

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

*Unite the left!*

Inside this week

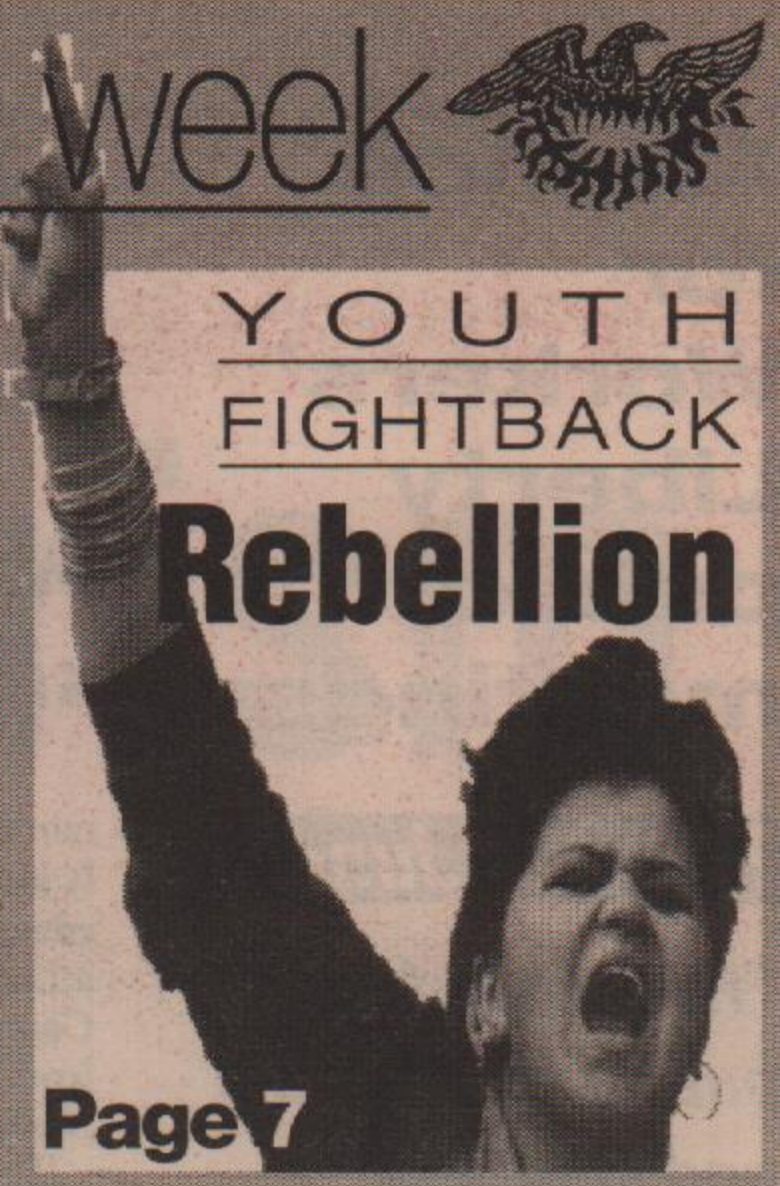


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Rebellion



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## Trade Unions tell Smith:

**T**HE LABOUR Party leadership look like they have failed to win the support they need to carry through their proposed weakening of the party's link to the trade unions. Smith has demonstrated that even in matters close to his heart he is weak and ineffective. The labour movement has shown once more that it is still alive.

Continued on page 2

# LABOUR IS OUR PARTY



**KEEP THE LINK!**



*Schooling under the Tories:***Education for barbarism**

This article in this space last week, "Education, capitalist and socialist" indicted the Tory way with education for the mass of British children. It should have been attributed to Jill Lewins. In the article which follows Colin Waugh continues the discussion. We invite other readers to contribute to this important debate.

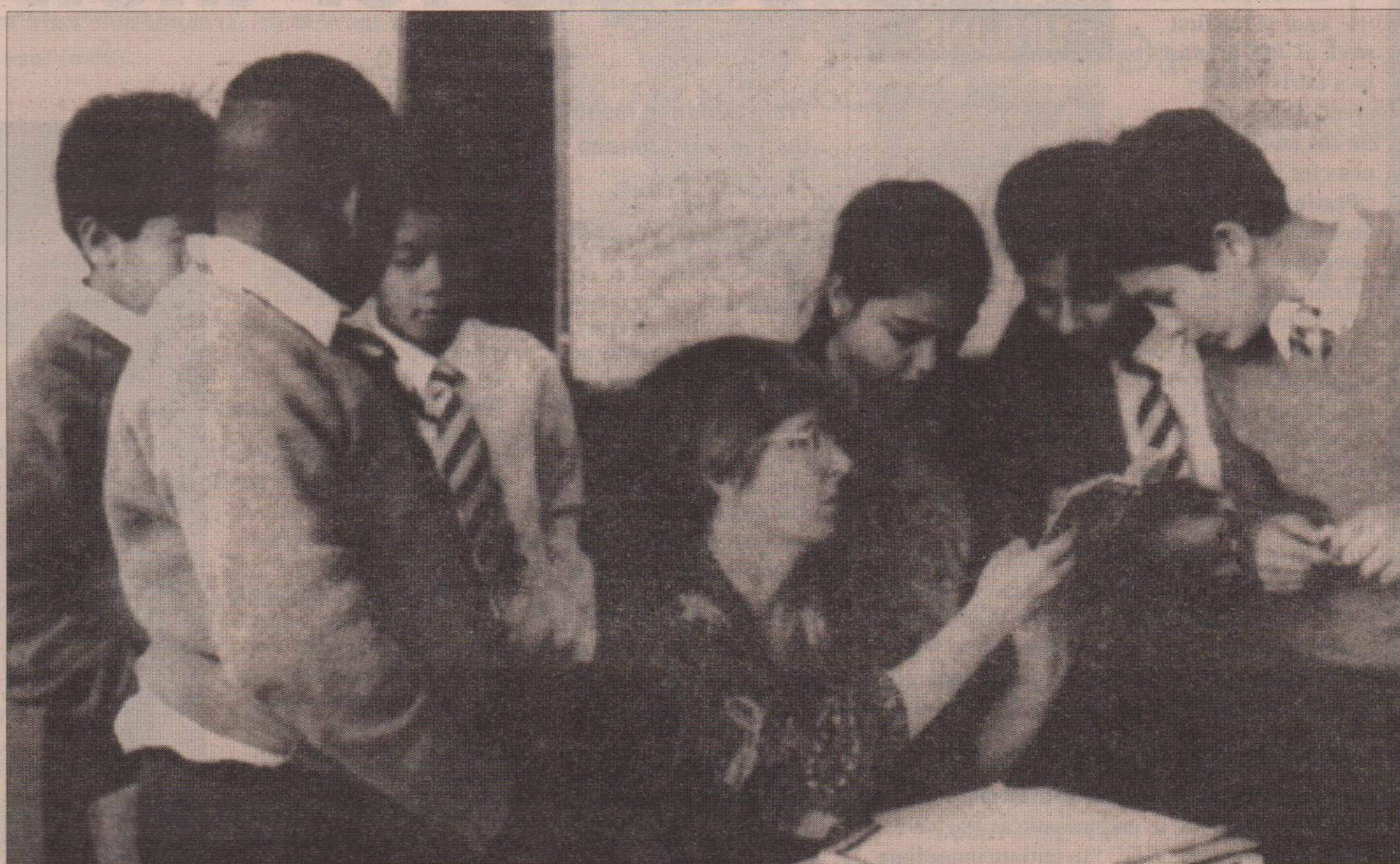
**'E** DUCATION, capitalist and socialist' (SO, 10/6/93) rightly says we should "open up the whole debate around our own vision of education."

The article starts from arguments put forward by Chanie Rosenberg in the SWP pamphlet *Education under Socialism and Capitalism*, which do need to be debated.

First, granted that UK society is "geared", as the article says, "to profit-making", is it also "divided into rigid [my emphasis CW] social classes"? No, because Tory education policy since 1979 only makes sense if seen as a strategy to win votes from people who are moving between classes, or who hope their children will do so. And is there simply a wealth-owning class, a middle class which "oils the wheels" (Rosenberg's phrase, whatever it means) and a working class "who will feed the factories and offices"? No, because lots of these floating voters are self employed people or small employers who don't fit these categories.

Secondly, granted that the "[labour] market is the single greatest influence on the education system" and that "the capitalists need an education system which reproduces [these] classes for the labour market", does the whole system boil down to private schools teaching the rich to think/command, and state schools teaching workers to "read, write and perform simple arithmetic"?

For a start this ignores the existence of grammar schools or grammar school streams in comprehensives. And in any case, schools don't only prepare people to perform economic functions: they also allocate some people to one function rather than another; for example, they 'cream off' some working class children into university and management. Again, both private and



We need to view struggles in and around schools in a context of broader ideological struggle

state schools provide general education which goes beyond 'vocational skills'. If they didn't, the working class wouldn't have fought so long for universal primary and secondary state schooling under slogans like "knowledge is

*"When people on the left consider issues in education they usually either make reformist criticisms of the current situation and/or suggest what education might be like under socialism."*

power". Lastly, both types of school teach concepts and attitudes; they play an ideological as well as an economic role.

Thirdly, can "the 'surplus product' [of capitalist industry] be continuously enlarged"? Is it this which causes "the capitalist... increasingly to dominate the labour process, to remove [control over] it from the hands of the worker into his or

her own"? And can we explain the progressivist education reforms of the '40s, '50s and '60s from this?

No: because under capitalism growth keeps being halted by a lack of buyers, and it's these crises — not the 'continuous enlargement' — which raise the tendency towards automation and de-skilling to a decisive level, as the bosses cut costs by attacking workers' control over production, either by building skills into machines and/or by training up technicians to replace them. (In a boom, they avoid disrupting work practices.) The postwar educational changes must be explained

Politically — as concessions made by the bosses, first to ward off revolution, later to buy stability for expansion. It's the rolling back of these concessions, starting in the mid 1970s and still going on now, which has been tied up with attempts to alter the education system so as to create a more flexible workforce.

The article rightly points to the left's "reluctance to think in fundamental terms" about education. This reluctance means that when people on the left consider issues in education they usually either make reformist criticisms of the current situation in schools and colleges and/or suggest what education might be like under

socialism. In other words, they don't try to work out demands which could lead on from struggle here and now towards struggle for socialism.

Rosenberg realises this, and tries to get over it in her pamphlet by starting with a supposedly hard-headed economic analysis of capitalist schooling. This analysis implies that every detail of the system stems directly from some requirement of production — as the blurb on the pamphlet puts it, "The ruling class wants a schools system geared to turning out the right mix of human components for its economic machine". But when she moves on to look at current developments, recent Tory policies etc, her position is like that of any non Marxist radical bemoaning the attacks on what's left of child-centred teaching methods. This isn't merely because her economic analysis is over-simplified and static. It's also because in education economic forces so often make themselves felt through ideological struggles (for example the SATs struggle now), as well as directly through struggles over pay or cuts. And education has its own specific history, so that it's not good enough to say, with Rosenberg, that, "Capitalism is cyclical, it goes through booms and slumps. Education, its mirror does the

same."

How can socialists think more effectively about education? First, we need to rediscover its real history (as opposed to the official mythology) and keep it in mind when we take action. Secondly, without backing away from struggles in and around schools and colleges, we need to view it in a context of broader ideological struggle. For example, we need to recognise that, where it can, the ruling class uses curricula and teachers to impose its agenda, in much the same way as it uses, for example, the news media and journalists. (One implication of this could be that the left needs its own curricula, just as it needs its own papers.)

*"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

Sales Organiser: Jill Mountford

Published by: WL Publications Ltd,  
PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

Printed by Eastway Offset (TU),  
London E9

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office

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

# T&G: what a good agenda!

THE TGWU Biennial Delegate Conference in the first week of July promises to be a fairly low-key event. This is bad news for the media but good news for the union.

Previous BDCs have been dominated by set-piece show-downs between the union's soft-left National Executive majority and a well-organised hard-right based upon the majority of the union's Regional Secretaries.

Since the last BDC the right seems to have come to terms with the Morris/Adams leadership and the NEC majority. The Secretary of Region 5 was recently heard saying nice things about Bill Morris.

The BDC agenda reflects this unaccustomed outbreak of peace. On the two big issues where conflict might have been expected — the proposed merger with the GMB and the Labour Party/union link — there seems to be unanimity. And it's unanimity around good policies as well.

The GMB merger has not produced the outburst of T&G chauvinism that some predicted. All the motions welcome the merger in principle, although not all are as enthusiastic as Region 5 which calls upon the GEC "to initiate immediate discussions with the objective of effecting an early merger." Most of the amendments are more circumspect, stressing the need for "lay member control" (T&G-speak for rank and file democracy).

The two motions on the Labour Party/union link (submitted by a total of 11 branches and committees) are both inspired by the "Keep The Link" campaign. The only amendments are fairly technical ones that, if anything, strengthen the pro-link position. There can be little doubt that a strong pro-link resolution will emerge, given Morris's publicly stated position and the right's evident decision not to fight on this issue (until recently the T&G right's boast was that they supported the Labour leadership more strongly than Morris and the left). Delegates who want to liven up this particular debate might consider asking Bill Morris what exactly he meant when he said that he supported the demands of "Keep The Link" but not the campaign. Perhaps he doesn't want to tie his hands?

There are excellent motions on New Management Techniques, repeal of anti-union legislation, public transport and privatisation. The motions on Europe and Maastricht stress the need for "social convergence" and international union cooperation: "there can be no return to isolationism" say branches 1/657 and 1/667. All this is in stark contrast to the nationalistic anti-European rhetoric that used to characterise the T&G "left".

It's good to see that Britain's largest union will be debating such a wide range of sophisticated, well thought out motions. Putting them into action is, of course, another matter. Perhaps that's what branch 5/802 has in mind when it castigates "the ostrich-like position of the union in recent years [that] has allowed the erosion of workers' rights", and calls for the conference to state "that we should get our heads out of the sand, so that we may once again hold them up with pride". That's a motion that deserves support, if only for its originality.

## INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

# Chinese workers strike for their rights

From the June issue of the journal *Chinese Worker*

FIVE THOUSAND workers were on strike at some time or other in May of this year in 3 foreign owned factories in Zuhai. Together with the strike in the Cannon factory in April, this amounts to 4 strikes in the Zuhai area alone, within a short period of 40 days, involving up to 6,000 workers. The 4 strikes were all caused by workers dissatisfaction with their pay in relation to inflation, and the resultant increase in exploitation by the bosses.

Without a doubt, strike action is an expression of the fundamental right to self defence by workers, and no one can dispute its aim and its use as a tactic. The WAFC offers unswerving support, respect and class solidarity to our striking brothers and sisters. At the same time, we call on all democratic and labour organisations to take action in support.

