

# SOCIALIST

**ORGANISER**

*It will be socialism or barbarism!*

**Welfare State Network**  
working conference

- Benefits for youth and students ● 21 hour rule
- Job Seeker's Allowance ● Incapacity Benefit

**Saturday 18 February**

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Tickets: £5 waged/£3 low-waged/£2 claimants and students with grant, £1 students without grant

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# JOIN

# THE

# ANTI-CUTS

# CRUSADE!

**Campaign**  
**plan against**  
**the Tories**  
see page 3

**Newcastle action shows the way**

## NHS waiting lists at record high

DEATH BY A THOUSAND CUTS

By Rosalind Robson

HEALTH SERVICE waiting list figures, available since September of last year — but never published by the Department of Health — show the highest total since records began: a massive 1,071,100.

As we suspected, the Government is doing what John Maples advised them to do in his memo leaked to the press at the end of last year. It's burying unpalatable facts about the health service.

**SALARY INCREASES** for the Chief Executives of Health Service Trusts last year were on average four times more than those awarded to their staff.

Three chief executives earned over £100,000 and most earned around £60,000. A modest amount, perhaps, when compared to the bosses of gas, electricity and other public utilities but roughly ten times more than the lowest paid NHS clerical worker!

Clerical staff are so low paid that UNISON has called for a £4,500 rise over the next four years. Let's hope the Trust bosses will be as understanding about the need for this above-average pay increase for these workers as they are for themselves.

**PRIVATISATION** in action: Norfolk Trust plan to lease facilities from a 700-bed hospital development that will be privately owned. What happens then is fairly predictable.

The hospital owners will push their prices up in order to make a profit. The Trust will have to economise and services will then become scarcer. GPs will switch their contracts to other hospitals and patients will be forced to travel further for treatment. And in rural East Anglia that could mean up to a hundred miles.

PETER Lilley has suggested recently that benefits could be administered at a local level. It could even be possible that national government will no longer set the levels of benefit. This is in line with the logic of

Job Seekers' Allowance legislation, which proposes various schemes of subsidised employment. Such schemes could vary from region to region or be piloted in a particular region.

It is not difficult to imagine what comes next. Perhaps the involvement of local Chambers of Commerce in fixing local benefit provision, tied to Workfare-type schemes benefiting their companies.

That's why people are saying this could herald the return of the Poor Law. Before national unemployment and other benefits were introduced, welfare relied upon the Poor Law Guardians — local gentry, politicians and business people who fixed local provision according to how benevolent they felt.

**POOR PETER.** He's finding it difficult to cut the social security bill. Well, when you've reduced benefits to such miserly levels what else can you do. Step up your anti-fraud campaign.

The latest is asking the tutors of privately-run courses for about 400,000 long-term unemployed to spy on their students.

They have all received an "open learning pack" with helpful advice to tutors on how to spot the evil fraudsters. "Briefcases and paint splattered jeans are suspicious". They are asked to provide detailed descriptions of these low-life moonlighters so that Benefit Inspectors can easily spot them!

**How ridiculous! Most tutors, fortunately, will not be following Government advice.**

**Our advice to Peter is this. The only way to stop so-called benefit fraud is to provide decent well-paid jobs with full employment rights for the unemployed.**

