

Forward in
Unison!



New super-union: page 5

Wonderful
Copenhagen?



Europe and the Danes: page 11

For socialist renewal!



For workers' liberty!

Slovakia checks
Klaus



Report from Prague: page 7



Two
Americas?

Perot: p. 10; Teamsters: p. 8-9

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

Stop this sordid farce!

Down with Murdoch!

Murdoch's *Sunday Times* is serialising Andrew Morton's book on the royal marriage.

Each day more half-truths and innuendoes spill out of Fortress Wapping.

And who is Rupert Murdoch? Murdoch has built up a huge multi-media empire in Australia, America, Europe and the UK. He owns newspapers, TV interests, radio stations, book-publishing houses and magazines.

Like the robber barons of old, Murdoch uses his media groups to gain power for himself.

When he took over the *Times*, the Monopolies Commission was going to be called in, but Murdoch told Thatcher that if it was he would withdraw his support from the Tories, both editorially and financially.

The Monopolies Commission was not called in.

Everyone remembers how Murdoch set about union-bashing when he moved the *Sunday Times* to Wapping. He has waged a personal war on the unions.

His Sky satellite channel, later to merge with BSB, brought *Sun* standards of journalism to television.

He has signed a deal with the Football Association which means that working class people must find the cost of installing a satellite dish or miss out on seeing Premier League football on television. From 1993, a subscription fee and decoder will be needed if you want to watch a Premier League game.

Murdoch is a robber baron of the vilest kind. His papers extol racism, sexism and homophobia.

He props up the Tories while hitting the working class at every opportunity.

Down with the royal family!
Down with Rupert Murdoch!

SACK THE QUEEN!



A guillotine would be better! A guillotine would also be kinder. On all questions concerning the British or any other monarchy, this newspaper is,

vigorously and without qualification, republican. We believe that a monarchical system of inherited political rights, prerogatives, and privileges, is politically wrong and morally indefensible.

We believe that a republic, in which all are equal citizens before the law and in politics, and power comes only from the people, is in all ways superior to the best

Continued on page 3

Up the republic!

Students plan soup kitchens

Eighty students lobbied Parliament on 4th June to protest against Tory attacks on education and worsening student poverty.

The lobby was called by Left Unity supporters on the NUS NEC, Kevin Sexton and Jeni Bailey, with Tyne Tees Area NUS and with the support of the NUS Women's Campaign.

The lobby gave students representing colleges across the country a chance to meet and discuss the problems we face and how best to fight them.

Students will go back to college at the end of the summer to overcrowded lecture halls, dismal grants — if any: most students in the Further Education sector get no grant — inadequate accommodation and grossly underfunded libraries.

This will be the second summer that students will not be able to claim benefit.

What is the NUS leadership doing about this? They think that the best way to fight student poverty is not to fight at all! They plan no national demo, nothing, despite the crying need for one.

They don't even lobby any more.

They concentrate on having lunch with Tory backbenchers and people 'we can work with', like Tory John Patten!

President-elect, Lorna Fitzsimmons, thinks the nicest way to fight the Tories is for her to fly around Europe on expensive junkets.

This is why Left Unity is so important in the student movement. We must organise now for next term. We are calling for a mass 'signing-on' over the holidays to protest against the removal of benefits.

While NUS holds a 'reception' for Tory MPs with posh food and wine, we will hold a soup kitchen outside.

Left Unity supporters in Manchester Area NUS are calling a national demo, provisionally for October 28.

We must prepare now to step up action against student hardship. We must build the MANUS demonstration and we must organise now and over the holidays to make the wave of unrest we saw this first term look tiny.



They call themselves "Youth Defence", but their goal is to deprive pregnant young women of the right to an abortion. Last Saturday about 1000 of them, including Michael Ahern, a star of the film "The Commitments", marched through Dublin and ex-

changed abuse with a couple of hundred pro-choice demonstrators. A decade ago the ban on abortion was written into the Irish constitution. The Maastricht treaty would undercut this. Thus abortion is again a major issue in Ireland.

Like father, like sons

By Mick Duncan

Robert Maxwell was a crook. So, it seems, are his sons.

It is alleged that £460 million was plundered from the Maxwell pension funds before Cap'n Bob got what was coming to him.

Thousands of pensioners face poverty in their old age. Last week it was revealed that the brothers Maxwell, Robert Maxwell's heirs, are still in business.

Kevin Maxwell is operating from a prestigious address in London, recently hired by an

American company, Sphere Inc.

Sphere Inc. was bought last year by Kevin's loving father. It is owned by a Maxwell 'charitable foundation' based in the tiny Liechtenstein principality, outside of the reach of creditors and administrators.

In the months prior to Maxwell's death, £14 million was transferred to the foundation and, it is alleged, to its companies which include Sphere.

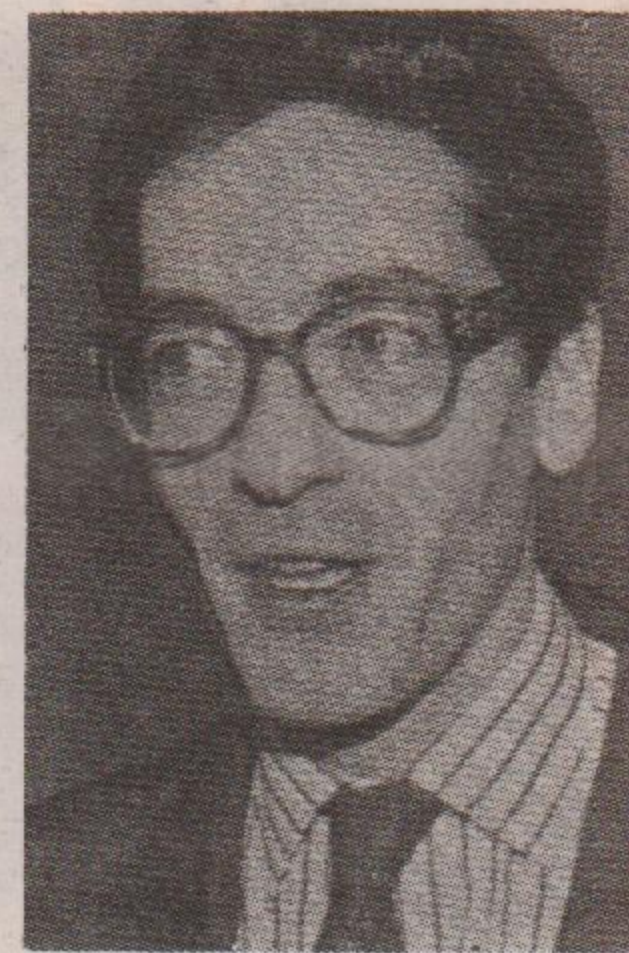
Sphere markets a delightful computer game for budding little Robert Maxwells, called Falcon 3, which is based on

the Gulf War.

Does anyone still doubt that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor? Ernest Saunders, the crook at the centre of the Guinness affair, did a couple of months in a holiday camp and has made a wonderful recovery since being released for health reasons. He has just been given a £70,000 pension from Guinness.

Maxwell pensioners on the other hand, get a small loan from the government while Robert Maxwell's heirs, Kevin and Ian continue to make millions.

PS. The Maxwell



Kevin Maxwell

charitable foundation has continued in its past tradition. Since Bob's death, it has made precisely no charitable contributions.

Prescott is the lesser evil

By Chris Reynolds

The Labour leadership contest, which started out as a competition between John Smith and Bryan Gould about who could promise the quickest SDP-isation of Labour's politics, has shifted a little under the pressure of the rank and file.

Despite the ridiculously stitched-up way the contest has been run, Bryan Gould has felt obliged to turn on some left-wing speechifying, and Margaret Beckett has had to dust off her CND card.

What does this mean for the left? The contest for leader still gives us no openings at all. There is still no issue of substance where Bryan Gould has taken a clear stand to the left of John Smith.

In the deputy leader contest, however, John Prescott has now differentiated himself from the other candidates on a clear issue. He has opposed the exclusion of the trade unions from Labour Party leadership elections.

This position is hypocritical and unreliable. Since getting on to the National Executive in 1989, Prescott has consistently backed Kinnock's witch-hunting and Kinnock's drive to scrap left-wing policies.

Even now that he is talking

'opponentist', he did not manage to register a vote against Kinnock on cutting trade-union links at the May National Executive meeting. Yet a win for Prescott will undeniably boost the defenders of the trade union link. And

"Prescott is hypocritical and unreliable. Since getting on to the NEC in 1989, he has consistently backed witch-hunting and the drive to scrap left-wing policies. Yet a win for Prescott will undeniably boost the defenders of the trade union link."

another thing that has changed since the contest began: Prescott's candidacy now looks like a serious challenge, not just an exercise in self-promotion. He might even win.

Consulting comrades round the country last week, the

Socialist Organiser editorial staff concluded that the balance of the argument had shifted in favour of voting for Prescott as the least bad of the right-wing candidates. A spoiled-ballot protest, the only alternative, is very difficult to make effective. If even 99% of the members of a Constituency Labour Party, or a trade union, spoil their ballots, the vote of the CLP or the trade union will be decided by the one per cent who cast valid ballots, and the spoiled ballots will disappear from the reckoning.

Some readers will complain: 'So! You back a right-winger like Prescott, and you would not back a left-winger like Livingstone! Sectarian fools!'

But to try to tip the scales for the marginally least bad of various right-wing candidates, when there is no better choice, does not compel us to support joke 'left-wing' candidates who are just standing for personal or sectarian self-promotion.

And anyway, the issue of whether or not to vote for Livingstone never came up! Even before he declared as a candidate, he had tacitly admitted that he could not get the 55 nominations necessary.

The fact is that his candidacy was never a matter of left against right, but an attempt by a shyster to promote himself as the leader of the left. That was what we refused to support.

Britain brings red herring to Rio

By Les Hearn

With an eye to the voters, President Bush has persisted in his refusal to sign the treaty to preserve the diversity of life on Earth. He says it would cause unemployment in the US, something he is not normally concerned about.

This position has resulted in a split among the US's delegation to Rio. The UK government has backed away from its support for the US's stand, following a storm of protest.

However, the UK has launched its own campaign to save the red herring. Baroness Chalker, the lame duck of Wallasey, and Minister for (lack of) Overseas Aid, has made a speech identifying population growth as a major environmental problem.

She mixed up the issue with that of access to birth control for those who wished to limit their families. This is a simple question of human rights which should be supported by all. But there is no evidence that freely available birth control would significantly limit population growth. Neither is there any evidence that population growth is causing famine, degradation of land or loss of forests.

In fact, it seems that the world could easily support twice or thrice the present population and even up to 30 billion (if they were all vegetarians!) Prevention or limitation of global warming by cutting CO2 emissions remains the issue least likely to be tackled by the Earth Summit, not least because it is primarily a product of the industrial countries, and it would cost them money to put it right.

The most pressing problem, however, is perhaps that of the world's forests.

The rate at which these are disappearing has actually increased over the past decade. In addition to the loss of species of plants and animals, many unidentified before their extinction, this is causing climate changes of its own.

This is in the form of reductions in rainfall on nearby farming land which can only increase pressure on the remaining forests from hungry peoples. To tackle this requires that multinational food and timber companies renounce the profits they are obtaining from the destruction of the forests, either voluntarily or under pressure from their own governments. Anyone who expects either of these things to happen is truly naive.

Instead, the drift is towards putting the burden of resisting forest destruction on Third World countries. Understandably, these are unwilling to pick up the tab from someone else's meal. The only real alternative is mass pressure on companies and governments to force changes and this is why the environment must become a labour movement issue.

SOLS Left makes its mark

By Brian Munro

This year's Scottish Labour Students conference, on 6 June, saw the new SOLS Left consistently polling half the votes of the registered clubs. Only votes from his clique in the NUS and the SOLS leaderships swung the votes for the resident Stalinist leadership under Jim Murphy, president of NUS Scotland.

The main debate at the conference was on a motion from Glasgow Poly which argued that SOLS must join in, and give critical support to, 'Scotland United', which is campaigning for a multi-option referendum, using civil disobedience if necessary, and that

Labour Students must argue for the maintenance of working-class unity in Scotland, England, Wales and elsewhere.

Many of Murphy's normally loyal supporters joined SOLS Left in trying to defeat Murphy's wrecking amendment to this motion, but it was carried. The SOLS leadership decided, in effect, that student poverty is not important, and neither are the further attacks on trade union rights. Instead, Scottish Labour Students decided to concentrate their efforts on the Regional and European elections.

SOLS Left includes some of the largest and most active Labour clubs in Scotland, which puts us in a strong position to challenge the right wing at next year's conference.



John Prescott



This tabloid farce

Continued from front page

imaginable monarchy. It says something, then, when doctrinaire republicans such as ourselves are driven to feelings of deep disgust by the endless mauling and baiting of "the Royals" in the Murdoch press and in the non-Murdoch tabloids. The guillotine would be kinder!

So would a clean decision to abolish the British monarchy and put an end to this sordid, pointless, all-degrading soap opera. It would also be politically healthier.

After many decades in which not a word could be safely said against the monarch or the Royal Family in public, we now live in a world where prurience, tittle-tattle, endless speculation, and — it seems — sometimes blatantly concocted stories about the Queen's family are a major item in the diet of the

tabloid press. Plainly there is a demand for this stuff. Even if the tabloids increase the appetite they feed, the people want it.

A generation ago, the journalist Malcolm Muggeridge was almost hounded out of public life for saying that the Queen had the manner of a school girl. Nowadays something like that would be taken as a public compliment!

The semi-religious open-mouthed standing in awe before the Royal great ones is a thing of the past, and that is entirely to the good.

This monarchy — which holds tremendous reserve powers that could in certain circumstances be used to override a democratic parliament — is now joined at the spine to the show-business world of pop stars, movie glamour, and tabloid sleaze.

Despite its stiff old-world trappings, it merges with the typical aristocrats of modern capitalism — with sports and pop stars and moneyed nonentities, with the Donald and Ivana Trumps, with the Bill Wymans and the Mr and Mrs Rupert Murdochs.

The young "Royals", especially, belong to that world, except that they did not "make it" even partly on their own. Who and what is Princess Di, but a pop star who can not sing?

People have grown to expect royal "reporting" that fits the Royal Family's real position.

On one level, the British Royal Family always was show business. A hundred years ago, the ruling class set out with expert showmanship and pomp and glamour, armed with the pseudo-medieval mock-gothic trappings of a largely invented "tradition", to create an "imperial monarchy" surrounded by ceremony, dignity and mystique.

At its heart even then was a conventional, not to say

commonplace, though enormously rich, bourgeois family. It was no different from the upper class of which it was the coping stone; if anything, it was below rather than above the average ability and intelligence of that class of spare-time hunting, fishing, race-track frequenting, philistine folk.