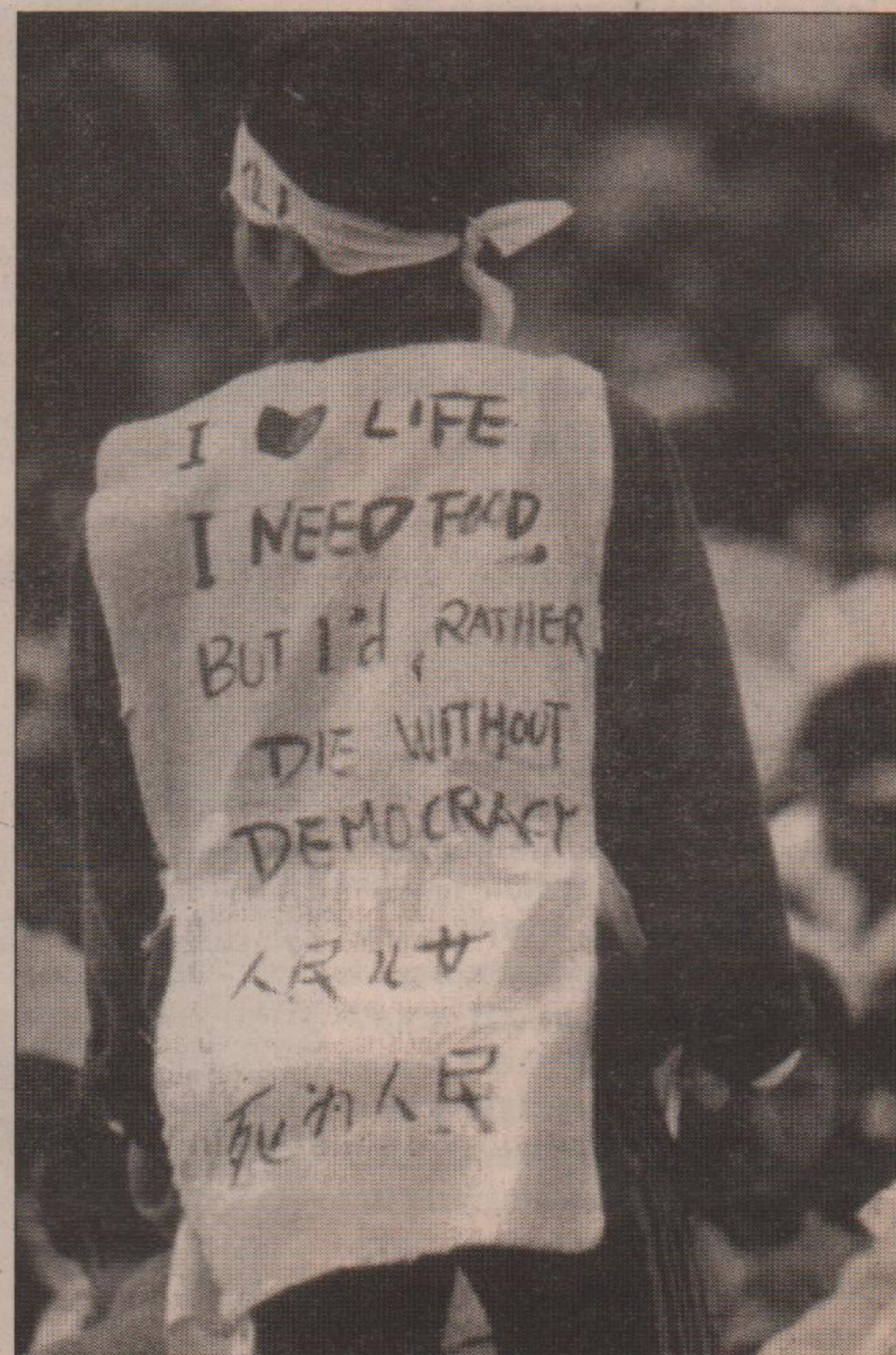
We make this call, not to make a mountain out of a molehill, but for a very simple reason. What is happening in Zuhai is not an isolated affair. At a time when the Chinese Communist Government is moving away from a nationalised economy and with the deregulation of control over foreign investment, Chinese workers are faced with increasing exploitation

and restrictions. The state is colluding with capitalist cartels in attacking workers, firstly through inflation, so as to claw back the fruits of workers labour, and secondly, through their attempts to restrict workers weapons of self defence: the right to strike, to collective bargaining and to freedom of association in independent trade unions.

During the strike wave in Zuhai, the employers stated publicly that, in the interest of profit margins, they were no longer prepared to increase wages in line with inflation. This shows very significantly that the strike wave is rooted in the fundamental conflict of interests between workers and capital. It must be said that this strike wave is only the first in the trials of strength of workers against capital, and much will hinge on its success.

*"The strike wave is rooted in the fundamental conflict of interests between workers and capital"*

During the strike, many workers spontaneously organised themselves and elected representatives to negotiate on their behalf



The regime denies all human rights

with the employers. They were met with obstructiveness from the authorities and the employers. On more than one occasion Zuhai authority declared that any workers organisation must come under the leadership of the (state-controlled) All China Federation of Trade Union, and that any elected representatives had to be recognised by the ACFTU. The authority went so far as to say that workers must not be seen to demonstrate in the streets, and if they went on strike as opposed to stopping work, they would be acting against the law. In spite of claims that they are the masters of China, Chinese workers are in fact wilfully deprived of the most basic human rights: the right to strike and the right to free association! The Chinese authority deserves our strongest condemnation! The struggle against capital in the Cannon factory in April was dissipated with the aid of the state authority. In defence of the most basic interest and the most fundamen-

tal freedom and rights for the Chinese working class, we declare:

1. Chinese workers have internationally recognised labour rights; the right to strike, to collective bargaining, and the right to organise trade unions. These rights cannot be taken away at the whim of the Chinese authority.

2. Wages must keep pace with inflation. The index should be decided upon by representatives from the workers, the employers and the government and calculated according to the real situation.

3. For a minimum wage - employers and state authority cannot unilaterally withdraw benefits received by workers, and must hold tripartite negotiations with workers representatives.

Long live workers unity! Struggle to the end to defend democratic rights and the right workers livelihood!

**Chinese Worker** is the newsletter of the Workers Autonomous Federation. Subscriptions are available from 47-49 Charing Cross Road, London WC2

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An Alliance for Workers' Liberty pamphlet

# Workers' Liberty '93...

...is three days of socialist debate from **Friday 2 to Sunday 4 July** at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, Archway, London N19, hosted by the **Alliance for Workers' Liberty**.

## FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

■ **What do we do about the police?** (3.30) with *Clara Buckley* (Orville Blackwood Campaign), *Joanne Rowe* (M25 campaign) and *Ruth Cockcroft* ● *John O'Mahony* (editor of *Socialist Organiser*) discusses the **Legacy of Max Shachtman** (8.15) ● **What should socialists say about the prison system?** (6.00)

### Debates:

■ **Which way forward in the unions?** (7.15) *Trudy Saunders* debates *Mike Power* (editor of *New Times*) ● **Should we build a Leninist Party?** (3.30) *Mike Marquese* (*Labour Briefing*) debates the AWL

### Course:

■ A two-part introduction to **Marxist economics** with *Martin Thomas* (Starts 6.00)

### Black History:

■ *Sab Sanghera* looks at the **Roots of modern British anti-Black racism** (7.15) ● *Dion D'Silva* examines the history of **Black workers in the British class struggle** (6.00) ● *Bruce Robinson* on **Music of Rebellion** (US jazz, soul and blues 1955-70) (7.15)

### Extra discussion:

■ *John O'Mahony* discusses **The record of the left on Palestine** — tracing the roots of 'left' anti-semitism to the 1930s (Starts 3.30)

## Women at Workers' Liberty

■ *Caroline Henry* asks **Why are men violent to women?** (Friday 2, 6.00)  
 ■ *Jill Mountford* looks at **Naomi Wolf and the beauty myth: "Dieting is the most potent political sedative in women's history"** (Saturday 3, 10.45)

## SATURDAY HIGHLIGHTS

■ Former Black Panther and current leader of the Los Angeles Coalition Against Police Abuse, *Michael Zinzun*, speaks on **What we can learn from the Black Panthers** (1.30) and **Los Angeles, One Year On** (5.00)

■ *Winfried Wolf* from Cologne looks at the **Rise of the German neo-Nazis** (10.45) and the **Crisis of German capitalism** (6.30)  
 ● *Anthony Arblaster* on **Opera** (3.00). ● *Cathy Nugent* on the **History of Rioting** (5.00) ● *Jeremy Corbyn MP* on **Can the Labour Party win?** (1.30) ● *Peter Tatchell* and *Maria Exall* on **What can we learn from Queer Politics?** (3.00) ● *John O'Mahony* on **The Revolutionary Paper** (6.30)

### International crisis:

● *Branka Magas* on **Yugoslavia** (1.30)

### Black History:

● *Gail Cameron* from *Socialist Organiser* editorial board on **Marcus Garvey and the Roots of American Black Nationalism** (10.45)

### Additional Sessions

● *Jim Kearns* discusses **What is Human Nature?** (10.45) ● *Alan Johnson* speaks on **Can we win a majority for socialist revolution?** ● *Alan Johnson* on

## Sinn Fein debate at Workers' Liberty '93

How do we stop the violence in the North of Ireland? How can the Protestant and Catholic workers come together? What should we say about the troops? These queries will be discussed at 1.45 on Sunday 4 July.

Workers' Liberty will be packed out. Be sure of getting in — get a programme now! [Programme gives entry to the event]  
 ● Before end June: unwaged £7; low-waged/students £11; waged £16.  
 ● On the door: unwaged £8; low-waged/students £12; waged £19.  
 ● One day tickets: £3 and £7 (waged) before the end of June.

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## Michael Zinzun and Darcus Howe speak at Workers' Liberty '93

MICHAEL ZINZUN, former Black Panther and current leader of the Los Angeles Coalition Against Police Abuse, will speak on Saturday 2 July. Michael will discuss ● The legacy of the Black Panthers and ● Los Angeles — One year on.

Michael will be joined by *Devil's Advocate* (Channel 4) host and political activist *Darcus Howe* for the discussion on Los Angeles.

What will socialism be like? (3.00) ● Who was Jesus Christ? (5.00) with *Rob Dawber* ● Do films lead to violence? with *Geoff Ward* ● Socialism and Zionism — a contradiction? (5.00) with *Vicki Morris*

## SUNDAY HIGHLIGHTS

■ *Dion D'Silva* (author of the AWL pamphlet *Malcolm X*) looks at **Martin Luther King** (1.45)

### Debates:

● **What should we say about Black Power?** (10.30) ● *Tom Rigby* debates *Workers' Power* on **The Class Nature of the Stalinist states** (10.30)

### Forum on Education:

■ *Liam Conway* on **What sort of Education do School Students need?** (10.30) and *Jason Barron* from Summerhill School on **How Summerhill works** (12.00)

■ *John O'Mahony* on the **Cliff-SWP tradition** (10.30)

■ *Matt Cooper* on **Post-Modernism** (3.00) ● *Mark Serwotka* on the **Unions and the Civil Service** (1.45)

■ **Nature versus nurture** with *Clive Bradley* (12.00)

■ **The Gene Revolution** (3.00) with *Les Hearn* (*Socialist Organiser* science correspondent)

### Ireland:

What should we say about the Troubles? *Pat Murphy* from AWL discusses with *Gerry MacLochlainn* from *Sinn Fein* (1.45)

### International:

● *Tom Rigby* on **South Africa** (1.45) ● *Don Filtzer* on **Russia in Crisis** (1.45)

### Black History:

● *Gail Cameron* discusses **Answers for the Black Community in Britain** (3.00)

### Extra guest speaker:

● *Al Richardson* looks at **The record of the British Trotskyists on the Labour Party** (3.00)



GRAFFITI

# Accept no imposters!

## GRAFITTI

**S**POT THE coppers competition — only one of the two following cases involves real police officers. The other involves con artists posing as coppers.

Case one involves police officers talking their way into the home of a 64 year old man and his two children, aged 16 and 11. Having gained entry they pocketed £1,500 worth of cash and jewels, and left.

Case two concerns Francis Milburn, a 22 year old student who, while studying for his exams late one night was disturbed by some noisy singing and shouting outside. Milburn went out and told the drinkers to shut up. Following a row the three burst into Milburn's house beat him up, half throttled his step-father in a headlock and threw him down a flight of stairs. Equal opportunities now being a very sensitive issue with policemen, they then threw his wife down after him.

Clearly, since case one involves no gratuitous use of violence, you will have guessed that these police officers were nothing but imposters. The police in case two, however, were the real thing: British police of the '90s. These three authentic upholders of Tory law and order finished their jollies for the evening by arresting three members of the family and charging Francis Milburn with assault. Naturally when they got to court they backed up their charges against Milburn with false statements. Last week these three — unlike most misbehaving policemen — were jailed for two years each.

The moral of this story: never let a copper into your home when you know him to be an imposter!

**I**T IS WITH GREAT regret that we have to report the premature retirement of US Army Major General Harold Cambell, who last month described his Commander in Chief, George Clinton as a "pot-smoking, womanising, gay-loving draft-dodging etc etc..." The source of this regret is that the alternative to accepting early retirement, along with a fine, and a letter of reprimand for violating the military code was a court marshal.

**W**AS THE last year of political struggle too much for you? Well, Socialist Outlook have the answer: their summer school in "scenic" Snowdonia. "Take a step back from the class struggle, world capitalist crisis, the collapse of Stalinism, meetings, pickets and demonstrations" reads the blurb. Outlook, have already taken one major "step back from the class struggle" this year by not publishing their paper for six weeks at the height of the miners' struggle, they are the front-running candidates to organise a retreat from politics to North Wales.

In the spirit of left unity Socialist Organiser is considering offering our services for a session at the school. Having condemned and rejected the plan for a wine tasting session because it could lead straight to a divisive political debate about the class nature of Bulgarian wine, we are offering them our services for a revolutionary bungi-jump. Supporters of Outlook are invited to bring their own elastic bands.

(The cost is £95, so you'd better send the cash to us for safe keeping.)

**C**APITALIST IDIOT of the week is John Amerman, chief executive of US toys giant, Mattel, famed for its Barbie Dolls. Amerman was offered the exclusive right to make the toys tied to the film Jurassic Park, mainly model dinosaurs, but also models of the human characters from the film such as Dickie Attenborough (anyone suggesting these are the same thing has no faith in the British industry). The film makers, MCA/Universal are hoping to raise \$1 billion from worldwide merchandising, more than four times the sum the film is expected to gross.

Was America's refund simply a gross error of judgement by Amerman, or did he have more principled motives for turning down a potentially lucrative contract. It seems that Amerman has been putting it about that he refused the deal because the film was "too violent".

Instead, Mattel's big product this summer will be a tie-in doll for the film "Last Action Hero", which casts Arnold Schwarzenegger as a muscle bound gun toting hard man who kills people. Arnie vetoed the original Arnie doll because, according to Amerman, "He didn't like his left bicep... he didn't think it had enough muscle."

With toy makers such as these know our children are safe from being influenced by violent small brained extinct animals on the screen.

**A**NOTHER JOYRIDER has been let off the hook by a lenient judge. This tearaway sped along on the A1, ignoring police signals to stop, before turning off and speeding through the town of Haddington at 60mph, mounting the pavement along the way. After he lost control and crashed the car he resisted arrest, assaulting one police officer, knocking his hat and spectacles off. Later he was discovered to be three times over the legal alcohol limit.

The judge let him off with one year on probation, 200 hours community service and an eight year driving ban. With our famously fair and impartial judiciary there can be no suggestion that the source of this leniency was the joy riders rank although he is the Duke of Hamilton. The Duke is Scotland's most senior peer, member of the Queen's bodyguard and hereditary keeper of the Queen's Edinburgh residence, Holyrood House.

The decision must have been influenced by Hamilton's exemplary record: this is the aristocrat's fifth drink driving conviction.

**I**T IS GOOD TO see that the British Government is putting up a stout rearguard action against those Brussels bureaucrats who are attempting to outlaw the British way of life. This time the valiant Michael Heseltine has blocked moves to improve standards on fire inspections, drills, the storage of combustible fuels and other health and safety measures.

The coincidental saving of £10 million that the Government will make by not employing extra fire inspectors is small change compared to our sovereign right to die in truly British fires.

# Britain's most anti-union paper?

## PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

**A**S THE SCANDAL surrounding the Tories' funding arrangements gains momentum, one newspaper in particular insists on linking the affair, in an "even handed" sort of way, to the issue of union funding of the Labour Party: *The Guardian*.

In fact, over the past couple of months, scarcely a day has gone by (or so it seems) without *The Guardian* carrying at least one article denouncing the unions' influence over the Labour Party and urging John Smith forward to a brave new world of classless politics and pacts with the Liberal Democrats.

This is not really very surprising: *Guardian* editor Peter Preston was an early fan of the 'Gang of Four' and in the mid-eighties was only just prevented from committing the paper to support for the SDP. More significantly, perhaps, the paper's chief political correspondents Patrick Wintour, Michael White and Keith Harper are all cronies of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.

The Wintour/White/Harper axis has succeeded in turning the *Guardian* into an unofficial mouthpiece of their chums

*"The cause of this dramatic change of line between the editions was a furious late night phone call to the news-desk from Tony Blair"*

on Labour's most extreme "modernising" wing.

In a recent spasm of thoroughly modern anti-union fervour, Keith Harper went so far as to urge the Labour leadership to declare a unilateral split from the unions.

Patrick Wintour favours a more softly-softerly approach and has still not given up hope that some "compromise" involving a "register of supporters" or a "topping-up" of the political levy might be found. But either way, the *Guardian* message is the same: Labour must break the union link. The alternative is (in a favourite *Guardian* expression) "the abyss".

