


SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

Inside this week 

Sinn
Fein
and
the
Protestants



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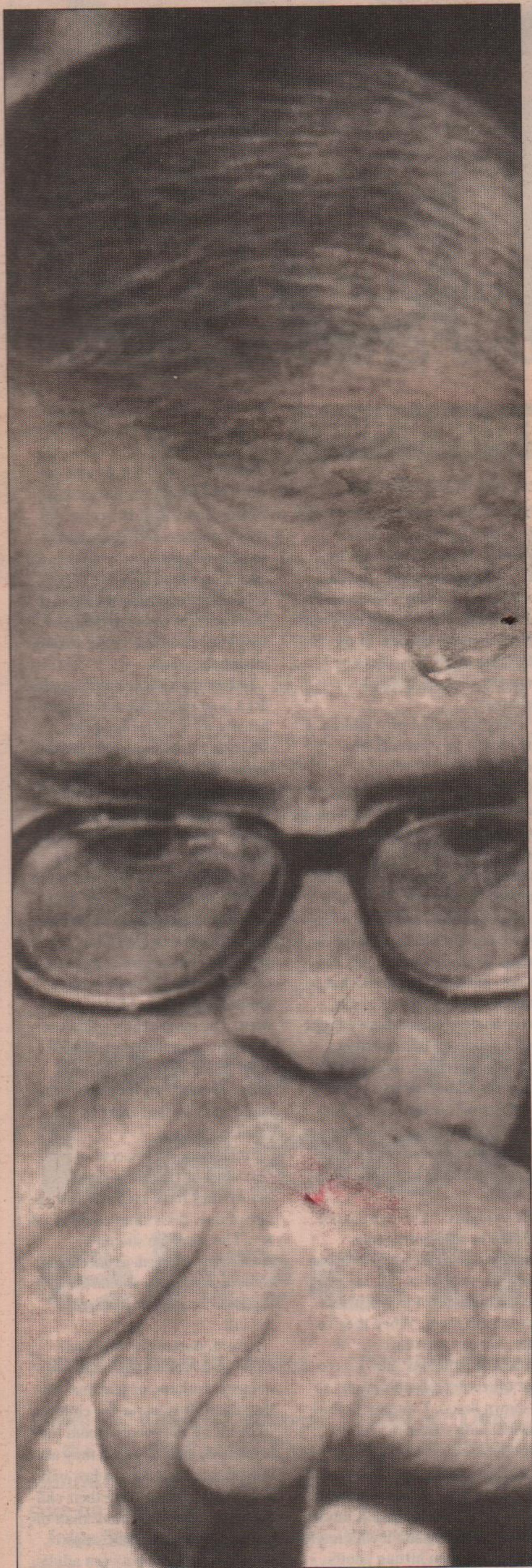
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Major stumbles from crisis to crisis



Tories must go!

THE LABOUR PARTY can force John Major's government from office. The Tories are highly vulnerable. They have lurched from crisis to crisis. Major is now the most unpopular prime minister since polls began.

Now the final stage of voting on the Maastricht treaty this Thursday, 22 July could provide the opportunity to defeat the government in parliament.

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Labour can force election!

Left slate for Labour

By Gerry Bates

LABOUR PARTY members will soon be balloted for the constituency section of Labour's National Execu-

tive Committee. The left-wing Campaign Group's slate is Tony Benn, Doreen Cameron, Jeremy Corbyn, Ken Livingstone, Alice Mahon, Dawn Primarolo and Dennis Skinner. Doreen

Cameron, the new name on the slate, is a member of Labour's Black Socialist Society.

Last year the right wing managed to push Dennis Skinner off the National

Executive, leaving Tony Benn as the sole left-wing voice there. A strong effort for the Campaign Group slate is vital in order to restore an effective left-wing minority in the Executive.

Developments in Northern Ireland

By Pat Murphy

BRITISH politicians talking about imposing 'Dublin rule' on Northern Ireland. Protestant rioters attacking the RUC and demanding the removal of the police from their areas. SDLP leader in regular talks with Sinn Fein producing joint statements about a commitment to self-determination. Has the world turned upside down?

The political situation in Northern Ireland is still very much shaped by the political system set up by the Hillsborough Agreement in 1985. Britain is still the sovereign

power in Northern Ireland and directly rules the state-mate through a Secretary of State and a Northern Ireland Office. She rules, however, through a system of institutionalised and regular consultation with the Irish Republic. This system is supposed to reassure northern nationalists that their interests are taken seriously and bolster 'moderate' nationalism (SDLP) at the expense of republicanism (Sinn Fein). It is also supposed to force the unionists, who hate the 1985 Agreement, to compromise.

This set-up withstood immense and violent loyalist resistance. It began to erode Sinn Fein support and it led

to some new talks including visits by leading unionists to Dublin.

But the constitutional talks have broken down repeatedly — foundering finally on the unionists' insistence that the Republic drop its claim to the North embodied in Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish constitution.

And Sinn Fein's vote is now increasing again. The party won more first preference votes in Belfast than any other party in the recent local government elections.

Protestant working-class alienation from the Northern Ireland state is visibly deepening. Working-class Protestants have become convinced

that the path is cleared for their incorporation into some form of Irish unity.

The political initiatives proposed recently by Dick Spring and Kevin McNamara are products of impatience with the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Labour spokesperson McNamara proposed a strict time limit for talks to succeed and then the imposition of joint sovereignty over Northern Ireland by the British and Irish governments, to be approved in referendum North and South.

The fundamental problem here is that the whole Anglo-Irish process attempts to solve the problem without the people. It is an attempt to appeal to reason over the heads of "dogmatic, extremist" local politicians. The model for this process is the attempt by the European ruling classes to create a European union after World War 2. Then the economy boomed and prosperity offered some way of undercutting historic rivalries. In Northern Ireland the economy is in collapse and those at the sharp end see no offer of prosperity, no democratic involvement and no guarantees that they will have any role in determining their own futures.

Whatever the ruling parties of Britain and Ireland do, the job of socialists is to build a united working class which can combine the fight against Tory economic policies with the struggle for a democratic political settlement to the national question.

Against violence in the labour movement

In this issue of *Socialist Organiser* you can read about events at Marxism 93. We print below the text of a petition which we are asking readers to circulate in the labour movement. Signatures should be returned to: Jill Mountford, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Believing that disputes in the labour movement should be dealt with democratically and not by violence, we call for a labour movement inquiry into the following reported events at the Socialist Workers' Party's event, "Marxism 93", which was advertised as "a week of debate and discussion".

- 1 On Tuesday 13 July Jason Bonning tried to intervene in an argument with Rahul Patel, a leading organiser for the SWP and the Anti-Nazi League. Patel told him, in a threatening manner, to leave. Bonning did so. As he got outside the door, Patel seized him in an armlock and banged his head against the wall. Another SWP member punched him two or three times. Patel told Bonning he was banned from "Marxism 93" and expelled from the ANL.
- 2 On Friday 16 July, as Mark Sandell was distributing leaflets and petitioning about Tuesday's incident, a group of SWP members surrounded him, knocked him to the ground, and kicked him four or five times as he lay there. They also seized his leaflets.

We believe that these reports must cause concern to every serious socialist, and call for a labour movement inquiry.

Labour goes with the child-beaters

POLITICAL FRONT

By Martin Thomas

HIT OUT AT THE Tories? Too bold, too controversial, too dangerous, say Labour's front-bench leaders. Hit out at small children? That's another matter. In the *Guardian* of 10 July, Labour front-bencher Jack Straw declares:

"I have smacked my children. I don't know any parents who don't".

Child-care experts of every political colour were unanimous in condemning the decision by Sutton magistrates on 8 July that child-minder Anne Davis can hit children in her care. The *Daily Express*, of all papers, ran a big article arguing that smacking is wrong. Jack Straw not only disagrees, but seems to think that to admit even that other Labour Party leaders might share enlightened opinion on this question would be too risky, too likely to brand the Labour Party as left-wing! Straw's is the classic middle-class attitude — wheedling and cringing towards the powerful, arrogant and brutal towards the weak.

He explains: "You can smack children to stop outrageous behaviour or when something is a danger to them. I'm talking about young children before you can reason with them. When they're older you can use reason... A gentle and judicious smack saves a lot of trouble. A child wants to be shown limits. I wouldn't allow a casual baby-sitter to smack them but I would trust a long-term child carer... much more..."

Children have the same human right not to be assaulted as adults have. And hitting small children is much worse than hitting adults because the children are defenceless, physically and emotionally. If a smack does no great physical harm, that does not undo the emotional harm; and routine, casual smacking as the answer to minor conflicts is the basis on which greater violence against children

grows in bigger conflicts.

Smacking teaches children nothing good. If they are unable to reason, they will not be able to work out what they have done wrong, and why it is wrong. All they can learn is that they are somehow bad (for why else would adults on whom they are totally dependent be hitting them), and that conflicts between people should be resolved by the strong hitting the weak.

Unless the violence against children is so relentless and comprehensive as to terrorise them, smacking does not even save the adult "a lot of trouble" (as Straw puts it, ignoring what "trouble" the smack may cause to the child). Smacks and threats breed hurt defiance, not self-respect, responsibility, and self-discipline.

The Sutton magistrates' decision is important because it undermines the laws which ban teachers, nursery workers, and (so everyone thought until 8 July) childminders from hitting children. The magistrates said that since the parents have a legal right to hit their child — and under present law they do — they could pass on that right to the minder.

Since some 60 per cent of parents start hitting their children before they have even reached the age of one, this ruling could reach far. The loophole should be closed. As in Sweden, parents hitting their children should be as illegal as any other form of assault.

Indeed, parents hitting their children is worse than minders, nursery workers, or teachers hitting them. It is worse for children to be hit by the people whom they love most, and on whom they are most dependent. Such a law will not stop parents hitting their children overnight, any more than the ordinary law of assault stops domestic violence between adults. But it will put down a necessary marker.

That is what Labour should campaign for. Straw's response shows that the Labour leaders' current "realism" excludes not only socialism, but the most elementary human decencies.

Student Unions under attack

Fight voluntary membership!

By Elaine Jones, NUS NEC (personal capacity)

THERE HAVE been two responses to Tory Minister John Patten's, declaration that he is about to break up student unions.

On one hand the leadership of the National Union of Students, headed up by Lorna Fitzsimmons, have flailed around looking for an excuse for their strategy of accepting half the Tories' agenda and begging for mercy. Now Lorna is trying to brave out the defeat by dressing it as a 'sort of victory over certain items'.

Student activists are fed-up to the hind teeth with this approach and are preparing their counter-attack. Cumbria and Lancaster Area NUS are organising a picket of Tory

Party conference in Blackpool in early October.

Manchester Area NUS are organising a national demonstration in Manchester on 3 October.

On 24 November, NUS has called a 'lobby meeting' for a hand-picked few to talk to a PR company about how to lobby — activists will be using that day to build a mass lobby of Parliament.

What you can do:

Over the summer, get your students' union to contact as many students as possible and build links with local trade unions, trades councils and campus trade unions.

Organise some action locally, a picket of the local Tory HQ, a lobby of your local MP's surgery.

Get your union to start

organising a campaign as soon as term starts.

Make sure your union books coaches for the MANUS demo and has plans for getting the maximum number of students involved in the campaign.

Set up a Save Our Union club or society and ensure it has a prominent place at union events and societies fairs.

Contact local trade unions, student unions and school sixth forms offering to talk to their members about the attack on student unions.

The Tories have extended the 'consultation period' on their proposals for student unions until the end of November, but NUS's failed policy has shown the Tories will not listen to grovelling. So let's start fighting back instead!

Stephen Smith

MANY READERS of this paper will be saddened to hear of the death of Stephen Smith.

Stephen, who was 36, died in the early hours of Thursday 5 July, suffering a severe heart attack after a blood clot on his lung became dislodged and blocked an artery.

He will be sadly missed by his family, friends and by his comrades in the Labour Party and at Guy's Hospital, where he worked as senior pharmacist and held the position of MSF Branch Secretary.

We send our condolences to all his family and friends.

His death leaves a big gap that will be impossible to fill. Stephen will be best remembered for his

stubbornness and bloody-mindedness. He refused to put up with hypocrisy or cant and, as a result, often found himself in conflict with the right-wing careerists dominant in the Labour Party and with mindless ultra-left sectarians.

Bloodymindedness is an incredibly valuable characteristic. It is perhaps the most important human quality required of people who want to fight against the capitalist system we live under. In this world, it is extremely easy to get by as a conciliatory, compromising "fudger". It is a bit more difficult to fight to the end for what you believe in.

Stephen knew this and he also knew that friendship and respect which were won on the basis of

sticking up for what you believe meant something.

If you made a friend of Stephen Smith, you had a friend for life.

My last memory of Stephen is that of hearing him virtually squeal with joy down the 'phone as he told me of the left's successful defence of the Labour Party/trade union link at MSF's annual conference. Stephen was particularly proud that it was *his* region — the London region — that had led the fight on the issue.

Politics *mattered* to Stephen. He knew that human actions have consequences and that battles like that to defend the union link were not just issues to pick up or abandon at the drop of a hat, or as the whim caught you, but were part of a relentless war to defend and

advance the interests of working class people.

Stephen did not consider himself a Trotskyist or a supporter of classical Marxism.

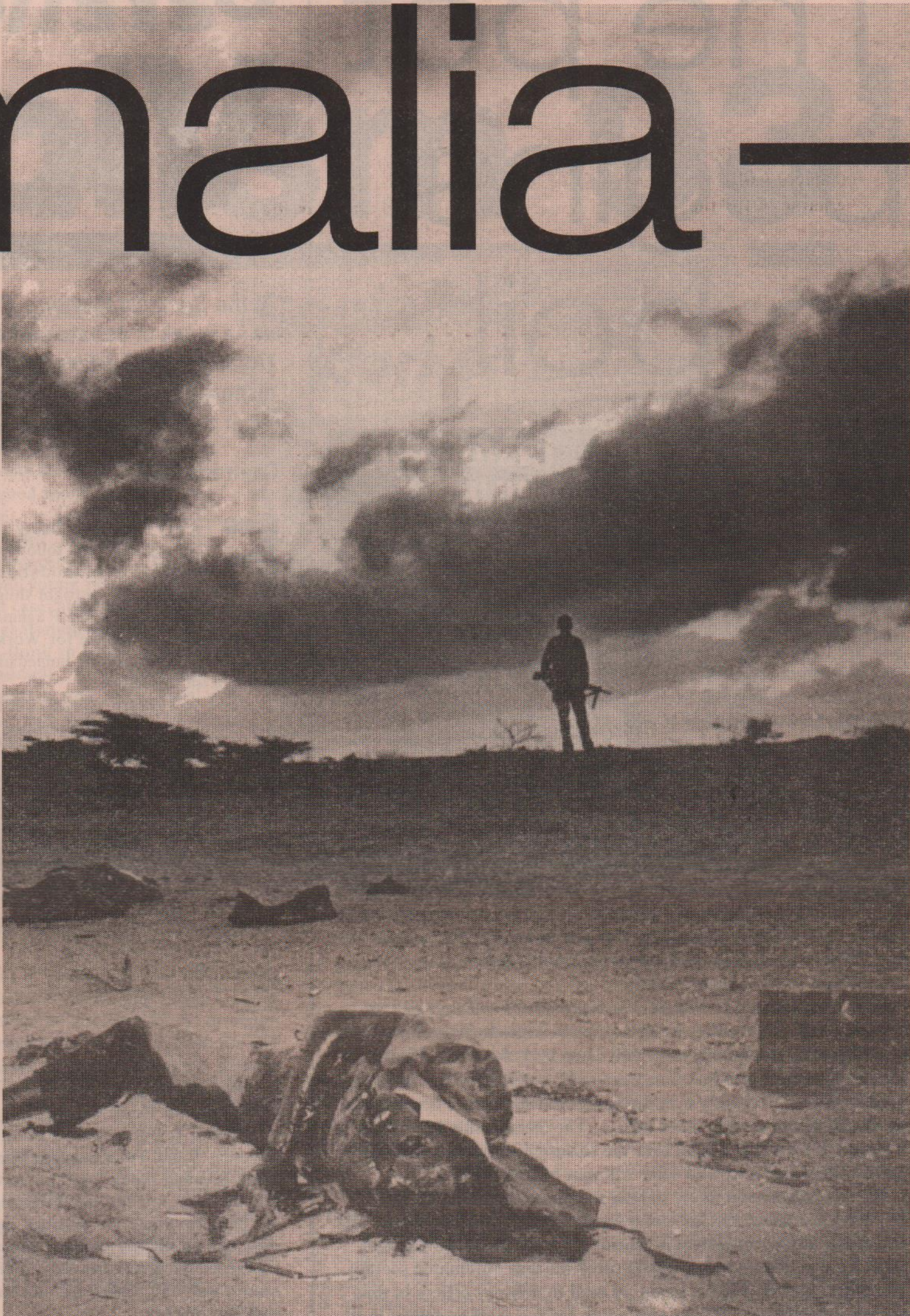
I have personally lost count of the hours spent in pubs after meetings arguing with him over Kant, Hegel, Marx and more or less everything else under the sun. But everyone who knew Stephen and who fought alongside him considered him a comrade.