Dignity and mystique were imparted and maintained by a synthetic, artificially-fostered, semi-religious awe, cultivated in public life, perhaps especially by the press, and enforced with great determination by the whole ruling class and its Establishment.

Illogical but functional, like a piece of machinery in Albania, cobbled together from a dozen different sources, Britain's ramshackle old constitution trundled along, with the monarchy, not the people, as the theoretical source of all power in the state.

Constitutional theorists, pondering the mysteries of this system and how it worked, distinguished between its "ceremonial" and "functional" roles, explaining in Queen Victoria's time how it could be that "a retired widow and her unemployed son" (the future Edward VIII, great-grandfather of the present monarch) could be at the constitutional centre of the

great busy bourgeois British empire.

But it did work. It is difficult to see now that it can go on working.

The third role added to the "functional" and "ceremonial" roles of the monarchy — or developed, according to modern mores, out of its ceremonial role — the showbiz role, brings the monarchy into a fearsome set of contradictions.

In the USA, of course, politics long ago fused with show business, not only using show business techniques of promotion and projection but also adopting its ethos. The show, the appearance, the projection, is everything. Political issues are no longer, despite the fictions, decided in this political arena.

As the British monarchy has got more and more into this sort of "politics", it has sold its soul to the media. It now plays the media game as pop stars do.

There are believable reports that what is going on in the current "crisis" is that Diana and Charles are competing for media support, feeding in "their side" of events to selected outlets. The media's appetite for stories and scandals grows with the feeding.

In America, showbiz/political stars have a short life. When one set is over-exposed and tarnished, having been taken through the cynical media cycle of approval, lauding, hero-worship, and then down the other side into attack, disparagement, and contempt, then a new set is ready to begin the cycle all over again.

The fairy-tale Princess Diana of the 1980s, the beautiful nursery-school nurse chosen to be Queen Consort, becomes the neurotic, suicidal, rejected wife of the 1990s.

But the royals, unlike the showbiz political stars in the US, are supposed to be with us forever, "until death do us part". They, in their political and constitutional

position, are eminently unsuited to play this modern game with the media. The new third, showbiz, dimension of the monarchy eats into and threatens to make impossible its constitutional and ceremonial functions.

The young jobs like Andrew and Fergie are probably only typical of their time and class, and yet they are known above all else for not being typical. Their public yobbery draws critical attention to their privileges and lack of personal merit, and to the immense tax-free wealth they enjoy.

And the most important tabloids are owned by Rupert Murdoch, who is part of the international capitalist Establishment, rather than the British Establishment, and a man of reputedly republican opinions.

The show business monarchy, having put itself at the mercy of the tabloids, finds that the political bill is enormous and growing all the time. Potentially very serious questions inevitably crop up alongside the gossip column trivia. The Queen's immense tax-free wealth, and the tremendous amount of

Advisory Editorial Board

- Graham Bash
- Vladimir Derer
- Terry Eagleton
- Jatin Haria (Labour Party Black Sections)
- Dorothy Macedo
- Joe Marino
- John McIlroy
- John Nicholson
- Peter Tatchell

Members of the Advisory Committee are drawn from a broad cross-section of the left who are opposed to the Labour Party's witch-hunt against Socialist Organiser. Views expressed in articles are the responsibility of the authors and not of the Advisory Editorial Board.

Concluded on page 4

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

Karl Marx

Socialist Organiser
PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA
Newsdesk: 071-639 7965

Latest date for reports: Monday

Editor: John O'Mahony
Published by: WL Publications Ltd,
PO Box 823 London SE15 4NA
Printed by Tridant Press,
Edenbridge

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office

Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of Socialist Organiser and are in a personal capacity.

Ultra-left posturing

The scene is a building site in London. It is on strike. Pickets from the unofficial Joint Sites Committee have just succeeded in stopping the operation of a scab crane.

Enter two full-time trade union officials. First official: "Why wasn't the bloody thing [the crane] sabotaged?"

Second official: "Why wasn't the whole bloody site burned down?"

Sounds good, doesn't it? Full-timers advocating sabotage instead of telling the members to get back to work!

But before you get too enthusiastic, remember that the strike was completely unofficial and that the two full-timers had given the strikers little practical support.

Ultra-left posturing of this sort has become quite the thing among left bureaucrats just at the moment, especially in industries where the rank and file are showing signs of militancy. The typical line goes something like this. "The anti-union legislation makes it virtually impossible to take official action. But (sotto voce) if the members want to get on with it, we'll give them what support we can behind the scenes..."

UCATT General Secretary George Brumwell's speech at the union's annual conference was a typical example.

"Building workers have to get off their knees and raise their heads high... There is simmering unrest across the sites", declared Bro Brumwell

"Trade unions within the building industry find it virtually impossible to take industrial action because of the legislation". But do not despair! Bro Brumwell has a message for the employers and the Government. "There are other ways and means... it may not even be UCATT's desire that industrial action should take place, but the fact is that it will happen", predicted the grim-faced General Secretary.

What this means in practice has been demonstrated at the Hanger Lane Balfour Beatty site in north London, where the Joint Sites Committee is currently picketing.

Both UCATT and the TGWU have supplied Balfour Beatty with "disclaimers", making it clear that the dispute is unofficial. The firm, of course, has printed hundreds of copies and distributed them to delivery drivers, making the pickets' task much more difficult than it otherwise would be.

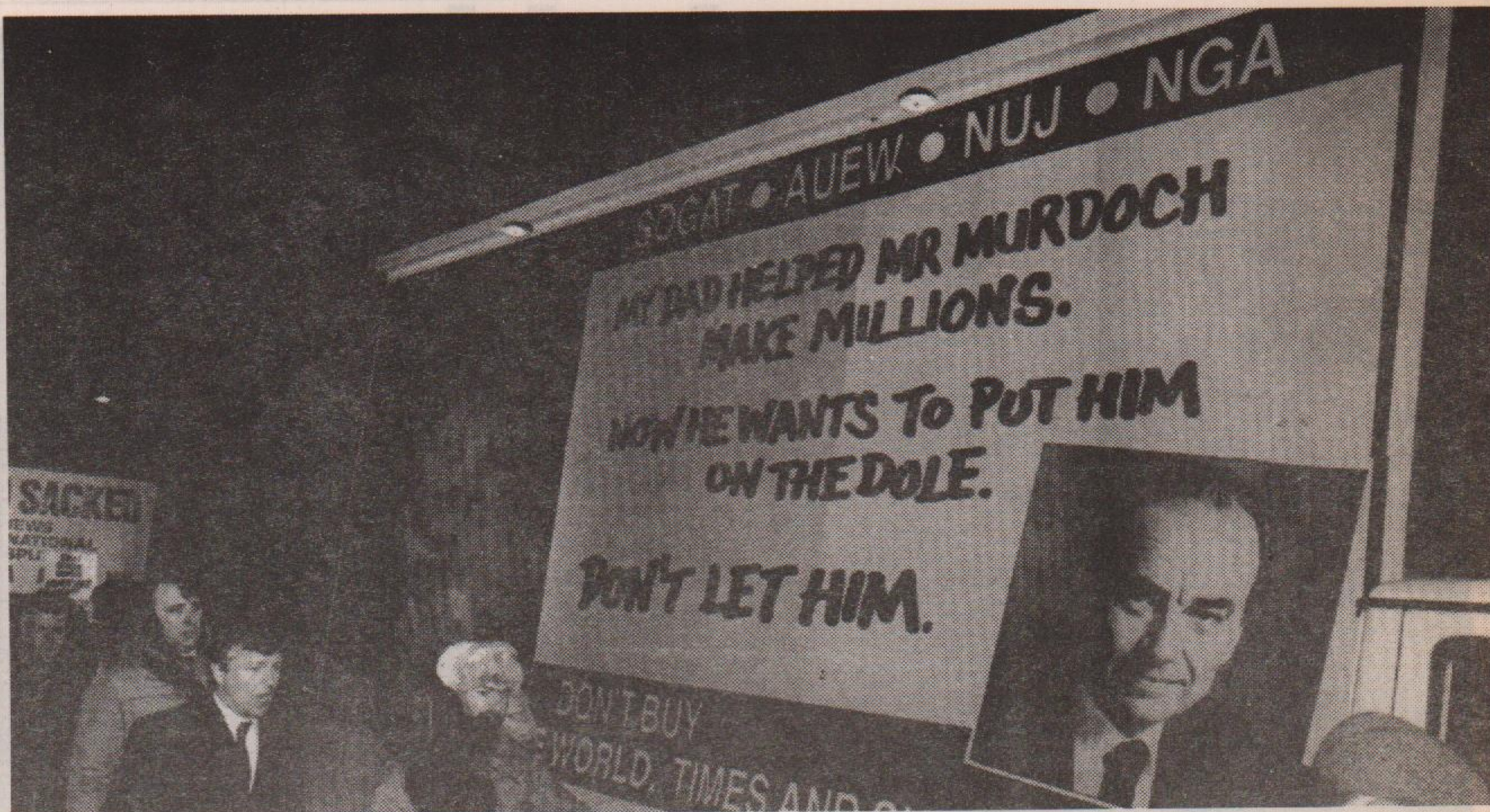
No-one underestimates the difficulties that the anti-union legislation places in the way of official action, and no-one is arguing that union leaders should jeopardise money and assets in reckless acts of "confrontation".

However, the excuse that the legislation makes official action more or less impossible in all circumstances is wearing a bit thin. Someone should remind all those "left" officials from UCATT, RMT and TGWU that Bill Jordan and the right-wing leadership of the AEU managed to organise a highly effective, legal and official dispute, involving dozens of different workplaces, throughout the 1990-1 shorter hours campaign.

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper



This is what Murdoch's Republic of Plutocrats really means: attacking the working class.

"It's a question of democracy"

Continued from page 3

public money that goes to keep the Royals in their accustomed style, provoke the naked bourgeois envy of the rest of their class, as well as the outrage of those of our class who notice that hundreds of us have been jailed for not paying the poll tax.

We repeat: all that is for the good, disgusting though both the tabloid adulation and the alternating tabloid baiting is.

So how near are we to Murdoch's Republic of the Plutocrats - with the chortling and yelping of the

tabloid demagogues, who bait Prince Charles for his attempts to project himself as a thoughtful, concerned human being, providing the new National Anthem?

We should now be discussing the fundamental questions: the "reserve" powers constitutionally vested outside Parliament, in this tawdry monarchy and whether or not the monarchy itself should continue. Yet these questions have not been raised so far, except for a little muttering here and there about the republican logic of what is going on now.

The mass media never rises above the mucky personal pop-star trivialities and demagogic (perhaps deliberately manipulative) Murdochite agitation.

Though in some of the serious media the explosive question of the Queen's finances is being raised now, almost no-one, apart from old campaigners like Tony Benn, yet raises any of the important political issues. The positive demand for a democratic republic with neither monarchy nor aristocracy is still almost unvoiced. The Labour leaders, and most of the Labour

left, continue to be convinced and loyal monarchists! Even Tony Benn is no republican.

Yet the logic is there. The Establishment now seems to be rallying to "defend the monarchy", yet it is safe to assume that things would not go on like this unless powerful sections of the British Establishment - the promoters and beneficiaries of the radical bourgeois changes of the Thatcher years - wanted them to go on: a serious brandishing of the Monopolies Commission at Murdoch would probably bring him to consider his position.

The way things are now going, the monarchy will either disappear, or, more likely - unless there are other radical changes - it will be drastically remodelled on the Scandinavian and Dutch models, with the monarch paying taxes and the number of Royal recipients of Civil List money drastically reduced.

Meanwhile, the baiting and the scandal mongering goes on, fed by Royal attempts to influence the media.

Shifts in the Establishment; the probable desire of part of the bourgeoisie to cut the old imperial monarchy down to "Dutch" size; the internationalisation of part of the British press; the diminution of symbols of British sovereignty that inevitably accompanies Britain's role as just one state in the mainly republican European Community; the effect of the pact with the tabloid devil the monarchy made two decades ago and must now regret; the public disenchantment with the old mystique-shrouded monarchy, which leaves it now with scarcely more mystique than Andrew and Fergie have - all this puts the question of a republic on the agenda of mainstream political life for the first time in well over a hundred years.

It is a question of democracy! The labour movement must once again become republican, as it was in the great pioneering days of the Chartist movement!

We say: end this sordid tabloid farce! Abolish the monarchy! Up the Republic!



Building workers deserve a better leadership

'I see the Past, Present, and Future existing all at once'

WILLIAM BLAKE



A vision shared by **HISTORY TODAY**. As Britain's leading monthly history magazine we highlight the links between past and present with lively and authoritative articles, historical background to current affairs and the latest news from the history world.

Every month **HISTORY TODAY** brings insights into the people, places and events of the past, from all periods of world history.

In each richly illustrated issue you will discover eye-opening accounts and fresh historical interpretations; generously enhanced with rare paintings and photographs, many in full colour - uniting serious history with a measure of high entertainment.

Future features

- Art and Decadence in the Fin de Siècle
- The Roots of Serb-Croat Conflict
- Stalin and the Communist Party
- The Myth of Enlightened Absolutism
- Women's Work in the English Civil War

Discover the secrets of history and take advantage of this special offer now.

New subscribers to **HISTORY TODAY** will receive, **FREE**, a copy of *Russia and Europe*. A timely and important book on Russia's history leading up to the collapse of the Soviet Union, (published by Collins & Brown at £8.99).

YES I would like to take advantage of this special offer for new subscribers to **HISTORY TODAY** (12 issues). I enclose my cheque for UK £25*, made payable to History Today Ltd. Please send coupon with payment to History Today Ltd, Freepost 39, 83/84 Berwick Street, London W1E 6JZ, England.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POST/ZIPCODE _____ SO

* Full-time students (degree level and above) and OU students special rate £15 if proof of status sent, but special offer not applicable.