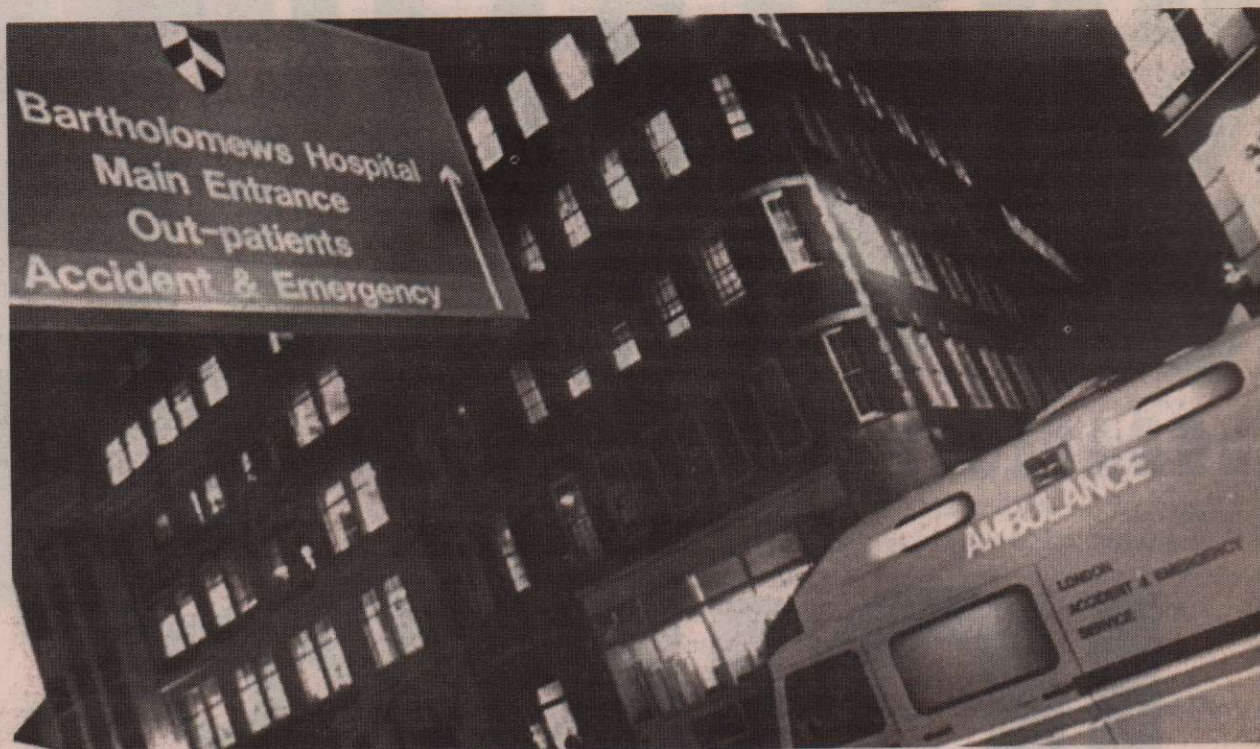
Two quotes of the month

**FIRST**, from Michael Portillo during the first reading of the Job Seeker's Allowance Bill. "There is no God-given right for any person to decide to be idle and to live off others."

Mr Portillo is a Republican, perhaps?

And from Lord Kilbracken, a Labour peer. Kilbracken is an "absent father" who could have (potentially) been hit for all his cash by the Child Support Agency. He was very relieved, therefore, to hear of Peter Lilley's reforms to the CSA. However Kilbracken was very distressed to hear that Lilley would not be taking into account the cost of school fees when working out the levels of maintenance.

We could feel more sympathy for Lord Champagne Socialist's opinions on the inequities of the system except... not a tear did he shed and not a thought did he have for all those single parents who will still continue to have their Income Support chopped by the amount of the maintenance they receive from absent parents. These are the people who are really losing out!



## Battle lost in war to save Bart's

Last week the Accident and Emergency Unit at Bart's Hospital, London, was closed — after 972 years! Patients were redirected to the London Hospital or Homerton Hospital — both a fair distance away, in London traffic. Homerton's A&E shut down for two hours, unable to cope. Labour front-bencher Margaret Beckett pledged to oppose the full closure of Bart's, but would not promise that a Labour Government would reopen the A&E.

## Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!

**I**N Pennsylvania USA, Republican Tom Ridge won the state house on a pro-death-penalty platform and pledged he would sign death warrants on taking office as governor on 17 January. Foremost among the 170 men and women on Pennsylvania's death row is Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was framed in 1982 on charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer.

In the early morning hours of 9 December 1981, Jamal was working as a cab driver and saw his brother Billy being beaten by police officer Daniel Faulkner. Jamal got out of his cab and took a near-fatal bul-

let in the stomach. Jamal was found sitting on the kerb and bleeding nearly to death. Faulkner was dead.

Jamal was denied the right to represent himself or have the attorney of his choice. He was allocated a mere \$150 for pre-trial investigation in a case in which the police had already interviewed 125 people. Jamal was removed from the courtroom and missed most of the prosecution's case. His court-appointed lawyer was unprepared for trial and repeatedly asked to be relieved. He was later disbarred.

The prosecution's case claimed that only Jamal and his broth-

er came anywhere near Faulkner until the back-up cops arrived. But four witnesses stated they saw a third man shoot Faulkner and then run from the scene.

The prosecutor secured the death sentence by telling the nearly all-white jury that Jamal's membership in the Black Panther Party and use of the slogan "power to the people" and the old Maoist dictum "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" 12 years earlier "proved" he was a "cop-killer"!

As Jamal has written: "You will find a blacker world on Death Row. African Americans, a mere twelve per-

cent of the national population, compose about forty per cent of the Death Row population." Over 80 per cent of those sent to Death Row from Jamal's Philadelphia are black.

Over 40,000 people have signed petitions or sent letters to the governor demanding Jamal not be executed. Unions representing millions of workers, including the French General Confederation of Labour (CGT), and the National Union of Journalists in Britain have also backed him.

● Contact Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX, telephone: 071-485 1396.

## BR bosses push Tory message

**A RECENT** briefing given to workers on the South Eastern Train Operating Unit (still part of British Rail!) included comment on the Panorama TV programme on rail privatisation.

Management felt that they had to right the balance by telling workers that privatisation will be great, whatever the TV exposé said.

However, railway workers who are already experiencing "restructuring for privatisation", "staffing for revenue" etc. are not that easily convinced, and know that privatisation will cost dearly in terms of jobs, pay and conditions.

As the supervisor giving the briefing said: "You don't have to believe this, you just have to be told it!"

The next issue of Socialist Organiser... will be out on Thursday 16 February.

We will print the second part of Max Shachtman's recollections of the early US Trotskyist movement, which for reasons of space, we were unable to include this time.

We will also be concluding our debate on screen violence. Any last contributions to the debate should be kept to around 300 words.

## Labour council suspends anti-cuts seven

**SEVEN** Labour councillors have been suspended from the Labour whip in Islington council, North London, for voting against cuts in adventure playgrounds.

The playground cuts total only £77,000 out of a council budget of £250 million (and cuts of £5 million this year), but have aroused much protest and big demonstrations. The suspensions have angered not only those local Labour Party members who oppose all cuts, but also those who reckon — rightly — that £77,000 could have been cut less hurtfully elsewhere. The council is spending over £100,000 on computers, faxes, and mobile phones for councillors.

The council leadership — chief whip and former National Union of Students president Stephen Twigg, and leader and ex-Trotskyist Alan Clinton — are making a show of toughness.

## Margaret Dewar

Veteran Trotskyist Margaret Dewar died recently. Her funeral is on Friday 3 February, 3pm at Worth Crematorium, Crawley, Sussex.

The next issue of Socialist Organiser will carry an obituary.