Tom Rigby

Stephen's funeral will be held at the Lewisham Crematorium, Verdant Lane, SE6 on 29 July at 3pm. The funeral procession will leave Stephen's home, 89 Silvermore Road, SE6 at 2.30 sharp.

Somalia —

U.S. out!



DOZENS of Somali civilians have now been killed by the US attacks on Somali warlord Aideed. Even if Aideed is no better than the old warlord, Siad Barre, who ruled Somalia for many years with US support — and probably he is no better at all — this is an atrocity.

The US went into Somalia last year saying that it would provide military protection for the distribution of food aid. In fact — as we said at the time in *Socialist Organiser* — George Bush was launching an operation which looked good but was almost certain to turn bad by the time

Bill Clinton took office as president.

The inbred arrogance of US military chiefs, descending on Somalia for a publicity stunt, impatient with any gripes, complaints, quarrels or concerns of the local people, was bound to bring clashes. Clinton has made it worse by adopting that military arrogance as his own, to the point when he has horrified even the Italian military commander on the spot.

Probably the US military action still serves no imperialist purpose in the strict sense of the word. Somalia's coastline is strategically important, but the US can probably have any facilities it wants there

anyway. But the US army has imperialism built into its psychology, its structure, and its philosophy.

The Somali people need food aid, and the organisations

distributing food aid need to make sensible arrangements — based on local knowledge, and sensitive to local concerns — to protect themselves and their distribution. They do not

need a superpower blasting in with arbitrary and brutal interventions in a messy and atrocious civil war which only the Somali people can sort out for themselves.

Tories must go! Labour can force election!

Continued from front page

However, whatever happens on the day, the Labour Party should not lessen the pressure on the Tories.

John Smith should declare that the Tory government have no right to rule. He should place himself at the head of a mass campaign of opposition to the government, which could combine

demonstrations with support for workers in struggle, like those at Timex, and parliamentary disruption.

The alternative to the kind of offensive action designed to force the Tories to call a new election is for the Labour Party and trade unions to sit back and allow the Tories to push through their anti-working class agenda. This week the Com-

mission for Social Justice has reported in detail on what that agenda means. The division between rich and poor in this country is now greater than at any other time in the last hundred years.

Defeating the Tories has to be the number one priority facing the Labour Party.

The reactionary campaign to exclude the trade unions

from the Party, started by crown princes Brown and Blair and taken up as his own by John Smith, is nothing but a pointless and dangerous diversion.

John Smith should put the same amount of effort into defeating the Tories that he is currently wasting on attacking the unions.

Labour must fight!

Force a general election!

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

Karl Marx

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The pot begins to boil

IT WOULD SEEM that it's only a matter of time now before a major dispute breaks out in Royal Mail. The management are becoming increasingly aggressive. The introduction of new machinery is being used as a vehicle for massive job cuts right across the board. In London 5,000 jobs are to go under the office closure programme. In other parts of the country delivery jobs are threatened by the removal of night and early morning sorting. Second deliveries, and therefore full-time jobs, are threatened by management plans to flood offices with part time workers. Attempts to functionalise, that is split workers into separate categories, go hand in hand with proposals to cut staffing levels.

Management have also announced that they intend to impose a new discipline code in October by executive action. A draft proposal went to this year's Annual Conference, where several amendments to it were carried. Such is management's arrogance at the moment that they have refused to go back into negotiations and instead are treating the Union like naughty children.

Postal workers are getting increasingly fed up and angry at the way they're being treated. Huge increases in productivity have led to record profits yet management still come back for more. Unofficial strikes are starting to break out again. West Derby office in Liverpool walked out recently over discipline and there have been strikes at Sheffield and several other offices. The membership in London have voted for strike action over the closure programme although it seems likely that a revised offer will now be accepted.

The two issues most likely to lead to industrial action are the 09.30am last letter and the claim for the shorter working week. The 09.30 last letter Agreement is crucial for delivery staff. Management have stated that they intend using the new automated sorting machines, the NP 4000's, to get all mail to delivery offices in time for the first delivery. If they succeed in forcing staff to deliver it all then obviously there would be nothing left for the second delivery. This would allow them to decimate the number of full time jobs in delivery.

At the moment there are at least three National Agreements which protect the second delivery. These cover the time allowed for last deliveries, the maximum weight to be carried and the sort of mail that can be held back to allow deliveries to be completed on time. It seems clear that management are intent on ripping these up. Annual Conference this year passed motion which called for industrial action if the 09.30 last letter and second delivery were threatened. If management refuse to back down then there's a real possibility that the terms of this motion will be acted on.

The first shots of the campaign for a 35-hour week have been fired in the shape of a letter from the Union to the various businesses outlining the claim. The problem is going to be forcing the Executive Council to do anything more than just go through the motions. The only real answer postal workers have in the face of new technology is the shorter working week. Where management say "cut the jobs" we have to reply with "cut the hours".

The main task at the moment has to be to convince the membership of the need to have a campaign to cut the hours now and to prepare them for the fight ahead. The EC have promised to produce leaflets. Branches need to put the pressure on to make sure these appear and if they don't, then produce their own. This should be our attitude to the whole campaign — force the EC to act, but if they don't then move without them.

This needs proper organisation. UCW activists must make sure that the subject is discussed at every branch committee meeting and that branches liaise with each other on their activity. The recently formed UCW Fightback must prove that it's more than just a sectarian debating society and call a meeting to map out a plan of action that can be taken back to the branches. The shorter working week is to the advantage of every postal worker. The campaign for it should unite us all and if successful will not only save thousands of jobs but also put a large spoke in the wheel of Post Office privatisation.

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By a postal worker

NEWS

SWP uses thuggery Violence

At the Socialist Workers' Party "Marxism '93", advertised as "a week of debate and discussion", two Socialist Organiser supporters were beaten and kicked for daring to disagree (see page 2). Sean Matgamna writes an open letter to SWP leader Tony Cliff

Comrade Cliff,

FIRST, LET ME bring to your attention the following incidents of intimidation, violence, and outright thuggery by members of the SWP against members of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. They are the immediate occasion for this letter.

Later I will return to their roots and implications. The first incident I want to bring to your attention took place on Tuesday night, 13 July. AWL member Jason Bonning was attacked by a group of SWPers led by Rahul Patel, a prominent member of the SWP and national organiser of your auxiliary organisation, the Anti-Nazi League.

In the bar a heated discussion had developed between Patel and a young black woman member of the AWL, Tunde Osho. Jason Bonning joined in. Patel told him to leave. The atmosphere was one of incipient violence. Outnumbered rather heavily, Jason Bonning left, and so, soon afterwards, did Tunde Osho.

As Jason Bonning went through the door, Rahul Patel attacked him. Jason Bonning states: "As I got outside the door, my arm was thrust up my back by Patel. He grabbed my shirt, tearing my shirt and my chain. He carried me in this arm-lock to the nearest wall and bashed me into the wall four times."

Patel, who is somewhat larger and heavier than Jason Bonning, was not enough. Now another SWPer joined in. "Another of the group then punched me twice". This was Gaynor Gardner.

The rough stuff was now over. But Rahul Patel still had an offensive weapon: he had the authority of "Marxism '93", as a leading SWP organiser. His final blow at Jason Bonning was to tell him that he was now "banned from Marxism '93"!

Later he would shout that Jason was expelled from the ANL. This thug is obviously a man of great and manifold authority in and around the SWP! Wasn't it altogether too like the routine police operation in which the victim is first beaten and then charged? Except that here the licensed thug and the judge were the same person!

Meanwhile Tunde Osho had come outside, and since she had not been "convinced" by Rahul Patel's haranguing in the bar, she now found herself surrounded by perhaps 15 SWPers, who, following Rahul Patel's lead, were hurling abuse at her. Jason Bonning went over to support her and was told that if he did

not "fuck off" then Rahul Patel and his friends would finish the job and "kick his head in".

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty, shouted Rahul Patel, "supports David Irving", the semi-Nazi historian and Holocaust revisionist. In the second incident we were subjected to the altogether more plausible charge of being 'Zionists'!

Our two outnumbered comrades left at this point.

NOW, COMRADE Cliff, do you not find this scandalous? Isn't it altogether reminiscent of the way the Stalinist parties taught their members to behave in the days when those organisations were drunk with triumphalism?

Isn't it exactly like the Healy organisation (SLL/WRP) in the late 1960s, when they were in their last stage of transition from being a very sick political organisation to becoming a crazy destructive sect?

One of two things. Either this episode — the first of the two I have to recount — was an aberration, the accidental result of drink mixed with factional animosity, or of an organiser (Rahul Patel) going round the twist and carrying a group of young SWPers with him. Or it is an extreme example of a commonplace sort of behaviour, and it grows naturally and organically — and inevitably — out of the attitude, ethos, education and emotion-charged conditioning into which the SWP "socialises" its organisers, members and sympathisers.

I think it is the latter, but let us leave that open for the moment. Events had yet to provide the rest of that week's crop of evidence.

If the incident outlined above were a mere drunken brawl, then our comrades could either shrug and forget it, or complain to the organisers of "Marxism '93" against Rahul Patel's thuggery, and ask them to repudiate his pretensions to be able to declare the victim of his violence "banned" from Marxism '93.

But they knew that talking to the "Marxism '93" organisers was a waste of time. Incidents less extreme

but of the same sort have been too frequent, and the arbitrary use of power by the SWP's ideological patrols at the annual "Marxism" affair too commonplace.

Our comrades produced and distributed a leaflet recounting the facts outlined above, and organised a petition which participants in "Marxism '93" were asked to sign. This demanded that the Central Committee of the SWP and the leaders of the ANL investigate what had happened.

That led directly to another, the second, incident which is, if anything, more grotesque than the first. On Friday 16 June Rosie Woods, Tracy McGuire and Mark Sandell were standing outside the final rally of Marxism '93, selling Socialist Organiser and inviting people to sign the petition.

LET TRACY, a student of 20, describe what she saw and experienced. "When they recognised that we were beginning to attract attention four male members of the SWP approached us, surrounded us and started behaving hostilely to us. They called us racists, repeatedly told us to "fuck off" and accused us of calling them anti-semitic, even though we had not".

Four additional male members of the SWP joined the others and the situation grew much worse and much more hostile. Tracy McGuire continues: "At one point, about five men from the SWP surrounded me, shouting and accusing me of calling them anti-semitic. When I tried to debate with them on a political level, they ignored what I had to say and continued shouting. One of their comrades approached me and shouted in my face that I was a racist. His breath smelt of alcohol. I tried to walk away from him and the others.

"When I turned around I saw one of them snatch the petition which Mark Sandell was holding. Because Mark held onto the petition, he was pushed, and one of them grabbed his T-shirt and hit him. Mark and one of his attackers fell to the ground. Then about another four SWP members rushed around them. One tried to pick the SWPer off Mark, whilst the others kicked Mark. They then backed off and Mark was able to get up. His T-shirt was ripped and he had scratches and blood on his neck.

"The harassment did not stop there. Mark, Rosie and I stood our ground and remained with the petition despite continued threats and attacks from SWPers. Again they tried to provoke Mark into a fight by pushing him, saying that he deserved to have his head kicked in if he — a "Zionist" — called someone anti-semitic".

But relief was at hand: the organis-

"One of them grabbed his T-shirt and hit him. Mark and one of his attackers fell to the ground. Then about another four SWP members rushed around them. One tried to pick the SWPer off Mark, whilst the others kicked Mark."

"He grabbed my shirt, tearing my shirt and my chain. He carried me in this arm-lock to the nearest wall and bashed me into the wall four times."

against socialists at 'Marxism 93'

er called the thugs away to other party duties. Tracy McGuire:

"They continued to harass us until an SWP member came out to tell them to enter for the final rally of Marxism".

Those SWPers we can name are Ian Taylor and Newcastle organiser Yunis.

Now, AWL does say that, whatever the good intentions of SWP members, SWP policy is anti-semitic. You advocate the destruction of Israel, and commit yourself to this policy, even to the degree of backing Saddam Hussein's missile attacks on Israel. You are comprehensively hostile to Jews who reject the idea that Israel must be destroyed, denouncing them as "racists". You supported banning student Jewish societies. If it were a matter of name-calling by our comrades then violence might follow. In fact, we do not name-call. We argue our ideas and reasons. Those incidents did not come from natural if unfortunate heat and the clash of young people with strongly different ideas, outraged by the arguments they were hearing. They came because your comrades on average are not taught much by the SWP about the Middle East or about anything else. They are taught crude slogans and inoculated against discussing politics by demonology and misrepresentation of opponents which fill the place of Marxist education in your "revolutionary party".

I put it to you again, Cliff: is not this a scandalous business?

I HAVE ALREADY referred to the two streams of this sort of poisonous violence in the history of the labour movement. The Stalinist party used thuggery to suppress Trotskyist critics in the 1930s and '40s, and occasionally later, because the contradictions between the truth the Trotskyists proclaimed and the lies the Stalinists were compelled by their allegiance to Moscow to purvey were sharp and unbridgeable.

So also with the violence of the Healy organisation (SLL/WRP). There too the gap between what the Healy organisation said, its pretensions for itself, and its often crazy picture of the world came into too sharp a conflict with reality for them to be able to brook free discussion either in their own ranks or directed at their ranks from outside. (On the other hand, they did not, so far as I recall, organise pretend "open", "broad", public events like "Marx-

ism 93").