HISTORY TODAY

is available at leading newsagents price £2.50

Issues at NALGO conference:

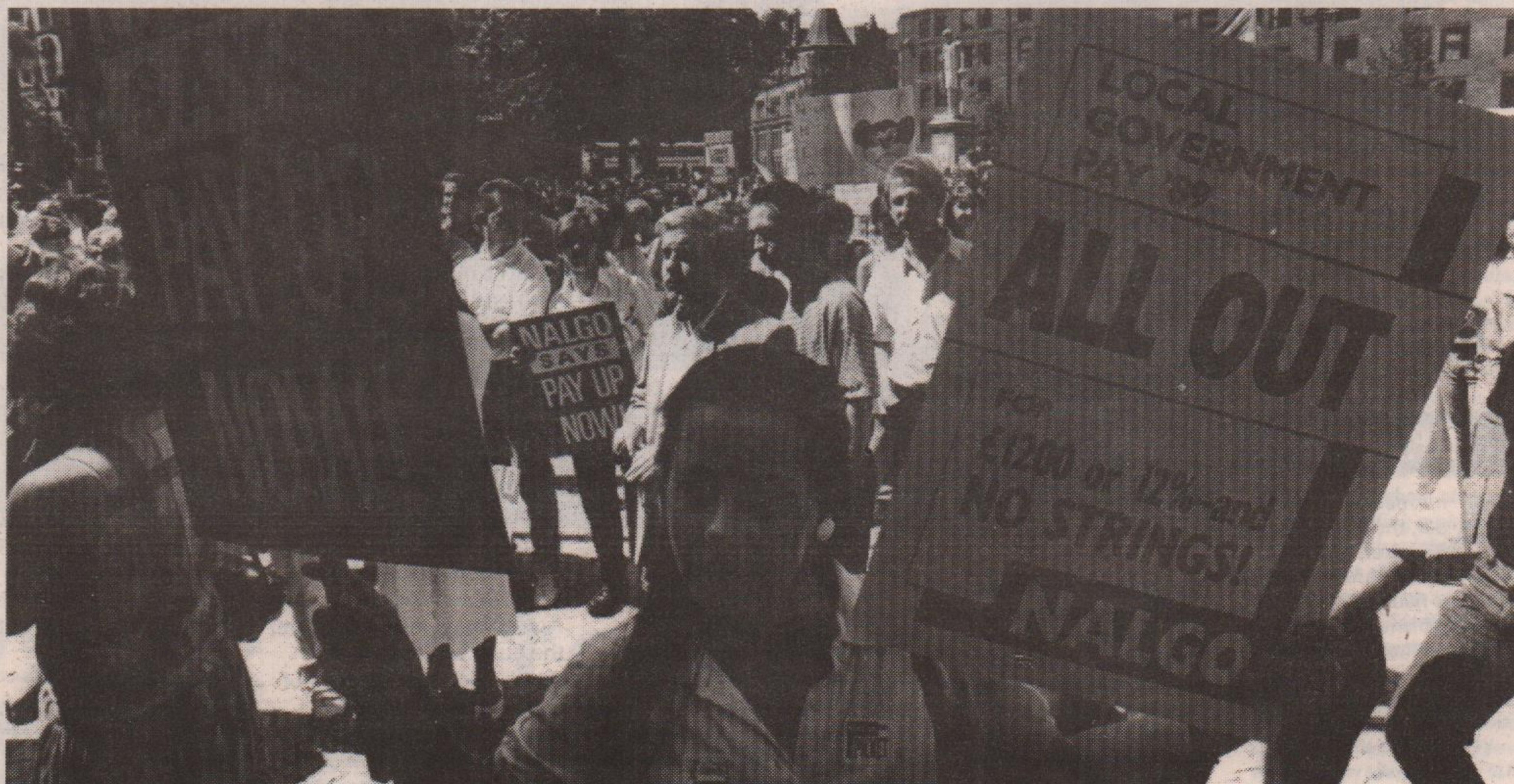
Forward in UNISON!

Yes to merger!

Yes to democracy!

By Tony Dale
(Manchester NALGO)

NALGO Conference meets in Bournemouth from 15 June and is likely to take the historic decision to agree to go forward to a merger with NUPE and CoHSE. This merger creating the New Union – UNISON – will found a public sector union covering local government and the NHS. With 1.5 million members it will be one of the biggest unions in Britain and the biggest public sector union in western Europe.



1989: NALGO's first national pay strike

MERGER – THE ISSUES

One big public sector union will be a big step forward for local council and NHS workers.

It will lay the basis for breaking down the divisions between blue collar and white collar workers. It can help to remove the inter-union rivalries which often plague disputes. A bigger and more powerful public sector union could be an important weapon in the fight to defend local council services and the NHS from the next Tory offensive.

For all these reasons it is vital the Conference gives a green light to the merger.

However, even at this late stage there is room for stronger democratic guarantees. There should be a statement giving individuals, branches and group of members a clear and unambiguous right to organise and campaign within the union.

The area which has generated most heat within the merger debate has been the question of branch finances. Promises have been made that branches will be able to retain about 20% of subscription income. This promise should be toughened up into a clear commitment included in the final report.

Many NALGO activists have

rallied around the cause of keeping NALGO's method of subscription collection. In NALGO at present the subs are collected locally by the branch. Then the branch after deducting its share (around 20%) passes the rest of the money to the union nationally.

In the New Union the proposed method of collection is direct to the national union and then it will pass on around 20% to the branches. This is the method of collection in NUPE and CoHSE.

Leeds NALGO along with other NALGO branches are organising around a formula where branches can opt for either local or national collection. If defeated they seem increasingly likely to organise a stop the merger campaign.

If the Leeds NALGO formula is passed the merger may well be called off.

For socialists concerned about building the widest and most effective trade union organisation to protect and defend public sector workers this would be a serious blow.

For socialists to turn how subs are collected into such a principle is crazy.

Many right wing NALGO branches are likely to rally to support Leeds NALGO over the subs issue precisely because they want to scupper the merger.

On the other side of the debate a group of District Secretaries (many influenced by the *Morning Star*) are organising to oppose all amendments to the final report. This position is also wrong.

We need to distinguish between those amendments likely to scupper the merger and those which will give stronger democratic guarantees without threatening the merger. Therefore, it is still important to argue for a clear statement on the rights of members to organise and campaign within the union and for a clear guarantee that branches will get at least 20% of subscription income.

DEFENDING JOBS AND SERVICES

Alongside the merger debate the key issue facing NALGO Conference is coming to terms with the re-election of the Tories and how to organise the fight to defend jobs and services. Central to this will be the debate on NALGO's response to the Tory threat to extend compulsory competitive tendering and privatisation to local council white collar jobs.

The Local Government Group Meeting will discuss a number of good motions on compulsory competitive tendering. The debate is likely to focus on the proposal for a national demonstration in defence of local government services. A national demo as part of a day of action could kick start the campaign to defend local council services from privatisation.

DEFENDING JOBS IN THE NHS

In the NHS trade unionists face the whittling away of national pay and conditions arrangements and the threat of redundancies in many of the Trusts. NALGO should be prepared to fight these, and should be discussing joint union action with NUPE and CoHSE, as the

best way of forging unity.

This year has seen the abolition of the right of appeal at regional and national level against nurse re-grading decisions and the introduction of a new grade – Health Care Assistant – which is out of the national pay structure altogether. Many NALGO members in the NHS will be unaware of these important changes, yet they show the shape of things to come for Admin. and Clerical workers.

The first faltering steps of the Trusts towards local bargaining will turn into a stampede if unions cannot uphold national agreements.

With the threat of the spread of compulsory competitive tendering into both local government and NHS clerical service, NALGO badly needs a clear policy on fighting it.

All too often, public sector trades unions have supported "in-house" bids that have attacked wages and conditions on the sole basis of keeping members. This approach has more in common with accountancy than serious trade unionism; it leads to demoralisation of the membership on the end of a union-sponsored pay cut and simply leads to "sweetheart" deals.

The flipside of this coin is well illustrated by Roger Poole of NUPE's call at their recent conference for an alliance with Tory councils and "reputable contractors" to support quality thresholds in CCT as a way of defending jobs and services. This conveniently misses the point that the whole aim of CCT is slashing costs, and that quality cannot be squared with contracting out!

Both of these methods – sweetheart deals with local authorities and pleas to the Tories and contractors for "quality" – point in the opposite direction to what genuine trade unionism should be. Both are based on members being passive, on them not defending themselves when attacked and accepting gratefully

whatever scraps are thrown them.

Far from being unrealistic, the only way to defend jobs and services is to defend terms and conditions from whoever attacks them. The easiest workforce to privatise is the demoralised one; NALGO should not lie down and sell its members existing conditions as the "lesser evil".

END LOW PAY

Following the Tories re-election the local government employers have toughened their stance in the annual pay negotiations. They are refusing to negotiate on a flat rate claim as proposed by NALGO. Instead they have responded with a 3.8% offer. This offer compares unfavourably with the teachers getting 7.5% and the nurses getting 5.8%. Underlying inflation is running at 5.7%.

More negotiations are likely before the final offer is made. But the local government Group Meeting on Monday 15 June will need to commit itself to a ballot on a rolling programme of industrial action if a decent pay rise is to be won. At the core of any pay campaign must be the fight to eradicate low pay.

The recent 5-3 vote by NUPE Conference in favour of merger with NALGO and CoHSE showed a lot of residual opposition to NALGO in particular. Many NUPE activists are hostile to NALGO, believing that whilst manual jobs have been massacred by CCT, NALGO members have been sheltered or have even benefited.

NALGO activists have to work on the ground to dispel these fears, and build a campaigning unity in opposition to the extension of CCT. The image of NALGO as "left wing" does not extend that far amongst public sector manual workers!



Merger will strengthen the anti-cuts battle



Socialism or EuroDisney?

Stalin comes to Disneyland

GRAFFITI

An American newspaper, the Hollywood Reporter, has claimed that three thousand workers had quit their jobs at Euro-Disneyland within weeks of the opening. Not true, replied Disney! Only 500 quit, and another five hundred were sacked! Written into the contracts of Euro-Disney workers are totalitarian conditions. For men, moustaches, beards, long hair, tattoos, earrings, and "too strong" after-shave are banned, and the use of deodorants is compulsory. For women, slit skirts with the slits reaching more than 8 centimetres above the knee, earrings more than 2 centimetres in diameter, and much else, are banned, and "appropriate" underclothes are compulsory.

China's Stalinist leaders say they are learning from capitalism, and that profit is the main aim of their "socialist" economy.

Western-style shopping centres are being developed at addresses like "Stalin Square". Since 1978, according to the "Economist" magazine, the number of televisions in China has multiplied by a factor of 39, and the number of washing machines by a factor of 700.

But the latest "Western-style" luxury, according to the magazine, is offered by a bathhouse in Beijing: a bath in Nescafe and Maxwell House coffee!

No wonder the official notices at Tiananmen Square on the third anniversary of the 1989 massacre forbid not only political demonstrations but also "laughter". I don't know whether tears were also banned.

According to the Government's own official Audit Commission, the supply of cheap rented housing will run at least 12,000 homes a year short of what is needed over the next ten years.

The Commission reckons that at least 74,000 new homes a year are needed. Local authorities, with present government restrictions, are unlikely to build more than 5,000 a year.

The Government has promised housing associations finance to build

57,000 homes a year, but even the Audit Commission notes that housing associations usually bring higher rents than local authorities.

Majorite grey represents a whole different set of values from

Thatcherite blue or socialist red, according to psychologist David Lewis, paid to study the issue by a big company car fleet management group.

Grey indicates a rather uptight character, "a strong sense of duty and a belief that everybody should lead as sober and upright a life as him or herself".

Those who prefer blue are "hard-working but slightly lacklustre".

The survey was commissioned because the company car fleet managers reckon that car colours reflect drivers' attitudes, which in turn influence the rate of costly accidents. Grey and green have been gaining ground at the expense of brighter colours.

Something must be wrong with the psychological theorising, because the car colour most popular with company reps, who must mostly be Tories, is bright socialist red.

Believers in the socialist potential of Scottish and Welsh nationalism now have a foothold in the House of Lords.

Dafydd Elis Thomas, former leader of Plaid Cymru and a left-wing Welsh Nationalist who has been associated with the Socialist Movement, is now a lord.

On standing down as an MP, he said that he saw the House of Commons as "an ineffectual body tied to outdated traditions and almost beyond reform".

It's wonderful what a bit of ermine can do.

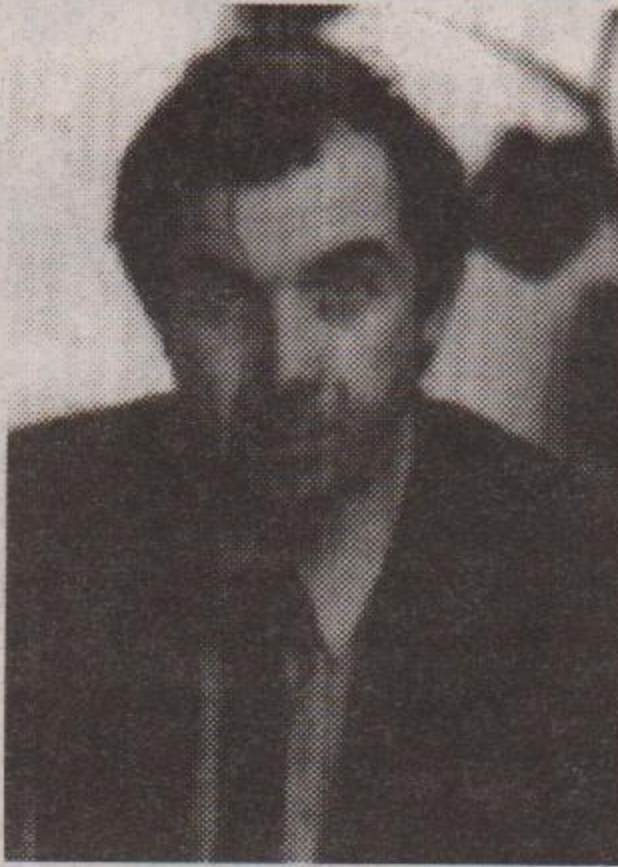
Five American trade unions have called for repeal of the US's Immigration Reform and Control Act.

According to the monthly bulletin "Labor Notes", almost all the unions backed the Act at first, seeing it as a way to protect American workers' jobs against immigrants prepared to work at lower wages.

Many trade unionists are now coming to see that in fact the Act gives bosses extra power over the illegal immigrants they continue to hire, by exposing those immigrant workers to deportation if they organise or claim legal rights.

Rat-pack goes up-market

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

In Brazil they're talking about the future of the globe; Sarajevo and its inhabitants are being pulverised; South Africa slides towards a military government; the Danish electorate have scuppered Maastricht. But for the British press, all this pales into insignificance beside the Big Story of the week: the state of the Waleses' marriage.

Since the mid-70s, when the Windsor children grew up and began their mating rituals, a distinct branch of tabloid reporting has developed: the 'royal watchers', or 'rat-pack'. This bizarre specialisation seems to involve a great deal of skulking in hedgerows, use of telephoto lenses and cash payments to various footmen, housemaids and detectives. It also involves a lot of foreign travel, agreeable stays in the world's best hotels and expense

accounts of £20,000-£30,000 per year. Not a bad life for a humble tabloid hack.

But now the rat-pack are moving up-market: this week, Rupert Murdoch's "quality" *Sunday Times* began its serialisation of "Diana: Her True Story" by Andrew Morton, formerly royal correspondent of the *Daily Star* and *News of the World*. The pre-publicity for this "scoop" hinted at a virtual collapse of the Wales marriage, other women in Charles' life and suicide attempts by the lovely but lonely Princess Di.