**Picket Peter Lilley! Protest against the Job Seeker's Allowance and Incapacity Benefit Saturday 11 February 1995 Meet 12 noon at Highbury Corner London**

# Join the anti-cuts

**D**EATH BY A thousand Tory cuts — that will be the epitaph on the gravestone of social welfare in Britain, unless something is done to stop the Tories soon!

Newcastle council workers have shown what has to be done. They have given a lead to the labour movement with their day of action against cuts on Wednesday 1 February — and, even more importantly, with their drive for a big nationwide campaign of political and industrial action leading up to the next Budget Day in November.

Such initiative can rouse and rally support even if, at the beginning, its support is limited.

Why is the support now limited? Because for years the leaders of the labour movement have refused to lead the movement into battle against the Tories. Where the Tories have been stopped — on the poll tax, for instance — it has been small thanks to Labour's leaders.

The poll tax was stopped by action. Action — strikes, demonstrations, pickets — can stop the cuts.

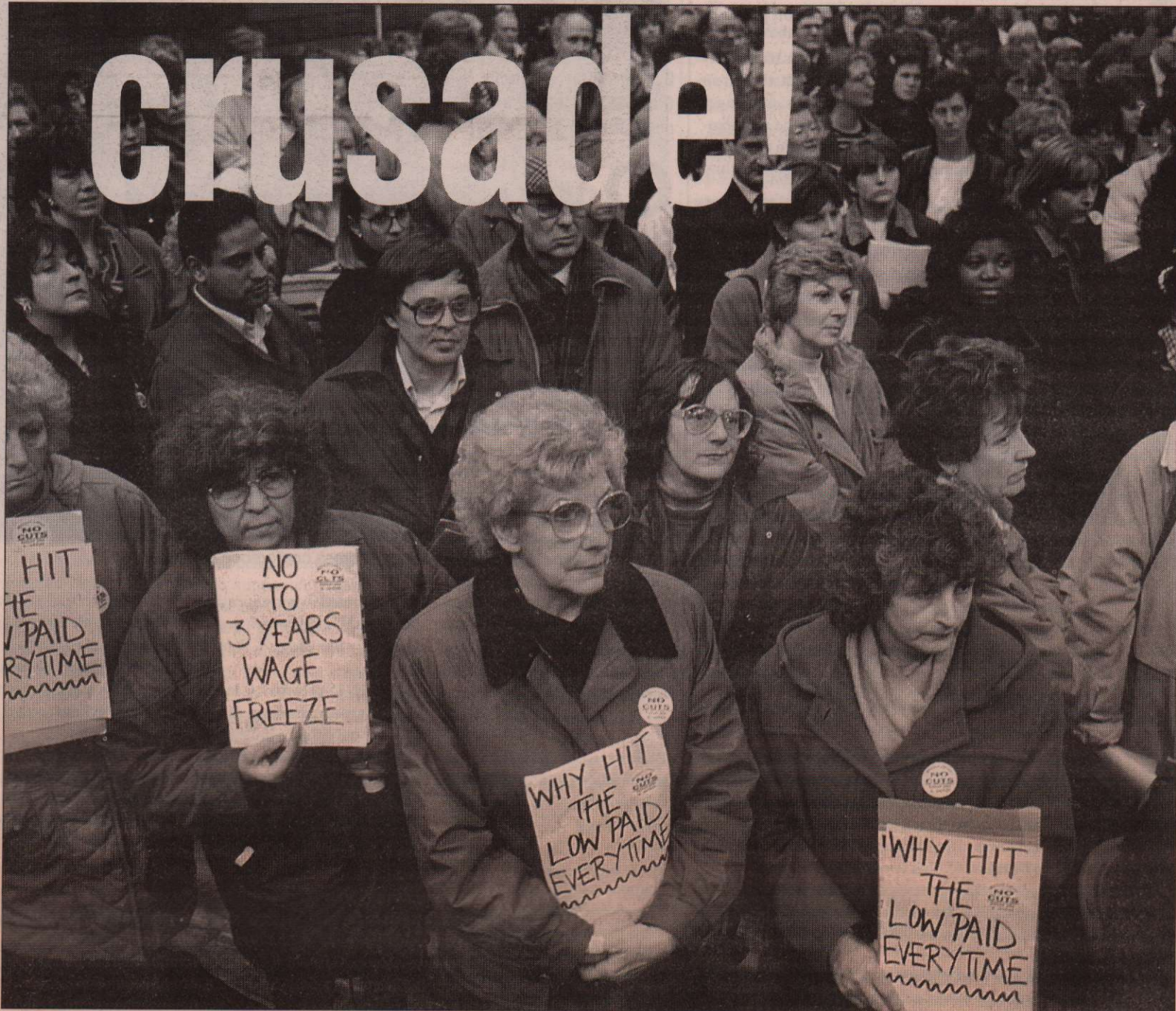
*"We need a drive for a big nationwide campaign of political and industrial action leading up to the next Budget Day in November."*

The Tory cuts are vastly unpopular. They do not have the support of a majority of the electorate. Most people support the Welfare State. By 1991, opinion polls showed 65 per cent saying that the Government should increase taxes and spend more on health, education and social benefits (only 32 per cent said the same in 1983).

Consistently, an overwhelming majority wants the Health Service to survive and be improved to meet the needs of everyone in Britain.

That means nothing to the Tories. They have the power, and they will continue to use it up to the day we kick them out!

But if there is action in defence of health and welfare on the same scale as there was against the poll tax, then the Tories will have to stop their vandalising of the Health Service.