Meanwhile the paper's Labour correspondent, Seamus Milne, has been busy covering the present round of union conferences. Milne is a conscientious reporter and has attempted to chronicle the unions' mounting opposition to the Labour "modernisers" in a reasonably objective manner. However, he has had to contend with the constant efforts of White and Wintour to tamper with his copy, giving it a slant more favourable to their chums Blair and Brown. Just before the MSF conference, for instance, Wintour changed a Milne article so that it confidently predicted a victory for Smith at the Conference.

According to *Private Eye*

(admittedly, not always the most reliable source, but in this case they got it right) a front-page story by Milne, stating that Blair had "suggested a compromise" to an unnamed "senior union leader" (in fact Tom Burlison of the GMB) was rewritten to suggest exactly the opposite in a later edition. The cause of this dramatic change of line between the early and late editions was a furious late night phone call to the *Guardian* news-desk from Tony Blair.

All of which may go some way to explaining how it is that Smith — once thought of as a canny operator — came to paint himself into his present corner over the union link. Some say that Smith's mistake has been to take too much notice of the baying of the Tory press. But that is unfair because even in these days of grey suits and "new thinking", the likes of the *Mail*, *Express* and *Telegraph* don't carry much weight at Walworth Road. *The Guardian*, however, does. Which is why, just at the moment, it's Britain's most anti-union newspaper.

# When horseplay becomes harassment

## WOMEN'S EYE



By Jean Lane

**W**OMEN WHO refuse to be touched up, groped or otherwise sexually harassed at work are used to being accused of having "no sense of humour". It has taken many years of fighting and educating to get the issue taken seriously; ie. not as "only a bit of fun, darling" but as a real attack on her right to work in a harassment-free environment. Those who do complain are

attacked for being stuffy, humourless and moralistic. Those who don't - for fear of being considered any of the above — are conveniently described as "liking it" or even "asking for it", and therefore prey to all the pinchers, gropers, creeps and filthy-minded gobshites who are within grabbing distance.

The other accusation that women who complain get thrown at them is that they can't take men's natural behaviour, particularly if it occurs in a predominantly male workplace or one in which offensive behaviour is the norm. "You shouldn't have taken on a man's job if you can't take what comes with it" was the comment of one harasser of a woman working on a building site.

But it is not always the case that what men consider horseplay, women find offensive. There is no 'male nature' which makes him crude, nor is it a female trait to find crudity offensive. Many men find overtly sexist behaviour uncomfortable or distasteful. Most fail to act for fear of being considered

'unmanly'.

A man who worked in the underground engineering works at Acton a few years ago preferred to have a Freedom For Blacks in South Africa poster above his workbench instead of his work mates' choice of the bodies of naked women. Some of his work mates complained and demanded that he take his "offensive political" poster down. When the boss intervened and told him to remove it, he replied, "I will, when they remove theirs".

Fortunately for him he was made of strong enough stuff to withstand the consequent accusations of being a "poof-ta", the sneers and, in some cases, hatred. Not all men are, and that's why they don't speak out. It doesn't mean they like it, any more than, if women don't complain or if they blush and giggle, it means they like it either.

This is why, despite the fact that women have suffered sexual harassment, many without recognition, for years, the case of the male security guard who has won

£4,500 compensation for being sexually harassed by his boss is important.

It gives the signal to men that it is OK to speak out, either on their own account or on behalf of women. It helps reinforce what women sufferers have always known; that sexual harassment, by whoever and to whoever, is not acceptable behaviour.

"Matthew Gates said of his bosses' behaviour "It was never just horseplay. I tried not to take any notice at first but then I was offended by it". He said that he found the behaviour of his boss, who would grab him from behind and simulate intercourse with him, shocking. He's right. It is: that one human being can force unwanted physical advances on another.

Whether Matthew Gates has an opinion on the harassment of women or not I don't know. It doesn't matter. The effect of his speaking out affects them positively anyway because it helps to marginalise the harassers whose behaviour is not an expression of 'normal male attitudes'.

# SLUMMING IT!

## The market-made youth housing disaster

By Hannah

**N**OTHING SUMS up Tory Britain as clearly as the sight of sharp suited city executives marching past a sixteen year old huddled under a blanket in a doorway in central London. The executive is probably getting a slice of the £4.5 billion given out in mortgage tax relief while the homeless youth is a victim of massive cuts in housing budgets and attacks on benefit rights.

Housing is one of the clearest examples of how the market system fails. Shelter, the housing campaign, estimate that 156,000 16 to 25 year olds are homeless.

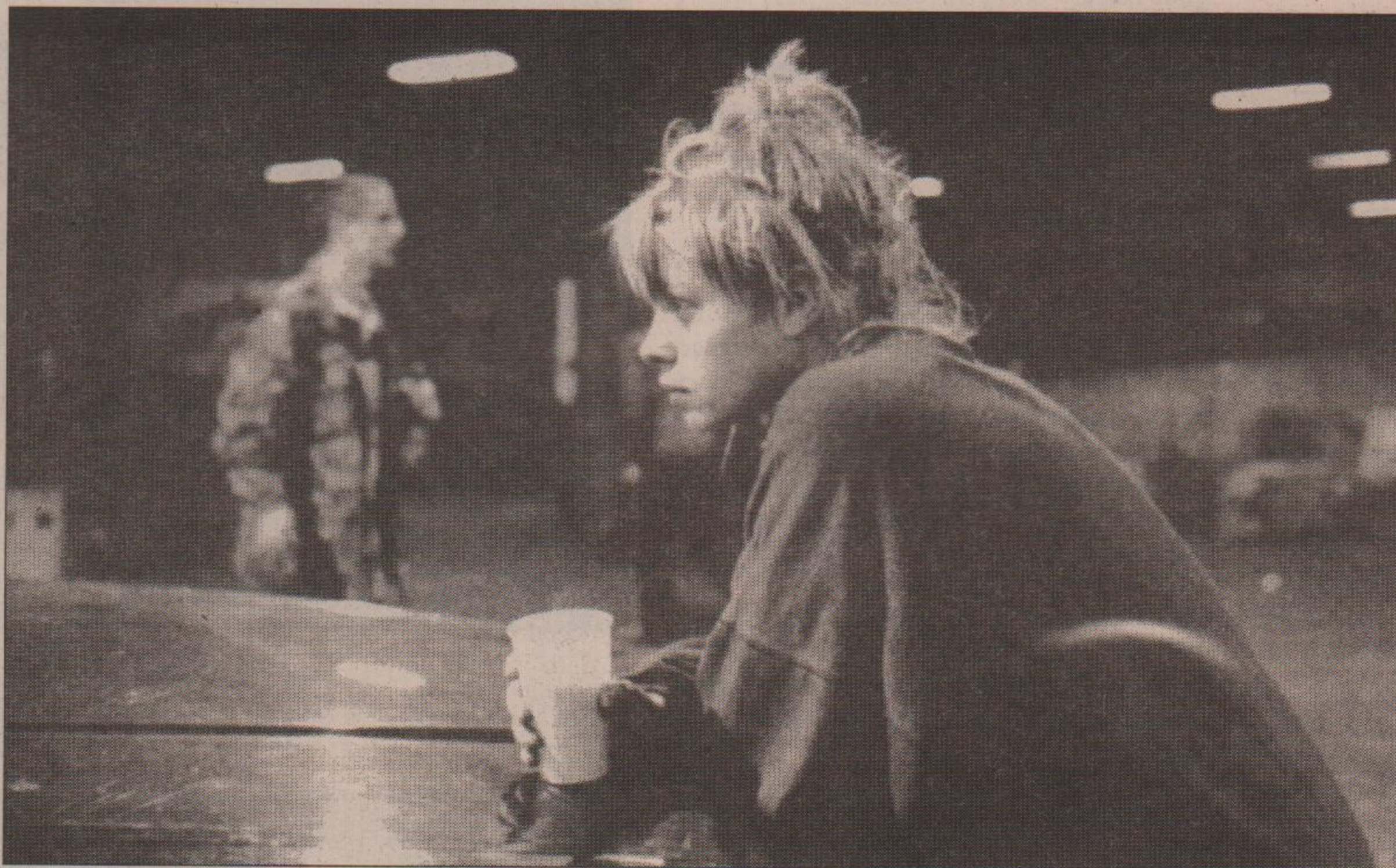
Hostels turn away 7,500 people every month because they have no space.

Councils do have a legal duty to house the homeless, but only if they are deemed to be 'vulnerable and in need'. Councils claim that single young people are neither vulnerable nor in need. They simply will not house us.

In Britain in 1993 over a million families are homeless; that is 3 million individual adults and children. And yet, 600,000 properties lie empty and unused!

The housing crisis is not some 'natural' disaster. It is a direct result of the profit system.

To the market "demand" is not "real" if it is not backed up by money. It is not a "demand" if it is only an expression of a basic human need — the need for accom-



modation — by human beings who lack sufficient money.

For example, the 3,000 sleeping rough in London during the economic boom did not represent a "market demand" — the profit-crazy developers of the billion pound Canary Wharf office blocks did.

The Tories, who worship the market, have made a bad situation worse:

- The Tories have got rid of council housing;
- They have savaged funding;
- They have stopped councils building new houses at the same

time as forcing them to sell off their housing stocks.

In 1968, 133,145 local council houses were completed.

In 1990 this had dropped to only 13,434. Housing Associations provided only an extra 11,743 homes.

Yet a government body, the Audit Commission, has estimated that to fill the housing shortfall, 740,000 houses need to be built within the next ten years.

Not only have the Tories savagely cut the supply of affordable housing, they have also taken away from millions of people their ability to pay for the housing they

have. The housing benefits system is a joke! Delays of months mean that many landlords will not accept tenants on benefits and evict tenants for not paying rent.

Thousands of young people have been thrown on to the streets because the Tories withdrew benefits from 16 and 17 year olds. Now the Tories are working on plans for new cuts in housing rights.

We live in the midst of appalling homelessness. In our cities people die of exposure on the streets. Yet the Tory press make propaganda, not against the squallor of mass homelessness, but against people who fight homelessness by finding an unused property and squatting in it. Tory Ministers are going to make squatting a criminal offence! It will then become the legal duty of the police to evict every squatter.

**"The market has no answer to this problem. Our demand for housing is not profitable."**

How many more youth do these people want to drive onto the streets? Is it part of their return to "Victorian values" to have as many poor on the streets as possible?

It is disgusting that the rulers of our society value the rights of a property owner to his empty property above the right to shelter of human beings sleeping in the street.

Most young people are affected by the housing crisis. Millions of us can not afford to leave home. Millions live in dangerous and unhealthy accommodation, at the mercy of rip-off landlords. Hundreds of thousands sleep on friends' floors or in shelters. Every day more youth are forced into sleeping rough.

The market has no answer to this problem. Our demand for housing is not profitable. We don't have the vast sums that buy the keys to yuppie flats.

The only way out of this crisis is: \* A massive government programme of building decent public



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## Labour fails youth

**T**HERE ARE probably no real, existing LPYS branches in the country. No youth join the Party. Why not? Well perhaps Alun Michael MP has the answer. Michael, Labour's Home Affairs spokesperson, welcomed the announcement that the government would test new, bigger, police batons. In doing so he outdid former Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke from the right. "It is tragic that 15 months have been wasted by Mr Clarke's unwillingness to consider the issue seriously," wailed Alun.

Last weekend London's Metropolitan Police Chief, Paul Condon, said he thought that it was only a matter of time before the police were armed.

Alun's response? He wittered on about the great pressure the police were under.

Alun Michael is one reason why socialist-minded youth hold the Labour Party in contempt. Other reasons are sat alongside him on Labour's front bench.

Our party — the party of the trade unions — is led by people who refused to back the miner's one-day strike on 2 April, who make cuts and sack workers at local level, and during the recent Lloyds of London crisis, where rich investors lost money, were again to the right of the Tories, demanding that the government bail the 'names' out.

In 1987, the Labour Party effectively wound up the Young Socialists — it was too left wing. Now there is nowhere for socialist youth to meet, discuss and campaign within the party. All that youth see is pro-police pro-establishment Labour politicians. It is hardly surprising young people do not join the Party anymore.

Labour's membership is falling — it is not just youth who do not see the point in joining a party which presents itself as a shadow of the Tories.

Labour needs to turn outwards and fight. When the Tories say we need more, better armed police the Party must speak out for the intended victims: youth and the labour movement

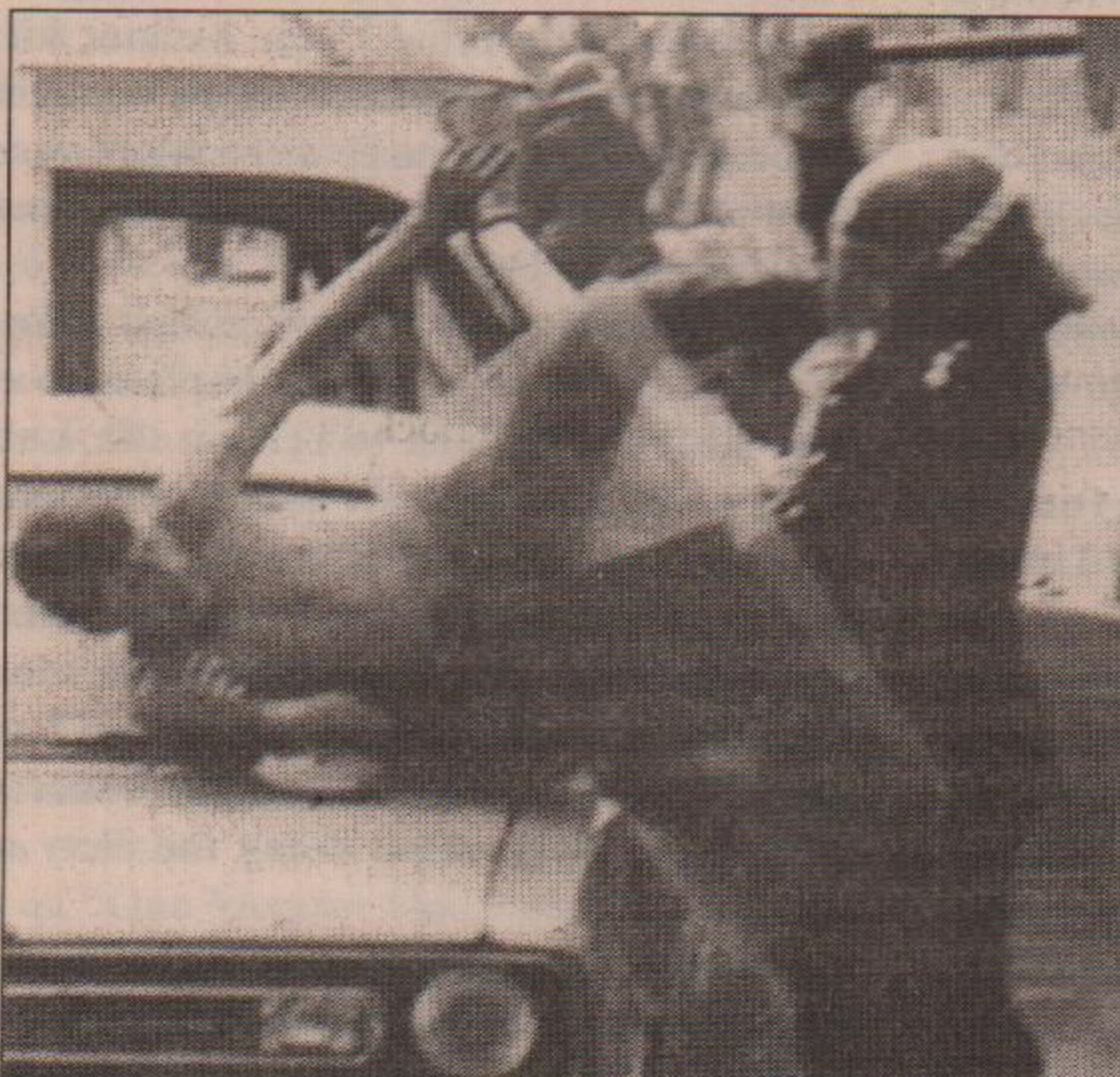
The miners and the printworkers, who have faced police violence on picket lines, know very well that the police are a real threat to the labour movement. The party of the labour movement must campaign for a more accountable, weaker police force, less capable of battering and brutalising.