The *Sunday Times*'s editor, Andrew Neil, put on his best Concerned and Sympathetic manner for the TV cameras and talked of the "deep despair" of the Princess and "cries for help that she probably now regrets". According to author Morton, the book was written with the co-operation of many of Di's closest friends who believed that it was time her story was told. The *Sunday Times* went so far as to suggest that Di herself co-operated and re-named the book "Diana: Her Own Story".

With hot stuff like this about to break, the rest of Fleet Street naturally wanted to get in on the act. But there was a problem: the *Sunday Times* had invested £250,000 in exclusive rights to the Morton book and had made it clear that m'learned friends would take a very dim view of any other paper attempting to use this source. The *Daily Mail* got round this difficulty by buying up the rights to another book,

containing much the same material as Mr. Morton's. Thus it was that Friday's *Daily Mail* led with the banner headline: "Diana tried to take her own life", and devoted nearly six pages to royal revelations.

The story appeared under the by-line of the *Mail*'s gossip columnist, Nigel Dempster, but the material came from a book written by one Nicholas Davies. Remember him? He was the man sacked from the *Daily Mirror* last year after allegations of gun-running and spying for Mossad. At the time of the "Mirroagate" scandal, the *Daily Mail* devoted a great deal of effort to proving that Davies was a "liar" and a "fantasist" (their words). Now, it seems that the same Mr. Davies is the impeccable source of the *Mail*'s world exclusive front-page story.

No doubt, most *Socialist Organiser* readers regard all this royal gossip-mongering with a mixture of boredom, nausea and mild amusement. It might even have the thoroughly desirable effect of inflicting serious damage upon the institution of the monarchy. But, in the meantime, the Press Complaints Commission has roused itself and is once more talking about statutory controls to limit press intrusion into privacy — controls that would inevitably damage investigative journalism.

Mr. Andrew Neil ought to give that possibility serious consideration before he next appears on our TV screens, trying to persuade us that the money-grubbing antics of the *Sunday Times* have anything to do with "important news" and the "public interest".



Market forces and bigotry

WOMEN'S EYE



By Liz Millward

Have you heard the lunatic ultra-Thatcherite "think-tank" advocating that all equal pay laws should be scrapped and women left entirely to the mercy of market forces?

Of course, in practice most women do not get equal pay, laws or no laws.

Women's pay was lower than that of men, even for doing the same work, because the man's wage was supposed to include the cost of feeding a family —

reproducing the labour force — and the woman's was not.

This barbarous assumption still exerts a malign influence on women's wages — even today, with more women than ever before going out to work. It is an excuse for paying low wages, especially to part-time women workers.

Now these right-wing idiots come along and say that this is fine, and that all attempts to change it by social legislation are wrong and counter-productive.

They say it is — you will be encouraged to know this, and be sure you don't forget it — biologically determined that women should get lower wages! It is, they say, biology too which lies behind the fact that so few women rise to the top as bosses in the capitalist industrial system.

They say it is no more than just that women have been kept down: it is a necessary result of our real, biologically-determined capacities and aptitudes! And you are not so

stupid as to argue with Biology, are you sister?

Socialists know better than that.

Socialists believe that human beings are slaves neither to "external" nature nor to their own biology. The history of civilisation is the history of progressive human emancipation.

"They say it is ... biologically determined that women should get lower wages!"

From the constraints of raw nature, and from the limits of our own individual strengths and innate capacities — and also from the shackles of biological specialisation.

The idea that in our society,

in 1992, a woman's biological and gender role need — except for short periods — limit what she can do is simply ridiculous.

The idea that biology *should* so limit women is pernicious and bizarre.

These market-worshipping right wingers whose ideas — watered down a bit — guided the "Thatcher Revolution", are just a bunch of superstitious right wing bigots.

They think they represent the future, but mentally they are a throwback to the savage religions of old, whose priests made human sacrifices to the gods they thought they saw in, then, uncontrollable nature.

These modern right wing priests make a religion out of the market-mechanisms of capitalism, and insist that we must go on making human sacrifice to them!

Socialists know better! Human beings created this system, and we will, under socialism, put it under rational human control.



Electioneering in Prague

Slovaks vote for autonomy and jobs

By Adam Nezval in Prague

Socialist and nationalist parties have won 65% of votes in Slovakia, in a massive rejection of the shock therapy that has devastated Czecho-Slovakia's poorer eastern republic. The Slovak parliament will now declare sovereignty, and attempt to negotiate a loose confederation with the Czech Republic. The left-nationalist Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), which won 48% of seats in the Slovak parliament in elections on June 5-6 is demanding a "new reform for Slovakia" — with or without the Czechs — by the end of the year.

This new reform is based on massive job creation, and a state-led restructuring of the economy. Worker and management buy-outs are to be favoured in future

privatisations, and foreign investment subjected to stricter conditions. The vote for parties supporting this strategy was so strong that the ruling, pro-Czech ODS failed to achieve the 5% needed to enter the new parliament.

Differences are, however, bound to emerge over HZDS plans to build monstrous barrages on the Danube and other Slovak rivers to generate half of Slovakia's energy needs, and build enough nuclear power stations to provide the other half. The election also revealed the gulf between the Slovak parties and the national minorities that make up 20% of Slovakia's population.

Almost all Hungarian-speaking voters supported rightist and pro-Czech parties; an understandable reaction to a HZDS which intends to forbid the use of Hungarian in

public service enterprises. Only 1 in 5 of Slovakia's 10% Romany minority voted; a result of the increasing marginalisation of the Romanies (60% are unemployed, compared to 12% of white Slovaks) and the intense racism directed against them.

Peter Weiss, leader of the ex-Communist Party of the Democratic Left (SDL) says his party supports most HZDS policies, but will go further in demanding that progressive measures are genuinely carried out.

The SDL is the second largest party in the new Slovak parliament, with some 20% of seats. Both Stalinist and social democratic tendencies in the SDL will win new members as the HZDS wavers on economic and social questions.

The Slovak Social Democratic Party (SDSS) led by 1968 leader

Alexander Dubcek, did not beat the 5% barrier. A loyal defender of the Prague government until the elections, Dubcek is now stressing his desire to co-operate with the HZDS (who don't need him) and the SDL (who he snubbed as "communist" when early opinion polls gave his party 10% support.) The speed of this re-orientation gives a good idea of the intensity of SDSS attachment to socialist or other principles.

Those dissatisfied with the opportunism of SDL leaders will pass to the defiant Union of Communists of Slovakia (ZKS), the radical Workers' Forum (FR) or the Bratislava-based *Leva alternativa*. These groups polled only 1%, but their demonstrations will continue to draw militant workers and activists encouraged but not satisfied with the election results.

King Leka's balloons

By John Cunningham

The old saying, "Dream on", could perhaps have been invented for the world's smallest and most exclusive band of unemployed — the ex-monarchs of Eastern Europe. Deprived of a meaning for existence, these regal scroungers gaze on helplessly as their former subjects, apparently ignorant of the fact that help, succour and guidance is only a 'phone-call away, grapple with their futures.

Waiting in the wings of history can be a tiresome experience but for ex-King Michael of Romania, 68, and his wife, Queen Anne of Bourbon-Parma, the rigours of exile are softened by their rather sumptuous life-style in Geneva. "We are biding our time and playing it by ear", he says, ever willing to do his duty "if the people so desire".

The last time a member of the Royal Household attempted to size up the hunting grounds he was promptly dispatched to the next plane out of Bucharest airport, so it looks very much as if the people's desires are elsewhere, probably on such trivial matters as getting enough food to eat. I do hope Mike is a patient man, he'll need to be.

At least Mikey baby actually tasted the trappings of Regal power and privilege, albeit briefly (1940-44) while still a lad. Pity then poor old Crown Prince Alexander of Yugoslavia, who has never even seen his kingdom. His father, King Peter II, arranged to have their Hotel room at Claridges declared part of Yugoslavia for his birth. A Task-Force is being put together to reclaim this land for Britain, meanwhile unrest grows in the kitchen and the Broom Cupboard has declared independence. Definitely a 100 to 1 outsider.

Grand Duke Vladimir Kirilovich, 72, the eldest son of the eldest nephew of Czar Nicholas II of Russia, has also never seen his homeland. Born in Finland, he now lives, in some comfort, in Paris. As yet there has been no 'phone-call.

The ex-King of Bulgaria, Simeon II, 52, a lawyer, won't be found slumming it in Claridges. He found the perfect formula for exiled regal bliss — marry a banker's daughter and become a buddy of a real king (in this case, Carlos of Spain). He's another one waiting for the call.

At least Otto von Hapsburg has had the good sense to throw in the towel. Currently a German Euro-MP, the ex-heir to the once mighty Austro-Hungarian Empire, prefers the slog and toil of the Brussels-Strasbourg circuit to the eternal wait in the wings. He even had the good sense recently to ignore a call from a group of pro-monarchists in Budapest for him to return to claim his own.

Having a father called Zog and having to live in the shadow of the cretinous Stalinist Enver Hoxha would be enough to send most people to a monastery for the rest of their life, but not Albania's King Leka the First, a sprite at 50. This "international businessman" (potential libel writs prevent me from mentioning the commodities and business involved) currently resides in Johannesburg and, undeterred by the distance involved, has called upon his countrymen to "rise up". The message, however, sent by a balloon, was apparently lost. Perhaps the wind was blowing the wrong way.

As I'm sure you've worked out by now, life on the regal dole isn't exactly hard. This is probably just as well. The peoples of Eastern Europe, having only recently freed themselves from one despotic, elitist and corrupt form of rule, don't appear to be in a hurry to go back to its feudal variant.

We must continue to resist the poll tax

By John Jefferson
Bedfordshire County Councillor

After three expulsions, I should never be surprised by the actions of Bedfordshire County Labour Group. But the leadership have excelled themselves of late.

Like many socialists, I still refuse to pay my poll tax and, because of Section 106 of the Local Government Finances Act, I am now disqualified from voting on specific financial commitments.

The area I represent in Luton has mass unemployment, families squashed into tower blocks, many single parents and many members of the ethnic minorities at whom this racist and vindictive tax was directed.

In the course of my ward work, I have come across women who

have had to sell their wedding rings, families who have had their gas/electricity disconnected and pensioners who have sold their TVs to pay the poll tax. I do not feel that I could walk around this estate with my pride intact if I capitulated while they are suffering like this.

I never expected the right wing leadership to shake my hand, but their attacks on me in the local press and on the radio have been simply idiotic. The group leader said "non-payment of the poll tax is not compatible with Labour Party membership." I am membership secretary and this is news to me!

At the moment, they are waiting for a ruling from Joyce Gould on whether they can kick me out of the Labour group and/or expel me

from the Labour Party. But I am not optimistic.

Our Party should represent the working class and the new underclass the Tories have created: we have to do that by taking on unfair laws and taxes. How can working class people vote for a mealy-mouthed party run by people whose first principle is: "We must obey the law always", and who witch-hunt anybody who challenges that view?

If working class people do not see the Labour Party as something radically different from the Tories, they will not exert themselves to kick the Tories out.

The Tories manage capitalism, they are good at managing capitalism; it is foolish to say that the Labour Party can manage it better.

We must continue to fight the poll tax. We must ensure the people realise that this tax will be victimising people to the turn of the century. Those who deny that forget about the six-year clawback.

The working class would never have won the vote if we had not battled both inside and outside the law. Women were jailed, beaten and died to ensure that women got the vote.

We would be selling out the memory of these sisters and brothers if we give in now.

If I am banned from office or expelled from the Labour Party, that is the price I pay, but at least I will get with my pride intact. I will go knowing that I did not sell out the people who need our help most.

Hope for the future as US Cap

Rank and file victory

New leaders set out to rebuild the union

This February, the 1.5 million strong US Teamsters' (truck drivers') Union was taken over by rank-and-file reformers.

The Union had long been run by corrupt "business unionists", who paid themselves huge salaries and often worked closely with organized crime. But since the 1970s a 10,000-strong organized rank-and-file movement, "Teamsters for a Democratic Union" has been built, and now the TDU and its allies have taken over the Union.

Despite everything, the US working class is alive and kicking! These articles, by Phil Kwik and Kim Moody, abridged from the US socialist magazine "Against the Current", tell the story.

In his December 13 victory speech, the new General President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), Ron Carey, said: "Good-bye to the Mafia ... This union has been won back by its members."

The stunning victory of the reform slate in the first-ever, one-member, one-vote election in the 1.5 million member union represents just that: a victory by the union's rank and file. Officers in fewer than thirty of the union's 638 locals supported the Carey slate. None of the Joint Council — the middle level of the union — supported Carey. None of the International vice presidents — the union's executive board — supported Carey.

How did it happen? Two factors stand above all: the collapse of the incumbent machine, and the organization of the rank-and-file reform caucus, Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU).

Once famous for its militancy, the Teamsters union of the last thirty years has been better known for its ties to organized crime, sweetheart contracts and declining strength. Angry at their loss of strength at the workplace and at the bargaining table, the

members finally said "Enough!"

More than just the chance to vote, however, the Teamster ranks had candidates they believed in, candidates who were not tied to the old guard, but who were honest, hard-working unionists. Ron Carey never cozied up to the mob leadership. But perhaps more important to many of the rank and file, he took on the boss. He earned his reputation in the 1970s and '80s fighting UPS, the most notorious of the tens of thousands of Teamsters employers, and winning decent contracts.

Teamster officials, who relied on intimidation for so long in the past, couldn't deliver the vote when their jobs depended on it.

According to activists, the story was the same all over the country. Among Chicago clericals: "Durham's people didn't know how to campaign, because they never had to. They told the members to vote, but they never had any strategy for how to turn people out". In New York City warehouses: "When local officials told a member to vote for Durham or Shea, they said 'Yeah, stick it.' They certainly weren't going to listen to them." By contrast, the reformers were organized, due mostly to the

structure that had been built by TDU. For sixteen years, TDUs organized a grassroots network of activists in some 150 locals across the US and Canada. They were seen daily in the workplace, distributing contract bulletins, helping members file grievances, providing pension information, leading support for sisters and brothers on strike.

TDU was the backbone of the campaign, activating rank and filers far beyond its numbers.

One of the main tasks of the reformers now will be to finish the job of cleaning up the union. They've elected the top officials

"Throughout the union, the new officials and the activists will have to work together to reach organized members in non-traditional Teamster jurisdictions — dubbed by Carey during the campaign as the "forgotten Teamsters" — in particular, women and people of color, who had no role in the old union."

and have demonstrated their support among the rank and file, but there are many officials at the local and Joint Council level who, for the most part, remain hostile to reform.

Because of the union's decentralization, these officials could block democratic reforms and a militant program. Some activists predict a "civil war" in the union, with the International officers and the ranks on one side, and local and Council officials on the other.

To consolidate reforms, activists will put some of their energies into local elections. About one-third of local union elections take place each fall.