Coventry council UNISON members protest at wage freezes and cuts. Photo: John Harris

Why hasn't there been such action? Not because it is impossible. Not because mass support for the Health Service is lacking. But because people have got used to the rundown of health and welfare. Most of those who hate what the

Tories are doing also feel that there is nothing they can do about it.

Action — even limited action, like Newcastle's — can change that mood, and transform resigned fatalism into active combat against this vicious ruling-class government and

for the Welfare State!

We can start now by making the necessary links between activists. Get your trade union or Labour Party to contact the Newcastle unions; discuss how you could link in with their plan of action; and

send delegates to the 18 February Welfare State Network conference, which will discuss action on a range of issues including the Job Seeker's Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, and student grants and benefits. (See front page for details).

## Newcastle moves against cuts

**L**OCAL government workers and community activists in Newcastle are staging a day of action on Wednesday 1 February over jobs and public services.

Newcastle City Council faces cuts of £20 million over the next three years. Coming on top of £41.5 million cuts since 1990, these cuts will close schools, day-care centres, libraries, and residential homes, and put 1000 jobs at risk.

Kenny Bell, of Newcastle City UNISON, spoke to *Socialist Organiser*

about the campaign.

"At a UNISON union activists' meeting in Sheffield on 14 January, we discussed how to gain maximum support for our action on 1 February and how to take the campaign forward from where we are now.

The meeting adopted a motion to be sent to the union's National Executive, calling for coordinated national action on 22 March. People in the National Union of Teachers are supporting a similar plan.

We also discussed a general cam-

paign across the public sector from May to August, to lead up to a national demonstration in November to coincide with Budget Day.

We want the campaign to be coordinated by the TUC; if not, it will have to be done by UNISON.

Many branches across the country face cuts like ours. In fact, in comparison with other areas, the proposed cuts in Newcastle City Council this year — £7 million — seem slight.

We are expecting delegations from other UNISON branches around the

country to attend the demonstration on 1 February, and several local delegations from non-public-sector unions are likely to attend too."

*Day of action: assemble 11.30, Newcastle Civic Centre. Rally, 1.00, New Tyne Theatre, Westgate Road, Newcastle*

Contact: Jennifer Davies or Kenny Bell, Newcastle UNISON, Newcastle Civic Centre, 091-232 8520 x 6980

*"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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## WE SAY

## Act on Clause Four!

TONY BLAIR is unwilling to renationalise water, gas, electricity, or telecoms, but on 16 January John Prescott promised plans to bring rail back into public ownership.

A firm commitment from Labour to renationalise with minimum compensation would wreck the Tories' plans to sell off rail straight away, by deterring private buyers. But Prescott proposes much less.

Where private companies have taken franchises for train operating companies, Labour would (said Prescott) let them run their course — for seven or maybe ten years, that is, for longer than the term of the Labour Government! Then the *next-but-one* Labour Government would try to bring those train operating companies back into the public sector at the first franchise renewal.

His only promise for the *next* Labour Government is that it would buy back enough of Railtrack — the company that runs the tracks — to give the government majority control, *so long as the Tories do not sell off too much of it*. If the Tories sell off 51% of Railtrack, Labour will buy back two per cent, to bring the public stake up from 49% to 51%; if the Tories sell all of Railtrack, then Labour will do nothing.

All this would leave the running of the railways largely dictated by the interests of the private shareholders in Railtrack. It would do nothing to reverse the Tories' crazy carving-up of the network. It would do nothing to halt or reverse the shutting-down of "unprofitable" rail services.

Tony Blair claims Labour "could not afford" renationalisation. But, as the *Tory Times* (16 January) points out, "In reality, the Treasury could easily 'afford' to buy back Railtrack. Renationalisation would simply require an exchange of one kind of financial paper — government bonds — for another, Railtrack shares".

The *Times* assumes full compensation. A Labour Government should give no more compensation than is necessary to avoid disastrous losses for small shareholders and for pension funds. And it should in any case be moving for public ownership and control over the £100 billion assets of the big pension funds. Act on Clause Four!

## Scrap the Child Support Agency!

LAST WEEK, the Tories announced several changes to the CSA — an appeal system to allow "flexibility"; no maintenance order to exceed 30% of net income; recognition of "clean break" arrangements; account to be taken of high travel-to-work costs.

A further change is that lone parents on benefits will get a £5 per week credit. However, this is not money added to their income, but to be paid as a lump sum when the lone parent (90% of whom are women) gets a job.

The Tories' main aim in its Child Support policy seems to be to minimise the benefits bill. Its move to clear the CSA's backlog is to suspend all pre-1993 claims from non-benefit claimants. The Agency's performance targets are set not in terms of numbers of claims settled, or numbers of children helped, but in amounts of Income Support money saved.

Following these changes, the Child Support Agency retains all the core features that led us to oppose it at the outset. It forces women into contact with former partners; it claws back money for the State, not for children; it is based on an ideology that children should be brought up by their biological parents, and that if this is not feasible, then the mother's duty is to provide care, the father's to provide money.

## Amnesty for poll-tax debtors!

FEMINISM WAS never dragged so low. Harriet Harman MP tried to fend off the *Independent on Sunday's* exposure of an attempt by Cherie Booth (Tony Blair's wife) to keep a poll-tax debtor in jail by claiming that it was an attack on the right of women to have careers separate from their husbands.

Cherie Booth chose to parade round last October's Labour Party conference, playing the Adoring Wife. And the other explanation offered by Blairites — that, as a barrister, Booth had no choice but to take the case — is equally lame. No-one forced Booth to specialise chasing poll-tax debtors, and no-one could force a star lawyer like her to take this particular case.