They too built up in their organisation the culture of primitive religious certainties combined with hate and demonisation of other socialists and of all critics, heretics, and "anti-party elements". They too inculcated an indifference to politics — "anything goes if it serves the party", "never mind the politics, think of the membership figures". They too operated a culture of revealed truth (all of it known to the Leader), hate and hysteria against dissenters, and general unreason in and around their organisation.

In and around that organisation — like yours now — there was an atmosphere of incipient violence towards doubters, critics, sceptics and opponents that inevitably burst out in violent incidents and episodes. Members of the SWP's predecessor IS were occasionally its targets and victims.

These days people who remember the Healyites remember them when they were more or less completely crazy. They did not begin completely crazy, Cliff. That took a long time.

I submit to you, comrade Cliff, that the SWP is already far gone down that road. That is what the two incidents outlined above signify. That is what they will tell you — if you are still capable of paying attention.

Incidents like those I have outlined grow out of the entirety of the culture and the everyday reality, and out of the normal internal life of the SWP.

THE TRUTH is that democracy at "broad" SWP events like Marxism 93 cannot rise higher than democracy within "The Party". If you demonise your socialist critics, teach your youth to sloganise and rant before they have learned to think or even to read the basic texts of Marxism and factual accounts of modern history; if you expel any SWPer who seriously criticises what the organisation's leaders do — as you expelled Phil Taylor and Maureen Watson for criticising your mad call for a General Strike last year — how can you tolerate, even at a supposedly "open" event, the activities of independent socialists like ourselves who are comprehensively and implacably critical of what the SWP

is, does, and says, and who offer alternatives?

If your young people are wound up to see a complex issue like that of Israel and the Arabs in the ridiculously false terms of a conflict of racists and their victims, or of a good people and a bad people — how can healthy, vibrant, militant, sincere young people fail to behave as your young people behave in the cases above? If you have an organisation that teaches them to think in terms of popes — yourself, God help us! — revealed truth and political devils — how can they not behave as ignorant, psychologically mutilated religious zealots always have behaved and always will behave?

Rosa Luxemburg used to insist that "Freedom is always and everywhere the freedom of the one who thinks differently". The routine intolerance of disagreement not only within the "party" but at "Marxism 93" and other such affairs is the clearest

**"Democracy at
"broad" SWP events
like Marxism 93
cannot rise higher
than democracy
within "the Party"."**

portrayal of how things stand with democracy in the SWP now and of where it is going.

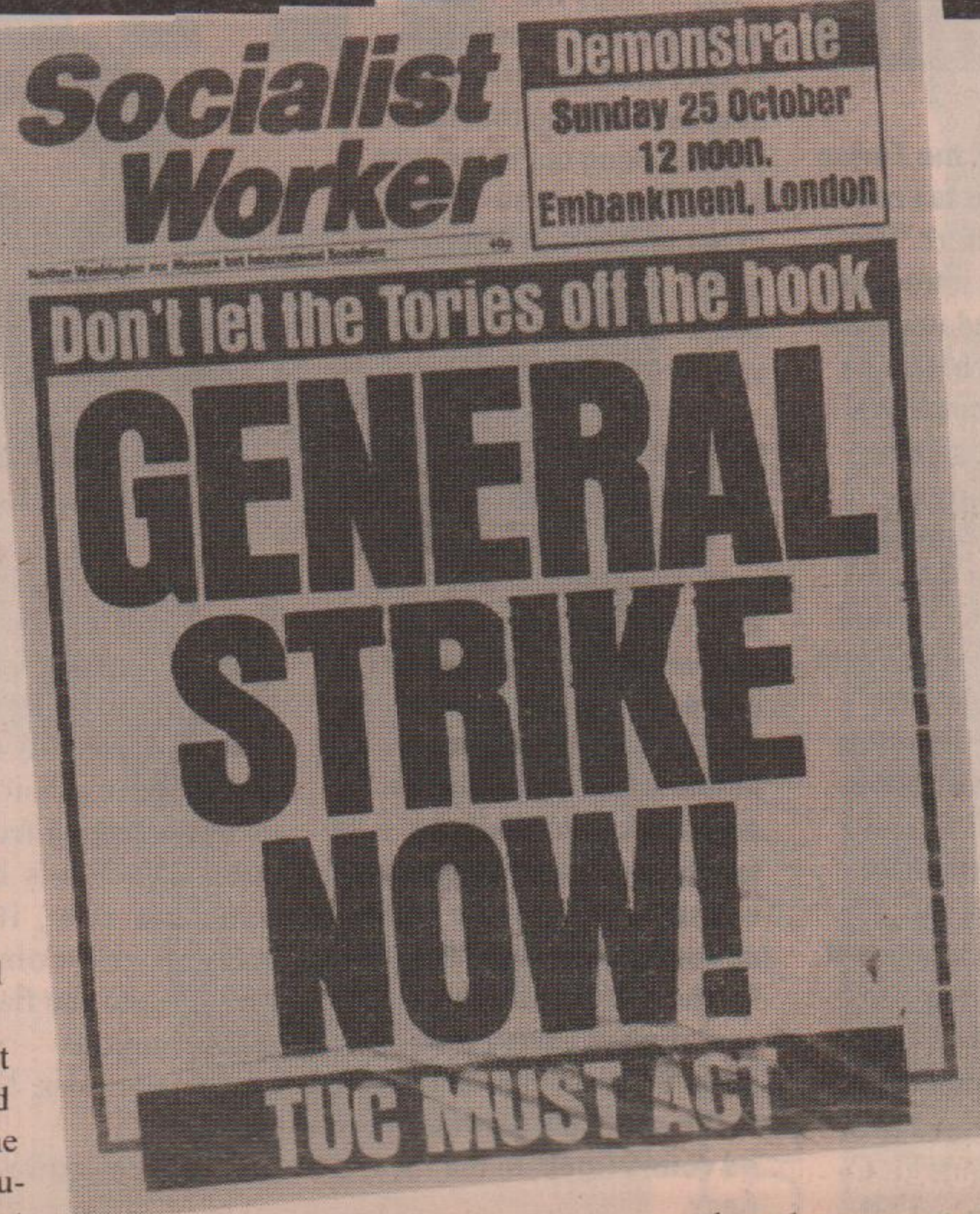
I repeat: hysterical political violence is a function of the general politics of the organisation you have built, comrade Cliff. It is only one of the symptoms of political decay.

THE EPISODES and symptoms of gross degeneration in the SWP are legion, and of its present similarity with the Healy Group as it was in the late 60s. Take the recent bizarre episode of your sudden call for a General Strike. In this letter I will let this episode stand in for many political episodes in your recent history.

Last October the brutal Tory decision to close 31 pits created waves of outrage — waves far wider even than the miners and the labour movement. 100,000 labour movement activists marched in London on the Wednesday and more in heavy rain on the official TUC demo the following Sunday. It was all very inspiring, in wonderful contrast to the mood of depression that had prevailed for so long before it. It showed great potential. But it was only a beginning. In fact, it subsided quickly. Things are not as bleak as before the upsurge. The will to struggle in the labour movement is very much greater. But things have not gone as we would have liked, either.

The SWP's response to these events was one of the most bizarre and illustrative things in recent British politics.

YOUR FIRST response in *Socialist Worker*, as things moved towards the first national demonstration was rather like ours — joyful but cautious, and focused on practical ways of spreading and develop-



"General Strike Now" — the slogan would have been mad ultra-leftism if it were not a cynical advertising-agency-type gimmick to give the SWP a revolutionary "image" and recruit people

Marxist reasonings about reality rather

than the outcome of a brainstorm in the head of the leader of a cult, then discussion would have been seen as the necessary means of really convincing the organisation.

Those who were slow to "turn" and see what the far-seeing leadership had seen would not be treated as enemies to be bullied or expelled, but as precious people playing an irreplaceable role in the necessary process of creating real clarity and conviction in the party.

An organisation of politically alive and thinking people could not have behaved like the SWP did, Cliff!

This business was all the more startling and weird coming from people who had fought us and others when we called for a General Strike to back the miners during their 1984-5 strike. Almost as many miners were on strike then — and for over a year! — as demonstrated on the bigger of last October's two big marches.

"THE PARTY" you have built, Cliff, is an extremely undemocratic organisation, conceived as a machine for achieving certain mechanical tasks — flyposting, paper sales, raising money, recruiting and at its centre a cult around yourself. It is conceived as a machine for... building a machine, a machine of the Zinovievist type, or even of the Stalinist type.

The weird business with the general strike reminds me of something James P Cannon once wrote about another cult:

"I will admit that I lived sixty years in this world before I stumbled over the fact that there are such things as political cults. I began rubbing my eyes when I saw the John-sonites operating in our party. I saw a cult bound to a single person, a sort of Messiah.

"A cult requires unthinking fools for the rank and file. But that is not all. In order for a cult to exist, it is not enough for a leader to have per-

ing the movement. No talk of general strike. Then on the Wednesday demo your people turned up with masses of expensive placards and began to hand them out. They called for all-out general strike! How you arrived at this wild flight of fantasy — it was as crazily remote from reality as anything political Gerry Healy ever dreamed up, even in his political dotage — was never explained.

How had the SWP measured the mood in advance of its first — limited — manifestation on the Wednesday? That is the great mystery!

If one asks who had the weight and authority, once the crazy idea had occurred to him, to carry the party with him, then for anyone who knows the SWP there is only one answer to that question: you, comrade Cliff!

The cultism at the heart of the SWP has never been more clearly displayed in public.

Everyone sometimes gets crazy ideas — what characterises the SWP now is that overnight your crazy idea was imposed on the organisation. Naturally, loud dissenters were expelled.

After a while reality impinged on your fantasies and the all-out general strike call faded, but there has never been any public accounting for this episode.

Cliff, the organisation that could be moved to raise and then drop this slogan as the SWP raised it and dropped it is a sick organisation — a cult inside a Stalinist-type authoritarian party regime. Think about it.

Suppose you were right about the need for the SWP to make this startling and sudden switch — after over a decade of preaching gloom and doom and of exaggerating, even during the miners' strike, the allegedly hopeless state of the labour movement. Would a serious organisation have confined itself to issuing marching orders to the ranks? Would it have stifled discussion and expelled dissenters?

If the call for a General Strike had really been the outcome of rational



Rahul Patel



Mark Sandell

Continued on page 11

A tax on learning

GRAFFITI

WELL, are the Tories going to tax reading matter? "We have no plans to introduce VAT on books and newspapers", said John Major on BBC's *On the Record*. That will reassure those who forgot that the Tories promised not to extend VAT 12 months before they announced the tax on fuel. Major added that it would be "unwise to rule anything absolutely definitely in or absolutely definitely out". Reassured?

Now that you are in no doubt at all about the Tories' intentions, take out a bank loan and buy enough books to last you until the next election.

IN CASE you haven't noticed yet, front page adverts have been appearing in the *Guardian* for an outfit called "Campaign against Militarism and War".

Is this some bunch of left-over peaceniks from CND? Or a splinter group of pacifist anarchists? Who could be so much into publicity stunts that they set up alternative road blocks in the City at midnight to protest against the police ones? Who can afford *Guardian* front-page ads?

Yes, you've guessed it — the RCP, the strange, affluent "communists" who made their name in the labour movement during the 1984-5 miners' strike — by supporting the UDM scabs in Nottingham against the NUM!

With the sole exception of Slobodan Milosevic, they are the unlikeliest of peace campaigners.

The RCP have a fascist-minded history of adoring violence and paramilitarism. In the early eighties the RCP tried to build a cult of violence around their front organisation Workers Against Racism (WAR), although their main activity was shaking collecting tins to collect money that went straight to the RCP.

And then there was the worship of the Irish National Liberation Army, an Irish republican group that made the Provisional IRA look left-wing and restrained.

In April of this year a group of RCP supporters attempted to smash up a demonstration organised by the London Irish community against the Warrington bombing and for peace. The grounds? It was anti-IRA. They marched in military formation.

The strange RCP leader and Peter Lorre lookalike Frank Ferudi was recently overhead saying that he is now working out in the gym every day because "I want to get in touch with my body". How about doing some renovation work on your brain, Frank?

HOW democratic is the ruling class? A major victory for democracy was won in the board room of Great Universal Stores last week. Up until now the company has been run by just 2.2% of their shareholders; half these shares are held by the Wolfson family and the other half by connected charitable foundations. In a major advance for the democratic representation of money the other 97.8% of shareholders in the company were granted voting rights in the company.

The chair of the board, Lord Wolfson of Marylebone, has even expanded the board to make it more representative. One of the new non-executive directors is Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, his second cousin.

COCA-COLA is of course concerned to capture new markets to replace any it may lose. So they now target primary schools to persuade them to install fizzy drink vending machines. This, they say, is "the free and easy way to generate extra income for your school".

The company promises payments which "could easily add up to as much as £400. Very often much more".

Schools once supplied children with free milk to help strengthen their teeth and bones, until a Tory minister of education called Margaret Thatcher took it away. Now it seems that the underfunding of education is to lead the introduction of machines that sell drinks to rot children's teeth. Progress, isn't it wonderful?

SPOT the difference competition. Before: it was illegal to be lesbian or gay in the US armed forces — if you were found out you would be dishonourably discharged.

After: Bill Clinton is proposing that the sexuality of lesbians and gay men in the armed forces will no longer be an offence so long as they stay deeply in the closet. Being lesbian or gay is no longer a crime — getting caught still is.

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

KELVIN MacKenzie, the ebullient editor of the *Sun*, is generally reluctant to appear on television. When, as does happen from time to time, the *Sun's* behaviour causes a row, it is never Kelvin who comes on the box to take the flak, but one of his minions — or even his immediate boss, Mr Andrew Knight.

So it was quite a surprise to see Kelvin appearing on the *Sun's* TV commercials last weekend. And the script was nothing short of bizarre: "I've put a great idea to the boss" says MacKenzie. The great idea is to cut the price of the *Sun* to 20p as a "recession beater". He then asks "Is that OK boss?" and a chair behind him swivels

round to reveal a figure, bound and gagged, emitting a pathetic muffled cry of anguish. "I think I'll take that as a 'yes'" says a grinning MacKenzie.

This extraordinary commercial contained a number of powerful messages — some verging on the subliminal. One was that the *Sun* bears no responsibility for the present recession or for the government that presides over it. As the *Daily Mirror* pointed out, this is a bit rich coming from the paper that immediately after the last general election ran the headline "IT'S THE SUN WOT WON IT."

Then there is the suggestion that the *Sun* is somehow repaying the loyalty of its happy family of readers who have stood by it through the recent hard times. The "happy family" myth is a recurring *Sun* leitmotif, conjoining a deliberately positive image of cheeky lager-swilling Essex lads with XR3i's and hearts of gold. Of course the real purpose of the price cuts has nothing to do with the existing *Sun* readers: it's to lure readers away from the competition. Specifically it is to damage the *Mirror* group in the run-up to the "placing" of the 55% of MGN shares

presently held by the banks. An agreeable side-effect may be to hasten the demise of United Newspaper's ailing *Daily Star*.