There are two reasons for this emphasis. First, this is the level of the union that members see day-to-day, and the level at which much of their dissatisfaction lies.

TDU activists often argue that winning International office doesn't necessarily change things at your particular workplace. It doesn't change who your business agent is or whether you get a grievance settled. Second, local leaders elect Joint Council officials. In order to transform the union — for lasting reform to take root, for real organizing drives or contract campaigns to happen — the Joint Councils must be changed.

TDU activists and other reformers realize that they will have to focus on more than local elections. They need to reach new areas, and involve more than the 28% of the membership who voted. The election of the Carey slate removed some of the obstacles to activating the members, but it doesn't guarantee success. More members will have to be involved in the union if the reformers hope to consolidate their power.

Organizing new members is clearly another priority. Union membership has fallen from 2.2 million to 1.5 million over the past decade. While the reasons for this are complex and varied — deregulation; new efficiency in the industry; erosion of the U.S. steel, automobile and rubber industries that used trucks to move their products — certainly a renewed emphasis by the administration to organize Federal Express, Overnite, J.B. Hunt and other non-union carriers and delivery services could boost the union's clout at the bargaining table.

Throughout the union, the new officials and the activists will have to work together to reach organized members in non-traditional Teamster jurisdictions — dubbed by Carey during the campaign as the "forgotten Teamsters" — in particular, women and people of color, who had no role in the old union.

At this point, what role the union will play in the larger labor movement is unclear.

But the door has been opened for change. Carey ended his inaugural speech to some 2000 Teamsters by inviting them to come into the building, because "it belongs to you now". The membership of the union can shape its future, and its future depends not only on the new leadership, but on the membership as well.

The reform Teamsters will send the clear message that militancy and democracy can succeed. As one Teamster activist said in explaining the impact of the December rank-and-file victory: "People will see that we did it. They'll see how we did it. People will start feeling like they belong to a union movement again."



Teamsters unroll a petition demanding

The co

For the mainstream media, the story of the election of Ron Carey and the slate of 15 reform candidates to the General Executive Board of the Teamsters was simple: A government-supervised election allowed Carey to defeat old guard candidates R.V. Durham and Walter Shea. But, in fact, something has happened that defies the mythology: The Teamsters' active rank and file has imposed some of its terms on a state that originally had a very different idea. It has produced an outcome that no one expected.

Since 1957 every president of the Teamsters, save Billy McCarthy, has been convicted and sentenced for one or another federal offense. Both the political opportunities to be exploited and the potential danger to society seen in Mob control of the Teamsters stemmed from the central place of this huge union in America's post-World War II economy.

Whether in ascendancy or



Capitalism spirals into barbarism

in US's biggest union



g the right to vote on top union officers outside the 1986 IBT convention in Las Vegas

urts and the rank-and-file

crisis, American industry grew, faltered and restructured along the blacktops of the U.S. Interstate Highway System. And Teamster members loaded, unloaded and drove the trucks that carried the bulk of industry's output along those roads. Furthermore, in an industry composed, until recently, of many firms, the giant union stood out as a, or even the, central organization.

Both Republican and Democratic administrations had fought (and courted) this influence in the period of U.S. economic growth through the 1960s and crisis during the 1970s. But government intervention had been limited to the indictment of individual leaders.

What made the Reagan-Bush approach to the Teamsters different was the project they had for the American economy. Their road to competitiveness was through a deregulated wilderness leading to deep economic restructuring. No previous administration had the ideology

or nerve to go as far.

A Mob-influenced Teamsters union cluttered the highways in a number of ways. For one thing there were the payoffs, graft and

What made the Reagan-Bush approach to the Teamsters different was the project they had for the American economy. Their road to competitiveness was through a deregulated wilderness leading to deep economic restructuring.

other extortions to which shippers often had to accede. For another,

Frank Fitzsimmons, Roy Williams, Jackie Presser, and even Billy McCarthy were not exactly your state-of-the-art, quality circle, just-in-time, free trade kind of guys.

Their greatest liability, however, was that unlike Jimmy Hoffa they were not in control of their membership.

In 1983, TDU handed IBT president Jackie Presser an historic "slap in the face" with a nearly nine-to-one rejection of the crucial National Master Freight Agreement. In 1985, it won a court decision allowing casual workers to vote on future National Master Freight Agreements

In 1986, TDU won a court case that opened the door to contract rejection by a simple majority rather than the two-thirds no vote previously needed. This promised even more market-distorting instability in the industry. The UPS contract was voted down by majority in 1987 and the NMFA and car hauler contracts in 1988.

All this came prior to the actual

filing of the government's RICO suit, at a time when contract rejections were all but unheard of in other industries. The government's decision to intervene came as the leadership of the Teamsters became weaker and less effective in relation to the ranks.

TDU opposed trusteeship (putting in government trustees to run the Union) but presented the Teamster membership with an alternative.

In September 1987 TDU agreed that if a RICO suit is filed, TDU will intervene in court to win the right to vote." To TDU the right to vote meant the direct referendum vote on all top leaders of the IBT.

TDU did more than intervene in court. Beginning in early 1988, it launched a national Right-To-Vote campaign that gathered 100,000 signatures on a petition, held rallies around the country and organized members at the local level to win their local unions to this position. This culminated in the election of

some 250 reform delegates for the 1991 IBT convention, by far the largest opposition presence ever. They also came up with a more detailed version of how a fair and honest election could be conducted.

When the Justice Department finally filed its RICO suit on June 28, 1988, it had dropped the trusteeship idea. The government accused forty-eight IBT officials with illegal activities and ordered the election of new officers. Trusteeship had been defeated.

At that time, the election of a new leadership posed no apparent problem for the government or employers. No one, including TDU, believed then that reform or TDU candidates could win office in significant numbers in the first round of elections, no matter how open the procedures.

The government's 1989 consent decree was careful not to ban or chastise the practice of multiple job and pension holding that brought 134 Teamster officials salaries in excess of \$100,000 in 1989. Mere corruption was all right so long as no connection to the Mafia or any outright violations of law were in evidence.

In fact, the more or less clean rump of the old guard had a great deal of difficulty pulling together credible slates. Durham and Shea eventually destroyed orderly succession and normalization by pairing off against one another in the supervised election held in December 1991.

The government appointed Michael Holland, a former lawyer for the United Mine Workers, to oversee the election process.

In the end, Holland's resistance to TDU influence and fairer election rules were not enough to stop the forces of genuine reform.

The irony, by no means new to history, was that government concessions to the ranks fuelled the fire of the rebellion. State intervention could not patch over the ineptitude of the IBT's old guard, born of corruption and expressed in their in-fighting to the end. Attempts to thwart the very democracy the state had conceded only strengthened the resolve of the opposition.

It is as though the spin doctors within the state forgot that their restructuring was also having an impact on working people.

In a matter of a couple of years the unknowns came to be the official leaders. The American media could only explain this as the result of intervention from above. Hopefully, we on the left can recognize this process as the stuff of working-class power.

The appeal of H Ross Perot:

The anti-political American

By Barry Finger

If the polls are to be believed, the American presidential front-runner is not President Bush and not the Democratic Party's Bill Clinton. He is a man without party affiliation. He is favoured by one-third to one half of the parties' registered voters. He is a man who has never held public office, whose sole stated purpose is to "make things work".

To unwrap this enigma, let us state what H Ross Perot's appeal is not based on. It is least of all based on a thought-out consistent set of programmatic alternatives.

He loathes the federal deficit, but he hasn't outlined what he could do about it.

He was an outspoken opponent of the Gulf War, but a supporter of Richard Nixon's imperial Vietnam policies.

He's for the right to abortion, but not for federal financing of abortion clinics.

He lectured TV personality David Frost on religious tolerance towards the homosexual community, yet he endorsed the Pentagon's policy of excluding gays and lesbians and promises to extend that policy to cabinet positions. ("We don't need any sissies around".)

He's willing to suspend the constitutional prohibitions against illegal search and seizure while fighting crime in black neighbourhoods. His solution: "cordoning off minority neighbourhoods and searching door to door for weapons and narcotics."

Topics like the decay of the cities, health care and job creation have not been addressed by Perot. His only memorable foreign policy statement was a flip promise to scrap the foreign embassy system.

Clearly, Perot's appeal is not a triumph of political vision over soundbite rhetoric and his likeable personality. A clear understanding of the issues was not considered of primary importance. Political cartoonist Garry Trudeau observed wryly that Perot has successfully "stigmatised positions as something politicians have."

Bourgeois democracy is based on two piecemeal exclusive principles of organisation.

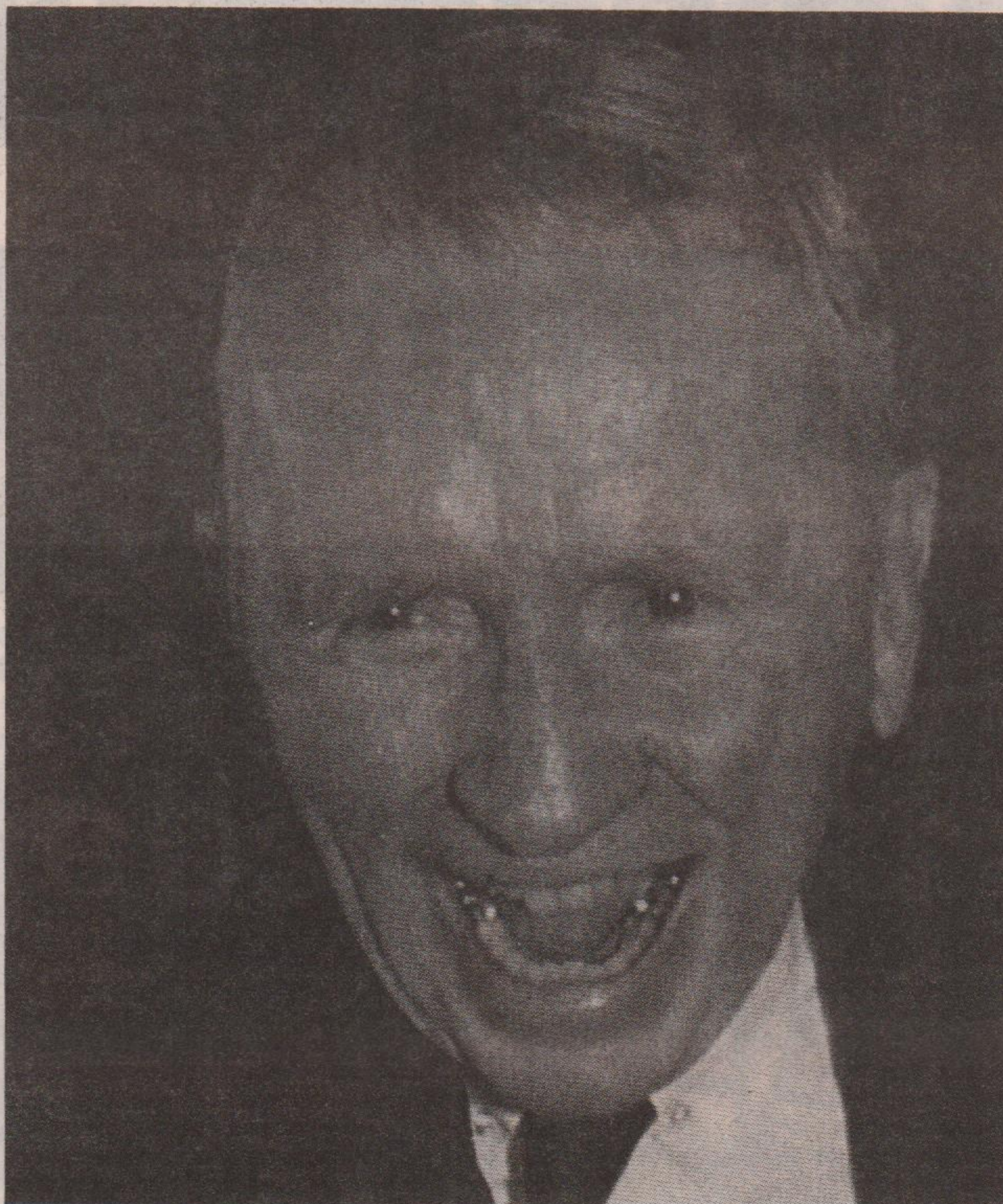
The vested interests establish social control through patronage machines (political parties) which are the social conduits between the worlds of business and government. These machineries are lubricated by the consensus manufacturing and influence purchasing industries - the corporate controlled media, academia, and think tanks - which frame social issues, identify the acceptable solutions and select the choices for governmental office.

Above all, this "head fixing industry", as socialists once called it, inculcates the habits of servility and compliance before wealth and power.

That mass of people, bereft of capital, who nevertheless wish to change their position in society have no recourse other than to mobilise their numbers in open political struggle. At a certain level of maturity, which unfortunately has yet to be attained in the US, this struggle develops out of the factories and the streets, and finds expression in electoral activity independent of the parties of privilege.

The Perot phenomenon apparently combines these two principles in a twisted amalgam - a parody of bottom up self-organisation. Whatever preparation Perot made for his candidacy, his momentum is undeniably spontaneous. The mere announcement of his willingness to run on nationwide TV should the "people" so desire it, conjured up petition tables outside train stations, shopping malls, libraries and supermarkets throughout the country.

Perot's appeal reaches beyond the habitu-



A man of many guises including capitalist exploiter

ally non-political. Prominent media liberals such as Norman Lear, political handlers from the Reagan and Carter campaigns, LaRouchites and psychobabble cultists from

Perot's only real innovative proposal is for a plebiscitary democracy based on interactive videos. These would connect the living rooms of America into a giant townhall and would permit the public - through devices attached to their television sets - to vote directly on issues

the New Alliance Party, even a leftist or two such as journalist Robert Scheer have answered the call. Such people no doubt have separate agendas which they hope to advance through the Perot campaign.

But for the rank and file supporter, Perot is experienced as a political saviour. For this sizable portion of the electorate, long soured by the ditherings of the "political process", Perot's cowboy homilies and his financial miracle working were immediately recognised as signs of divine selection.

Of course the real secret of his financial miracles resides more in the realm of the profane than the sacred. The legendary aspect is of a frustrated IBM salesman, who

failed to convince IBM that there was a fortune to be made not only in selling computers, but in tailoring personalised uses for them. This is the supposed vision behind his Electronic Data Systems, started by Perot with a \$1,000 loan from his wife.

The reality was exposed (and forgotten) twenty years ago when radical journalist and economist, Robert Fitch detailed how Perot became America's first "Welfare Billionaire" paying Medicare claims, which Perot undertook. Having developed this programme with taxpayer funds, Perot went private and with the aid of Blue Shield and the Republic National Bank of Dallas was able to obtain contracts for processing Medicare and Medicaid claims in 11 states. It took five years for EDS stock to be worth \$1 billion.