The Tories are weak and Labour could drive them out of office if our leaders get off their knees.

As part of the process of building a Labour Party capable of standing up to the Tories we need a refunding of the Labour Party Young Socialists.

An LPYS policed by Labour Party Head Quarters will not do — youth will not join. Youth need an independent YS and the right to campaign and fight back against the Tories.

### The noble art of self defence!



A good old British bobby defends himself on a picket line — bless him!

## Fightback in Luton

By Jeni

**Y**outh Fightback's series of meetings demanding an end to police harassment, continued with a large meeting in Luton on Thursday 10 June.

40 youth, many from the local community campaign Exodus discussed how to deal with the police. At least one person who spoke was facing a court case after being fitted up for a drugs offence.

The Luton police turned on Exodus after they organised free raves and squatted empty properties to house homeless people.

# The uneasy alliance

# The Labour Party and the

The leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party have failed once again to dig up the Party's trade union roots. The campaign waged by *Socialist Organiser* and others to "keep the link" with Labour helped focus the militant rank and file of the unions against the proposal to cut the Party off from the unions. The opposition of key right wing trade union leaders like GMB's John Edmonds shows once again that the labour movement is not as dead as faint hearts and sectarians have been telling us. But the fight is not over yet. The right wing will try again. Allan Street puts the story into historical perspective.

THE RECENT ROUND of trade union conferences has seen a series of defeats for the Labour Party leadership in its attempts to undermine and eventually destroy the links between the Labour Party and the trade unions.

But no one should allow themselves to be lulled into a false sense of security by the setbacks suffered by the Party leadership. The current attempts to unravel the Party-union links are not some passing fad on the part of the "modernisers".

They represent the latest upsurge of a political tradition stretching back decades which is completely hostile to the idea of class politics and class based political organisation.

The Labour Party was set up by the trade unions at the turn of the century as the Labour Representation Committee [LRC]. Its role was to represent the interests of organised Labour in parliament.

As Keir Hardie, one of the pioneers of the new organisation put it in 1903: "When acting in the House of Commons, they (members of the LRC) should be neither socialists, Liberals, nor Tories, but a Labour Party".

In subsequent decades there were certainly bitter conflicts over what policies Labour MPs and the Labour Party as a whole should be pursuing. But the organic relationship between the trade unions and the Labour Party as the two wings of the labour movement was taken as read.

Criticism of the role played by the trade unions in these years tended to come from the left rather than the right. But the left did not attack the existence of Labour union links. It focussed its criticism on the undemocratic way in which the trade union block vote was used to guarantee right wing control of the Labour Party.

Things began to change — dramatically — in the early 1950s.

From the point of view of the so-called "revisionists" the Labour Party had fulfilled its role. The welfare state had been established. Council housing was — supposedly — solving the housing crisis. And some industries had been nationalised.

Of course, capitalism was still intact. And many reforms of the post-war Labour government were to the benefit of capitalism. But, in any case, it had never been the programme of the revisionists to overthrow capitalism.

In the eyes of the revisionists the working class was now guaranteed security "from the cradle to the grave". Class conflict was a thing of the past and workers were no longer the pariahs of civic society. This kind of idiot optimism was best summed up by Anthony Crosland's *The Future of Socialism*:

"One cannot imagine today (1956) a deliberate offensive alliance between government and employers against the unions on the 1921 or 1925-6 or 1927 model, with all the brutal paraphernalia of wage cuts, national lock-outs and anti-union legislation; or say, a serious attempt to enforce, as so often happened in the 1920s a coal policy to which the miners bitterly objected."

Soon, the 1950s ancestors of the bright young things of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee were churning out pamphlets and books arguing that the working class was dying out and that the Labour Party should therefore become a party of "the people" in general, rather than remain the political wing of the labour movement.

*Must Labour Lose?*, published in 1960, for example, attributed Labour's successive election defeats to three factors: the Party's support for public ownership; and "weakness and disunity" in the leadership of the Party.

An additional reason for the revisionist ideologues' hostility to the Labour-union links resulted from the role played by the union block votes at Party conference.

In the past the block vote had been the safeguard of the right wing. But in 1959 the union block votes defeated the Party leadership in its attacks on nuclear disarmament and public ownership.

Labour won successive General Elections in 1964 and 1966. You did not need to be a genius to work out there was something deeply flawed in the revisionists' argument that Labour's identification with "a declining working class" prevented it from winning elections.

The theory of the "declining working class" looked even more disreputable in the early 1970s when class conflict reached a level not seen since the 1926 General Strike. Mass pickets shut down Saltley coal depot, the threat of a general strike freed the Pentonville dockers and miners' strikes brought down the Tory government.

Trade union struggle in the 1960s and 1970s was also powerful enough to defeat some of the right wing policies pursued by Labour governments. The 1964-70 government was defeated in its attempt to introduce anti-union legislation, whilst the "Winter of Discontent" defeated the incomes policies of the 1974-79 government.

The response of the revisionists to such events was not to re-assess their theories about the end of class struggle, but to intensify their hostility towards effective trade unionism.

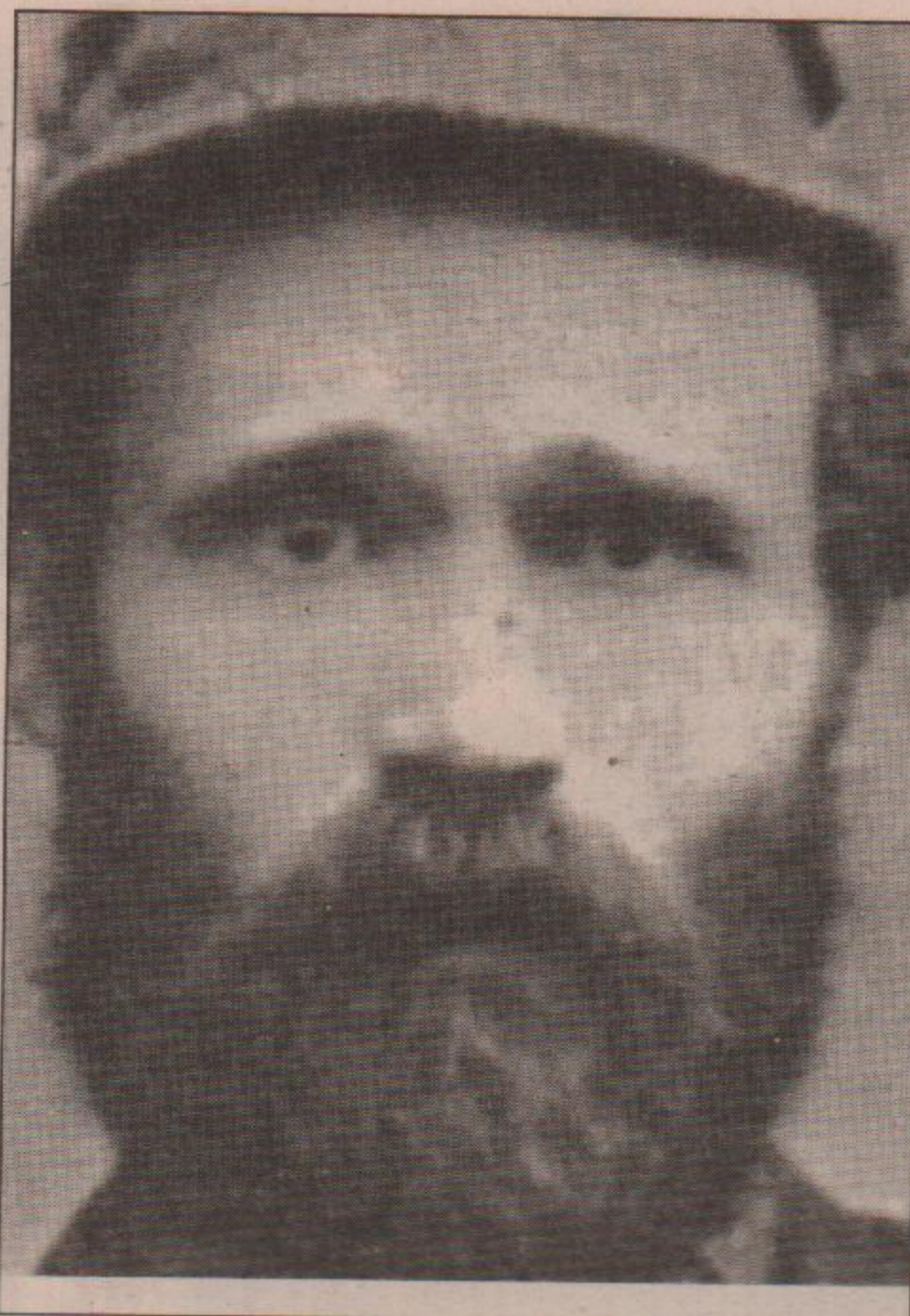
Crosland's basic argument was that working people had been integrated into society as a whole, and that labour should therefore cease to be a "narrow" working-class-based party.

The revisionists' revamped version of this argument was that organised labour, in the form of the trade unions, had grown too big for its boots. The problem was not capitalist society, but trade union resistance to the workings of capitalism!

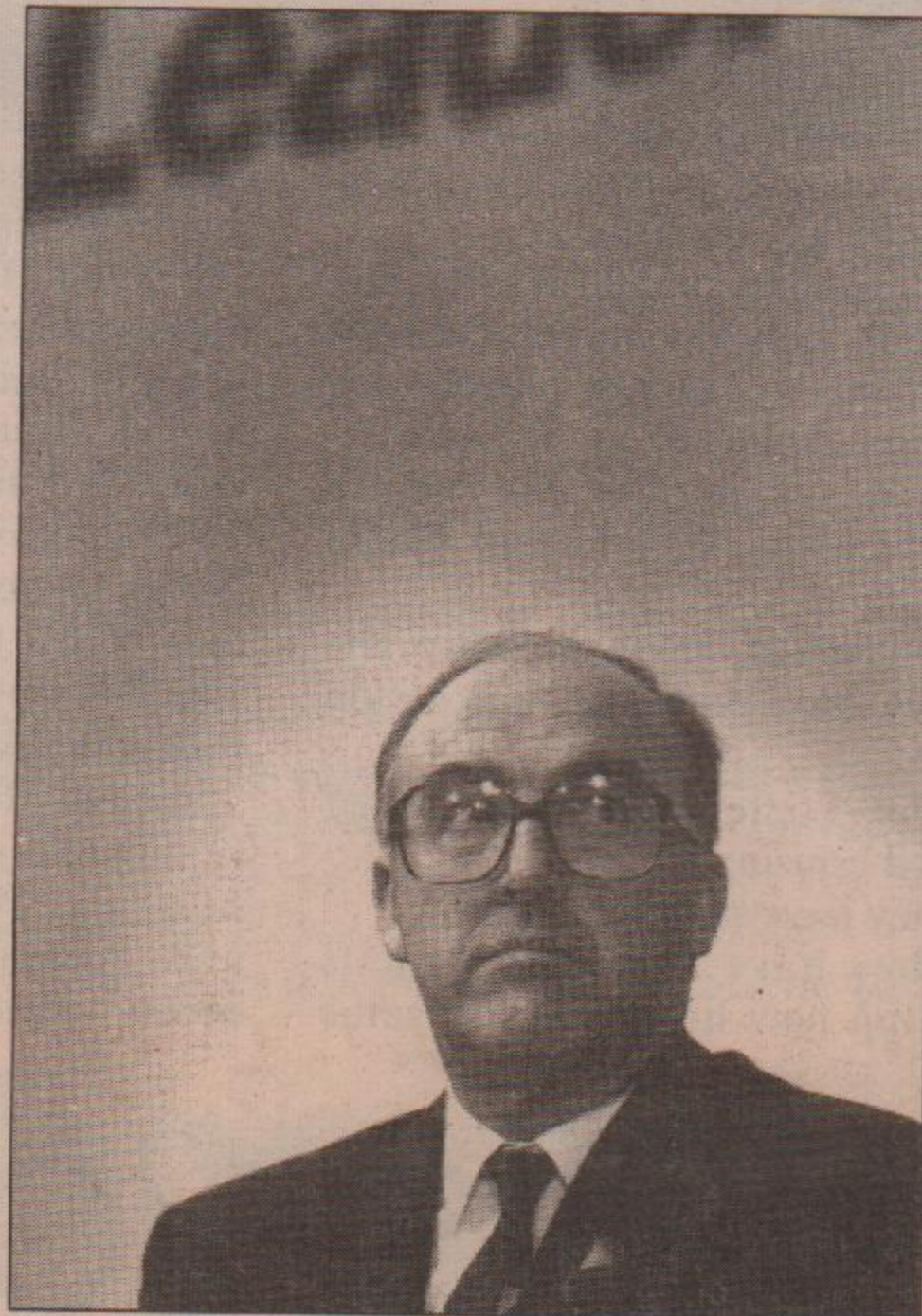
*"The block vote was wielded in support of the leadership's onslaught on Party democracy. In the aftermath of the 1992 election defeat, the leadership turned on the hand that fed it."*

Trade unionists undermined the economy (as in the "Winter of Discontent") and needed to be brought to heel (through anti-union legislation). And the Labour Party itself should distance itself from these troublemakers (by breaking the Labour-union links).

The revisionists' hostility to the involvement of the trade unions in the Labour Party was reinforced in the years 1979-81, when, for their



Keir Hardie. The pioneers of the Labour Party at least understood that it was there to represent organised labour



All the signs are that Smith will not get his way on OMOV. But we should not be complacent

own particular reasons, trade union leaders used their voting power at Labour Party conferences to back democratic reforms of the Party, such as automatic re-selection of MPs and widening the franchise for the election of Party leader.

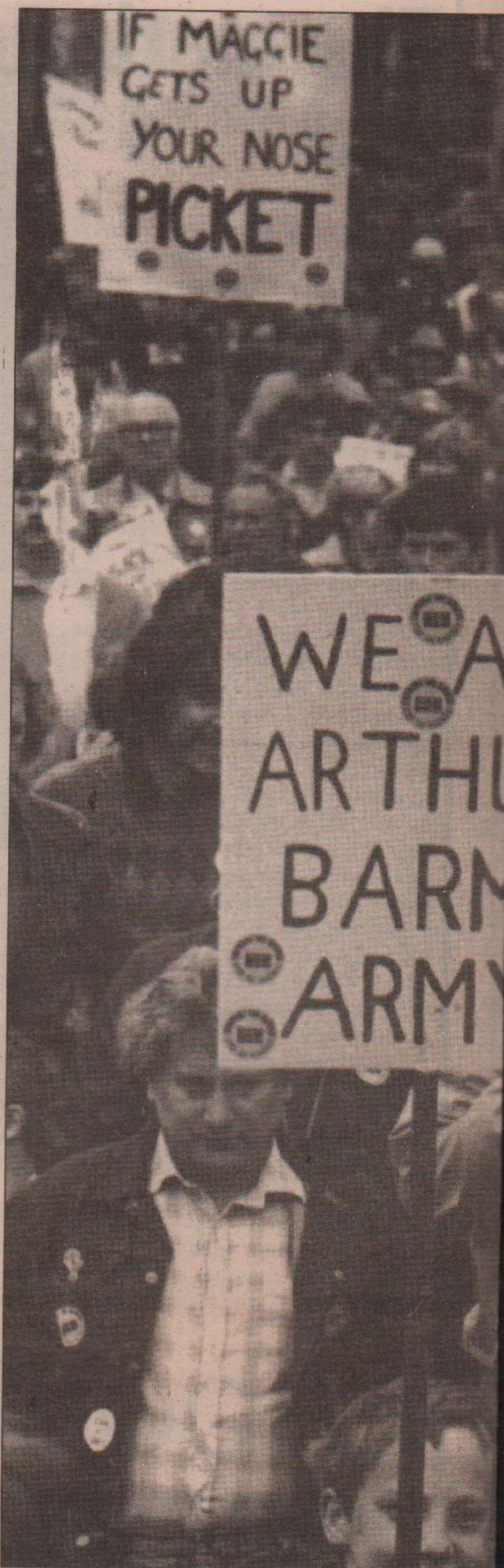
The extent of this hostility found expression, in none too subtle a form, in Dennis Healey's recollections of these years in his autobiography, published in 1989.