Despite the poll tax being long dead — and the Tory Government implicitly conceding that it was unjust and unworkable — councils are jailing increasing numbers of poll-tax debtors. More than 1000 were jailed last year. Over 2000 have been jailed in total. A sizeable number have been single parents with young children. Most are very poor.

This vindictive man- and woman-hunt against the poor should be ended by an *amnesty* for all poll-tax debtors.

But there should be no amnesty for Booth, Blair and the other "New Labour" leaders for their crime of mocking the needs and aspirations of millions of working-class people who desperately want a real alternative to the Tories.

## DEFEND CLAUSE FOUR

## Defending Clause Four

## Right down to the wire

By Tom Rigby, "Defend Clause Four" steering committee

OVER SIXTY delegates from around the country gathered in Manchester last Saturday, 28 January, for a meeting of the "Defend Socialism, Defend Clause Four" campaign committee.

Leading activists from the TGWU were confident of winning support for Clause Four, but stressed that enormous pressure was being put on Bill Morris to save Blair's bacon.

The Fire Brigades Union, FBU, has affiliated to the campaign, and a delegate from the London Region encouraged all local Clause Four campaigns to get in touch with the union locally to see what support could be given.

ASLEF and RMT, the two main rail unions, are solid in their support for Clause Four. A "Railworkers for Clause Four" group has been set up. Blair's retreat from rail renationalisation has angered many railworkers.

Though the GMB was expected to be pulled behind Blair by general secretary John Edmonds, it was reported that at a recent executive meeting Edmonds himself had talked of withdrawing support for a new Clause Four unless there was "an absolute commitment" to renationalising the water industry.

The GPMU printers' union is expected to maintain its support for Clause Four, as is the media technicians' union BECTU.

The four key trade-union battlegrounds will be UNISON, the giant public sector union, MSF, the technicians' union, USDAW the shopworkers' union, and the



Blair at press conference last week

newly formed Communication Workers' Union, which draws together the old UCW and NCU.

A "UNISON for Clause Four" group has been set up and has published a bulletin. In USDAW the left are organising hard for their annual conference, which takes place less than a week before the special conference. Blair is so worried about it that he will address the conference in person.

The battle in MSF is likely to be rather bloody (see Sleeper). The new Communication Workers' Union is an unknown quantity.

The committee laid plans for covering the Blair roadshow, despite the refusal of regional offices to send tickets to left-wing CLPs, trade union branches, or Trades Councils.

Looking towards the special conference, we agreed to combine a principled defence of Clause Four and common ownership with a drive to expose Blair as unreasonable and

unwilling to find any basis for unity. We felt that the best way to do this is to push for Blair's new statement to be considered as an addition to the existing Clause Four, rather than as a replacement.

We felt that the drive by Labour's National Executive for postal ballots in the constituencies should be resisted. We should defend the sovereign

rights of delegate-based General Committees in the constituencies, and refuse to accept the loaded ballot papers which the National Executive will produce.

The mood of the meeting was buoyant, with everyone agreed that the battle will continue right up to 29 April. As one TGWU activist put it, "This will go right down to the wire".

## Vox doc

By an Islington South CLP member

Tony Blair's video on why he wants to cut common ownership out of Labour's constitution caused a row at the January meeting of Islington South Constituency Labour Party.

The video was filmed in our CLP offices, presumably chosen because we are a "safe" CLP — but why, asked one delegate, had only opponents of Clause Four been chosen to do the "vox pop" in the video?

It just turned out that way, replied our constituency agent. Short notice. Not many people available on a weekday morning.

Under further pressure, the constituency chair said that inviting a wider range of members would have made no difference, since all the questions shown on the video were scripted. They were not the questions that ordinary Labour Party members — even anti-Clause-Four ones — want to ask, but the questions Blair wanted them to ask. Not vox pop, but vox doc.

In fact, one of our members who supports Clause Four does appear in the video. She just doesn't get to speak!

"If there had been any awkward questions", added our con-

stituency secretary, "they would have been cut out of the video anyway".

The final touch was Tony Blair's reported comment on arriving at the CLP office, about 300 yards from his house. "I never realised it was so near". It shows how much he is in touch with Labour's grass roots.

## Clause Four meetings • debates • rallies

Wed 8 Feb  
Fabian Society debate — Peter Mandelson MP and Alan Simpson MP

Central Hall, Westminster

Fri 10 Feb  
Arthur Scargill  
Birmingham

Wed 15 Feb  
Alan Simpson MP  
Haywards Heath

Fri 17 Feb  
Arthur Scargill  
Cardiff

Thur 23 Feb  
Arthur Scargill  
Liverpool

Fri 24 Feb  
Arthur Scargill  
London

For more information about times, speakers and venues phone: 071-708 0511 or 071-582 2955

## Join us the Campaign!

Name/organisation .....

Address .....

Phone/fax .....

Fee .....

Donation .....

Affiliation fee: £10min/£30 regional orgs/£50 national orgs.

Cheques to "Defend Clause Four" c/o the NUM, 2

Huddersfield Road, Barnsley S70 2LS.

Donations please!

Please send us a regular standing order to help finance the campaign over the next year. Payee: "Defend Clause Four", account no. 54006144; branch 086001.



Blair's "forum": no awkward questions, please, we're "modern"

## Doctoring the debate

By a Newcastle Labour Party member

BEING based in the North East, I don't get an opportunity to see how Walworth Road "works" on a regular basis. That is, except for delayed membership cards, constant requests for money — and an invitation to a meeting with Tony Blair which arrived so late that my branch secretary could not reply within the time constraints.

