areas. Market Testing is currently taking place in Scotland — where union members are balloting for strike action — and in other areas where united union strike action is extremely likely.

It is an absolute necessity that the Civil Service unions defeat contracting-out before it comes in, not presiding over wage cuts for the members. After years of Tory attacks on civil servants, contracting out would be a disaster. We would have to re-build our union and fight to re-gain the rights we have won over many years.

Activists must fight for a joint Civil Service union Conference to decide the way forward. There is no doubt that we will need a campaign of widespread industrial action. The right wing "moderate" leadership of the CPSA see winning contracts "in-house" as the answer. This is nonsense. The whole point of contracting-out is to cut costs. In-house or not, our wages and conditions will worsen. In any case, an in-house bid could be lost in future.

Contracting-out will be extended to white collar workers in local government. We must build links with local government unions to organise a one-day public sector strike. (NALGO Conference is likely to vote later this month for a day of action).

100s of thousands of public sector and Civil Service workers are under attack. A big vote for 3 day strike action from NUCPS over the pay deal would help kick start the campaign. A rejection of the same deal from CPSA would help the fight too. United we can defeat the Tories.

More on contracting out page 15.

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