Labour links with the unions, claimed Healey, prevented it from pointing the finger of guilt for the 1979 election defeat: "The Labour Party's financial and constitutional links with the unions made it difficult for us to draw too much attention to their role in our defeat."

The unions were also at fault in backing the reform of the Labour Party in the years 1979-81: "Again and again in the critical years after the 1979 election, incoherence or incompetence in the trade union leadership led us to disaster".

The unions were also to blame for the Thatcher years: "The reasons why the Labour Party failed for so long to benefit from the unpopularity of Thatcherism were... the image of division, the excessive influence of dogmas which have long since lost their relevance and the role of the trade unions in deciding both its policy and its leadership."

Healey concludes: "The trade unions are probably the Labour Party's greatest problem... The Labour Party will have less chance of winning an election so long as it remains dependent on trade union money, and so long



Kinnock launched his offensive on the unions

as the trade unions insist on controlling its policies through their votes at its annual conferences."

It took time for Kinnock, and now Smith, to begin to implement the Healeyite programme for breaking up the labour movement. In the years 1979-81 the left was in the ascendancy. Then, from 1984 to early 1985 the miners' strike was in full swing.

Kinnock could launch his revisionist offensive on the labour movement only on the back of the Tories' offensive against the working class. *Independent* journalist Peter Kellner hit the nail on the head, for once, when he wrote in his introduction to that piece of required reading for masochists *Thorns and Roses* (Kinnock's speeches 1983-91):

"Had the miners' strike succeeded in forcing the Coal Board to abandon its plans to close pits, Kinnock's plans to reform the Labour Party would have been set back many years."

It says much for the Kinnock-Smith "modernisation" of the Labour Party that the precondition for its implementation was a major defeat of the working class by the Tories: "tough guy" Kinnock could not have succeeded without the Tories first doing the dirty work for him.

Through the mid-to-late 1980s a series of reforms were bureaucratically and undemocratically imposed upon the Labour Party by the revisionist "modernisers".

Socialists were expelled. Left-wing policies



# trade unions



on the back of the Tories' attack on the working class and the defeat of the miners' strike

were abandoned. Automatic reselection of MPs was undermined (though not completely destroyed). The youth section of the Labour Party was shut down. Policy formation was increasingly concentrated in the Party leadership at the expense of Party conference.

Throughout this period the trade union block vote was dutifully wielded at Labour Party conference in support of the leadership's onslaught on Party democracy. Then, in the aftermath of the 1992 election defeat, the leadership turned on the hand that fed (and paid) it.

Although the issue of trade union involvement in the Labour Party had never been an issue in the election campaign, Walworth Road officials fed the press with material alleging that the Party's links with the unions had cost Labour the elections.

It was the signal for a renewed offensive in pursuit of achieving the long-standing goal of undermining the Labour Party's links with the unions.

In the short term Smith has suffered a setback. Despite the wordy-wise nominations of the master strategists of the *Guardian*, all the signs are that Smith is not going to get his way on "One Member One Vote".

In fact, the biggest danger to Labour-union links right now probably does not come from the full-blooded onslaught from the likes of Smith and Jordan, but from all the clever "face-saving compromises" being dreamt up

by union leaders, the Labour Party soft left and of course the master strategists of the *Guardian*.

Such compromises mean a step towards abolition of Labour-union links. In the revisionist view of the harmonious workings of capitalism there is simply no place for a union-based Labour Party. If need be, they will settle for a compromise this year, and then come back next year for another compromise, and again the following year until they achieve their goal.

The events of the past twelve months have seen the right wing come out into the open. Their goal is not the "modernisation" of the Labour Party, but throwing the labour movement back to the nineteenth century, when the trade unions lacked any representation of their own in Parliament.

By a curious coincidence — if it is a coincidence — the Labour leadership's goal is a mirror image of the Tories' given that their attacks on trade unions would leave them as devoid of rights as they were in the nineteenth century.

Instead of waiting for the right wing to come back with another attack on Labour-union rights, the left should fight to begin to set the agenda, by strengthening Labour-union links and transforming Labour into a party which champions workers' interests not just in Parliament but also in the workplace and on the streets.

# Tory gangsters!

**“OFFICIAL POLITICS IS NOTHING BUT an organised conspiracy of**

**the rich against the poor”.** That may sound too sweeping and too melodramatic, but it is an old truth. In Britain now, when some of the Tory Party's

dirty financial arrangements are being uncovered to the eyes of a startled public, it is increasingly plain truth. The link between the Tory Party and big-time swindler Asil Nadir was only one knot in a giant net with which the rich ensnare our society.

According to figures in *The Guardian*, during the year which ended on the day they won the last General Election — 9 April 1992 — the Tory Party spent £27 million. Income was £22 million, leaving them £5 million in debt. They admit to spending £11 million of the £27 million on defeating Labour in the General Election. Probably they spent much more than that.

The network is not only national, but international too.

Of the Tory Party's £22 million admitted income £19 million came from anonymous donors — that is from people like Asil Nadir and God knows who else.

Amongst the more fantastic allegations going around now is the story that £7 million was donated by the Saudi Arabian government just before the last General Election. According to this story they grew worried in Riyadh that Britain might cease to be a safe place for financiers and property speculators, and rushed in emergency funds to ensure that the Tory campaign to keep Britain safe for royal Arab and other rich bandits did not fail for lack of funds.

Whether that story is true or not, it is true that the rich and the powerful in our society, the “classes against the masses”, do club together — socially, financially, politically and, if they “have to”, militarily — to make sure that all the important things go their way.

They own the land and the machines and the offices and the houses which we must have to live; they buy the labour power of the people who do not own land and machinery, and who must sell their power to labour in order to live. They have immense wealth. They use it with discretion, but without scruple or inhibition. They defend what they own and relentlessly maintain — behind a democratic facade where possible — the control of their class over the rest of us who live in capitalist society.

The Tory Party is the hub of this ruling class political conspiracy in Britain. With chilling single-mindedness and ruthlessness, and a lubricating, muffling hypocrisy, they do *whatever* they think it is in their interest to do. They stop at nothing where their fundamental interests are involved.

When they needed to beat down the challenge of the 1984-5 miners' strike, they did not hesitate to break their own laws. They sent armies of policemen to use as much violence as necessary, *irrespective of the law*, to ‘contain’ picketing miners. The Tories behaved as organised gangsters for the ruling class — gangsters with the power to make laws as well as break them!

(Seven years later — this, after all, in a country where the rule of impartial law prevails, however belatedly — the courts admitted that the Tory-controlled police trampled on the legal rights of miners, and ordered that the authorities pay compensation to the miners — whose defeat by such methods was now history, out of which poisonous offshoots and tendrils were already woven into the woof and warp of society).

Naturally the Tories take the gangster approach to money too.

Asil Nadir is only one of a vast army of parasites, thieves and gangsters who pay tribute — gratitude money, and protection money too — to the Tory Party. As Lord McAlpine, the candid recent ex-Treasurer of the Tory Party, has said, the Tory Party leaders would only refuse to take money if they knew for sure it was stolen money; and there are as many ways of willingly “not knowing” as there are flexible definitions of stealing!

And what are the outright thieves and legally liable looters like Nadir but capitalist gangsters who have broken the ‘trade union’ rules — the civilised rules, embedded in law, for fleecing the people and looting society, worked out over centuries by the ruling class cartel to which the money lords, land lords and machine lords belong?

On behalf of this cartel of the big and little Nadirs and of the Margaret and Mark Thatchers, the Tiny Rowlands and your grubbing neighbourhood property developer, the Tories in power have hobbled the labour movement and smashed up the welfare state. They have cut taxes for the rich and raised them for the poor.

In a long series of “privatisations” — from gas to water — they have asset-stripped the people as spectacularly as bandits on a mail train throwing sacks to their accomplices riding behind. Nothing like the asset-stripping of the last fifteen years has been seen in Britain since the great confiscation of public land between the 16th and 18th centuries — on which so many of the great fortunes of Britain's rich were founded.

No wonder the well-off make sure that the Tory Party is lavishly supplied with money to fight elections and run campaigns on their behalf! From vast sums donated to the Tory treasury — often, despite the denials, in exchange for some tawdry state “honour” — to the paying of Norman Lamont's personal legal bills by an “anonymous” benefactor hustled up for him by Tory Central Office, the rich make sure the Tories are alright. They are grateful to their agents at Westminster!

Like the Tory Party itself, the capitalist system the Tories represent is rotten to the core. Both are long past their burial date!

## AGAINST THE TIDE

By Sean Matgamna

# Democracy and the rig

This is part one of Martin Thomas's contribution to a symposium on nationalism and self-determination published in the current issue of the American radical magazine *New Politics*.

**C**APITALISM, AS Marx pointed out, gives the notion of human equality, for the first time, "the fixity of a popular prejudice." Only *consistent democracy* — the translation of that "prejudice" into conscious politics — can underpin workers' unity. The "National Question" for socialists is, I believe, a subsidiary of this question of consistent democracy.

Democracy is more than individual rights because people are more than individuals. They identify themselves as part of a community and, in the modern world, as part of a nation. Arabs in Israel have more individual rights than Arabs in Syria; yet the Arabs in Israel feel oppressed because democracy is denied to their nation.

Capitalist production and trade needs *arenas*: areas of sufficient size in which goods and people can move easily, and in which there is a common language, common laws and common taxes. Historically, therefore, capitalism tends to create *nations*: groups of people marked out by a particular territory, home market, language, and (arising from all those) culture and sense of common identity.

Nations conquer other nations: they take control of the territory, plunder the economy, downgrade the language and culture, and treat the conquered nation's people as less than equal. Anything less than full support for the right of the conquered nation to self-determination — that is, to independence if it wants it — is not democratic. If the workers of the conquering nation deny to the conquered nation the right to self-rule that their own nation enjoys, then they are *nationalist*. They are identifying with their own nation's interests — that is, primarily, with the interests of their own nation's bosses — at the expense of the principle of equal rights for all. Any obstacle to links between the workers of the two nations which might be created by the independence of the conquered nation (for example, through greater difficulties in travel and communication) must be very minor compared to the obstacle created by such acceptance of national privilege. In such clear-cut cases, there should be no room for argument among socialists; and, indeed, in

the classic Marxist debates there was none. Whatever the arguments about central and eastern Europe, Rosa Luxemburg was as unequivocal as Lenin about demanding the right to independence for the clear-cut colonies of the European powers.

Many of the colonial peoples were not yet fully-formed nations, but the left supported the right of the emergent national movements to pursue and complete the process of nation-formation. For much of this century, while the European powers held lots of colonies, and then were gradually forced to release them, the "National Question" was mainly about such clear-cut cases. It was a central question not only for an often weak and beleaguered working-class socialist movement, but also for much more powerful nationalist movements. Thus, over the decades, the *socialist* debates about the National Question have become corrupted and confused by *nationalist* answers.

*"The National Question has come to be seen as one of backing 'good' (oppressed) nations against 'bad' (oppressor) nations."*

**T**HE NATIONAL Question has come to be seen as one of backing "good" (oppressed) nations against "bad" (oppressor) nations, with the corollary that socialist revolutionaries are distinguished from mere bourgeois nationalists by their more militant, extreme, or even revanchist advocacy of the cause of the "good" nation. It is true that the nationalism of an oppressed nation is different from the nationalism of an oppressor nation. The demand for free speech from those socially bred to deference and self-effacement is different from the same demand from those educated in the voice of command. Yet free speech is only free speech, not a guarantee that what the previously self-effacing say must be true. National rights are only national rights, not a guarantee



The Intifada continues. From the Palestinian Arabs' sense of common culture, common identity and common oppression comes a strong drive to constitute themselves as a nation

that what the previously oppressed nation does with those rights must be ideal. Nationalism of any stripe, putting nation above class, is alien to socialism.

Example: the Israel/Palestine question. A bookish reading of the "right of nations to self-determination" would lead socialists to side with the Israeli Jews. The Israeli Jews are definitely a nation, with a territory, home market, language, culture and sense of common identity. The Palestinian Arabs are dispersed over many territories, have no common economic life, and share a language with other Arabs. But politics is not arithmetic. Nations *develop*, and they develop out of political movements as well as out of long-term economic processes. The struggle of an oppressed nation is *generally* a struggle to move from semi-nationhood to a fully-fledged nation. Out of the Palestinian Arabs' sense of common culture, common identity, and common oppression comes a strong drive to constitute themselves as a nation. For them to do so — i.e., to bring together as many of their people as wish to come in an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza — does not entail oppressing any other people or building any new barriers to workers' unity. Consistent democracy requires recognising their right to such self-determination. As long as that right is denied, there is a barrier to Arab-Jewish workers' unity. Many socialists however go on

to denounce any "compromise with Zionism" as weak-kneed liberalism. The Israeli Jews, they say, have no right to self-determination. They are an oppressor (bad) nation. They must dissolve themselves into an Arab state. In such politics, national self-determination — Palestinian-Arab self-determination — becomes a good cause outside and above any considerations of consistent democracy or workers' unity.

*"Marxists have to think independently, not write a plus wherever the ruling class writes a minus."*

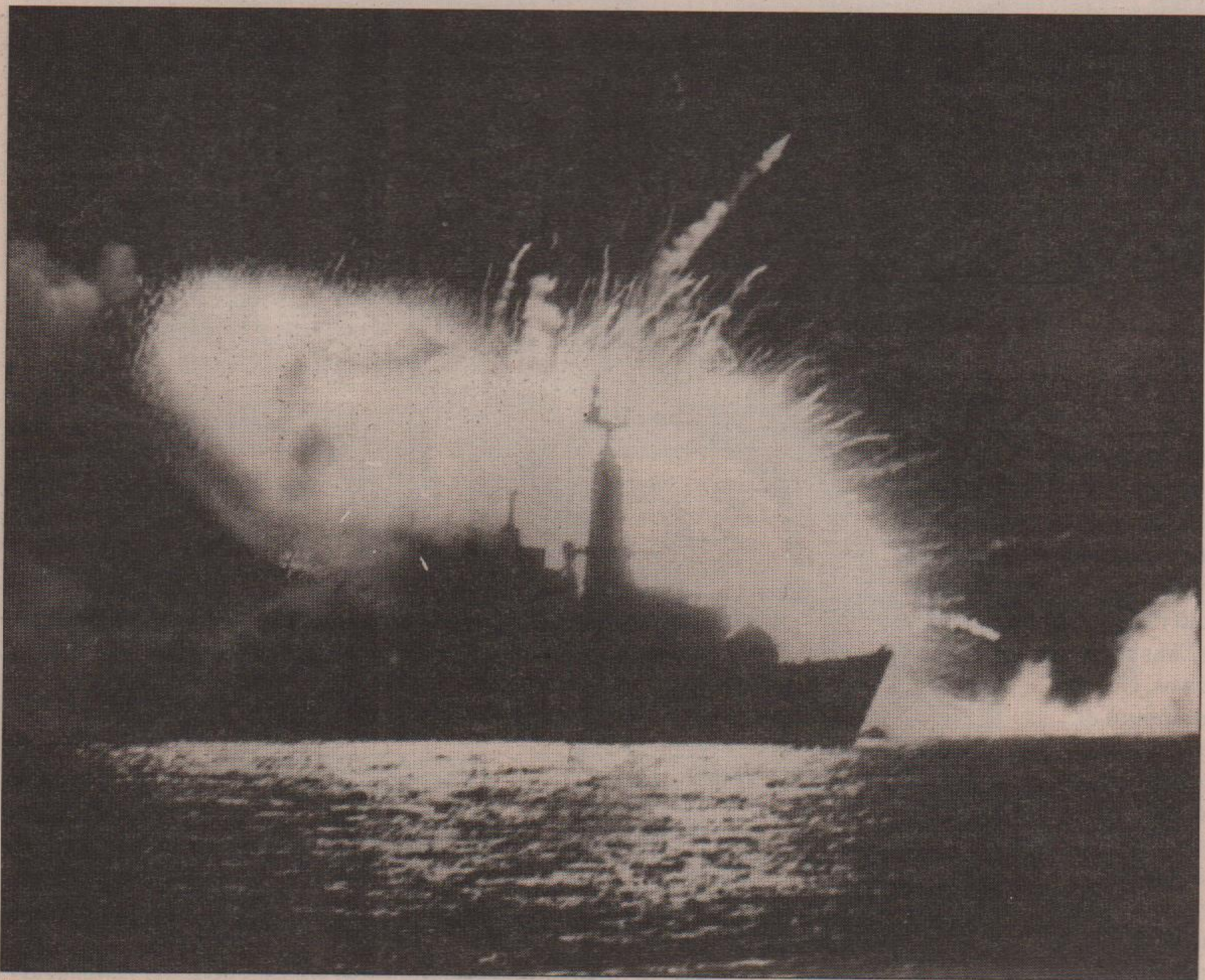
Nationalist ideology has also tangled the national question confusingly with questions of economic development. National independence of oppressed nations is proposed, not as a democratic right, but as a step desirable for economic development, especially industrial development. Usually the national independence of former European colonies in Africa and Asia did assist industrial development, for various reasons. But that is not the essence of the question. If national self-determination is a democratic right, which it is, then it is a democrat-

ic right which remains valid even if independence is likely to slow down economic development. If there are very clear indications that independence will slow down economic development, then there will be a strong case for the Marxists of the nation concerned to oppose secession, but still no case for the Marxists of the dominant nation to deny the right of secession. For socialists, industrial development based on class exploitation — and that is what has been at stake in all these cases, and must be what is at stake unless a socialist revolution overshadows and conditions the National Question — cannot be an overriding consideration. The political conditions for working-class unity are more important.