I did however get there. I got past the stewards, who confiscated a bag from another Party member because it contained

copies of the *Action for Health and Welfare* newspaper. The "forum" consisted of a ten minute speech on why we should embrace capitalism — for ever and ever — followed by an hour of Tony Blair answering questions from "Labour Party activists." He did take his jacket off, he did remove all physical barriers between us, and he did smile. Boy, did he smile.

The initial questions seemed a bit lame but were answered with confidence. There were a lot of people indicating they wanted to speak and surely soon more difficult questions would have to be answered. It

didn't happen.

Despite a good number of people who support Clause Four being present, only those who supported change were chosen to speak.

I watched more closely. A local councillor moved forward. There was a nod from the Chair. The next question was from the councillor, and pretty tame at that.

After over 20 questions, there was still no dissenting voice.

Subsequent discussions revealed that up to 60% of the questions were staged. The remaining questions were chosen from members that Walworth Road (and Regional

Office) regarded as safe.

Now I know how Walworth Road works. So do others. Many who might have considered a change in the constitution now resent the attitude of Tony Blair and what it stands for.

The next major focus for the Clause Four campaign in the North East is a meeting to be addressed by Arthur Scargill at Ferryhill Station, in Tony Blair's constituency of Sedgefield, on 14 February. The meeting, at Mainsforth Community Centre, has been organised by Spennymoor and Newton Aycliffe Trades Council.

## Margaret Hodge spells it out

By Jim Fraser

ON 19 January two hundred Labour Party members heard Islington MP Jeremy Corbyn debate Clause Four with Margaret Hodge, former leader of Islington council and now MP for Dagenham. Despite both Islington CLPs now being heavily right-wing, the mood was overwhelmingly for keeping Clause Four.

Corbyn spoke scathingly about how the market economy and mass unemployment had further concentrated society's wealth and power in the hands of a small circle of unelected plutocrats motivated solely by personal gain.

The alternative was a socialist society where the means of production, distribution and exchange were under the ownership and control of the majority, and run for the benefit of society as a whole.

This view was anathema to Margaret Hodge. She stated that wealth was produced by the market, and Jeremy was a fossilised relic, stuck in a

bygone era. She represented the future.

The thoroughly modern Ms Hodge furious condemned the "old fashioned" and "out of date views" of the long-dead Aneurin Bevan. And she supported the "up-to-date" viewpoint of Adam Smith. It was "sheer hypocrisy" to think a Labour government could ever have any control over the multinationals.

She denounced people with political beliefs that were to the left of her own as "the nouvelle right," comparing Labour's defenders of Clause Four with the die-hards who want to keep women out of the West End gentlemen's clubs!

Hodge also scornfully rejected Corbyn's call for industrial democracy. Any form of workers' control or management was insanity, she said, citing as proof her own experience of running Islington Council! What she meant was that workers fought against her cuts in jobs, conditions and services! Discussion from the floor

was lively and enthusiastic, with most in favour of retaining Clause Four. Several times the point was made that objectives could be added to the Clause. It was not necessary to abolish Clause Four in order to improve it. Hodge still insisted that Labour must back women's equality instead of public ownership.

Stephen Twigg, former president of the National Union of Students and now Chief Whip of Islington council, defended Margaret Hodge's claim that no-one would want to nationalise Tesco. People are happier queuing at Tesco than in Moscow. This proved conclusively that Clause Four must be abolished!

Margaret Hodge had claimed that the experience of what she called "state capitalism" in the USSR and Eastern Europe discredited Clause Four. *Socialist Organiser* supporter Martin Thomas pointed out that the former Stalinist countries were ruthlessly bureaucratic dictatorships where the people had no democratic rights

and no say in the running of society or industry. Ownership by such a state was not common ownership. Clause Four, with its commitment to working-class control, was the exact opposite of Stalinism.

Margaret Hodge responded that Martin Thomas was "the most unreconstructed Marxist she had ever met!" And she must have met quite a few!

Summing up, Margaret Hodge was clearly distressed and very irate. She denounced the whole meeting as narrow-minded bigots, out of date, out of touch, old-fashioned and not interested in winning the next election.

In reply, Corbyn stated that to support the market economy was to support the consequences of such an economy: unemployment, inequality and deprivation. Clause Four poses an alternative in which people have control over their own lives and society is run for the common good instead of profit of the few.

## T&G goose, MSF gander?

TONY BLAIR'S GAME plan becomes clearer by the day: the high-risk gamble over Clause Four is but the prelude to his ultimate goal of cutting the Labour Party's links with the unions once and for all and refounding the party in his own Christian Democratic image.

The problem he faces is that in order to achieve this aim he has to introduce state funding of political parties. In order to achieve that, he has to win the next election. And in order to win *that*, he thinks he has to win on Clause Four (not that Clause Four has ever lost Labour a single vote up to now).

The irony of the situation is that, given the stubborn resistance of the constituency Labour Parties, he looks like having to depend on the unions to win the day for him: not what Peter Mandelson and Alistair Campbell envisaged when they urged him to take this course.

No wonder that Blair's office is busy sucking up to the union general secretaries whilst — simultaneously — telling the press that no "deals" with the unions are on offer. Blair's project is not helped by the fact that none of his coterie comes from a labour movement background or has any understanding of the ways of the union bureaucracy.