Finally, there is the implication that the *Sun* is an independently minded publication with a cheeky, public-spirited editor who'll brook no interference from "the boss". Given that "the boss" is, of course, Rupert Murdoch, I find this a somewhat unlikely scenario. Kelvin MacKenzie is not averse to abusing and humiliating his subordinates. But strapping Murdoch to a chair and forcing him to give away money? Clearly, Kelvin has a well-developed — not to say surreal — sense of humour.

As it turns out the joke could be on Murdoch and News International. The *Mirror*, the main target of the *Sun* price cut, responded by cutting its price to 10p for one day only on Monday, and ended the week more or less holding its own in terms of circulation. The *Daily Star* was certainly hurt, but the main victim seems to have been the *Sun's* stable mate *Today*.

Richard Stott, who took over *Today* after being sacked from the *Mirror* by David Montgomery, has

been working hard to build up his paper's circulation and sales were up 10.3% in the first half of this year. Now, thanks to the price war initiated by the *Sun*, *Today* has lost all of its sales gains at a stroke. Stott is said to be incandescent with rage.

"A final unforeseen result of the price war is the increased likelihood of VAT on newspapers."

A final, unforeseen, result of the price war that will hurt Murdoch as much as anyone else, is the increased likelihood that VAT will be imposed on newspapers in the November budget. Kenneth Clarke will surely argue that if newspapers can afford to cut their cover price they can at least absorb part of the 17.5% VAT increase. Well done Kelvin. Well done Rupert.

A slip of the scalpel — or pen?

WOMEN'S EYE



By Jean Lane

GENETICS and genes are coming in for a bit of a bashing just lately, what with the discovery of a gene which can depict the tendency of men towards homosexuality, and with the assertion in the *Independent's* Tuesday cricket coverage that "by consent, the game's

foremost batsman" (my emphasis) is Australia's Denise Annetts. Your genetic make up, it seems, can be changed as much with a slip of the pen as with that of the scalpel.

If there are any people out there (as is widely feared) who would consider aborting a foetus which carries the "gay gene", they could take a few valuable lessons from the cricketing fraternity — including those who cover the game in the press — who are past masters at cutting undesirable elements out of the game; i.e. women.

Today (20 July) sees the start of the 5th Women's Cricket World Cup. It has caught the press on the hop. Quite understandably — it has only been going for 20 years. Rachael Heyhoe-Flint's England XI beat Australia by 92 runs in 1973. Since then, Australia has exacted a heavy price, beating England three times in 1978, '82 and '88, and

look set to do the same again this year with the help of the aforementioned batsman.

The England team, however, have Jo Chamberlain, a left-handed pace bowler (who is "a bit quicker than Graham Gooch" according to Kevin Sharp, the Yorkshire batsman and assistant to the women's coach, Ruth Prideaux) on their side. New Zealand, too, are serious contenders, particularly with Debbie Hockley who has aggregated 668 runs in two World Cups.

The five other countries participating are India, Ireland, Denmark, the Netherlands and the West Indies. These last have encountered difficulties funding their team's effort, as, no doubt, have all of the others. According to their manager, Dorothy Hobson, "Men throughout the world think women

shouldn't play cricket so they pay us lip service. Unfortunately a lot of sponsors are run by men".

The Cup Final is on 1 August and is being played at Lords — where women may not enter the much-sanctified Long Room, nor the members' enclosure in the Pavilion. A spokesman, replete with handlebar moustache, plummy voice and a good supply of pomposity (no mistaking his genetic make-up) for the male-only club remarked that the exclusion of women was an old tradition, which added to the mystery of the club.

Someone ought to tell him that in the days of genetic research and scientific scrutiny there are no mysteries, except those at work in prejudiced minds. Pity they can't find a gene which shows a tendency towards becoming an upper class old fool. The abortion clinics would be inundated.

Fight Tory Job Plan!

WHOOPEE! THE Tories have come up with a spanking new way to solve the unemployment problem. No, not creating more jobs, but setting up the Job Plan Workshop.

Like most of the Tories' crap ideas for claimants, they've had to make it compulsory.

If you've been on Income Support for over a year, you now have to go on a Job Plan Workshop or you will get your benefit cut by 40%.

The good news is that people are fighting back against Job Plan.

In Brixton, unemployed people in a Job Plan Workshop refused to cooperate with the trainers in protest at conditions and against the patronising rubbish they were being fed.

On the second day of the five-day course, it was closed down by the training firm. The message was clear: we may have to go but we're not taking part!

As Ray Barker, one of the 'strikers' said:

"The whole exercise seemed designed to make us feel like it is



our fault that we're unemployed. I have never been so humiliated and patronised in all my life.

"The fact that all of us on the workshop acted together shows how we all felt the same. With 3

million people on the dole, I don't see how they can blame us, I want a real job with decent pay".

Unemployed groups have joined with other groups in a campaign to stop Job Plan. Job Plan Workshop venues are being leafleted on how to fight back.

It is vital that a national campaign against Job Plans be built. If you get called up on a Job Plan Workshop, use these ideas to fight back and build your local unemployed campaign:

- Attend so that you don't lose benefit.
- Inform the trainers that you are there under protest and won't be participating.
- Bring newspapers, books, magazines or a Walkman. You could be in for a long and very boring week.
- Along with other claimants on the Workshop, draw up a list of grievances and demands (such as inadequate heating, lighting, ventilation, refreshments, resources, etc.).
- Make sure your list of complaints is given to the Job Centre manager and the trade union rep.
- Don't let the trainers intimidate you into cooperating. Ignore any threats from them that your benefit will be cut. **Your benefit**

YOUTH FIGHTBACK ARE FIGHTING FOR:

- Full benefit rights for all, including 16-17 year olds, and students.
- An end to compulsory Youth Training, Job Plan Workshops and Employment Training. We demand real training with trade union rates of pay and full trade union rights. We want a guaranteed job at the end of training.
- We want jobs for all — a cut in the working week to 35 hours without a drop in pay would create nearly 3 million jobs.
- We want a massive programme of public works to create jobs. For example: the 120,000 unemployed building workers could construct houses for the 3 million people without a decent home. Everyone would benefit.
There is a great deal that needs doing: the money is lying idle in the hands of the rich and the super rich — tax them and put their cash to use!
- The labour and trade union movement must unite workers and the unemployed and fight for these demands.

IDEAS FOR FREEDOM

UNEMPLOYMENT is part of capitalism, not an accident, or a natural phenomenon like bad weather. It is a direct result of the economic relationships that drive capitalism.

Most of us can only live at a bearable level if we work, or in other words if we sell our labour power to a boss.

As with every other commodity under capitalism, our work has a price. As with other commodities, price is affected by supply and demand. The unemployed are a surplus of workers: the bosses use them to drive down wages and blackmail those in work.

The surplus of workers is purely a capitalist creation. We are in the depths of a recession, not because there is no work that needs doing, but because those who own the factories, the land, the equipment, the materials, that is, the bosses, will not employ workers because they cannot get a profit from our work.

The sole reason a capitalist employs workers is to make a profit. The profit is the value of the labour that the boss does not pay the worker for.

In a recession, overproduction of goods floods the market with goods that people cannot buy. This is not overproduction as such, not overproduction of houses that the homeless could live in, but overproduction in the sense that it is production that cannot be sold, like the billion pound Canary Wharf office block.

Workers are thrown on the scrap heap until they can again be squeezed for profit when the commodities they make can be sold.

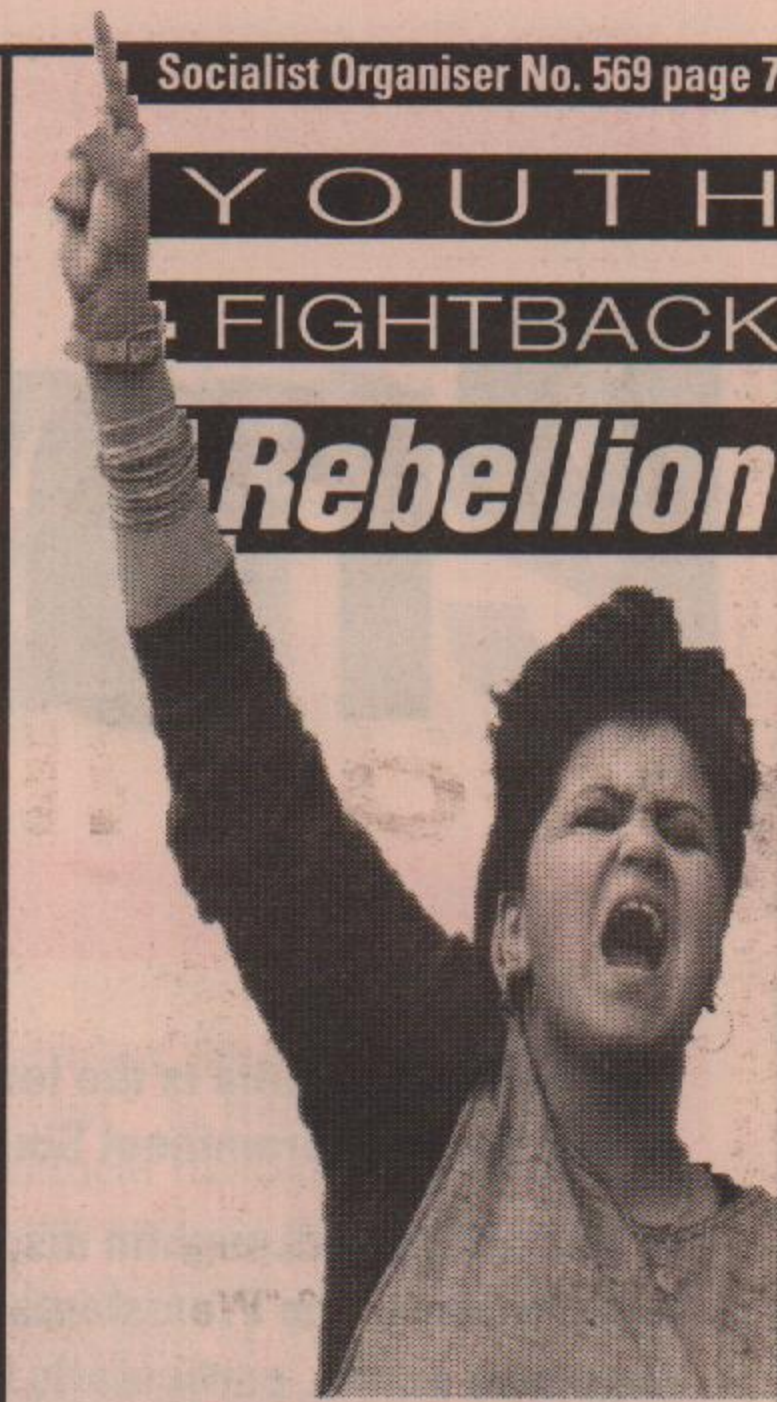
Capitalism works in cycles of booms and slumps, but, boom or slump, the capitalist class is the exploiter of us all and their system means that there is only one thing worse than being a wage slave and that is being denied the right to work.

Millions of young people in Europe are now trapped in long-term unemployment. Even the limited booms pass them by. It was partly out of such a situation that Hitler built the Nazi party, and we are seeing the rise of the new Nazis in Germany, France and Belgium.

The message is clear: either the labour movement organises the unemployed and links the struggles of workers and the unemployed, or our movement will be weak and divided, leaving the path clear for the bosses' offensive and the Nazi recruiting sergeants.

Socialists should fight for the Labour Party to stop trailing after and sometimes leading the offensive against youth around law and order and start to campaign against unemployment and for real training with decent rates of pay and union rights.

The trade unions must start a recruiting offensive based on campaigns and action to draw in the unemployed and those on YT and ET.



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Editor: Mark Sandell

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for details of our activity.

Letters and articles to Youth Fightback c/o PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

can't be cut if you attend.

- Remember, during the action don't vent your frustration on the workers at the Job Centre: they are generally on our side and struggling with not enough staff and the slow privatisation of the Employment Service.
- Get in touch with local Unemployed Groups.

Reactionary git of the week

OUR REACTIONARY git of the week is the Reverend Kenneth Hewitt, vicar of St Augustine's in Knightsbridge, London. He has recently delivered a series of sermons attacking "freeloaders" and "spongers" who have been flooding his parish. No, he is not attacking the idle rich who shop at Harrods, but beggars. He has told his flock: "Don't hand over your cash to beggars. Their tax-free pickings put them in the £50,000 a year bracket".

This good samaritan has also said: "I don't think I've ever seen a genuine case of homelessness".

Well, we think the Reverend and the Church of England for that matter should take a leaf out of a certain carpenter's son's book and dress in rags, and give their property to the homeless.

This week's runner-up was the Pope for his views on sex and contraception.

Protestants, Loyalists

Mitchell McLaughlin is the leader of the Sinn Fein group on Derry City Council. He is one of the most prominent Sinn Feiners in the North.

In this article McLaughlin discusses the attitude the Provisional Republican movement takes towards the Protestants of Northern Ireland. McLaughlin makes several important points, particularly his recognition that Ireland cannot be united by force, against the wishes of the one million strong Protestant minority.

McLaughlin does not, however, draw out or follow through the logic of his own argument with any specific proposals.

On page 10 John O'Mahony discusses McLaughlin's article.

McLaughlin's article first appeared in the Derry magazine 'Fingerpost'

By Mitchell McLaughlin

SINCE THE SIGNING of the Hillsborough Accord, Unionists have been confused, resentful and fearful. Despite all the claims from British ministers that the union is now guaranteed in perpetuity, the unionist people in the Six Counties have a sneaking horror that fine though these words may be, that there is a secret scenario, that in reality Britain has subtly and deceitfully initiated a withdrawal timetable.

There are those within the Protestant community who accept that they have been sold short as a people by their historic dependence on Britain. As a people who for fifty years did not have to justify their actions to anyone they now find themselves wracked with fear and self-doubt, feverishly seeking solace in the old certainties of the past while wildly looking all round them for any or some means of asserting their validity as a nation. Witness their latest searches among Irish pre-history for sagas and stories to prove their own separateness as a people; they are the 'Cruithin', the original inhabitants of Ireland. They, and not the native Irish, are now the 'Dispossessed'.

Contemporary ambiguity

THE HISTORICAL ambivalence points up a contemporary ambiguity between unionism and loyalism. Are they one and the same or is one an unacceptable version of the other? It is too simplistic, indeed it is simply wrong to define militant grassroots loyalism as a lower

class populist Protestantism. Over recent years we have seen the involvement of 'respectable' sections of the Protestant population in the procurement of arms and the organisation of armed groups. Vanguard, Tara, the Third Force, Ulster Resistance are all examples of the Protestant people of 'property' in action.

Why then do substantial proportions of any community seek solutions in arms? Traditionally, Irish nationalists and republicans have sought to assert their Irishness, their independence, and their separateness in armed struggle with the British. Ironically, in this century, it was the unionists who first defied the might of the British empire with the formation of the UVF, and Carson was the first to show that the British government were amenable to force while intransigent to dialogue. After the creation of the Six-County statelet, unionists did not have any great necessity to resort to arms in a thoroughgoing extra-legal fashion. All the coercion that was needed to keep the nationalists cowed was supplied by the regime in Stormont.