However, the nationalist posing of the question has been influential — so influential that when economic problems arise after national independence, as they must, they are attributed to the independence not being "real." The workers are called on to put their weight behind the efforts of their bosses to win an improved position in international capitalist competition, under the banner of "real" independence. In a sort of international version of the old Stalinist theory of the "anti-monopoly alliance," all the efforts of poorer and weaker capitalist states to improve their position relative to the stronger ones are considered "progressive".

Thus some Argentine Marxists have been campaigning for a "Second Independence" of their

# hts of nations



It was possible to oppose Thatcher's role in the Falklands/Malvinas war without supporting Galtieri

country; and large sections of the Marxist left were persuaded to support Argentina's mini-colonial venture in the Falklands/Malvinas in 1982. This was an attempt by Argentina's military dictatorship to grab itself a small colony in territory which was — and had been since before the modern Argentine nation came into existence — occupied by a different people. Some of the motivation for supporting Argentina also came from a justified desire to oppose Britain's imperialist intervention as energetically as possible. Yet it was entirely possible to oppose Thatcher's role without supporting Galtieri's. And, in general, the attempt to read off positive policies from the negative principle of "anti-imperialism" has had bad effects. (It provides, for example, one of the main arguments used to present Arab revanchism as a Marxist policy for Palestine.)

**S**OCIALISTS QUITE commonly say that we should support the independence movements of oppressed nations because they will weaken the oppressor ruling class. They may well not do so. A ruling class which holds an oppressed nation under its control often pays a high price in economic costs of coercion, political costs of permanent unrest, and strategic costs of a built-in "fifth column" in its territories. Freeing the oppressed nation may make it stronger. For Marxists, this calculation

cannot be crucial. We have to think independently, not write a plus wherever the ruling class writes a minus. The whole tendency of the nationalist posing of the National Question, and its adoption or semi-adoption by socialists, has been to pull the National Question out of the framework of consistent democracy and workers' unity, and to elevate it as a higher principle, standing on its own. One by-product is an extreme loosening, in Marxist discourse, of the definition of "nations." The word "nation" is used for almost any disadvantaged or oppositional community whose demands you wish to elevate by dubbing them the "self-determination" of a nation (a "good" nation, of course). Like many other slippages, this one has a germ of sense in it. National oppression almost always means making the oppressed nation something less than a fully-fledged nation — dispersing its population, dislocating its economic life, suppressing its language. A static, bookish use of definitions of a "nation" could leave us shunning the struggles of those oppressed nations on the grounds that they do not fit our textbooks. I have already given one example: such an approach could "justify" denying national rights to the Palestinian Arabs and upholding them only for the Israeli Jews.

That said, however, there is very good reason to restrict the use of the term "nation" to communities linked to

more-or-less definite territories. The separation of two communities, each of which has its own territory, into two states rather than one, need not harm workers' unity. It implies no split or divide among the workers in any given factory or city. Apart from minor problems in travel and communications which may be created by the new border, the separation will not harm the links between workers of the two different territories. If one of the communities previously felt oppressed, then support for their right to secede by workers of the other community will improve links. It will ease suspicions, aid the free cultural influence of each community on the other, and bring the day closer when the workers regard the national differences between the two sides as unimportant.

Matters are very different with two communities mixed together on the same territory. Then, to separate them out, and to try to create separate political structures so that each community can "self-determine" separately, must divide the workers.

**The other contributors are: Branka Magas, Ernest Erber, Lynne Jones, Bogdan Denitch, John Feffer, Samuel Farber. *New Politics* costs \$24 for four issues. Write to: *New Politics*, PO Box 98, Brooklyn, New York 11231, USA.**

## A short history of radioactivity

**97** YEARS AGO, another of the most far-reaching discoveries of our age was made, and again, like that of X-rays, by accident. The French chemist Henri Becquerel was investigating luminescent chemicals (that glow after exposure to light) to see if they also emitted the newly discovered X-rays. They did not but when Becquerel put some uranium salts in a drawer for future investigation, he found that a sealed pack of photographic film had become "Fogged". Thus was the phenomenon of natural radioactivity discovered, as science journalist Catherine Caufield, formerly of *New Scientist*, writes in her book *Multiple Exposures\**, a history of radiation and radioactivity.

LES HEARN'S

SCIENCE COLUMN

Becquerel soon published details of these radiations that could penetrate light-proof wrappings and ruin a film. Marie Curie read his paper and decided to work on radioactivity (a term she coined) for her doctorate. Finding that pitchblende (uranium ore) was more radioactive than it should be, she discovered the highly radioactive element, radium. After four years of heroic labour, she succeeded in extracting 0.1 gram of radium from a tonne of waste from a pitchblende mine (one part in ten million). It was millions of times more radioactive than uranium. But she and her husband had been working in a highly radioactive environment, breathing dangerous dust and gases. Even now, her lab notebooks are dangerously radioactive. In 1934, 31 years after sharing the Nobel Prize for Physics for the discovery of radioactivity, Curie was to die from leukaemia.

Soon, it was found that the "rays" produced by radioactive elements were of three types: gamma rays — a more powerful form of X-ray — alpha particles — fast-moving nuclei of helium atoms — and beta particles — very fast-moving electrons. The dangers should have been quickly appreciated as Becquerel himself suffered a burn to his skin after carrying a tube with a small amount of radium in his waistcoat pocket for 6 hours. Gamma rays had passed through several layers of clothing to cause damage identical to that by X-rays.

As with X-rays, the new element caused enormous excitement in the scientific and non-scientific worlds. It was seen that radium could have similar uses to X-rays but without requiring a bulky power source. Treatment of cancers was an obvious use but all sorts of other idiotic ideas sprang up. In the USA, many patent medicines were soon on the market, such as radioactive belts for "healing", a radium-containing hearing aid, radioactive toothpaste, hair tonic and skin cream, a radium-containing chocolate bar and a radium-based contraceptive jelly (on sale until 1953!)

"Radium water" was sold as a tonic (a paradoxical seeming healthiness being an early symptom of radiation poisoning) to millions of people. Some were defrauded into paying high prices for tonics with no radium. Caufield points out that these were the lucky ones, many others dying from radiation-induced cancers.

Medical uses had their successes but often patients received overdoses leading to what sounds like radiation sickness. Medical opinion seems to have been that, as the journal *Radium* stated in 1916, "Radium has absolutely no toxic effects, it being accepted as harmoniously by the human system as is sunlight by the plant". And this despite the experience of Becquerel 15 years before. Strong warnings were given a year later of the dangers of overdose on those already suffering serious illness but the evidence shows that largely untrained medical practitioners continued the wide use of radium for some 20 years.

Radium achieved widespread use in luminous paints from the 1920s and I will look at Caufield's account of the fate of the radium painters next week.

\* Penguin £5.99

# Can socialism be reactionary?

This week we print an extract on "Reactionary Socialism" from Karl Marx's "Communist Manifesto," with accompanying extracts from the notes on the Manifesto written by the great Bolshevik Marxist scholar David Riazanov.

The parallels between "Reactionary Socialisms" are close and the Islamic "anti-imperialism" and "socialism" widespread in many parts of the world today. There are also parallels with Maoism and other Third World phenomena of modern history.

**O**WING TO THEIR historical position, it became the vocation of the aristocracies of France and England to write pamphlets against modern bourgeois society. In the French revolution of July 1830 and in the English reform agitation, these aristocracies again succumbed to the hateful upstart [ie capitalism]. Thenceforward a serious political contest was altogether out of question. At literary battle alone remained possible.

In order to arouse sympathy, the aristocracy were obliged to lose sight, apparently, of their own interests, and to formulate their indictment against the bourgeoisie in the interest of the exploited working class alone. Thus the aristocracy took their revenge by singing lampoons on their new master, and whispering in his ears sinister prophecies of coming catastrophe.

In this way arose Feudal Socialism: half lamentation, half lampoon; half echo of the past, half menace of the future; at times, by its bitter, witty and incisive criticism, striking the bourgeoisie to the very heart's core; but always ludicrous in its effect, through total incapacity to comprehend the march of modern history.

The aristocracy, in order to rally the people to them, waved the proletarian alms-bag in front for a banner. But the people, so often as it joined them, saw on their hindquarters the old feudal coats of arms, and deserted with loud and irreverent laughter.

In pointing out that their mode of exploitation was different to that of the bourgeoisie, the feudalists forget that they exploited under circumstances and conditions that were quite different, and that are now antiquated. In showing that, under their rule, the modern proletariat never existed, they forget that the modern bourgeoisie is the necessary offspring of their own form of society.

For the rest, so little do they conceal the reactionary character of their criticism that their chief accusation against the bourgeoisie amounts to this, that under the bourgeois *regime* a class is being developed, which is destined to cut up root and branch the old order of society.

What they upbraid the bourgeoisie with is not so much that it creates a proletariat, as that it creates a *revolutionary* proletariat.

In political practice, therefore, they join in all coercive measures against the working class; and in ordinary life, despite their high-falutin phrases, they stoop to pick up the golden apples dropped from the tree of industry, and to barter truth, love, and honour for traffic in wool, beetroot-sugar, and potato spirits. As the parson has ever gone hand in hand with the landlord, so has Clerical Socialism with Feudal Socialism.

Nothing is easier than to give Christian

asceticism a Socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, against the State? Has it not preached in the place of these, charity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life and Mother Church? Christian Socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat.

## Reactionary romanticism

**A**MONG FRENCH MEN of letters, this reaction was voiced by such writers as Louis de Bonald (1754-1840), and Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821), who contemplated the possibility of restoring the old order with its three main buttresses, God, King, and Executioner. Bonald fiercely opposed any innovations. Everything which was given birth to by the new industry, everything which called to mind the "principles of the eighteenth century" was condemned out of hand. Large towns, credit, banking — all these were contraptions of the devil. Especially offensive to Bonald were the successes of industry and technique, which he rightly regarded as phenomena that were quite incompatible with a primitive social order, with patriarchal rights and (speaking generally), with a spirit of mediaeval isolation and exclusiveness. In the normal State, he considered, the interests of the landowning class take the first place, seeing that this class is more stable than all others and more devoted to order and tranquillity. On the other hand, the predominance of commerce, industry, and capitalism introduces into the nation an unstable "revolutionary factor," undermines the time-honoured system of social stratification, leads to the subverting of social relationships, and to the infringement of rights. Of coal, Bonald says, with tears in his eyes: "It fills the air with smoke, makes a horrible smell, diffuses low spirits, and can, in the course of time, change the whole character of a nation."

## Christian socialism

**A**S IN THE MANIFESTO, so elsewhere, Marx resisted every effort to Christianise socialism.

"The social principles of Christianity have had eighteen centuries in which to develop, and have no need to undergo further development at the hands of Prussian consistorial councillors. The social principles of Christianity justified the slavery of classical days; they glorified mediaeval serfdom; and they are able when needs must to defend the oppression of the proletariat, though with a somewhat crestfallen air. The social principles of Christianity proclaim the need for the existence of a ruling class and a subjugated class, being content to express the pious hope that the former will deal philanthropically with the latter. The social principles of Christianity assume that there will be compensation in heaven for all the infamies committed on earth, and thereby justify the persistence of these infamies here below. The social principles of Christianity explain that the atrocities perpetrated by the oppressors on the oppressed are either just punishments for original and other sins, or else trials which the Lord in his wisdom



The cult built around Mao, was an attempt to distract Chinese workers from the horrendous oppression and poverty they faced under that regime.

ordains for the redeemed. The social principles of Christianity preach cowardice, self-contempt, abasement, submission, humility, in a word, all the qualities of the

*"The workers must resist every endeavour to reconcile them to religion, no matter the guise in which the pabulum is presented."*

canaille; and the proletariat, which will not allow itself to be treated as canaille, needs courage, self-confidence, pride, a sense of personal dignity and independence, even more than it needs daily bread. The social principles of Christianity are lick-spittle, whereas the proletariat is revolutionary. So much for the social principles of Christianity!"

It would, of course, not be difficult to show that these "social principles of Christianity" have not always played a reactionary role. Primitive Christianity, in so far as it was a protest against the ancient world order, stood for the abolition of private property and the State, and advocated asceticism and poverty. But this is a very old story, belonging to a time when no other means of freeing those that "labour and are heavy laden" existed apart from the help proffered by the "heavenly Jerusalem"! The workers must resist every endeavour to reconcile them to religion, no matter the guise in which the pabulum is presented whether it is called "purified" or "enno-

bled" Christianity; or "new" Christianity, or the "religion of humanity."

"The fact is that religion is the self-consciousness and the self-feeling of the man who has either not yet found himself or, having done so, has lost himself again... Thus the struggle against religion is a direct struggle against the world whose spiritual aroma is religion. Religious poverty is in one, the expression of real poverty; and, in another, a protest against real poverty. Religion is the sigh of a heavy laden creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is a prerequisite for the attainment of real happiness by the people.... Thus the criticism of heaven is transformed into a criticism of earth, the criticism of religion into a criticism of law, the criticism of theology into a criticism of politics." ((Marx, *Zur Kritik der Hegelchen Rechtsphilosophie*.)

## Glossary

**Bourgeois society:** Capitalist society, dominated by trading, production for profit, and equality before the law.

**French Revolution of 1830:** Overthrew the king who had been restored to power after the final defeat of revolutionary France at Waterloo, and installed a more liberal and reformist monarchy.

**English reform agitation:** for the first Reform Bill of 1832, which opened up parliamentary elections, previously pretty much controlled by landlords, to the middle class.

**Proletarian:** Wage worker.

**Proletariat:** wage-working class.

**Asceticism:** Rejection of luxuries.

**Canaille:** The "underclass", the hopeless poor.

**Pabulum:** sops.



Stalin shamelessly exploited Lenin's legacy, twisting it to his own ends. None of this can be learnt from *Stalin*, the film.

# Terrible men make history

## Video

### Geoff Ward reviews *Stalin* recently released on video

**S**TALIN, STARRING Robert Duvall, winner of awards, is a truly appalling film. It is to a decent film what the Great Leader himself was to a decent human being!

Spanning the years from the October revolution in 1917 to Stalin's death in 1953, this picture tells you less about what happened after the Russian revolution than a well-done comic book for bright 10 year olds would feel obliged to tell.

In one scene Lenin protests to Stalin about his lack of the information which he needs to partici-

pate in running the state. With this movie the viewer has the same problem: a crippling lack of necessary information.

Stalin, of course, wanted to keep Lenin in the dark, to prevent Lenin crushing him politically. (As Lenin, on his death bed, tried valiantly, but too late, to destroy the monster in the making).

How are we to understand what's going on, when the director has gutted nearly all the politics from the story the film purports to tell?