Hence the potentially disastrous (for Blair) misreading of Bill Morris's

speech at a TGWU Automotive Group function in Birmingham last week. Morris was, in fact, sending out smoke signals to the effect that — given sufficient commitments on public ownership — he would be willing to do a deal on Clause Four.

The Blair camp's initial response was to denounce Morris to the press as "pusillanimous" and "confused" and to call the union's internal democratic procedures into question. A bad move on the part of P.Mandelson. Within hours of this ill-advised attack on the leader of the largest affiliated organisation, Blair and Prescott had made personal calls to Morris, apologising in grovelling terms for their lieutenant's gaffe.

But the damage had been done: Morris was personally antagonised, and the left-leaning TGWU executive is now virtually certain to back keeping Clause Four.

This incident, predictably, provoked a flurry of press attacks on Morris and the union's internal democracy. The T&G is presently conducting a branch-based "consultation", using the Labour Party's rigged "response sheet". Blairite papers like the *Guardian* and *Independent* wasted no time in attacking Morris for having expressed an opinion without holding an individual ballot of the entire T&G membership. No matter that Morris's speech was entirely in line with the union's existing policy and constitution.

Less has been said and written about the extraordinary events in MSF. General secretary Roger Lyons, a fanatical Blairite, last week wrote a press release backing the abolition of Clause Four without gaining his National Executive's approval.

The union's president, John McIntyre, not a left-winger but a democratically-minded "moderate", saw the document, collared Lyons, and demanded a retraction. When the media picked up on the press release, four regional secretaries and four regional presidents signed a letter condemning Lyons and demanding a retraction.

When Lyons realised the game was up, he wrote a retraction, but McIntyre said it wasn't good enough. Lyons had to rewrite it.

The right-wing Eastern Region of MSF voted last week to censure Lyons for his undemocratic behaviour over Clause Four. Five Regions have already called for a special conference of MSF to debate the issue. Right-wing National Executive members are reported to be switching sides in favour of Clause Four.

Lyons is beside himself, and was observed shouting at delegates to the union's youth weekend: "It's your kind of attitude that lost us the election in 1983!"

Strangely enough, the *Guardian* and *Independent* have not attacked Roger Lyons for pre-empting his union's consultation process, and Blair's office has not been demanding that MSF holds an individual ballot of its members.

### INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

# Women back Clause Four

## WOMEN'S EYE

By Sarah Wellings, Women's Officer, National Union of Students

**T**HIS WEEK I saw an advertisement for a Labour women's group meeting which said: "If you think the Labour Club is just full of men who support Clause Four — think again."

Many arguments in favour of getting rid of Clause Four have centred around the idea that a commitment to equality should be included in the constitution — at the expense of, rather than in addition to, common ownership.

But "to secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry" means *all* workers, including women, who are among the most exploited within the workplace.

On average, women are paid two-thirds of a man's wage. We are concentrated in part-time, casual, often non-unionised employment. And many women face a double burden, with responsibility for domestic work.

Common ownership, I think, must also mean the common ownership of domestic labour. Why? At present, domestic labour is carried out in isolation, unpaid, within individual home units. A more sensible way of organising this work would be collectively, i.e. to socialise housework.

Of course, we should also be fighting for a greater commitment from the Labour Party to fight for women's equality and women's rights. Quotas do not mean that is achieved, although they seem to be the only measure which the Labour right wing proposes for women's equality.

We need to build women's sections, campaign for an annual women's Labour conference, demand a commitment to fighting for union rights, against cuts, and for full employment. Women should defend Clause Four, defend socialism, and fight for real equality.

# Lesbian Link was a life-line

## STAMP OUT HOMOPHOBIA

By Charlotte

LESBIAN LINK, the only advice line for women in Manchester, is no more.

The organisation ran not only a phone line but a supportive social network throughout the area. Ironically, it received £35,000 from Manchester City Council but had problems recruiting volunteers and committee members and so had to make the decision to close.

I can only see it as a real shame and perhaps an indication of why local lesbian and gay projects should not be taken for granted. We should strongly defend and support them, especially from Tory backlash.

The case for such helplines seems quite simple. We live in a homophobic society which had a problem with lesbians, gay men and bisexuals. There is clearly a need to offer support and alleviation from this oppression. We should demand initiatives like this are

given the financial and political backing they need.

The closure of Lesbian Link is not solely due to a problem of finances. Financial assistance from Manchester City Council was no doubt necessary and welcome. But perhaps there was a lack of ongoing political support, a campaigning approach that advertised and celebrated the service provided by Lesbian Link.

Local projects can unfortunately become swamped and over-shadowed by a money-centred and largely male-dominated commercial scene.

When I was growing up in Altrincham, a 'true blue' suburb of Manchester, Lesbian Link was literally a life-line for me.

I was able to talk to other women who knew what it was like to come out as lesbian at a time when the Clause 28 hysteria was at its strongest. The isolation I felt was greatly alleviated without necessarily having to go out on the scene.

Now that Lesbian Link has closed I think it's very sad that the support I felt may be denied to others.

# Tony Blair's yuppie gorillas

## PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

**I**N THE old films the gang boss never got his hands dirty. He'd sit in his smart office wearing an immaculate suit while out on the mean streets his gorillas were blowing people's brains out and generally ignoring the Queensbury rules. The good guys knew what was going on but the problem was always to *prove* it.

Now, I'd be the last person to compare Mr Tony Blair to an old-time gang boss, but he certainly does have his gorillas. They're the political correspondents of papers like the *Guardian*, and the clique of middle-class ex-Stalinists who produce *New Times*, paper of the so-called Democratic Left. Their plan was to fit pro-Clause-Four Labour MEP Ken Coates up with a concrete overcoat and drop him into the harbour. Naturally, Boss Blair knew nothing whatsoever about it.