Fitch reports that EDS, having taken over the processing of Medicare and Medicaid policies in California, carried out a racial purge firing or demoting anyone who was black.

Perot has always been vigorously anti-union. No undertaking associated with him has an organised workforce.

His reputation for devotion to his workforce comes from his successful commando-hired rescue of EDS employees from a Teheran jail in 1979. This too has taken on mythic dimension, and is augmented by his missions to Vietnam in 1985 for the purpose of bring back non-existing American soldiers "missing in action".

EDS was eventually sold to General Motors in 1984 for \$2.5 billion. Perot's share was \$1.4 billion, with \$700 million later thrown in for his quietly abandoning his stock and board positions at GM. Currently Perot is sole owner of Perot Systems valued at \$200 million.

It is through the counter posing of myth to reality that the insider becomes the outsider, the wheeler-dealer becomes the anti-politician, the billionaire the embodiment of anti-establishment fervor. Yet despite all these outsider guises, the messianic appeal of a Perot is rooted in the psychology of mass submission before the authority of bourgeois virtues.

This of course has precedent in America - the 1923 Presidential clamour for Henry Ford, or the rise of former GM official George Romney before 1968. The extent of Perot's appeal however cannot be separated from its coincidence in time with the demise of "Communism" and the Cold War. These had cast a profoundly chilling effect over all grassroots movements by making them vulnerable to the charge of destabilising the nation in the teeth of the totalitarian threats from abroad.

Communism in this sense made easier the cooption of grassroots movements into bourgeois political institutions, usually the Democratic party. Thus the trade union, civil rights and peace movements announced their opposition to Communism in the only way the public could understand or respect. Such disillusionment with the incumbency as the Perot movement now represents, would have in the past been a boon to the Democrats.

Between Perot and the two-party system, there is nothing for socialists to choose.

Perot's only real innovative proposal is for a plebiscitary democracy based on interactive videos. These would connect the living rooms of America into a giant townhall and would permit the public - through devices attached to their television sets - to vote directly on issues. Socialists have always been suspicious of such bogus democracies, and have rightfully seen in plebiscites the tools of authoritarianism and mob rule orchestrated from on high. This is the big lie behind the New York Times' faint praise of Perot for aspiring to empower the average citizen.

The best that can come out of this is a progressive corrosion of the Democratic and Republican parties and a maturing of the disenfranchised masses as they begin to experience success in independent political organisation. As it stands now, Perot's supporters, armed with the relatively paltry war chest of \$1.4 million, - entirely self-generated, have achieved parity with the two parties and their \$34 million in fat cat donations.

Perot is a swindle. But he's a swindle nourished by bourgeois values. He will most likely be undone by a ruling class unwilling to have a renegade independent raised above it. A survey of the Chief Executive Officers of the USA's biggest 500 companies shows overwhelming support for the two-party candidates. Once Perot's candidacy is formally announced, their suspicions will be translated day and night into an immense media pounding which will assume Gulf War dimensions.

Yet the great fact remains that the disaffected do not trust the two parties or the government to fix their problems. They know that campaign promises and political platforms are meaningless and prefer the absence of programmes to condescending lies. The enduring political loyalties of millions of Americans have been shaken by the Perot movement, though the mental habit of submission before power still persists.

It remains to be seen if, once the lustre fades from Perot, a legacy of self-confidence born of successful grassroots organisation will begin to displace this ideology of submission.



Neither Copenhagen nor Brussels, but workers' unity!

By Colin Foster

"Wonderful, wonderful, Copenhagen", sang left-wing Labour MP Dennis Skinner in Parliament after the Danes voted to reject the Maastricht treaty.

Tony Benn also welcomed the vote, and called for a referendum on Maastricht in Britain.

But what did the Danes' "no" mean?

The article on this page from Age Skovrind - a Danish socialist who voted no - recognises that it reflected "many contradictory positions".

In the Danish Parliament, the opposition to Maastricht came equally from the Left and from the nationalist Right. There were some left-wing motives behind the no vote - fear that European integration would cause higher unemployment and more cuts - but they were confused (in fact, unemployment and cuts would be just as bad in a capitalist Denmark out-

side the EC); and there were right-wing motives too.

Right-wing voters feared that closer European integration would mean more immigrants, and more Danish money spent on aid to poor areas in southern Europe.

How can a majority for that mixture of confused left-wing feeling and nationalist right-wing feeling be a victory for the left?

No socialist would have wanted to vote yes to Maastricht. The Europe of Maastricht is a bosses' Europe; a racist Europe, committed to closing Europe's external borders while it eases internal frontiers; an imperialist Europe.

No socialist could approve the way the Maastricht treaty was worked out, either, by haggling behind closed doors between different governments, while the elected European Parliament functions only for show.

No socialist could say yes to the Danish Conservative government's cynical posing

of the referendum. The referendum presented no real choice; there was no way that the Danish government could or would carry out the mandate of a no vote.

Such referendums are called by governments only when, and in terms such that, they can win. Unfortunately for them, the Danish Conservatives miscalculated.

The Danish left should have registered a protest against both Maastricht and Danish nationalism, by abstaining in the referendum, as *Workers' Fight*, a forerunner of *Socialist Organiser*, advocated abstaining in the 1975 British referendum, and as the French socialists of "Lutte Ouvriere" advocate abstaining in the referendum now called in France.

Probably the European Community governments will find some way to manoeuvre over the coming months and save the Maastricht treaty, with or without Denmark. Possibly the Danish vote will trigger other upsets and send the EC governments back to the drawing board.

Neither outcome will make Europe any less capitalist, racist, and imperialist.

Capitalism has outgrown the limits of the relatively small European nation-states of the last century. The governments know that: and the EC and Maastricht reflect their awareness. For four decades now, in a fumbling and bureaucratic way, they have been trying to create a broader "home market", and a framework for Euro-multinationals capable of competing with the Americans and Japanese.

The socialist answer cannot be to defend the outdated capitalist nation-states. Our answer is workers' unity across Europe, to meet the bosses' international plans with an international working-class strategy, and to fight for levelling-up of rights and conditions across Europe.

Neither Copenhagen, nor Brussels, but international workers' unity!

"The no vote reflects many contradictory positions"

Danish socialist Age Skovrind assesses the Maastricht referendum in Denmark. This article was written before the referendum result; it is translated (and abridged) from the French socialist weekly *Rouge*.

The figures show a huge gap between the voters and the political Establishment.

Among the 175 members of Parliament, only the 15 members of the Socialist People's Party; the 12 of the right-wing, populist and nationalist, Progress Party; and one member of the Christian People's Party, voted against the Maastricht agreement.

Why are the Danes so opposed to European integration? Several factors need to be taken into account. There is a widespread (though not

entirely true) idea that social standards are higher here than in other European countries; and so, more integration would mean a loss of social gains.

The methods of decision making in the European Community are perceived as profoundly anti-democratic. The distancing of Denmark

"Culturally, Denmark feels closer to other Scandinavian countries than to Germany"

from Brussels reinforces this feeling, and all the more because Denmark only has three votes out of 76 in the council of ministers.

Culturally, Denmark feels closer to other Scandinavian countries than to Germany, towards which, moreover, there remains for historical reasons a certain hostility.

Unlike the countries of central Europe, Denmark has only belonged to the European Community since 1972, and so EC membership is not yet seen as an established fact of life.

Finally, since 1972, internal politics has been dominated by cuts policies and by a big rise in the rate of unemployment, and these are seen - although wrongly - as the result of entry into the EC (for several years, Sweden and Norway did better economically).

The parties to the left of Social Democracy have always been unconditionally against EC membership. However, those positions have changed in recent years. That

is due to the fact that, despite great scepticism towards the EC, more and more people think it is no longer possible to quit.

The great weakness of the no-vote camp is its division on an overall alternative. A no majority will reflect many contradictory positions.

However, such a result would be a terrible blow to the traditional parties, and would probably lead to the resignation of the Schuler government, which has already been weakened by a series of scandals.

In such a situation, new elections would represent a great chance for the Left Alliance [of far-left groups] to get representatives in Parliament and to strengthen the mobilisation for a socialist and internationalist alternative to the policies of the European Community.

LETTERS

SO is right on Cowen...

Gary Scott's review of the first biography of the 19th century Tyneside radical leader, Joe Cowen (*Socialist Organiser* 521) is quite correct to underline Cowen's importance for the Marxist movement in this country.

Cowen was never, formally, a Marxist. Indeed, he was a Liberal MP; But one who supported strikes, funded European Republican movements and, it would seem, made the bombs with which Orsini tried and failed to blow Napoleon up with in 1858.

Cowen represented a link between physical force Chartists and the Marxism of the Social Democratic Federation, whose Newcastle branch he funded even after his politics became pro-imperialist in the mid-1880s.

Nigel Todd, the author of the biography, portrays Cowen as the greatest leader which British Marxism never had. Certainly, compared to the current crop of labour leaders, Cowen was an absolute inspiration. Yet his politics remained on the extreme left of bourgeois radicalism. He baulked at the idea of party political organisation in a Marxist sense. If anything, he might be seen as a forerunner to British anarchism, rather than British Marxism.

Despite Todd's excellent book, Cowen left extensive archives and there is plenty of room for further research and interpretations of Joe Cowen.

Charles Murray, Tottenham

...but wrong on Ireland

In denouncing the call for "Troops Out of Ireland Now" as 'irresponsible', *Socialist Organiser* is travelling the same road, impelled by social democracy and extreme Stalinophobia, as the Stalinist Official IRA.

Anti-imperialism is, for *Socialist Organiser*, an 'ideological lie' that 'the left tells itself'.

All qualitative distinctions vanish. Effectively, you argue that there is no such thing as British imperialism. The British army is just one more armed force in a confused situation and since, as you say, "Britain has stopped sectarian civil war for the last 20 years", whatever caveats or reservations you may then employ, you end up giving "critical" support to British imperialism.

Your 'alternative' to British rule is "The people of the Six Counties need a radical, democratic solution, not bloody stop gaps". What kind of perspective is this coming from people who claim to be Trotskyists?

Now we see where *SO* is coming from when it insists that "Permanent Revolution does not apply in Ireland." You mean that Stalin's theory of 'two-stage revolution' *does* apply there.

The list of demands you give at the end of the article amount to liberalism - a belief that if Protestants and Catholics would only agree to be nice to each other, respect each other's rights etc. all would be well. 'Socialism' has to wait until a "democratic solution" has been achieved.

Stalin would have blushed with pride at seeing how his perspectives of 1927 in China, so discredited at the time, have now been taken up so avidly by some of those who claim to follow his bitterest enemy, Leon Trotsky.

Abandoning elementary Marxist principles, you don't see that only a consistent Marxist perspective, of principled opposition to British imperialism, of the struggle for socialism, of transitional demands in the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky, can unite the Irish working class.

In this, you break with not only Trotsky - you also junk even Connolly's tenuous anticipations of such a position. All you offer instead is warmed-over liberalism: "Be nice to each other!"

Socialist Organiser draws an 'analogy' with the situation in Yugoslavia: but the communal bloodletting there is the result of capitalist restoration, following decades of 'market socialism' that undermined the collective property relations of a deformed workers' state.

Try putting your "be nice to each other" line to the Serbs and Croats. You would, unfortunately, be met with derisive laughter.

Ian Donovan, Sutton Coldfield

Revolution must break the state

State power, argued Lenin (in this excerpt from his famous pamphlet, "State and Revolution"), cannot just be whittled away bit by bit. As the socialist movement grows, it will have to meet violent attacks from the existing state power and, if it is to win, it will have to break the power of the capitalist state. The "withering away" of the state, the disappearance of special bodies of repression standing above society, is possible only after the minority ruling class, the capitalists, have been overthrown.

After formulating his famous proposition that "the state withers away", Engels at once explains specifically that this proposition is directed against both the opportunists and the anarchists. In doing this Engels puts in the forefront that conclusion drawn from the proposition concerning the withering away of the state which is directed against the opportunists.

One can wager that out of every 10,000 persons who have read or heard about the "withering away" of the state, 9,990 are completely unaware, or do not remember, that Engels directed his conclusions from this proposition not against the anarchists alone. And of the remaining ten, probably nine do not know the meaning of a "free people's state" or why an attack on this slogan means an attack on the opportunists. This is how history is written. This is how a great revolutionary teaching is imperceptibly falsified and adapted to prevailing philistinism. The conclusion directed against the anarchists has been repeated thousands of times, vulgarised, rammed into people's heads in the shallowest form and has acquired the strength of a prejudice; whereas the conclusion directed against the opportunists has been slurred over and "forgotten".

The "free people's state" was a programmatic demand and a widely current slogan of the German Social-Democrats in the 1870s. This slogan is devoid of all political content except that it describes the concept of democracy in pompous philistine fashion. In so far as it hinted in a legally permissible manner at a democratic republic, Engels was prepared to "justify" its "temporary" use from an agitational point of view. But it was an opportunist slogan; for it

expressed not only an embellishment of bourgeois democracy, but also failure to understand the socialist criticism of the state in general. We are in favour of a democratic republic as the best form of the state for the proletariat under capitalism; but we have no right to forget that wage slavery is the lot of the people even in the most democratic bourgeois republic. Furthermore, every state is a "special repressive force" against the oppressed class. Consequently, every state is not "free" and not a "people's state." Marx and Engels explained this repeatedly to their party comrades in the seventies.

This very same work of Engels', from which everyone remembers the argument about the withering away of the state, contains an argument on the significance of violent revolution. With Engels, the historical analysis of its role becomes a veritable panegyric on violent revolution. This "no one remembers"; it is not good form in modern socialist parties to talk or even think about the significance of this idea, and it plays no part whatever in their daily propaganda and agitation among the masses. And yet, it is inseparably bound up with the "withering away" of the

"Wage slavery is the lot of the people even in the most democratic bourgeois republic."

state into one harmonious whole. Here is Engels' argument:

"That force, however, plays yet another role [other than that of evil-doing] in history, a revolutionary role; that, in the words of Marx, it is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one, that it is the instrument by means of which social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilised political forms - of this there is not a word in Herr Duhring. It is only with sighs and groans that he admits the possibility that force will perhaps be necessary for the overthrow of the economy based on exploitation - alas because all use of force, forsooth, demoralises the person who uses it. And this in spite of the immense moral and spiritual advance which has been the result of every victorious revolution. And this too in Germany, where a violent collision - which may after all be forced on the people - would at least have the advantage of wiping out the servility which has penetrated the national consciousness as a result of the humiliation of the Thirty Years' War. It is this preachers' mentality, dull, insipid and impotent, that claims the right to impose itself on the most revo-



The miners had to confront the violence of the state during the 1984-85 strike

lutionary party history has known!"

How can this panegyric on violent revolution, which Engels insistently brought to the attention of the German Social Democrats between 1878 and 1894, i.e., right up to the time of his death, be combined with the theory of the "withering away" of the state to form a single doctrine?