For example, from the reading of Lenin's Testament, condemning Stalin, we go straight on to a scene showing Trotsky being bundled onto a train and into exile. We see nothing of the six year struggle in between — the years in which the Soviet working class and its vanguard fought the Stalinist counter-

revolution!

During the scenes concerning the Moscow show trials initiated by Stalin to butcher the men of the Bolshevik old guard, his victims Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bukharin still address their murderer and the murderer of the revolution affectionately as 'Koba' and 'comrade'!

The film depicts far too few of the events which shaped the fate of the revolution and those it presents are presented inaccurately.

Thus we see Stalin passively watching a newsreel of the rise of Hitler, as though this tragic event had nothing to do with the criminal policies he imposed on the German Communist Party and on the German workers.

This is a rapid great-men-make-history version of events. History becomes just a nonsensical patchwork of sinister motives and purposes; the major struggles and reasons behind them are barely touched upon. This may work well in a gangster movie, but here it is simply stupid.

The best that can be said about this film is that it portrays Stalin's evil side as best it can within a PG rating, and that it tries to look at events through the eyes of Stalin's wife, Nadia Aliluyeva (as recounted by their daughter). An honest revolutionary, she committed suicide in 1932 in protest at what Stalin was doing to the revolution. Watch this sequence and weep.



## Mourn not the dead

By Ralph Chaplin

Mourn not the dead that in the cold earth lie —  
Dust unto dust —  
The calm sweet earth that mothers all who die,  
As all men must;

Mourn not your captive comrades who must dwell —  
Too strong to strive —  
Each in his steel-bound coffin of a cell,  
Buried alive;

But rather mourn the apathetic throng —  
The cowed and the meek —  
Who see the world's great anguish and its wrong,  
And dare not speak!

\* Ralph Chaplin, known as "The Wobbly Poet", was one of the chief songmakers for the American syndicalist organisation, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) which reached its peak in the years before 1917, when the USA entered World War One.

Harry Wicks

# A man of courage

## Book

Matt Cooper reviews *Keeping my Head* by Harry Wicks (Socialist Platform, £5.95)

**H**ARRY WICKS, WHO DIED IN 1989 was one of the first British Trotskyists, over sixty years ago. His story has been recorded thanks to the efforts of the *Revolutionary History* group.

But oral history has to be treated carefully. Old memories should be carefully checked against contemporary sources, inconsistencies pursued. An editor of such memoirs must have a knowledge of the terrain, ask the right questions, probe for answers. Here, this book sometimes falls down.

Too often the editor has not picked up obvious inaccuracies. One example: Jay Lovestone is said to be in charge of the American Communist Party in 1932, whereas Lovestone and his faction were expelled in 1929.

Despite this, the book is moving in two ways: it depicts the heroism and courage of Wicks, and his story illustrates the tragic intellectual paucity of the British Marxist tradition.

Wicks left school at 14 to work on the railway and joined the British Communist Party at its inception in 1920 at the age of 18. Wick's particular, rather parochial view of the labour movement was bounded by his local neighbourhood, Battersea. There the Communists and the Labour Party worked very closely until, in 1925, the Labour leadership banned joint CP/Labour membership. This was very important for Battersea which had a Labour-backed Communist MP, the Indian Shapurji Saklatvala.

Between 1927 and 1930 Wicks was at the Lenin School in Moscow where layers of loyal Stalinist bureaucrats were trained to ruin the national Communist Parties. That Wicks survived it, and even learnt from it, is a great compliment to his mind and character.

On his return to Britain Wicks, knowing the reality of Stalin's Russia, was drawn to Trotsky's criticisms of the CP. The CP's "Third Period" line of ultra-leftism (when even the Labour Party was called "socialist fascist") was anathema to Wicks. He saw that this idiotic policy was leading the working class in Germany to bloody defeat.

In 1931 Wicks and another South London Communist, Reg Groves formed the nucleus of a secret Trotskyist faction inside the CP (the "Balham Group"). Typically, it was an almost exclusively South London affair. The group, numbering 13, were expelled with little fuss in 1932.

For Wicks it was a heroic struggle that entailed incredible sacrifice.

Wicks had been victimised after the General Strike and then was three years in Moscow, after which he worked for a CP-linked Russian oil importing firm. His expulsion meant the sack, complete ostracism by his ex-comrades, and five years unemployment and grinding poverty. Many who had criticisms kept their heads down and chose a quiet life.

Wicks, the self-educated worker, had the intellectual courage to stand up for Marxism: that alone should make his name one we should revere.

But neither Wicks nor the central figure in the Balham group, Reg Groves were real leaders. The British group floundered from the beginning.

The best thing in this book is Wicks' account of a visit to Copenhagen in 1932, where Leon Trotsky had been invited by the Social Democratic students to lecture on the Russian revolution. Trotskyists from all over Europe gathered to meet Trotsky, who lived in Turkey at that time.

Indirectly, Wicks' account of this affair shows one of the reasons why the parochial group of South London Trotskyists floundered. Wicks was like a fish out of water — this was not the workers' movement with which he had grown up: he did not feel at ease. Although Wicks never developed Groves' positively negative attitude towards the Trotskyist international, it was never at the top of the man from Battersea's agenda.

In 1933 the group split, a minority following Trotsky's advice to join the left-moving Independent Labour Party and work to win people to their ideas. Wicks and Groves preferred isolation. Their group of a few tens of people remained paralysed.

Eventually — in 1934 — they collapsed into the Labour Party, without a thought-out strategy. Although Wicks maintained some activity into the forties and in the late sixties re-emerged on the periphery of the IS/SWP, this was really the end of Wicks on the Trotskyist stage.

Why was this? In Wicks' own words: "I have never enjoyed national or wider set-ups. I have always been happier taking part in practical work rooted in the local class movement".

Despite his personal sacrifice and courage Wicks was never an organiser or thinker of serious stature. He cannot be blamed for this. The CP was not formed out of a split in an existing workers' movement informed by Marxism but by the fusion of a number of small, often ultra-left sects. The British philistine culture was to dominate British revolutionary politics for many years.

# An appeal from South Africa

## LETTERS

**LIVE IN THE REMOTE** poverty-stricken township of Pabellelo near Uppington, a very poor settlement. It is in my township's Resource Centre that I came across an 18 February 1992 issue of the *Socialist Organiser* publication. I read a particularly interesting article by your organisation headed "Why you should be a socialist".

With permission from the Resource Centre officials I made a copy of the article, raised enough funds, and made 200 more copies and distributed these among students, unemployed youth and the

workers and other sectors of the community. These were well received and made a great impact on the readers. In fact interest was aroused.

But tragically I got faced with two major problems. One is from the black nationalists who are in the majority in our community. They make it extremely difficult for one to progress with a genuine socialist agenda. One is either confronted with a Stalinist attitude where you find your pamphlets torn up, or an isolation campaign waged against yourself by people who claim to be for liberation.

Or one is branded a "sell-out" for not supporting — or going

strongly against — demands that in one's view are compromising the Marxist socialist struggle of the workers.

Problem number two: although the Resource Centre is trying very hard in its capacity to help the community as regard information (on Marxism, socialism etc) their material is but very limited. It could not fully, when required, come out clear as regard these issues i.e. Marxism, socialism.

It is at this point that I need your organisation, and this is the reason for my letter.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty holds public meetings — I think I'm correct — on a regular basis, where you discuss topics

ranging from Marxist insights to international solidarity eg "Labour Must Fight" and "Deportations from Israel — what we can do" etc. What was also particularly interesting was the AWL Basic Marxism Course at the Northumbria University on Wednesday 24 February 1992.

My request to your organisation is please, if possible, help me with material on the topics I've quoted and more if it suits you. A contribution, no matter how small you view it, shall be appreciated, material you view as unimportant might be very important to us, and these can be used for workers' liberty to and by people who cannot even afford to buy newspa-

pers on a regular basis. If you wish I will try to raise funds to pay for the shipment costs of the material.

I am an unemployed youth of 22 and devote most of my time and energy to the emancipation of the workers. I hope this will influence you in your consideration of this letter in general and my request in particular.

I am looking forward to hear from you.

Thank you. Yours for Workers' Liberty

Ray Kutu  
Pabellelo, Uppington  
South Africa

## The origins of bureaucratic collectivism

**IN HIS LETTER** ON "The First Bureaucratic Collectivists" (SO 564, p14) my old friend Laurens Otter claimed: Ricci's theory was taken up by the *Partisan Review* and the [German Trotskyist group] IKD who broke with Trotsky one year before the split between Shachtman and Cannon.

I do not understand. One year before the split was in August 1939. As an associate member of the IKD in the late forties I can state categorically: there is no truth in it. How could there be?

Walter Held (former secretary to Trotsky and in constant correspondence with him — the documents are available in printed volumes of Trotsky's by Pathfinder Press) was stuck in Norway when he tried to reach the US via the USSR as he was arrested near Kiev and later executed.

In 1940 Held (real name Heinz Epe) had published a European issue of *Unser Wort* on his own from Norway with a lead article on the front page: "Europa Unter Der Eisernen Fesseln" ("Europe under the Iron Heel") which has been misinterpreted as a concession to Shachtman's position on the Finnish War.

A second Trotsky secretary, Oscar Fischer (ie Otto Schuessler) was in Mexico in August 1940. Aum and Lauffer were on the way to England where they co-operated with Grant and Haston's Workers International League and proposed new ideas on the national question in Europe (which were rejected by WIL as later by the SWP-USA).

Finally, the leader and founder of the IKD Johre (Joseph Weber) who had edited *Unser Wort* in Paris and penned most of its famous theses (still readable today) was first detained in a French refugee camp and later managed to

save his life on the long trek to the unoccupied zone of France from which he managed to find passage to the US at the last minute. There he supported the thesis of the "Unconditional Defence of the USSR" and the Cannon Group (and not the theories of Ricci as Otter claims).

Just as he misinterpreted Held's article on the "Iron Heel", Otter probably used the 1944 document of the IKD on "Socialism or Barbarism" in which it is claimed that capitalism will partly negate itself even if the proletarian revolution does not come. Unlucky Otter! Here our friend certainly shoots himself in the foot: the title of the document happens to be "Capitalist barbarism or socialism".

At no stage of the document is it claimed that capitalism will disappear. Much importance however is attached to the emergence of slave labour camps in Europe during the Second World War. It was precisely with the publication of Victor Kravchenko's book "I Choose Freedom" in 1946 which proved the existence of what Solzhenitsin later called the GULAG that the IKD broke with Trotsky's thesis that the USSR was a "Degenerated Workers State" and first stated that Russia was a state regulated capitalism.

In 1947, Comrade Otter, not 1939! I have on my desk Shachtman's [*New Internationalist*] introduction to the IKD document. Its full title is: "Capitalist Barbarism or Socialism: on the development of declining capitalism and on the situation, tasks and perspectives of the Labour Movement by the Internal Communists of Germany" (*New Internationalist* supplement to October 1944).

Once in New York Weber and the IKD supported Cannon and the slogan of the "Unconditional Defence of the USSR" even under Stalin while disagreeing with "Theses on the National

Question" in Europe.

After the war Ernest Mandel revealed that the besieged Trotskyist groups in the underground had maintained an "internationalist" position of fraternisation... with the German soldiers, instead of supporting the underground which was under Stalinist leadership. Although this is fifty years later I remember well the IKD's polemical position: what difference is there between supporting unconditionally the USSR under Stalin and the National Resistance movement in the Europe and countries under the Iron Heel? Instead Cannon's front men Marc Loris (ie Jan van Heijenoort, another Trotsky secretary) and Felix Morrow fell upon the IKD and accused them of opportunism, Popular Frontism etc. Later they recanted and joined Shachtman.

In a nutshell: the main thesis which underlies all the 57 varieties of the theory of bureaucratic collectivism, managerial revolution etc, is capitalism with its unemployment, cycles of boom and crisis etc is on the way out. It will not be replaced by socialism. Laurens Otter hints that Simone Weil had a theory of bureaucratic collectivism but does not dwell on it. Nor does he give us her sources: I remember reading her documents in Dwight MacDonald's *Politics* fifty years ago and it was Ferdinand Fried's book "Das Ende Des Kapitalismus" ("The End of Capitalism") which was the main source. Ferdinand Fried was the main mentor of the right wing "Tat Kreis" ("Die Tat" Circle) mainly composed of economists who predicted the demise of capitalism without socialism replacing it.

Otter is wrong in dating Ricci's book back to 1936. At the time Ricci had put forward his thesis inside the Trotskyist movement. It was in 1939 that he published a book with a bourgeois publisher. I remember reading it in the sixties. It was fatally weak and would attract no attention today but for the fact that Ricci accused Burnham of plagerism, on the grounds of this book. There is no evidence that Trotsky, Cannon or Shachtman supplied Burnham with a copy. The main point is that from 1941 when he published the "Managerial Revolution" to 1942 when he came out with the even more reactionary "The Macchiavellians" (ie right wing and fascist sources of sociology) to "The Coming Struggle against Communism", Burnham migrated steadily towards the right as Trotsky had predicted.

As for Ricci, Otter mentions his "oddities" without stating what they were. Let your readers be the judges: Ricci in his "Bureaucratism of the World" (1939) like Burnham in 1941 predicted the victory of the fascist powers. In 1943 when Mussolini tried to found his ill-fated Northern Italian Republic, Ricci wrote him a long letter echoing many of the fascist theories about Judeo-Masonic plots and the role of Jews in usury. Ricci, who was the owner of a small shoe factory, survived to rescind all his theories and predict that the free capitalist market would be the basis of a new democracy in Western Europe: he warned against Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell's plans for a mixed economy! (cf *Socialist Leader* 1961).

Finally, who was the first bureaucratic collectivist? Without forgetting the examples adduced by Orwell in his 1946 pamphlet on Burnham: Hilaire Belloc "The Servile State" (1911) in which the sentence occurs "If the present ruling class wishes to preserve the institution of private property, it will have to reintroduce slavery", HG Wells "The Sleeper Awakes" (1900) Jack London's "The Iron Heel" (1909), Zamyatin's "We" (1923) I would like to suggest Wladislaw Machajski's "The Intellectual Worker" which had come out in Russian Poland in the 1880s, and had already been discussed in the Tsarist prisons (of Trotsky's "My Life"). The American publicist Max Nomad had claimed Machajski for the anarchists, so it is astonishing that Otter who is close to them should not have thought of him.

Machajski predicted in the 1880s that a rapacious intellectual elite would appropriate in turn the victorious working class and cheat them of their victory: meanwhile, the hungry intellectuals from the pseudo-left wing ideologies. In power, the same intellectuals would eliminate the old capitalist class, crush the working class which had brought them to power, and re-organise society so that their newly acquired economic privileges could not be wrested from them.

I would like to leave the last word to Max Shachtman himself. In 1944 in his introduction to the IKD document he refuted Otter in advance: "indeed so far as the section on Russia is concerned, our differences with the views of Trotsky, which the German comrades still seem to accept are too familiar to need special emphasis"

Carl Renest

## The nature of the Soviet Union

**LAST YEAR YOU** were good enough to publish an article I submitted to you on the nature of the Soviet Union. I came to the conclusion that the economy of the USSR as 'sui generis' — of its own kind — but that it fell within the broad category of being pre-capitalist. I set out a number of reasons for coming to the conclusion that I did.

At the time of writing the article I was aware of another argument, perhaps the strongest single one in support of my case, but due to the circumstances I was in with regard to research material, felt unable to use it then.

The argument runs as follows. It was an absolutely basic plank in Karl Marx's theory with regard to the the end of the feudalism and the oriental commune, and the establishment of capitalism that one of the historic conditions for capital is free labour, and the exchange of free labour against money (see "Pre-capitalist Formations" p 67).

At a certain point in time in the history of the USSR a system of internal passports was instituted, whose precise function was to tie labour down to particular localities. Workers individually, or collectively could only shift to other localities if the state permitted it. In a word, labour was juridically and in practice unfree.

My difficulty is that although this fact is well known; as I am situated, to source this phenomenon to a reputable English language text, is proving rather difficult. (I live in a rather small rural place about two hundred miles away from any library of significance).

I am writing to you at this time to ask the assistance of your readers in this regard. Can your readers let me have the name of an authoritative work on the USSR which sets out the details of the internal passport system; when it was started etc.