The rise of the Civil Rights Movement, and the re-emergence of militant republicanism, shattered the myth of the unionist monolith and after the fall of Stormont in 1972 the whole edifice flew apart in all its contradictory fragments. Paradoxically, Britain's more public, sustained and open involvement in Irish politics, the introduction of Direct Rule, sent the unionist people into a paroxysm of panic. A people who had, for fifty years, employed every repressive discriminatory and dehumanising method to ensure their total domination of the state, became with the flourish of a British politician's pen, a beleaguered community, surrounded by a sea of Rebellion, militant Catholicism, and even Marxism. The nationalist population, for decades the wretched of the North, were portrayed as an awful threat to the stability and prosperity of British 'Ulster'. Unionism's inability to come to terms with what was happening led inexorably to the onslaught of a loyalist sectarian slaughter that has been an unchanging feature of life here for the past twenty years.

Loyalism has a life of its own

IT IS A MYTH, and a myth much bandied about by people who should and do know better, that loyalist violence is a direct result of republican violence. Loyalism may on occasion respond to outside pressure but to deny loyalism a life and a virulent life of its own as that, is to deeply misunderstand the nature of the beast. From the foundation of the northern statelet, loyalist gangs have asserted themselves in the only way they know. From the massacre of families in the '20s to the massacres of families in the '90s there is little difference to be seen. The Shankill Butchers were not inspired by any supposed IRA operations, and neither were they the mindless psychopaths that many lib-



Today, Northern Ireland Protestants are clashing with "their own" police force, the RUC

erals in Ireland would so describe them. The mutilation of corpses strikes as one of the most primitive beliefs in humankind and the terror that such actions would induce was very much understood by the gang and its leaders. As Farrell has pointed out, referring to the emergence of sectarian strife after the creation of the Six Counties:

"Unionist leaders were finding that, having used discrimination and loyalist supremacism to establish their state, they could not dispense with them over night. Orangeism and Loyalism had developed a dynamic of their own and Craig wasn't prepared to challenge them. It would not be the last time an Orange backlash would wreck attempts to stabilise the northern statelet by concessions to the northern minority, or to the South."

Convenient label

SINCE PARTITION, loyalist sectarian campaigns have been a recurrent feature of life in the North. These campaigns have often been

mistakenly described as 'Tit for tat' but that is seldom the case. It may be a convenient label for lazy politicians and commentators but it contributes to the general lack of understanding of loyalism and posits a spurious

"The republican quarrel is with the British state in Ireland ... we cannot and should not ever try to coerce the Protestant people into a united Ireland."

raison d'être for the death squads. History teaches us that loyalist military action is never solely a direct response to IRA actions. On occasion there may be an overlap but in general it is fair to say that loyalism has its own agenda and that the main items on that agenda are the terrorising of the Catholic community and the sending of violent signals to the British government not

to tamper with the union. There is little doubt that present-day loyalist gangs have become much more professional, more politicised and more durable. They do have better access to official intelligence files and have obviously spent a number of years deliberately modelling their military organisations on the IRA.

This should not be seen as either a startling or a radical advance. To ascribe this professionalism solely to the shadowy influence of British intelligence is however incorrect. Loy-

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ts and Republicans



Above: similar clashes in 1985. Photo: John Arthur, Reflex.

alist gangs have, on occasion, been infiltrated and directed by agents of the British state. And there is little doubt that they have been aided periodically by supporters in the South African intelligence services. As far back as the early 1970s we have evidence of that collusion — from Ginger [] and the Military Reaction Force episodes to the Brian Nelson case and the later instances involving the supply of sophisticated missile technology to South Africa. The recent admission by the loyalist camp that they are receiving a steady flow of secret information from the British Army, UDR and the RUC should come as no great surprise to anyone who examines the methodologies of these gangs. The RUC and the UDR are overwhelmingly recruited from the Protestant community and see themselves not so much as preserving peace and order as preserving the community with which they equate stability. British Intelligence can provide information, can facilitate operations, and can create conditions on which British government strategies can be introduced, be they further oppressive measures or 'political initiatives', without any great examination of their wider implications.

While the control of the loyalist gangs may be of assistance to the British and has been a constant in British policy here, there is ample evidence that the British cannot fully control the monster that they have created. They can oversee selected operations against identified

republicans and nationalists, as has been exposed time and time again, but they have no ability to dampen down the sectarian rampages when loyalists fuelled with religious hatred stalk the streets and lanes of the Six Counties.

There have been occasional forays into the 26-County state, but these have tended to be sporadic, either British-inspired and directed, with very specific purposes, e.g. the Dublin/Monaghan bombings in the early 1970s, or very discriminative, such as the assassination of Eddie Fullerton, an act designed to show their military prowess. There is every indication that loyalist groups may attempt to resurrect that cross-border campaign but there are politicians within loyalist ranks who are aware that such attacks may in fact be counter-productive, alienating the support they are now enjoying in constitutional nationalist establishment circles.

The rationale of unionist thinking

IN A DOCUMENT presented to a Sinn Fein conference by a Derry Protestant who sought to explain the rationale of unionist thinking, it is stated, "These fears (of the Protestant community) were compounded by the Anglo-Irish Agreement which seemed further to erode Protestant influence and increase the influence of the Dublin government. The loss

of Protestant privileges and status may seem minimal to unemployed members of the Catholic community, but to Protestants they seem very substantial shifts in influence. Many government spokespersons and other commentators and politicians tried to reassure Protestants that they had been offered guarantees, and that their material position had not been affected. But these comments

miss the reason for Protestant concerns, which are more to do with losing control of their situation — the loss of power has been reinforced by the inability of Protestants to be able to change the situation. Because they relied on maintaining control, they have little experience of methods of co-operation and persuasion in dealing with opponents".

Some would argue that such considered arguments are merely a coded response to those who would claim that the unionists have brought all their woes on themselves, that their violence, their discrimination, their racism and their intransigence have created the situation in the North and that as instigators they not only are responsible but in many ways deserve what is now happening to them — the 'rub it up them' approach to politics that is evident not only in republican circles but in the wider nationalist community on this island. But that attitude does nothing to resolve the problem and in effect helps to prolong it.

We republicans must ask (and answer) the question, "What are unionists afraid of?"

The unionists for their part have provided clear indications that they would say Catholicism, republicanism and nationalism, in that order. There is also the understandable if seldom expressed fear that they will be treated in any new arrangement in just as cavalier fashion as the unionists have treated the nationalist minority. In this they do not differentiate between Sinn Fein, the SDLP and the various southern parties. The unionists quite correctly demanded civil and religious liberty, yet have done their best to extinguish it in political and social life in the North, just as their reactionary counterparts in the South have done.

The unionists now talk as if they have been a persecuted, misunderstood people whose only desire was to live in peace with its neighbours. They have distorted history and made their sectarian little statelet the butt of ridicule and shame. And yet, tragically, given the role created for them by Westminster there was very little else that they could have done or believed. Prisoners of a history made behind their backs in committee rooms in Westminster and in the great drawing rooms of Empire, they behaved exactly as an artificially created imperial bulwark would behave. So it is that present day unionists of every shade of opinion blame the IRA for all their ills, and have little difficulty in seeing the defeat of the IRA, and, by implication, that of the Catholic population, as a far more important consideration than any attempt at peaceful reconciliation within the island of Ireland.

In a perceptive and illuminating essay *Intellectuals and Political Culture: a Unionist-Nationalist comparison*, Liam O'Dowd points

out that "to outsiders the inability of unionists and nationalist" in Ireland to engage in constructive political dialogue is mystifying. One of the explanations most frequently advanced is the existence of political violence. Yet the rejection of dialogue preceded the 'troubles'. Over 40 years were to elapse before the prime ministers of both parts of Ireland met. And it is now a comical foot-

note to Irish history that in all the 50 years of one-party rule at Stormont the only act proposed by the nationalist opposition and agreed upon by unionists was the Wild Bird Act".

To facilitate the development of even the most cursory understanding of the history and present reality of the Protestant/Unionist community it is our duty as republicans to help dispel many of the myths that cling most cosily to the Catholic/Nationalist tradition and recognise that we are as much victims of a distorted image of those same myths as our Protestant neighbours. Empathy and understanding are

not the antithesis of rigorous political and self-analysis. There is nothing weak or contradictory in Republicans facing up to that fact.

When people say that if we are all to live on this tiny island it must be in harmony with our Protestant brothers and sisters, some militant republicans are only too eager to dismiss such statements as facile, mindless, heart-tugging liberal nonsense. And so they are when presented in a context where British involvement in our affairs is ignored or glossed over. However, we all will have a future after British withdrawal and if we are to live together in a 'Britless' Ireland then republicans and nationalists have got to reach an equitable arrangement with the Protestant community, and that arrangement must guarantee equal rights for all. No privileges, no perks, no special relationship and no religious or economic favouritism for anyone or any organisation.

Continued on page 10

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Protestants, Loyalists and Republicans

Continued from centre pages

In the document presented by a Protestant academic to a Sinn Fein conference, referred to earlier, the author presents us with three interpretations of Republican armed struggle that most Protestants hold:

- Republicans are evil terrorists who do not believe in law and order, but seek to undermine the stability of society.
- Republicans are actively hostile to Protestants. In this regard the killings of policemen increase the resistance of the Protestant community.
- Republicans do not care about Protestants. Accidental killings are seen as avoidable. Apologies cause anger because the possibility of an accident should have been foreseen.

In conclusion the author writes, "What Protestants need is for their views to be taken seriously, incorporated in any solution. Is the Republican Movement willing to do this?"

The need for a rapprochement

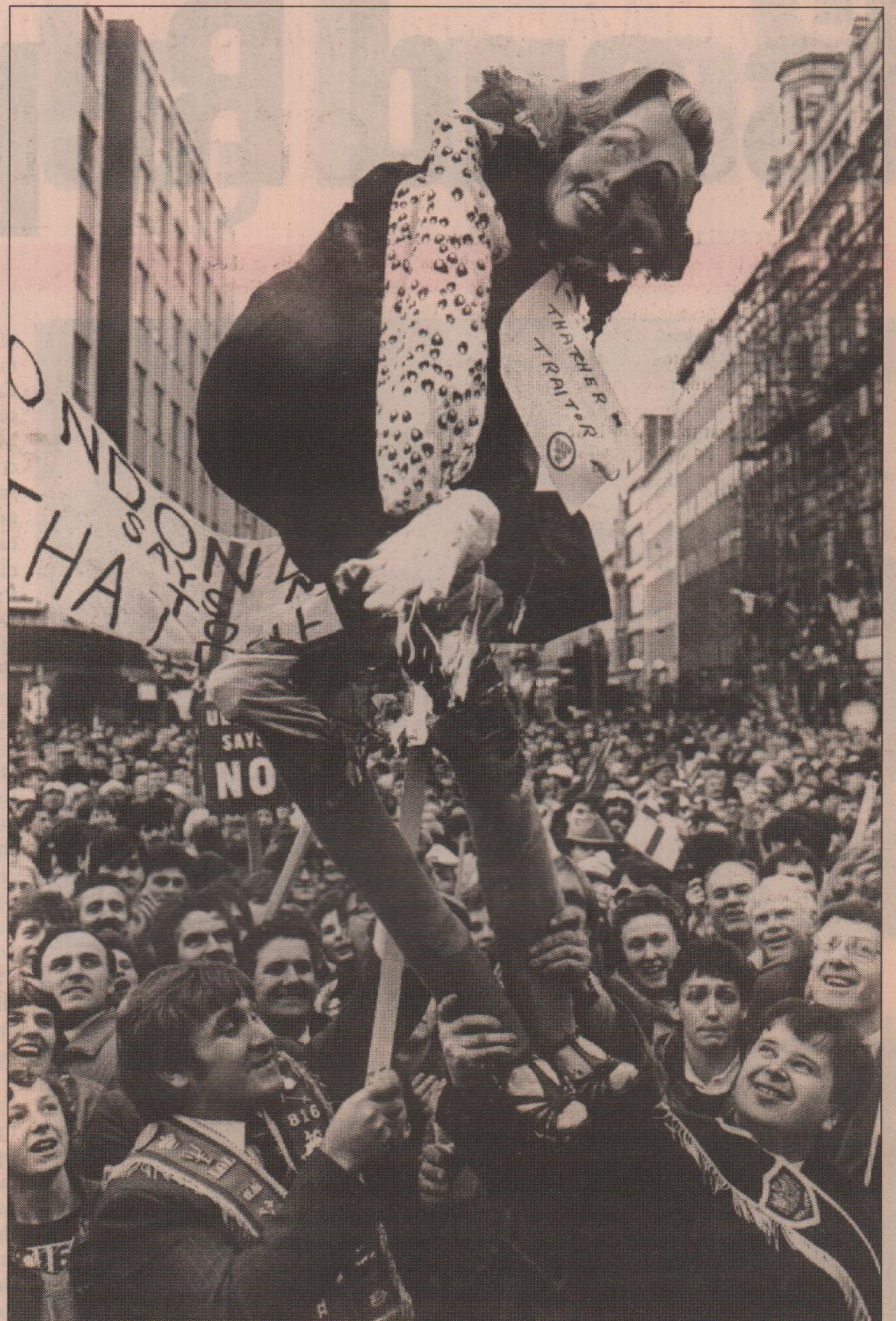
IF WE ARE EVER to resolve the situation in Ireland, if we are ever to have real and lasting peace on this island, there must be a rapprochement with the Protestant community in the North. And before there can be a rapprochement we, as republicans, must seek to understand and empathise with the Protestant community. Of course a prerequisite of peace is a British withdrawal but we must be realistic to accept that even after a British withdrawal part of this island will still be inhabited by more than 900,000 peo-

ple whose whole history, aspirations, culture and sense of stability have been formed, nurtured and reinforced within a British political, intellectual and emotional environment. Despite the accumulated angers and resentments of the centuries, we must open our minds to the ideology, the fears and the beliefs of a community that has been part of our oppression. Of course, a reciprocal desire for peace and understanding is required from the Protestants in the North but we have repeatedly stated that in a post-British Ireland any of the negotiations that would precede such an arrangement, republicans would be generous. That generosity would certainly be needed because someone, somewhere, will have to take that first step towards breaking the cycle of hatred and misunderstanding that has poisoned Irish society.

Irish republicanism prides itself on its historical uniting of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter. The founders of republicanism espoused the rights and essential unity of all Irish men and women freed from British domination. It dates its very existence to that philosophy and its universality to the United Irish movement of the 1790s. Every rebellion, rising and social movement since 1798 has had, we are told, its fair share of Protestant involvement and leadership. From Emmet to the Young Irelanders, from the Fenians to the Land League, from the Irish Renaissance to the Easter Rising. Catholic, Protestant and Atheist Irish men and women have played a formative role. Partition ended that all-embracing radicalism. It is no exaggeration to say that since the ending of the Civil War in Ireland the Protestant population has had only a minimal part to play in the ongoing debates and struggles for the creation of a united, democratic country.

Republicans partly to blame

WHAT HAPPENED? How did a vibrant, radical nonconformism virtually disappear? Republicans have been partly to blame. When you look at the post-partition development of the Republican Movement it is clear that time and time again we have rejected that dissenting voice because of our fears of the Catholic hierarchy. When the Protestant workers from the Shankill were belaboured by good, 'sound' republicans in 1934 for attempting to march at Bodenstown, who were they trying to impress? — certainly not the people of no property in Ireland and certainly not the Protestant workers in the



Northern Ireland Protestants denounce British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as "the traitor", 1985. Photo: Derek Speirs, Report.