Usually the two are combined by means of eclecticism, by an unprincipled or sophistic selection made arbitrarily (or to, please the powers that be) of now one, now another argument, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, if not more often, it is the idea of the "withering away" that is placed in the forefront. Dialectics is replaced by eclecticism - this is the most usual, the most widespread phenomenon to be met with in present-day official Social-Democratic literature in relation to Marxism. This sort of substitution is, of course, nothing new; it was observed even in the history of classic Greek philosophy. In falsifying Marxism in opportunist fashion, the substitution of eclecticism for dialectics is the easiest way of deceiving the masses. It gives an illusory satisfaction; it seems to take into account all sides of the process, all tendencies of development, all the conflicting influences, and so forth, whereas in reality it provides no integral and revolutionary understanding of the process of social development at all.

We have already said above, and shall show more fully later, that the teaching of Marx and Engels concerning the inevitability

of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. The latter cannot be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of "withering away", but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution. The panegyric which Engels sang in its honour, and which fully

"Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is the instrument by means of which social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilised political forms."

corresponds to Marx's repeated declarations (recall the concluding passages of The Poverty of Philosophy, and The Communist Manifesto with their proud and open proclamation of the inevitability of a violent revolution; recall what Marx wrote nearly thirty years later, in criticising the opportunist character of that programme) - this panegyric is by no means a mere "access of enthusiasm", a mere declamation or a polemical sally. The necessity of systematically educating the masses in this and precisely this view of

violent revolution lies at the root of the entire teaching of Marx and Engels. The betrayal of their teaching by the now predominant social-chauvinist and Kautskyite trends finds particularly striking expression in the neglect of such propaganda and agitation by both these trends.

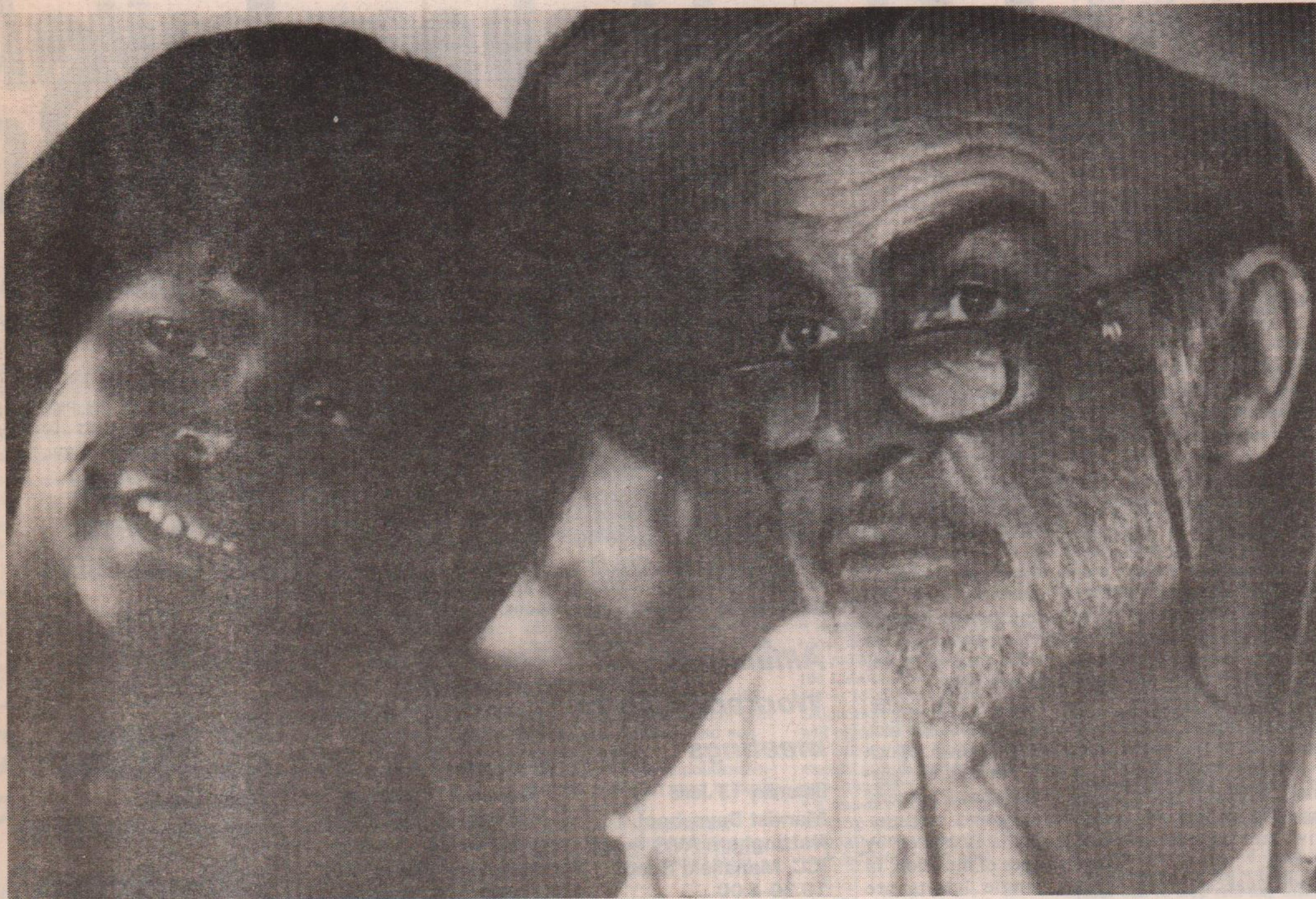
The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution. Doing away with the proletarian state, i.e., with the state in general, is impossible except through "withering away".

Glossary

Herr Duhring: Eugen Duhring, an anti-Marxist socialist influential in the 1870s, against whom Engels wrote Anti-Duhring.

Thirty Years' War: of 1618-1648, which consolidated the division of Germany into lots of small states.

Dialectics and eclecticism: Eclecticism means combining arguments incoherently - "on the one hand this, on the other hand that". Dialectics means looking at reality as not static but constantly developing through internal conflicts and contradictions.



Green Without Offence

Cinema

Belinda Weaver reviews
"Medicine Man"

If all scientists were as sloppy as the ones in "Medicine Man", there wouldn't be a cure for anything. I spotted the lost magic ingredient of the film's cancer cure about halfway through, but it took forever for the dummies in the film to cotton on.

Why we still watch Casablanca

By Mick Ackersley

Casablanca, perhaps the most popular Hollywood movie ever, is 50 years old, and still going strong. A fresh new print is being issued to mark the anniversary. The cast is wonderful, of course - Bogart, Bergman, Lorre, Greenstreet, Veidt. It includes a number of German refugees from Hitler, for example, the nasty Nazi colonel was Conrad Veidt. In Britain, in the mid '30s, he had made one of the rare movies of the period which exposed anti-semitism. "Jew Suss", based on the historical novel of the same name by Lion Feuchtwanger, who also wrote a book, "Moscow 1937", justifying the Moscow Trials. In 1940 the Nazis made a notorious anti-semitic film of the same name. By contrast with the anti-fascists, the Swede Ingrid Bergman had eagerly gone to work in Nazi Germany, and had tried, even after the war started, to keep open the option of going back. Yet the film is a bale of old B-movie clichés, given life only by the wonderful cast and by competent direction and editing. The mystery is why it still works. Perhaps the explanation lies in this: within its romantic conventions, it is a committed film. The villains really are

The film is pitched too low. It makes its plea for the preservation of the Amazon wilderness, but it does it so predictably that the audience has nodded off before they get to it.

The plot is ancient, whiskered. Gruff scientist in jungle finds miracle cure. He doesn't want girl assistant sent by distant drug company. She has to prove herself. Then their enterprise is threatened by hostile forces, which they fight together. End of story. Hollywood

has made the same film over and over again. Only the scenery changes.

Familiarity can have its charms. The film is safe, it doesn't offend anybody. But it ought to.

If it really is saying we should

"The film is a muddle that meanders on without knowing where it's going. Without Sean Connery as Campbell, it would sink without trace."

stop destroying the rainforests, then it should do so in a more aggressive way - by ending in a downbeat way, perhaps, rather than having no-longer-grumpy Campbell and now-acceptable Rae go off to a new start, smiles and hopes intact.

The film does try to tackle the ruin of the jungle by progress, but it doesn't have any ideas about where "progress" comes from, or whom it serves. The road that threatens the plants Campbell needs for his cancer research is never explained (why is it being built? where is it meant to lead?) - it's just there to be the bad guy.

The film has a lordly way of ignoring anything deep or "inconvenient".

Presumably the presence of

friendly Brazilian Indians is meant to be another plea - save the forest, it's their home. No-one could want to hurt this tribe. They're full of smiles, their whole life is one long gambol in the sunshine, never interrupted by work, the getting of food, or anything that could disrupt paradise. They have something (what?) that western civilisation could learn from.

Hollywood always does this. It romanticises primitive people, it turns them into saints, so that its plea to save them can be justified. The corollary of this is sinister - that flawed people don't deserve to live.

The Brazilian Indians, and the rainforest that they live in, is not worth saving because it's perfect, or because it matches some L.A. film director's idea of the (unspoiled) Garden of Eden. The Indians have a right to their land; precious rainforest and wilderness should not be destroyed merely to satisfy capitalist greed and waste.

If Hollywood could understand that, then films like "Medicine Man" would make better watching.

As it is, the film is a muddle that meanders on without knowing where it's going. Without Sean Connery as Campbell, it would sink without trace.

The way it's made, you realise some Americans do have a need for tribes like the ones in "Medicine Man". They're fast running out of people they can patronise. That's one endangered species they've always been keen to protect.

Rolling in it!

Television

Amy Gilbert reviews
Dispatches (C4 Wednesday)

Dispatches (C4, Wednesday) had a go at the Queen, setting out several instances where the Queen gets quite different treatment from us under the law. Good for Dispatches - it was done very well.

The Queen is exempt from the Employment Protection Act, the Race Relations Act, and the Sex Discrimination Act - she can sack whom she likes, she can refuse to hire black people, and no-one can do a thing about it. She can take ex-employees to court - but not vice versa.

She can get around planning laws, as with the monster house in Windsor Great Park for Férgie and Andy. No-one else in that green belt could so much as change a window frame, but the Queen found South York "environmentally sound".

She can - and does - feather her nest. She's rolling in money. The Civil List (which pays her and her family a very generous wage) came in after 1760 to compensate the monarchy for not being able to own property. The Queen does own property now, e.g. castles at Sandringham and Balmoral, but she's still getting money from us. Not that she needs it - she's the richest woman in the world.

She pays no tax - something fairly new, since Queen Victoria paid tax as late as 1842.

But taxes enrich her. The Duchy of Lancaster swells her coffers to the tune of £3 million a year - that's ten thousand a day to you or me. It's partly rents, but also a bizarre kind of death tax. The Queen grabs the assets of anyone without relatives who dies intestate in the Duchy. Five full time staff make sure no-one escapes the net.

Taxpayers cough up £30 thousand a day to keep the royal yacht Britannia going. Added to that is the cost of her special planes and trains - all in all £50 million a year just to get her and her family from A to B (in style).

The minor royals got a 75% pay increase in the last couple of years. No details were given to the relevant Commons Committee.

She gets to keep any freebies given by foreign governments. Quite often, this means big jewels. As Suzy Menkes offered, these gems are highly portable. Apparently the Queen has a Russian diadem smuggled out under some aristocrat's hat after the Bolsheviks took over in 1917.

Come the revolution here, we mustn't forget to look under the hats of any fleeing Royals. They'll probably be making off with gems worth most of the GNP.

Even more worryingly, the Palace scrutinises every Bill (not just Bills that affect the Queen) before it goes to Parliament, and quite often demands - and gets - changes. So much for democracy. A few diadems might be worth it to see off the Royals for good.



Rich and answerable to no one

An appeal to our readers

Plus ça change...

SCIENCE COLUMN

By Les Hearn

In his second BBC Reith Lecture, geneticist Steve Jones chose to look at the small change of evolution - mutations. Each living thing contains DNA molecules that are the direct descendants of the DNA of the first living things (or at least of the first living things to have DNA).

But the DNA molecules are manifestly not the same as their common ancestor, else we should all be slime moulds or blue-green algae, or something else small and insignificant.

The message has been garbled in its transmission, though "garbled" is perhaps too strong a word. After all, the message must still make sense or it could not specify a successful organism. Jones quotes the anecdote of the order passed along the line of command from the battle front: "Send reinforcements: we're going advance!" became "Send three and fourpence: we're going to a dance!" Both messages make some sort of sense, though not in the same contexts.

What we have is Darwin's "Descent with Modification". The original genetic message has been altered, added to or subtracted from during its copying and recopying over 3000 million years. Now, our DNA differs in millions of ways even from that of our

fellow humans.

Mutations are surprisingly common, occurring perhaps hourly in each one of us. Most are harmless, some potentially beneficial, some lethal to the cell that has them, some cause it to become cancerous. As we age, we accumulate more and more of these mutations and we become more prone to diseases of old age such as cancer.

If the mutations occur in the germ cells, they pass to our offspring. Beneficial ones contribute to the evolution of better adapted organisms. Harmful ones make the offspring less able to survive and have their own offspring.

Older individuals are more likely to pass on mutations to their offspring. Jones quotes the example of Queen Victoria's carrying of a mutation in the gene for a blood-clotting protein called Factor VIII. This mutation, which causes haemophilia in males who have it, probably occurred in the production of sperm by her father who was about 50 at her birth.

Each of us carries about two or three potentially fatal mutations inherited from our ancestors. I say "potentially" because we carry two copies of all genes (or almost all, for males) and it is usually necessary for both copies to be faulty for diseases to occur.

Haemophilia is an exception, the Factor VIII gene occurring on the X chromosome of which males have only one copy. Half the sons of carriers are sufferers, and half the daughters carriers.

The ancient Jews recognised this, excusing a male child from circumcision if his elder brother or cousin had bled excessively.

Jones takes us on a tour of the human DNA, likening it to a trip from Land's End to John 'O Groat's. On this basis, there are some 50 DNA letters per inch. The map for the journey is rather incomplete, with only a few miles of the total of nearly 1000 known in detail.

The Factor VIII gene, equivalent to about 100 feet, is quite well known. Much of it does not code for anything, consisting of "spacers" between active regions. Haemophilia is caused by several types of mutation. In some, single letters are altered, often a different one. In others, a whole section of the gene has disappeared. In a few, an extra piece of DNA, possibly part of a virus's DNA, has been inserted.

Jones finishes by considering why the rising burden of harmful mutations doesn't cause species to degenerate. The answer is sex, the mixing of genes from two parents, resulting in the mixture of harmful genes with health copies. There would be a genetic advantage if an organism could reproduce without sex - all its genes would be passed on. But this advantage would be outweighed by the accumulation of harmful mutations.