Harry Holland  
Box 251  
Mangonui, Far North  
New Zealand

## Thoughtful and provocative

**ENCLOSED FIND A CHEQUE** to cover the costs of a subscription plus your "Malcolm X" and "Trotskyism after the collapse of Stalinism" pamphlets.

I continue to find your paper both thoughtful and provocative. I believe, as a support of *Socialist Action* (USA), that Trotskyists here could learn a great deal from your methods.

Despite some apparent convergence, I believe your organisation and Solidarity (USA) are quite different animals, ie Solidarity is an opportunist mush, prone to crossing class lines (as with support to the New Party which supports Democrats) and a burial ground for tired Trotskyists.

Hal Leyshon,  
Vermont, USA

# NALGO votes to reject pay limit

By Fiona Monkman, Barnsley Branch NALGO and Chris Croome, Sheffield Branch NALGO

NALGO'S LAST conference prior to the establishment of UNISON on 1 July 1993 was a mixed affair.

One of the most significant victories at conference was over pay. The National Local Government Committee's recommendation to accept the Tories 1.5% pay limit was rejected. There will now be a ballot of all local government members on the pay offer which, if successful, will be followed by a second ballot for six days of action. However, the Health

Group Meeting voted to accept the government's 1.5% pay limit. Pay cut deals to "avoid" cuts, like the 3 1/4 one in Sheffield, were denounced by conference and Paul "I'll justify the Sheffield pay cut to any union meeting" Hudson, the NEC member who was behind the deal, slunk about and kept quiet.

This year NALGO came closer than ever to voting to ballot for national industrial action against the Tory cuts in local authority spending. It would have been won if it was not for a delegate from Sheffield who voted with the wrong card by accident. The vote on national action against CCT, the contracting out of local authority services, was clearly lost. These two decisions mean that branches are yet again left in

the virtually impossible position of trying to oppose employers who are implementing Tory policy on their own.

Conference unanimously re-endors NALGO's support for the Workers Rights Charter which calls for the right to strike and picket, the right to take secondary action, for the right for unions to organise all workers and gain recognition. The position of calling for total repeal of all the anti-trade union legislation and for positive rights is however going to be difficult to win in UNISON, with the NUPE bureaucracy not wanting any policy which could embarrass the Labour Party. Despite the overwhelming support for a good policy on the anti-trade union laws a motion censuring Alan Jkinson for repudiation of the day

of strike action in Lambeth in support of the miners was lost.

An emergency motion in support of the Islington nursery occupation was carried overwhelmingly by conference. Alan Jkinson, NALGO's General Secretary, repudiated the occupation at the behest of the Islington Labour leadership. The nursery workers were subsequently left with no strike pay or support from the national union, despite full backing from their branch. Sharon Whittington, one of the parents occupying spoke to the conference and received a huge round of applause. Alan Jkinson was rightly jeered and overturned.

There was a highly charged debate over allegations of "blatant racism" in relation to the organisation of the creche at

Women's Conference in October 1992. There were serious complaints regarding the running of the creche which required a proper investigation and report. At the same time the charge of racism is a very serious allegation to be levelled at the National Women's Committee. It was ridiculous to expect conference to make a fully informed decision after a few speeches. It was therefore not surprising and probably correct for conference to vote down the motion which contained the serious charge of "blatant racism".

The NEC were censured for deciding to spend £250,000 on end of NALGO parties and it was voted to donate £50,000 to the Timex strikers.

Socialist Organiser's policy for workers' unity in Europe and rejection of nationalistic protectionism and the capitalist Maastricht treaty was defeated but attracted a substantial number of votes.

The launch of UNITY the successor to NALGO Action, a

newsletter sponsored by branches, was successful. More branches than ever now subscribe to UNITY. It is now vital that its support is built amongst former NUPE and COHSE activists and branches.

An initiative to establish a democratic broad left in UNISON was launched at conference. With the NALGO Broad Left totally discredited after a few years of the SWP running it as a, (not very successful), recruitment front, this is a welcome event.

So far all the left groups are involved in the new organisation and a delegate conference is planned for later in the summer. It is vital that this group turns itself outwards in order to attract a wider base of support than just the hard left.

In the next year there is a lot of work for activists in branches to undertake, including the creation of UNISON branches and building unity on the ground in order that UNISON can really start to defend public sector workers.

## NCU Conference 1993:

# The fight is on over Attendance Patterns

By an NCU conference delegate

THE MAIN industrial issue discussed at NCU Conference in Blackpool earlier this month was that of BT's proposals to make Telecom's workers provide 7 day cover on the cheap. Whilst many BT workers, especially on Network duties, are on Rota and Shift Patterns already, this work attracts extra pay which though eroded by shiftworking agreements is still significant. The proposals affect customer-facing engineers (and later clerical workers) who are in Personal Comm Division. However, if BT is successful in forcing us to work at weekends, the practice will spread to other divisions.

The new NCU National Executive Committee has a majority of Broad Left supporters, elected by the strength of feeling on the Attendance Patterns issue. They were elected to stand up to BT's proposals.

The policy passed at Conference included the outgoing Executive's proposition with only one significant commitment — to oppose compulsory weekend working and uncontrolled flexible attendance patterns. Other proposals passed included opposition to 7 days working as normal hours, compulsory garaging

of vehicles at home, involuntary overtime.

A narrow card vote majority called for the Telecom Industry Committee of the NCU to negotiate only on reduced working hours for all NCU represented grades, and these reduced hours not to be dependent on a 6/7 day working pattern or flexible attendance. Most importantly the International proposal called for a campaign on the shorter working week and a rejection of 6/7 day working.

The demand for consultation before any agreement was strengthened to requiring ratification by an Annual or Special NCU Conference. The policy

passed insisted on a ballot for strike action if anything is imposed by BT.

The debate on the issue at NCU conference was tentative, with awareness that the stakes are high. Obviously BT management are looking to see the first moves of the new NEC, and the new NEC has to follow on from negotiations already begun by a previous NEC who had been prepared to compromise. All the more reason to step up the campaigning — the mood of the membership on this issue is a mixture of anger and fear. Anger at the possibility of being forced to accept worse working conditions and fear at the threat of

compulsory redundancies and a rampant management being unstoppable as they demand more and more control over our working day. Morale is at rock bottom but the management don't care.

What is needed is firm leadership and solidarity to reassure workers that together we are stronger than management.

The new NEC has to lead and NCU branches must campaign to build support on this issue. The Broad Left organisation has an important part to play in demanding political accountability from the NEC group and in giving direction to local campaigning.

## BT engineers stand firm against attacks

By a central London BT engineer

TELECOM'S engineers working in the Parsons Green and West Kensington areas on Personal Comms (domestic lines and phone boxes) are having their 9-day fortnight working pattern attacked by intransigent management.

Despite the fact that staff want to retain 7.30 starts and 9 day

fortnight working, one by one PC groups around London are being picked onto changed patterns of 8.00 am starts and 14 day, 3 week working.

The significance of these attacks by management on the hard won 9 day arrangements is that they come against the backdrop of major Attendance Patterns negotiations at national level.

Moves to erode 9 day working

can only be seen as an attempt to intimidate staff out of working patterns that were fought for in the past.

The West London staff under attack at present are being supported by other PC staff. At a meeting last week other PLR staff from union branches all over London agreed to refuse to undertake work from the area affected in the event of industrial action.

## The Industrial Front

The strikes by TGWU members at British Airways are over. The union has accepted a lousy deal which doesn't protect wages and conditions and simply amounts to a promise from BA not to set up any more subsidiaries.

London busworkers stopped services in the capital for two hours on 4 June when they held a garage "pull-in". Unfortunately the dispute has now gone to local negotiations and London-wide action is off the agenda. This amounts to sabotage of the dispute.

Southampton dockers have voted for strike action to stop compulsory redundancies.

At least 40,000 printworkers have already won a £6.50 per week pay rise. 11,000 more are continuing on overtime ban for the same claim. Meanwhile workers at Revell and George, Manchester and Arrowsmith Bristol need your support. They are locked out because of their part in the national GPMU campaign.

Contact: Revell and George c/o Manchester GPMU, Graphic House, Moseley Road, Manchester M19 2LH. Arrowsmith c/o Mike Vine, 45 Leicester Avenue, Bristol

## North West March for jobs

ARTHUR Scargill, NUM President, has demanded the TUC get off its knees and call for a 24 hour strike in defence of pit communities and every single worker under attack up and down the country from the Tory government.

Speaking at a rally in front of hundreds of people at the Park-side pit Lancashire on Sunday, where some mineworkers are still refusing to take voluntary redundancy, Scargill appealed to workers and activists in the crowd to go back to their streets, communities and workplaces and build for direct action to defeat the Tories and their attacks on workers and their jobs.

Other speakers on the platform included printworkers from Revell and George who are in dispute in Salford and three women from Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures who had spent eleven days down the recently closed pit. Calls to start the fightback were greeted by cries of enthusiasm from the crowd.

The rally was held to mark the end of the North West People's march for jobs on which hundreds of men, women small children and pensioners from all over the North West marched to show their solidarity with workers and their anger against the Tory government.

## RMT vote against the 1.5% pay limit

TO THE SURPRISE of an RMT AGM delegate the RMT has rejected BR's 1.5% pay offer.

ASLEF couldn't move fast enough to accept it. 22 and 23 July have been set aside for a strike ballot.

It is important that this campaign round the ballot doesn't just exist on paper. This time it is likely to be different because for once Knapp and all the other full time officers' pay is at stake.

Why? Because 24 July is the

last date of payment by BR of pay bill deductions to the RMT. Knapp wants to use the pay campaign as a way of encouraging the membership to sing up to direct debits or to pay the collectors.

The campaign should be used to build for a massive vote for action on pay but we should beware of any attempts to pull the plug once the direct debit money has been collected in.

Next week's RMT AGM in Newcastle should spell this out to the Council of Executives.

## Islington NUT one-day strike

THE NUT in Islington held a one-day strike on Thursday 17 June to protest at redundancy notices which have been served on Islington teachers. The majority of notices has already been withdrawn as a result of teachers' action but 12 teachers are still facing redundancy including the entire Arts in Education team of six specialist teachers. Islington NUT is giving the council a week to withdraw all redundancies or further action

will follow. It was announced on the day of the strike that Islington will not be fining teachers who have boycotted the SATs, although teachers have previously been threatened with fines.

Solidarity between all Islington council workers is the only way in which to force the council to defend jobs and services and to fight the Tory government. Which is what any self-respecting Labour council should be doing.

Demonstrate  
Support the Tyler's  
Strikers

25 June 6 am

Metcalfe Way depot Crowley  
Rally and march 11.30 am  
Donations and messages of support to  
strike fund c/o Jimmy James  
336 Ifield Drive, Crawley West Sussex  
RM11 2EW

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

## DSS staff oppose Market Testing

By Mark Serwotka, Sheffield DSS

### Timex: The fight is not over yet!



The Timex workers have stood firm throughout their dispute

**B**Y MASSIVE MAJORITIES, members of the clerical union CPSA and the executive union NUCPS have voted to take one day's strike action on 2 July. Despite the lack of leadership from either union at national level members have demonstrated their opposition to the disgraceful situation of having to bid for their own jobs and a willingness to strike against the government's plans.

The Tories intend to "Market Test" 88,000 civil service jobs in the next two years alone. This is the first step to their goal of half a million civil service jobs facing Market Testing. No job, no service is safe. Strangeways prison faces privatisation, the police and Inland Revenue computers as well as the delivery of DSS benefits. The welfare state is up for sale!

Faced with all of this, civil service trade unionists must learn the lessons of previous contracting out schemes. In the NHS and local government over 250,000 jobs were lost in 8 years. The civil service will be no different. We either face privatisation, working for the likes of P&O Ltd, whose director has already called for compulsory redundancies and the abolition of the negotiating machinery within the civil service, or we face in-house bids which to have a chance of "success" will reduce jobs and conditions. Already in one case a "successful" in-house bid led to 50% job cuts within the DSS at Newcastle.

This is a case of heads they win, tails we lose. That is why central to any demands we make on the government must be the call to scrap all Market Testing. It is no use asking for Market Testing without its worst excesses, which is the line taken by the Broad Left in CPSA. Members recognise that only a call to scrap the whole process is of any use to them. They also recognise that the demand will not be won by a one-day strike alone.

It is crucial that the DSS Executives of both CPSA and NUCPS prepare for the next phase of action. This action needs to be a significant escalation and preparation for the necessary all-out action that we will require to win. A national three-day strike with DSHSS would probably be the best strategy to fulfill this.

The mood is there. In my area alone CPSA voted by 257-18 in Sheffield and 176-4 in Rotherham for a strike. These massive majorities represent a base on which to build a campaign that can stop Market Testing.

**O**VER 6,000 demonstrators marched past the Timex factory in Dundee last Saturday (19 June) in the latest show of solidarity with the sacked Timex workforce.

Last Saturday's event was to have been a six-hour long mass picket outside the factory — Saturday's are a workday at the Timex plant — but was rescheduled as a demonstration after Timex announced that the factory would be shut down for the day.

As a safeguard against a possible occupation of the factory, police were drafted in from outside of Tayside and stationed both inside and outside the factory, whilst skips were welded to the main gates of the plant to block off the entrance.

Speaking at the closing rally, Timex convenor John Kydd stressed that last week's announcement of the planned shutdown of the factory had not weakened the workers' determination to continue with and escalate the dispute: "We will be calling for more demonstrations of this nature at the factory gates, despite the closure announcement.

"This strike is not for sale. It will only be settled by the 343 workers going back to work under the banner of the AEEU, with their pay and conditions restored to what they were prior to the strike.

"Our campaign will continue on an international level. We have already received messages of support from all over the world, including Denmark, Ger-

many, the USA and Fred Olsen's heartland of Norway.

"If trade unionists cannot defy the anti-union legislation with industrial action, then the trade union movement will die on its knees in the next few years.

"The time has come for leadership at the highest level. It's no good people saying it must just be done at the bottom".

The demonstration came at the end of a particularly bad week for Timex.

On Tuesday, the company effectively admitted that it had given up hope of splitting the strikers and re-employing some of them under worse rates of pay and working conditions. Instead, it announced, it planned to close the factory.

On Thursday a mass meeting of the strikers threw out, with only two votes against, an offer from Timex to re-employ 150 strikers (at the reduced rates of pay) during the rundown of the factory over the next six months, at the end of which they would again be sacked.

And on Thursday Timex again had to concede defeat in the face of a mass picket by announcing the closure of the plant on Saturday.

Paradoxically, Timex's announcement that it plans to close the Dundee factory is a sign of weakness, not strength. It is an admission that they have failed to beat down the sacked workforce, and are instead trying to run for cover.

Moreover, from their own point of view, Timex has announced the closure at a particularly bad time. There is

already a full-scale fight against Timex underway, providing a solid basis for the campaign against closure. It is not as if a campaign has to be built from scratch.

There are three immediate issues which the campaign against closure needs to address:

- The boycott of Timex products needs to be stepped up and extended into a trade union boycott of Timex products in the workplace.

At last Saturday's rally TUC President Alan Tuffin called for a worldwide boycott of Timex goods by trade unionists. Unfortunately, he meant a boycott by trade unionists as consumers rather than as workers.

- The Day of Action called by the Scottish TUC for Thursday 1 July must become a focal point in the fight to save the Timex jobs and all other jobs under threat.

As Timex steward Charlie Malone put it at last Saturday's rally: "On behalf of the strike committee I appeal to you to organise and argue for that Day of Action and make it a success, by organising factory gate meetings and city centre meetings".

Labour movement activists must campaign for action on the day, including not just rallies and demonstrations but also walkouts and strikes wherever

possible in opposition to the Government-employers' offensive against jobs and pay.

- The MSF must be drawn into the fight against closure. Until now MSF has argued that it is not in dispute with Timex and that therefore there was no (legal) basis for its members at the plant going on strike. But now all MSF members at Timex are in line for redundancy. Even in terms of the Tories' anti-union legislation, strike action under such conditions would count as a legitimate trade dispute.

Last week's announcement by Timex that it intends to close the Dundee factory does not signal the end of the dispute, or even the beginning of the end. It is merely the signal for a further escalation of the dispute.

For more on Timex: see page 2

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**SOCIALIST** Inside this week  
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**Buses, rail, pits, public sector**

**STRIKE TOGETHER!**

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