North. They were proving that they were as good Catholics as their appointed leaders in Maynooth and Leinster House. Until we face up to those truths we are still living in a dream of history. Our objective reality which must be faced by republicans even if it is unpalatable is that many IRA activities from the northern Protestant perspective are perceived to be sectarian. It is therefore undoubtedly true that the differences between the two communities which have historically existed have become even wider as a result. This is the truth which must be recognised by republicans and accommodated in any analysis of militant loyalism. I can think of occasions when some IRA operations displayed insensitivity to the feelings of ordinary Protestants and although the IRA campaign is clearly not sectarian (even when RUC and UDR personnel are the targets) nonetheless, there remains an unconscious

insensitivity in some areas of the movement which must be removed. Republicans still pay lip-service to the dictat of Wolfe Tone, without in any way attempting to examine honestly, without the past's baggage, the fact that the Irish independence struggle is now virtually the sole preserve of Catholics. By claiming that it is the republican objective to realise the aspirations of Wolfe Tone without considering the

absence of any appeal in any relevant fashion to the Protestant community, republicans are refusing to accept reality and while

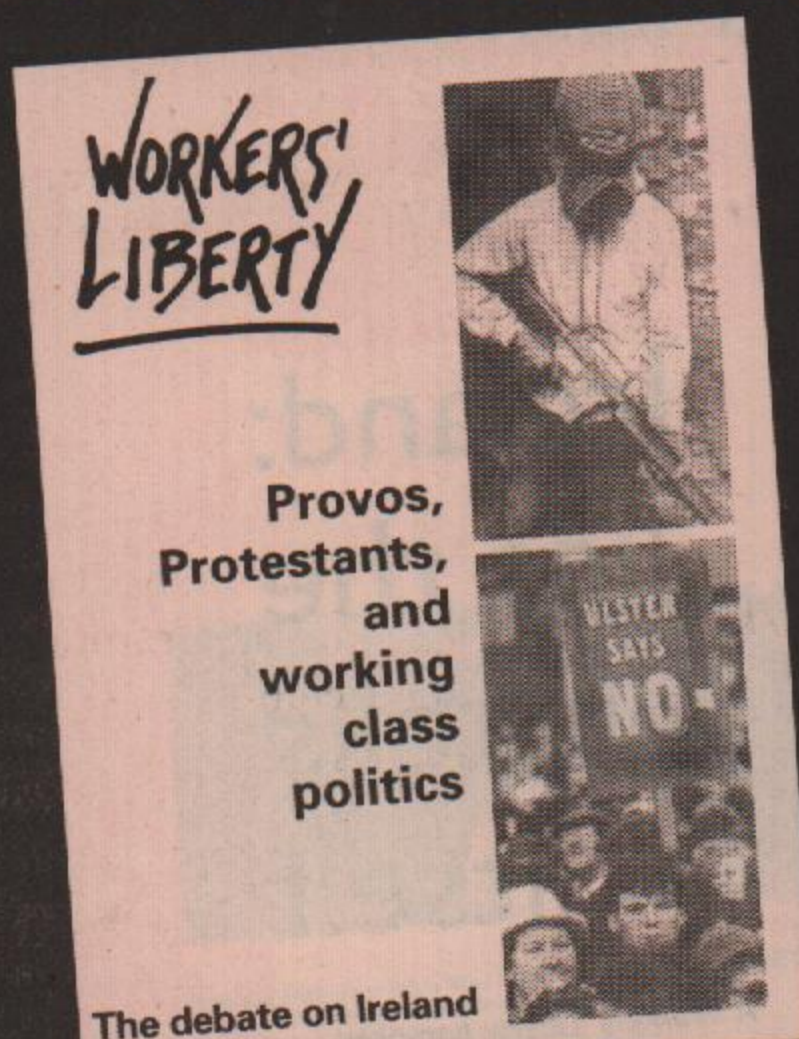
our aims and statements may be admirable in themselves they do not help advance the argument, nor do they offer hope to Protestants.

Unpalatable it may be, but there has always been an element within the Republican Movement and on the island of Ireland itself who secretly believe that the Protestant population could be coerced into accepting Irish unity and independence. That is not acceptable. Neither is it possible, as Republicans should know, because all the might of Britain could not and cannot, suppress the Irish resistance.

Actively seek to connect

THE REPUBLICAN quarrel is with the British state in Ireland and the truth is that we cannot and should not ever try to coerce the Protestant people into a united Ireland. We must convince them of the rightness of our cause and of the benefits accruing to them from advocacy of our cause. We, as republicans, have choices to make, we can continue paying lip-service to anti-sectarianism while denying the reality of sectarian elements in our movement, or we can actively seek to connect with Protestantism at every level. There is great animosity and misunderstanding on both sides and our joint histories are littered with atrocity and shame. While we offer the hand of friendship to our Protestant neighbours we cannot expect them to read our palms to discover our intentions. We, as they, must be ready to talk and apologise and unite, and the only way that can be achieved is through understanding. Are we ready for that painful experience? If we are not then we consign the people of this island to endless war.

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*"Republicans have
been partly to blame ...
many IRA activities
from the northern
Protestant perspective
are perceived to be
sectarian"*

John O'Mahony replies to Mitchell McLaughlin

Yes, but draw the conclusions!

MITCHELL McLaughlin's article is important for what it says about relations between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, and because it may be symptomatic of new trends of thought in the ranks of the Provisional Republican movement.

It seems to me that the author is at only an early stage of a reconsideration of his movement's ideas about the 'Loyalists'; his support for the military campaign of the Provisional IRA shows that he has scarcely begun to re-evaluate its behaviour towards them. Despite what he says to the contrary, the logic of everything new (new in Provo terms) that he says points to a condemnation of the Provisional IRA. McLaughlin deserves the courtesy of a serious reply. It will not be a full reply. I hope I am opening a discussion.

For 20 years now it has been murderous stalemate in Northern Ireland. The Provisional IRA's targets are mainly Protestant Irish people who play some role in the state, be it that of a carpenter fixing the woodwork in an RUC barracks. The basic thing in Northern Ireland is that the block on Irish unity is not now Britain — which was probably moving towards a United Ireland policy in the '60s — but the one million Irish minority.

The Provisional IRA campaign — which has gone on for about a quarter of a century! — has not made them more amenable to the call for Irish unity.

Plainly the Protestants are a distinct population — mostly they define

themselves as British.

They may be the only Brits in these islands, Brits as distinct from Scots, English, Welsh or Irish!

If, as Mitchell McLaughlin says they are a nation (I would not put it like that), then why do they not have the same rights to self-determination from the Irish majority that the Irish majority did from the majority in the old United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland?

By what moral right has the Provisional IRA made war on them (and it does make war on them, and mainly on them)?

If, as Mitchell McLaughlin says, they had good reason to resist the blandishments of the Catholic republican movement and to suspect it, and if further, as McLaughlin seems to imply, a United Ireland depends on the agreement of the Protestants, then almost everything the Provisional IRA — and its political wing, Sinn Fein — have done and do is simply counter-productive. How can someone who believes what McLaughlin believes do other than strongly condemn the Provisional IRA's military campaign and demand its immediate cessation? How can he fail to condemn the Provisional IRA for shooting down Protestant workers because they may have found work in an RUC station?

I don't want to engage in a detailed criticism of his historical account. But it seems to me that studded in it are a number of familiar half-truths used for self-deception. Thus the truth that Orange violence has always been



Protestant paramilitaries enforce a roadblock

there — though for decades it was muted — is used to avoid facing the enormous part played over two decades by the savage Provisional IRA bombing and assassination campaign, directed mainly against Irish unionists. The Catholic revolt was justified and necessary: the Provisional IRA campaign grafted on to it has probably set back the prospects of Irish unity for many decades.

There are other such things but I will not pursue them here.

McLaughlin's idea of Protestant-Catholic discussion on a common Ireland after British withdrawal is sheer fantasy. If Britain were to pull out

without a previous political settlement then the Protestants would seek their own self-determination, arms in hand against the rest of the Irish. Civil war on the Yugoslav model would *certainly* follow.

If there is to be real Protestant-Catholic dialogue it will be before British withdrawal, or not at all this side of a bloodily repartitioned Ireland, where two states will then have to negotiate a *modus vivendi*. They will not be negotiating a United Ireland!

Mitchell McLaughlin's implicit criticism of the Provisional IRA's activities are an immense step forward. I

cannot assess what it means in terms of the movement of which he is part. When a Sinn Fein councillor talks of the Protestants as a nation that is progress. That *idea*, that the Unionists are a distinct nation, has, as I've argued in *Socialist Organiser* before, hovered around the pseudo-republican organisation, manifest in everything they did against the Protestants. Their campaign implied that the Protestants were a bad nation.

With Mitchell McLaughlin this idea seems to have come down to earth within the Republican movement and in a far more benign form than we might have expected. Progress!

Violence at 'Marxism 93'

Continued from page 5

sonal followers — every leader has a personal influence more or less — but a cult leader has to be a cultist himself. He has to be a megalomaniac who gets revelations outside the realm of reality. A megalomaniacal cult leader is liable to jump in any direction at any time, and all the cultists automatically follow, as sheep follow the bellwether, even into the slaughter house."

Yet, there is more. It is not just a matter of the party's "internal regime" or of its character as a cult: it is a matter of the SWP's relationship with the labour movement.

You have good relations with some of the reformists, engaging with them in an agreed bit of role-playing — they are your idea of the reformist labour movement, you are theirs of "revolutionaries".

In elections you call for a Labour vote — for catchpenny reasons — contradicting your attitude to Labour for the previous five years.

But within the labour movement itself you play the classic role of ultra-left sectarians. Smart-ass, opportunist, middle-class ultra-lefts who cut corners and play dodgy roles in the unions in a way honest ultra-lefts do not, but ultra-left sectarians nonetheless. Take the question of the Labour Party.

TODAY, the Labour Party is a small model of a political police state, with not much scope for rank and file activity. But, as the current

resistance even by the trade union bureaucrats to cutting Labour-union links shows, it remains the mass party of the trade unions — the furthest the mass of the British working class has got in politics so far. What role must Marxists play in relation to such a movement?

According to every one of the great teachers of Marxist politics in the past — from the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 to Frederick Engels in the 1890s, through the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920, to Leon Trotsky in the 1930s — the role Marxists must play in this situation is to help the class develop its politics. We organise Leninist groups — ours, the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, for example — to do this work. We integrate, despite the bureaucratic witch-hunters and policemen, into the existing labour movement, fighting the bureaucrats and the right wing, helping the class forward.

By contrast you counterpose yourselves to the existing movement — implicitly your "build the revolutionary party" project is a project to build a new labour movement around yourselves, side by side with the existing labour movement. This movement cannot be bypassed. Marxists build an organisation to intervene in, reshape, renovate that movement.

Such little crazy splurges as the demand on the TUC to call an all-out semi-revolutionary General Strike last October are possibly only because you are not seriously concerned with the existing labour

movement — except as a source of recruits to the other, 'better' movement you think you are building.

FOR ALL THE "left" bluster and the quasi-anarchist attitudes and practices you train your youth in, the SWP is utterly defeatist for the working class and its labour movement.

The SWP now is a product, an epiphenomenon, of the defeats the British labour movement suffered in the 70s and 80s. With the decline of the old left of that movement, the SWP can look at the empty landscape and call itself 'Mr Universe' if it likes, Cliff — but it is an illusion. The labour movement will revive. The SWP as it is now — and it is not frozen as it is now, but degenerating fast; that is one of the lessons of Marxism 93 — can only play a harmful role in that movement when it revives.

Such sectarian conceptions as these which govern the SWP contradict what is perhaps the single irreducible idea which distinguishes Marxist socialism from all other socialism, the idea that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the class itself.

The real "revolutionary party" functions always to help the working class realise and move toward realising its self-liberation: that goal determines and qualifies what the revolutionary party does and does not do, and how it relates to the existing labour movements. All that is now either forgotten or in the peripheral vision of the SWP.

Because "building the party" is everything, and the politics not much or — too often now — nothing at all, the political line of the organisation, beyond a few basics of socialism, does not necessarily have to deal with the objective world and your real place in it, or with the real conditions of the working-class movement. You are a long way yet from the general lunacy which overwhelmed the Healyites, but the general strike episode indicates the way you are going.

Comrade Cliff, what are you going to do about the thuggery which has led me to write this account of its roots in the whole nature of the SWP?

What the Alliance for Workers' Liberty will do about it is to start a campaign for a labour movement inquiry into the events at Marxism 93.

There are enough people in the labour movement with experience of Stalinism and of the later Healyites to know that if the SWP is not tackled now it will become a much bigger problem later on.

You are nearly eighty years old, Tony Cliff. I do not for a moment question your sincere commitment to

the working class and to socialism, even where I am convinced your activities have been harmful or counterproductive or, on the question of Israel and Palestine, poisonous — you yourself having been poisoned in the savagely anti-Jewish Stalinist party of Palestine in the mid 30s. You should ask yourself what, after a lifetime of work, you want to bequeath to the labour movement of the future.

"With the decline of the old left of the movement, the SWP can look at the empty landscape and call itself 'Mr Universe' if it likes — but it is an illusion. The labour movement will revive. The SWP can only play a harmful role in that movement when it revives."

I quoted James P Cannon above on political cults. Let me finish by quoting another wise man, Groucho Marx, who joked that he would not want to belong to any club that would have him as a member. That has always struck me as good advice for anyone tempted to build himself a cult or a personal fan club.

The "unthinking fools" who followed you last year on the general strike, and the miseducated little thugs whose antics I have had to chronicle above — these, Cliff, are not the people who will build a real revolutionary working class party, or make the socialist revolution you have spent a long life trying to prepare for. Groucho knew better. So did Karl!

Leon Trotsky explains the role played by the Bolshevik Party in the Russian revolution

WITHOUT THE armed insurrection of 7th November 1917 the Soviet state would not be in existence. But the insurrection itself did not drop from Heaven. A series of historical prerequisites was necessary for the October Revolution.

- 1) The rotting away of the old ruling classes — the nobility, the monarchy, the bureaucracy.
- 2) The political weakness of the bourgeoisie, which had no roots in the masses of the people.
- 3) The revolutionary character of the agrarian question.
- 4) The revolutionary character of the problem of the oppressed nationalities.
- 5) The significant social burdens weighing on the proletariat.

To these organic preconditions must be added certain highly important connected conditions.

- 6) The Revolution of 1905 was the great school, or in Lenin's phrase "the dress rehearsal" of the Revolution of 1917. The Soviets, as the irreplaceable organisational form of the proletarian united front in the Revolution were created for the first time in the year 1905.
- 7) The imperialist war sharpened all the contradictions, tore the backward masses out of their immobility, and thus prepared the grandiose scale of the catastrophe.

But all these conditions, which fully sufficed for the outbreak of the revolution, were insufficient to assure the victory of the proletariat in the revolution. For this victory one condition more was necessary.

8) The Bolshevik Party.

When I enumerate this condition last in the series, I do it only because it follows the logical sequence, and not because I assign the last place in the order of importance to the Party.