Thus, humanity is not the degenerate remnant of some golden age, but "the products of evolution, a set of successful mistakes."

Socialist Organiser is raising extra money to fund our expansion plans. A loud voice for socialism is necessary to help the left regroup after Labour's election defeat.

Socialist Organiser offers a combination of news, analysis and debate which is unique on the left.

If you believe that *Socialist Organiser* is playing a useful role - helping the left to re-define itself and face up to the political challenges that face us in the wake of the collapse of European Stalinism - why

not make a donation to help our work?

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

Our fund target is £8,000, which we aim to raise by the "Workers' Liberty 92" summer school on 3-5 July. We have £2687.63 so far.

Last week we received £343.60. Thanks to Glasgow AWL for £138.10 in fund-raising, and to a supporter in Manchester and to Canterbury AWL for donations.

200 Club

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

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

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

Westminster

The Unions Socialist Movement Trade Union Conference: 18-19

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.

Economics

The Conference of Socialist Economists meets at the Poly of Central London from 10-12 July. Details from CSE, 25 Horsell Road, London N5

Alliance for Workers' Liberty meetings

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
"How to defend public sector workers".
Speakers from civil service and public sector unions. London AWL Forum. 7.30
Calthorpe Arms, Gray's Inn Road.

Thursday 18 June
"Yugoslavia in turmoil".
Glasgow AWL meeting.
7.30 Partrick Durgh Hall

Thursday 23 June
"How do we save the world"
Norhampton AWL debate the Green Party. 7.45 Royal Mail Club.

Wednesday 24 June
"Labour and the leadership" Manchester AWL 8.00 Town Hall.

Wednesday 1 July
"Malcolm X" Canterbury AWL meeting. 7.00 Sydney Cooper Centre.
"Aboriginal Rights" SW London AWL meeting. 7.30 Lambeth Town Hall. Speaker: Vassilli Manikakis

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.

Tribune/LCC conference:
26-27 June. Central Hall,

The politics of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty

We live in a capitalist world. Production is social; ownership of the social means of production is private.

Ownership by a state which serves those who own most of the means of production is also essentially "private"

Those who own the means of production buy the labour power of those who own nothing but their labour-power and set them to work. At work they produce more than the equivalent of their wages. The difference (today in Britain it may be more than £20,000 a year per worker) is taken by the capitalist. This is exploitation of wage-labour by capital, and it is the basic cell of capitalist society, it very heart-beat.

Everything else flows from that. The relentless drive for profit and accumulation decrees the judgment of all things in existence by their relationship of productivity and profitability.

From that come such things as the savage exploitation of Brazilian goldminers, whose life expectancy is now less than 40

years; the working to death - it is officially admitted by the government! - of its employees by advanced Japanese capitalism; and also the economic neglect and virtual abandonment to ruin and starvation of "unprofitable" areas like Bangladesh and parts of Africa.

From that comes the cultural blight and barbarism of a society force-fed on profitable pap.

From it come products with "built-in obsolescence" and a society orientated to the grossly wasteful production and reproduction of shoddy goods, not to the development of leisure and culture.

From it come mass unemployment, the development of a vast and growing underclass, living in ghettos and the recreation in some American cities of the worst Third World conditions.

From it comes the unfolding ecological disaster of a world crying out for planning and the rational use of resources, but which is, tragically, organised by its ruling classes around the

principles of anarchy and the barbarous worship of blind and humanly irrational market forces.

From it come wars and genocides; two times this century capitalist gangs possessing worldwide power have fallen on each other in quarrels over the division of the spoils, and wrecked the world economy, killing many tens of millions. From it comes racism, imperialism, and fascism.

The capitalist cult of icy egotism and the "cash nexus" as the decisive social tie produces societies like Britain now where vast numbers of young people are condemned to live in the streets, and societies like that of Brazil, where homeless children are hunted and killed on the streets like rodents.

From the exploitation of wage-labour comes our society in which the rich who with their servants and agents hold state power, fight a relentless class struggle to maintain the people in a condition to accept their own exploitation and abuse, and to prevent real democratic self-control developing with the forms of what they call democracy. They use tabloid

propaganda or - as in the 1984-85 miners' strike - savage and illegal police violence, as they need to. They have used fascist gangs when they need to, and will use them again, if necessary.

Against this system we seek to convince the working class - the wage slaves of the capitalist system - to fight for socialism.

Socialism means the abolition of wage slavery, the taking of the social economy out of private ownership into common cooperative ownership. It means the realisation of the old demands for liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Under socialism the economy will be run and planned deliberately and democratically: market mechanisms will cease to be our master, and will be cut down and re-shaped to serve broadly sketched-out and planned, rational social goals.

We want public ownership of the major enterprises and a planned economy under workers' control.

The working class can win reforms within capitalism, but we can only win socialism by overthrowing capitalism and by

breaking the state power - that is, the monopoly of violence and reserve violence - now held by the capitalist class. We want a democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system - a workers' democracy, with elected representative recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

Socialism can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers' struggles worldwide, including the struggles of workers and oppressed nationalities in the ex-Stalinist states of Eastern Europe and in still-Stalinist China.

What are the alternatives now? We may face new wars as European and Japanese capitalism confronts the US. Fascism is rising. Poverty, inequality and misery are growing.

Face the bitter truth: either we build a new, decent, sane, democratic world or, finally, the capitalists will ruin us all - we will

be dragged down by the fascist barbarians or new massive wars. Civilisation will be eclipsed by a new dark age. The choice is socialism or barbarism.

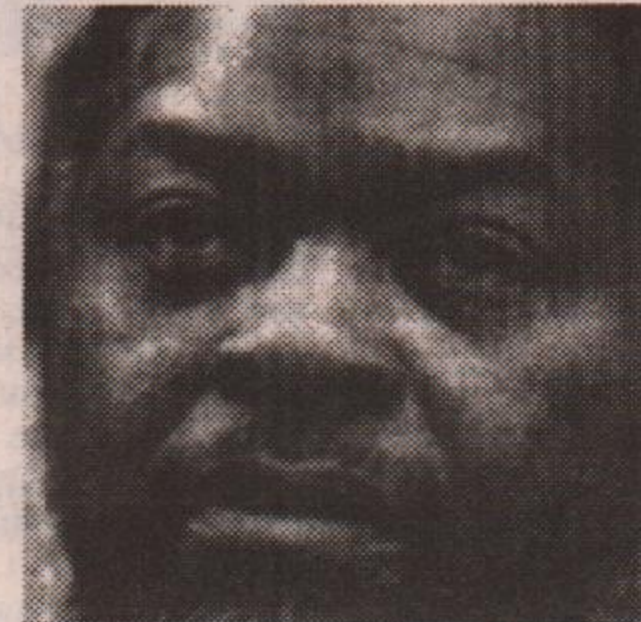
Socialists work in the trade unions and the Labour Party to win the existing labour movement to socialism. We work with presently unorganised workers and youth.

To do that work the Marxists organise themselves in a democratic association, the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

To join the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, write to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

LABOUR AND THE UNIONS:

How to turn the tide



A few weeks ago, Labour's right wing seemed unstoppable. The union link with the Labour Party was about to be cut, and the left could do nothing about it.

But now the unions' rank and file have begun to assert themselves. Support for continuing to root the Labour Party in the working class through the trade unions is growing.

In a limited way this has shown itself in union conference support for John Prescott in Labour's deputy leader contest.

We need to develop this mood of opposition. We need to arm ourselves with clear perspectives on what needs to be done next and what our goals are in the trade unions and the Labour Party.

Ideas for Freedom, a weekend of socialist discussion from Friday 3 to Sunday 5 July, will discuss the major issues faced by labour movement activists.

Bernie Grant MP and John O'Mahony (editor of *Socialist Organiser*) will examine the issues we face in the wake of the election defeat, and aim to answer the question: what next for Labour and the unions?

Trudy Saunders will look at the major threat faced by public sector workers, contracting out. How can we defeat the bosses' offensive aimed at breaking up the unions and driving down wages and conditions?

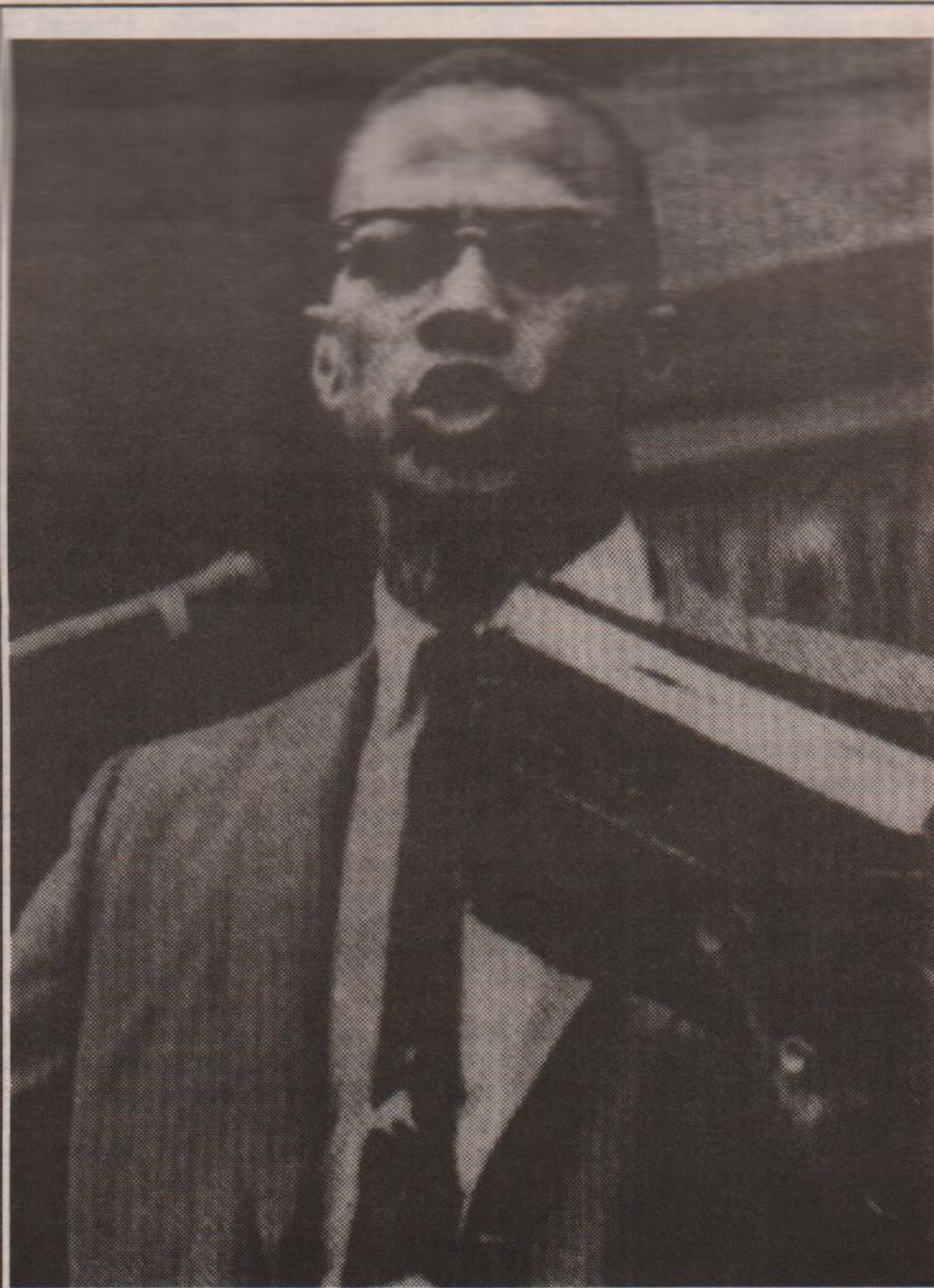
Ideas for Freedom will also include a number of courses to help socialists educate themselves about Marxist economics and about the Marxist classics.

For a fuller list of sessions, turn to page 14.

• Facilities: There will be a professionally-staffed creche. Accommodation can be provided. There may be transport from your area (phone 071-639 7967 for details). Food, drink and entertainment will be available.

• Tickets: Before the end of June tickets are cheaper. For the three days, they cost £7 (unwaged), £11 (students and low-waged), or £16 (waged). Subtract £1 (unwaged) or £1 (others) from these prices for tickets for Saturday and Sunday only.

• Agenda: For a full agenda, or more details of the event, phone Mark on 071-639 7967.



Socialism or black nationalism?

Ideas for Freedom - the Alliance for Workers' Liberty summer school - will debate the politics to defeat racism.

We will look at the life and ideas of Malcolm X, and ask, can black nationalism win?

We will discuss the causes of modern British racism with Marc Wadsworth from the Anti-Racist Alliance, and ask: can Le Pen come to power in France?

Nick Brereton from the AWL will survey the roots of anti-semitism.

Attend Ideas for Freedom!

By Tony Dale
(Manchester NALGO)

Nicholas Ridley has a "vision" of local authorities meeting once a year to hand out contracts.

In line with that vision, the Tory election manifesto stated: "We will maintain our programme of compulsory competitive tendering.... We will ensure that competitive tendering is extended to white collar local authority services".

Contracting out and privatisation have long been features of the Tories' rundown of public services. The attack now looming will not leave a single part of the public sector untouched.

Privatisation means job losses, erosion of pay and working conditions, and the decline of services to the public. Privatisation does not lead to better quality and more efficient services. One out of ten privatised contracts have had to be terminated early because of the shoddiness of the service.

At present, close to 60% of local councils have privatised at least one service. The Tories aim to increase that massively.

Compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) is not just about privatisation. In fact, the major impact of CCT has been the erosion of the terms and conditions of workers in sectors which are still run by local authorities. Councils up and down the country have used the threat of private contractors to cut staff, reduce hours, increase workloads, and erode benefits such as pensions and holidays.

Labour fought the election committed to ending CCT, but now, after the Tory victory, Jeremy Beecham, head of the Labour-controlled Association of Metropolitan Authorities and leader of Newcastle council, has endorsed CCT. Labour councils will use CCT to erode terms and conditions, soften up the workforce for cuts, and undermine trade union organisation.

From 15 June the Annual Conference of NALGO, the union which organises most local government white-collar workers, meets in Bournemouth. The timing of the Conference is perfect. It can be a launchpad to defend public services from privatisation and CCT.

A national fightback is needed. Council departments should not be left to fight alone.

A national demonstration and public sector day of action would be the best way to kick-start the campaign.

Subscribe!

I would like *Socialist Organiser* posted to me. (£5 for ten copies of *Socialist Organiser*; £25 for one year. Cheques to "Workers' Liberty")

NAME

ADDRESS

Return to: PO Box 823,
London SE15 4NA.