No, I am far from such a thought. The liberal bourgeoisie can seize power and has seized it more than once as the result of struggles in which it took no part; it possesses organs of seizure which are admirably adapted to the purpose. But the working masses are in a different position; they have long been accustomed to give, and not to take. They work, are patient as long as they can be,

"The proletariat needs a party which far surpasses other parties in the clarity of its thought and in its revolutionary determination."

hope, lose patience, rise and struggle, die, bring victory to others, are betrayed, fall into despondency, bow their necks and work again. Such is the history of the masses of the people under all regimes. To be able to take the power firmly and



Contemporary photomontage of the Bolshevik leaders of the revolution. It will be noticed that Joseph Stalin was not considered prominent enough to feature

1917

The key factor

surely into its hands the proletariat needs a Party, which far surpasses other parties in the clarity of its thought and in its revolutionary determination.

The Bolshevik Party, which has been described more than once and with complete justification as the most revolutionary party in the history of mankind was the living condensation of the modern history of Russia, of all that was dynamic in it. The overthrow of Tsarism had long been recognised as the necessary condition for the development of the economy and culture. But for the solution of this task the forces were insufficient. The bourgeoisie feared the Revolution. The intelligentsia tried to bring the peasant to his feet. The

moujik, incapable of generalising his own miseries and his aims, left this appeal unanswered. The intelligentsia armed itself with dynamite. A whole generation has wasted in this struggle.

On March 1st 1887, Alexander Ulianov carried out the last of the great terrorist plots. The attempted assassination of Alexander III failed. Ulianov and the other participants were executed. The attempt to make chemical preparation take the place of a revolutionary class came to grief. Even the most heroic intelligentsia is nothing without the masses. Ulianov's younger brother Vladimir the future Lenin, the greatest figure of Russian history, grew up under the immediate impression of these

facts and conclusions. Even in his early youth he placed himself on the foundations of Marxism, and turned his face toward the proletariat. Without losing sight of the village for a moment he sought the way to the peasantry through the workers. Inheriting from his revolutionary predecessors their capacity for self-sacrifice, and their willingness to go to the limit, Lenin at an early age became the teacher of the new generation of the intelligentsia and of the advanced workers. In strikes and street fights, in prisons and in exile, the workers received the necessary tempering. They needed the searchlight of Marxism to light up their historical road in the darkness of absolutism.

Among the emigrés the first Marxist group arose in 1883. In 1898 at a secret meeting the foundation of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party was proclaimed (we all called ourselves Social-Democrats in those days). In 1903 occurred the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, and in 1912 the Bolshevik fraction finally became an independent Party.

It learned to recognise the class mechanics of society in its struggles during the events of twelve years (1905-1917). It educated groups equally capable of initiative and of subordination. The discipline of its revolutionary action was based on the unity of its doctrine, on the tradition of common struggles and on confidence in its tested leadership.

Such was the Party in 1917. Despised by the official "public opinion" and the paper thunder of the intelligentsia Press, it adapted itself to the movement of the masses. It kept firmly in hand the lever of control in the factories and regiments. More and more the peasant masses turned toward it. If we understand by "nation" not the privileged heads but the majority of the people, that is, the workers and peasants, then the Bolsheviks became during the course of 1917 a truly national Russian Party.

"[Its] discipline was based on the unity of its doctrine, the tradition of common struggles, and confidence in its tested leadership."

In September, 1917, Lenin, who was compelled to keep in hiding, gave the signal, "The crisis is ripe, the hour of the insurrection has approached." He was right. The ruling classes faced with the problems of the war, the land and liberation, had got into inextricable difficulties. The bourgeoisie positively lost its head. The democratic parties, the Mensheviks and social-revolutionaries, dissipated the last remaining bit of confidence of the masses in them by their support of the imperialist war, by their policy of compromise and concessions to the bourgeois and feudal property-owners. The awakened army no longer wanted to fight for the alien aims of imperialism. Disregarding democratic advice, the peasantry smoked the landowners out of their estates. The oppressed nationalities of the far boundaries rose up against the bureaucracy of Petrograd. In the most important workers' and soldiers' Soviets the Bolsheviks were dominant. The ulcer was ripe. It needed a cut of the lancet.

Only under these social and political conditions was the insurrection possible. And thus it also became inevitable. But there is no playing around with insurrection. Woe to the surgeon who is careless in the use of the lancet! Insurrection is an art. It has its laws and its rules.

The Party faced the realities of the October insurrection with cold calculation and with ardent resolution. Thanks to this, it conquered almost without victims. Through the victorious Soviets the Bolsheviks placed themselves at the head of a country which occupies one-sixth of the surface of the globe.

From: *The Russian Revolution*, the text of a lecture given by Leon Trotsky in Copenhagen, November 1932.

The brain's too small

Film

Matt Cooper
reviews *Jurassic Park*

THEY ONCE left a trail of death and destruction in their wake. You thought they were extinct? They were, until one man with more money than sense pumped millions into a project to make them live again.

Yes, the disaster movie is back, cloned from fragments of plot DNA left over from seventies movies like *Jaws*.

From this old formula with a new twist Steven Spielberg has concocted an adventure romp which looks set to be the most commercially lucrative film ever.

The story is a simple one. Naïve billionaire John Hammond (Richard Attenborough) creates the ultimate theme park on a Costa Rican island (played by a Hawaiian island) populated by dinosaurs recreated from genetic material from dinosaur blood in mosquitoes fossilised in amber. Hammond invites a couple of palaeontologists (Sam Neill and Laura Dern), a

mathematician (Jeff Goldblum) and his own two grandchildren to endorse the project. But evil disrupts the project.

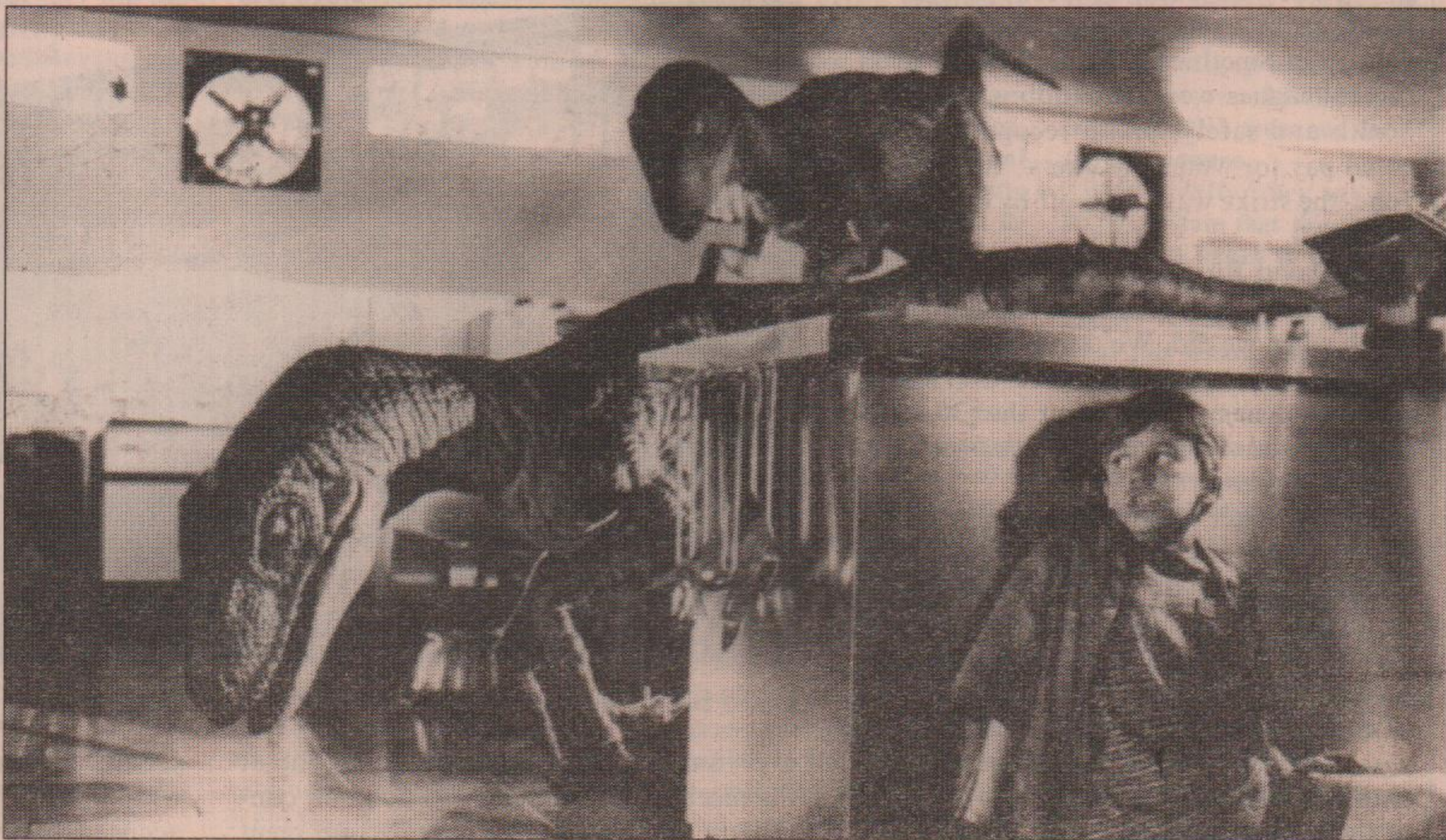
Spielberg had obvious difficulty casting an evil type. All the classic evil types — Germans, gay men, people with physical disabilities — who used to populate James Bond movies are now ruled out by political considerations (and rightly so). So Spielberg settles for the last Great Acceptable Target of Prejudice, an obese computer programmer (or is that two prejudices?). Dennis upsets Hammond's plans, and the dinosaurs are let loose to eat the cast.

The main subtext of the film is a fear of technology that is positively reactionary — people cannot dominate nature! Such logic, taken to its extreme, would repudiate the wheel and the harnessing of fire!

The plot is light-weight, the dialogue mostly banal, the thrown-in eco-politics kitsch and asinine, the pseudo-scientific gloss downright stupid. Its real stars are the dinosaurs.

The computer graphics are staggering. That is what separates this film from a well-made, routine adventure film.

Jurassic Park cost \$60 million to



Tim (Joseph Mazello) hides from the ferocious Velociraptors

make: but \$68 million has gone to promoting it. This is the most hyped film of all time.

The film is itself just a staging post in the advertising process.

Although it took \$150 million in its first week in the US, and £1 mil-

lion in advance bookings before opening in Britain, the box office is not where this film's main money is to be made. The capitalist backers of the film expect to take three times more on the spin-off merchandising than through the box office!

In effect the film is a huge advert for J-park products.

Call me old-fashioned, but I pine for the days when films were films and not mere vehicles for shamelessly extracting the maximum amount of money from a too tolerant public.

The iron heel that need not have been

Book

Paddy Dollard rereads *The Iron Heel* by Jack London, Journeyman Press, £4.99

PUBLISHED IN 1907, Jack London's novel *The iron heel* is one of the greatest and most powerful pieces of socialist literature ever written. It is also astonishing.

It is in the form of an uncompleted manuscript purportedly seven centuries old when it is published, in 'the year of socialism 419', with a short preface for readers in the 27th century. Its author, Avis Everhard, is the comrade and wife of Ernest Everhard, a working class leader in early 20th century America. The story it tells is of the eruption of bitter class warfare, of civil wars, the division of the working class along sectional lines, and the development and victory of an oligarchic dictatorship, the 'Iron Heel'. The 'Iron Heel' was London's name for what history would know as fascism.

Ernest Everhard, the novel's rather Nietzschean hero, is captured and killed. A "first proletarian revolt", "the Chicago Commune", is drowned in blood. The manuscript breaks off shortly before a planned 'second revolt' is due to break out.

The author of the 'preface' tells us that Avis Everhard too was almost certainly captured and killed. (The 'mercenaries' of the Iron Heel did not

keep records of their victims...) The second revolt too is doomed to defeat. So are many others which break out again and again before the final victory of the working class 300 years later.

It is a whole historic epoch of oligarchic slavery that succeeds capitalism, not socialism. The writer of the preface lets the mask slip and the thinking behind the book is clear in the following passage:

"(The 300-year reign of the oligarchy was) ...a step backward, to the social tyrannies that made the early world a hell, but that were as necessary as the Iron Heel was unnecessary. ...What else than feudalism could have followed upon the breakdown of that great centralised government machine known as the Roman Empire? Not so, however, with the Iron Heel. In the orderly procedure of social evolution there was no place for it. It was not necessary and it was not inevitable. It must always remain the great curiosity of history — a whim, a fantasy, an apparition, a thing unexpected and undreamed; and it should serve as a warning to those rash political theorists of today who speak with certitude of social processes".

"Today", of course, was 1907, not a day in the socialist world of the 27th century.

London's harsh, social-Darwinian views, emphasising struggle and conflict and acknowledging the possibility of defeat for human or animal individuals or classes, combined with certain ideas — those of Daniel De Leon — he found then in the American social-

ist movement and generated in him the imaginative energy for a pre-vision of fascism and of the totalitarian state. Ironically, the same social-Darwinianism made this strange mixture of a man see a natural racial superiority in "Aryan" man — 'the blond beast'. Thus, this socialist subscribed to the racist mythology which would be the ideology of the real Iron Heel in Germany.

But London's pre-vision is not fatalistic. It is a warning, a cry of alarm within an as-yet-undecided struggle. It has nothing in common with the whining pessimism with which many writers have since responded to fascism and Stalinism.

The "Iron Heel" differs too from other anti-utopias in that it is rooted firmly in reality. In Orwell's *1984*, by contrast, though much of the life the book describes is taken raw from contemporary — 1940s — capitalist society — in the end the explanation for it all is a mystical gibberish about a natural drive for power for its own sake, leading to a stable totalitarian system in which the future can be nothing but "a jackboot stamping on a human face — forever".

In London's view the struggle goes on, and on, as it must, for three centuries, until the workers triumph.

Contemporary class struggles find their direct reflection in London's book. It is the clarity with which the roles and possible logical consequences are worked out that is remarkable. Here London was indebted to Daniel De Leon of the Socialist Labour Party, and to the pre-World

War 1 left-wing socialist upsurge in the USA then. Led by Debs, De Leon and Haywood, the Industrial Workers of the World had been founded in Chicago two years before *The Iron heel* was written.

Just as Orwell dramatised the vapid reactionary stupidities of James Burnham (against whose books, *The Managerial Revolution*, *The Machiavellians*, etc., he had written some very powerful critical essays), London dramatised De Leon's ideas.

It is not to diminish the imaginative creativity of London to point to the intellectual structure on which it rests.

Within the Marxist current, De Leon had, by the beginning of the 20th century, the clearest and most brutally accurate picture of the weakness of the world labour movement and of its leaders. He addressed himself to the radically unfavourable position of the working class — the slave class of capitalism, without big property or independent culture — as an aspirant revolutionary class, and to the implications this had for the practice of socialists.

He saw things in advance that Lenin would not see fully until 1914. He was concerned with working-class craft divisions, with the growth of a labour aristocracy, with the traitorous role of the labour trade union bureaucracy — the 'labour lieutenants of capitalism' — with the inherent weakness of socialist parliamentarism.

At a time when fatalistic bland optimism made most revolutionaries forget the *Communist Manifesto's* warning that class struggles end in

either the victory of the revolutionary class or the mutual ruination of the contending classes, De Leon saw the proletarian movement in the great sweeping perspectives of history, and seeing also its weaknesses and flaws, contemplated defeat as a real possibility.

He cast his mind back to the class struggle in Rome 200 years BC, and, in a pamphlet, *Two pages from Roman history*, drew a comparison with the defeat of the ancient plebeian masses, led by the Gracchi, linking this defeat to their miserable subsequent fate as a parasitic proletariat within the plundering Roman Republics and Empires.

The point is not the accuracy or otherwise of his comparisons — which are debatable, to say the least — but their power to conjure up a black but realistic vision of, and pose questions about, what might be in store for the working class. His purpose was to warn and arm the socialist movement against the horrors he foresaw.

Mostly De Leon came to schematic, sectarian-utopian 'solutions' — but then he was dead three years before the Russian Revolution answered in creative life the questions he had seen and tried to answer through reasoning.

London's free-ranging imagination transmuted De Leon's ideas into *The Iron heel*. Today, it is difficult to imagine what a leap was required to fuse the elements of the terrible vision together.

The labour movement had known repressions; intense, sustained, sterilising totalitarianism had not yet appeared in history.

In 1907 socialism seemed an immense power, progressing ever onwards. But London's was the vision of the future. The tragedy is that it was not a wild phantasmagoria that the labour movement had the right to ignore, but had solid analytical underpinnings in De Leon's work, which the labour movement *did* largely ignore.

Burnsall: the aftermath

By Jim Denham

DAVID BROWN IS ANGRY. For one year and two weeks he was on strike at the Burnsall metal-coating factory in Smethwick; he and his 18 striking colleagues were demanding improved health and safety, union recognition and equal pay for women workers. Then, on 30 June, the strike was called off by officials of the GMB.

But David Brown's anger is *not* directed at the GMB. He says: "Yes, it was right to finish when we did. We'd fought for over a year and the union had tried everything possible to win. Everyone at the (30 June) meeting agreed that there was no point in continuing the strike".

David's anger is directed at some of the strike's "supporters" who he believes have manipulated certain strikers since the end of the dispute in order to attack the GMB and its individual officers: "I'm really disgusted," says David, "to be truthful, some of the strikers have been two-faced. They agreed with Jo and Danny [Jo Quigley and Danny Parry, the GMB officials in charge of the dispute] at the meeting. Now they're running about, talking to the press and saying that they've been betrayed by the union and that they wanted to carry on. There are a lot of lies going round and I don't appreciate it".

David, it should be noted, is virtually the only Burnsall striker willing to be quoted by name in the aftermath of the strike. Most of the quotes attacking the union that have appeared in the press come from anonymous "strikers" and therefore cannot be verified. There is one other exception: Balvir Singh gave his name to the *Birmingham Post*, saying: "When the (30 June) meeting was called, they [Jo Quigley and Danny Parry] were saying that if we didn't agree to stop the strike they would not fight our tribunal cases. We had no choice. No vote was taken. We have been blackmailed".

David Brown emphatically denies Balvir's accusation, saying: "Balvir agreed that it was a waste of time". It should be noted that during the strike Balvir had to be called to order after it was discovered that he had been forging the signature of a friend of his who had found another job, so that the friend could fraudulently claim strike pay from the union. This incident hardly inspires confidence in Balvir's honesty.

Nevertheless, let us examine Balvir's charges — charges that have also cropped up in reports in *Socialist Outlook*, *Eastern Eye* and in press releases from the Birmingham and London support groups:

- **The threat to drop the tribunal cases:** This threat was not made at the 30 June meeting, or at any other time. What *did* happen at the 30 June meeting was that a solicitor, Tony Lawton, explained the legal implications of calling off the strike. He stated (correctly) that if unofficial action continued, the GMB might be required to repudiate it, up to and including repudiation of the strikers' membership. It was also explained that the union's rule-book contained a clause against "bringing the union into disrepute". According to GMB official Jo Quigley this was done in the context of urging the strikers to maintain their union membership. But, adds Quigley, "in view of the past behaviour of some of the strikers and the manipulative role of some of the 'supporters', it would have been totally irresponsible of us not to have explained these facts to the strikers. None of it was said in the spirit of a threat". David Brown agrees.

- **No vote was taken:** This is true. David Brown says: "No vote was needed because



David Brown (left) with the other Burnsall strikers

everyone was in agreement. Everyone at the meeting agreed there was no point continuing any longer. The only disagreement was that some of the women said they wanted a couple of weeks to discuss it with their families. But you can't make a decision that way. You have to do what you know to be the right thing, no matter what your family or anyone else might say. No-one disagreed about finishing".

David is undoubtedly correct about this. However, Jo Quigley had a further point that is very important: "A lot of the women were under considerable pressure from their husbands to carry on the dispute come what may. The reason for this was the strike pay and money from donations, which was obviously very important to these relatively poor families. I feared that if the strikers went home without a clear decision to call off the strike — a decision coming from the union — the women would be put under intolerable pressure to carry on regardless. One woman in particular has a violent husband and there were realistic grounds for fearing that if she said that she had voted to end the dispute, she would have been beaten".

Factors like this are completely beyond the comprehension of the left critics. It was wrong not to take a vote — there is a principle here which cannot be dismissed — but the issue cannot be blown up into a broadside condemnation of the GMB.

- **The strikers were blackmailed:** Many of the comments about the alleged 'threat' to drop the tribunal cases apply to this charge. One additional point should be made: immediately after the 30 June meeting, the strikers were filmed and interviewed by BBC *Midlands Today* outside the GMB's Halesowen office. They all appeared in good spirits and not one made any complaint about the conduct of the meeting. The 'blackmail' accusation only emerged some days later, initially in a press release from the London support group.

It is important to go into some detail in refuting the charges against the GMB that are now flying about. Most of us on the left are all too familiar with cases of union bureaucrats selling out winnable struggles and treating the rank and file membership with contempt. We are also well aware of the British trade union movement's shameful record of indifference, neglect and downright racism towards black workers. The knee-jerk reaction is to believe the worst when the GMB is accused of betraying the mainly Asian (and majority female) strikers at Burnsall's. One Bob Smith, writing in *Socialist Outlook*, went so far as to state: "This is a shameful episode, only possibly equalled by APEX, now part of the

GMB, and their withdrawal from Grunwick". Mr Smith, it should be noted, also accused Jo Quigley and Danny Parry of stealing from the Burnsall's strike fund, though that charge was never put into print.

The uncomfortable fact is, however, that in this instance the GMB conducted an honest, determined and surprisingly principled struggle. If the left's usual accusations of 'selling out' and 'betrayal' against bureaucrats are to carry any credibility, we have to give credit where it's due and avoid spreading lies and slander. The accusations of *Socialist Outlook* are particularly distasteful and hypocritical, given that publication's record of lying and covering up for the role of one of their own supporters in wrecking the struggle on the London Underground.

Socialist Worker, while less hysterical than *Outlook*, has also accused the GMB of imposing its bureaucratic will upon "strikers [who] wanted to continue the dispute" and of failing to mobilise support "for fear of breaking the law". Again, such accusations come ill from people who argue that NALGO members should only be expected to strike when full pay is on offer!

The truth is that the GMB's campaign at Burnsall's was avowedly 'legal' from the start, but the union sailed close to the wind. Contrary to reports in *Outlook* and elsewhere, vigorous efforts were made to obtain blacking of Burnsall's and some success was achieved on this front at Jaguar in Coventry. The union's 'last throw' was to issue a powerful leaflet to the shop stewards' committees at all Burnsall's other unionised customers (Rover, Land Rover, PPG, all Ford plants) calling, in unmistakable terms, for blacking. The officials followed the leaflet up with personal contact, but got no response. Only after this had failed did they decide to call the dispute off. We have to ask *Outlook* et al, *what more should the GMB have done?* Or should the Burnsall strike have been turned into one of those never-ending disputes that becomes, in time, an exercise in alternative life-style?

But *Outlook* and *Socialist Worker* are not the primary instigators of the poisonous, dishonest campaign of lies and slanders surrounding the Burnsall's dispute. That honour goes to the Indian Workers' Association and the London Support Committee — for whom *Outlook* and others on the left were willing tools. The IWA's Stalinist leadership resented the fact that the GMB (and not *their* union, the TGWU) was leading the dispute, and set about denigrating and undermining the GMB from day one. The shameful role of the IWA General Sec-

retary Avhtar Jouhl and the IWA leadership, motivated by bureaucratic rivalry and petty spite, should not be allowed to detract from the genuine support given by many honest rank and file IWA members.

The case of the London Support Committee is somewhat different. These people, led by the Asian writer and 'intellectual' Amrit Wilson, are avowed black separatists who found themselves in the paradoxical position of having to support a struggle of mainly Asian workers for the recognition of a 'white' union. The London Support Committee spread such lies as the charge that the GMB was paying the Burnsall's strikers a special, low rate of strike pay because they were black and that the reason the union wanted to call off the strike was because strike pay would have to go up to £63 per week after one year (!). Ms Wilson's press release contains the following weasly words:

"Strikers such as Burnsall's can only be successful through mobilising wide community support and developing new strategies. But clearly the union officials were less interested in winning the strike than in keeping it within their control and preventing any wider involvement which might force them to listen to the strikers themselves".

In other words, the GMB should have handed control of the strike to "wider community support" — perhaps even Ms Wilson herself?

The hidden agenda behind much of the criticism of the GMB is the idea that only the self-appointed "leaders" of the black community can lead black workers. Non-racial trade unions that unite *all* workers are thought inappropriate at best and downright reactionary at worst.

This sort of thing would be laughable, were it not for the poisonous effect it had on many of the strikers and the gullible willingness of much of the left to take it seriously.

Previous articles in *Socialist Organiser* have outlined our considered criticism of GMB's handling of this strike: the union's failure to assign an official to deal with Burnsall's on an exclusive basis, and its failure to use the dispute as the springboard for a unionisation drive throughout the metal-coating industry. But these criticisms are of a different order from the lies, slander and hysteria peddled by Mr Avhtar Jouhl, Ms Amrit Wilson and their gullible bag-carriers at *Outlook*.

The inevitable effect of all their attacks will be to help boost non-unionism and even anti-unionism amongst sections of Asian workers.

The last word goes to a striker: "As long as my name is David Brown, I'll deny that the strikers were threatened or blackmailed by the union. The support groups just wanted to attack Jo and Danny and horrible lies are being told now. I'm proud of our fight but these people are determined to make it look dirty now. What encouragement is that to other workers? I'm disgusted".

Editor's note

It is an unfortunate fact that newspaper reports on affairs like this often consist of special pleadings: papers and organisations tend to protect, excuse and stand by "their own". Thus *Outlook*, so implacable in its demand for miracles from Jo Quigley and Danny Parry, the GMB full-timers, had no scruples about justifying a blatant sell-out by one of its people on the London Underground.

Lest the reader be suspicious, it is therefore worth stating here that no *Socialist Organiser* supporters have had any role in deciding what was done or left undone in this strike: no supporter of ours, nor any prospective or hoped-for supporter, was involved at all. Our interest is, as always, to tell the truth to the best of our awareness of what it is.

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Labour and the unions

Defend the link!

Support Timex boycott! see page 15



The Timex strikers in Dundee are still fighting, and still need your support.

CIVIL SERVANTS SAY We can beat Market Testing!

By Trudy Saunders, CPSA DsHSS SEC

ON 2 JULY, 32,000 CPSA and NUCPS members in the DsHSS (Departments of Health and Social Security) took strike action against Tory Market Testing plans for those sections.

The turnout at ballot meetings, the numbers voting 'yes' and those taking strike action on the day were unprecedented in the two unions' recent histories. 211 DSS Districts closed completely on the day. Of the 151 remaining partially or fully open, many were open for 5 minutes only or were included in the figures if the switchboard opened! Senior management used every trick in the book to attempt to force workers not to strike, from threats of sacking to, in one office, threats of physical violence. 2,000 DsHSS workers have joined CPSA since the strike began.

The strike had massive support, which is unsurprising in view of what Market Testing means: mass job losses, wage cuts, worse conditions, loss of pension and redundancy rights, the smashing up of our unions and worse service to the public. Yet campaigning and literature from either the CPSA DsHSS Section Executive Committee (SEC) which is

dominated by Militant supporters, or the Militant-controlled CPSA Broad Left was scanty. The massive 'yes' vote in the CPSA is clearly partly due to the work Socialist Caucus (the Left grouping in the CPSA) have put into ringing the alarm bells about Market Testing through Mark Serwotka's presidential campaign which focused on the need for

national, all-out strike action to defeat market testing.

During balloting meetings for the strike it was clear that DsHSS workers recognise two crucial points: firstly, the need to defeat Market Testing outright and, secondly, that

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This Monday 19 July the Labour Party National Executive gave its backing to John Smith's ridiculously misnamed "compromise" on the trade union-Labour Party link

By Jeremy Corbyn MP

"DON'T THINK THAT the trade union connection has ever been the slightest impediment to people voting Labour.

Let me give the example of Islington North — our majority has gone up from 5,000 to 13,000 in the last two elections and every single household has been told several times that the Labour candidate is not just an active member of UNISON, formerly NUPE, but sponsored by them.

Of all the weird and wonderful reasons people have ever given me for not voting Labour I can count on the fingers of two hands the number of times the trade union connection has been named.

The anti-union "modernisers" are determined to break the link because they want to pursue a very right-wing political agenda similar to that pursued by the French and Spanish Socialist Parties.

The right wing are campaigning on the basis of "One Member One Vote" but that isn't what they want.

If the trade union link is broken, then what does the Party represent?

It will be a structure in which enormous power is given to a parliamentary party which is increasingly setting the agenda. State funding will have to follow — because there will be a collapse of membership as the Party ceases to exist on the ground.

Meanwhile, those people who are active and have joined trade unions and believe in a political extension of trade unionism will be disenfranchised.

It will lead to the demise of the Labour Party as we know it and the break-up of the political left as an electoral force.

It is an extremely dangerous road to go down."

Registered supporters:
a bureaucratic nightmare

The Keep The Link Campaign explains what's wrong with it.

"REGISTERED supporters" would create a second level of Party membership in which individual trade unionists got the occasional chance to take part in a narrowly restricted area of Party affairs through the medium of postal ballots.

This system cannot work. It will be a tiresome bureaucratic nightmare and an additional financial burden which will divert energy away from the important issues facing trade unionists.

There will be a huge problem associated with constructing an effective and accurate data base. Post codes, for instance, do not neatly coincide with constituency boundaries.

It has already been admitted that this system cannot be in place before the next round of Parliamentary selections.

What's more, judged by the low turnouts in existing Tory-imposed postal ballots the "registered sympathisers" scheme is unlikely to increase the participation of trade unionists in Party affairs.

Collective debate and discussion is definitely preferable to any other form of decision making. Branch meetings provide a sounding board and allow different views to be aired in a context in which it is possible to create a collective agreement which can be acted upon. If this role is taken away it will further undermine the life of many trade union branches and make much political discussion purposeless because the branch will have no way to make its collective voice heard.

For this reason, we would ask you to vote to maintain collective trade union decision-making in the Labour Party including in the selection of candidates and the election of the leadership.

If you want to know more about Keep The Link or would like a speaker on the issue, write to: 120 Northcote Road, London E17 7EB.