What happened was this: back in November two journalists from *New Times* visited Coates and proceeded to annoy him with their smart-ass middle-class arrogance. Coates says, "They were with me for a total of possibly 45 minutes. Most of the time was taken up with a fairly heated argument about what these former communists were doing in the present labour movement".

In the course of this "off the

record" exchange, it seems that Coates also said some fairly uncomplimentary things about

Tony Blair and his allies, viz. "bastards and shits who are going to walk past the unemployed".

He may also have said: "There isn't a Labour Party any more. It's finished. Tony Blair wound it up. It's gone". Other gems from the argument apparently included: "Bugger the next election. What difference is it going to make if we have Clarke or if we have Blair?"

and: "The unspeakable Mr Blair has no scenario other than if he could get into bed with the Liberals, he could be in government for ever and ever. He will last five minutes and then he will be disgorged because he has not one idea in his head that matters".

On the present crop of Labour MPs at Westminster, Coates opined: "The illiteracy of this

generation of parliamentarians beggars the mind. How can you talk about equality

and assume the permanent continuation of employers and employees? What kind of freedom does an employee have?"

Finally, Coates said: "I cannot live without Clause Four. It's designed to remind the ancients who populate the Labour Party that they have a common root. You repudiate the common root with very, very great danger".

I can quote these excerpts from the argument because they all appeared in the *Guardian*, under the by-line of Patrick Wintour, on 14 January. So how did "off the record" remarks come to appear in a national newspaper over a month after they had been made?

According to Coates, the *New Times* people asked him for

permission to record an interview *after* the "off the record" exchange. "The interview which was then recorded bears no relationship whatever to what is published in the *Guardian*", he says.

Now, I wasn't there and, as someone once said, you shouldn't take anyone's word for anything in politics. But I know who I'd believe given a choice between someone with Ken Coates's record in the movement and the shysters of *New Times*. As Coates says, "I am now led to understand that our earlier conversation was surreptitiously recorded without my knowledge and has been selectively misquoted without any reference to me".

Whether the ex-Stalinists Blairites of *New Times* sent their 'scoop' to Alistair Campbell at Blair's office, or whether they sent it direct to LCC fellow-traveller Wintour at the *Guardian*, we shall never know. But either way, it was a concrete overcoat job designed to scupper not just Coates personally, but the entire pro-Clause-Four left.

In the event, it backfired. Coates has been inundated with messages of support from Labour Party members. His remarks about the general election may have been over the top, but the consensus among the rank and file seems to be that it's about time someone said that the Emperor has no clothes.

*"It's about time someone said that the Emperor has no clothes."*

# The best answer to Blair

**T**HE NEW *Workers' Liberty* magazine — first in a new monthly schedule of publication — is the best answer to the Blairites' claim that the Labour Left is a bunch of dinosaurs, die-hards, and numbskulls who would rather repeat old phrases than think anew.

A sharp-edged section on the Clause Four battle shows that Labour's so-called modernisers are the really backward-looking ones. Theirs "is an absolutely Victorian project. It would wipe out all the gains from the great unionising upsurge of 1889 and the mass trade unionism that follows".

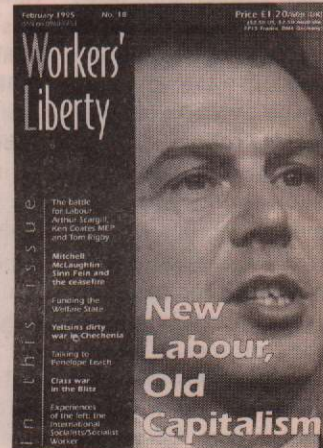
Then the magazine branches out into other issues. John O'Mahony argues that revolutionary Marxists must find a way forward by vigorous struggle for reforms — crucially, today, for the rebuilding of the Welfare State — not by "phrasemongering, mock-heroic posturing and 'calls' for the millennium". We "need to step back from talk about

the 'ultimate goal' so as to prepare for it in the only way it can consciously be prepared — by convincing workers to organise and struggle for their own interests..."

An interview with Penelope Leach explores what socialists should propose to adapt society to children's rights, and to the right of parents to do well by children.

Ray Challinor explodes some myths about the history of the Second World War: the Blitz revealed and sharpened class divisions, rather than throwing rich and poor together in national harmony.

Another myth-debunking exercise takes a narrower focus, on the revolutionary left itself, with the opening of a symposium on the history of what is now the biggest revolutionary group in Britain, the SWP (formerly IS). Ken Coates MEP, for example, recalls the late 1950s: "They were all very pleasant people... but if it is said that they had an orientation to the working class, that is



just nonsense!"

Other articles deal with Ireland, Chechnya, the recent influx of new members to the Labour Party, funding the Welfare State, political satire, Labour's youth movement, and debates on the Bolshevik tradition and on Marxists and Parliament.

● Single copies £1.20 plus 29p postage

# Ooh, aah, hands off Cantona!

By Mick, Birmingham

**A**BOUT 10 years ago, the cricketer Viv Richards got a bout of anti-black racist abuse from a white thug in the crowd when he was leaving the field. Richards hit out at him with his bat. Almost everyone reckoned that Richards' response was understandable, if not ideal.

Footballer Eric Cantona was sent off by referee Alan Wilkie during Manchester United's 1:1 draw with Crystal Palace recently. On his way off he faced the taunts of a Palace supporter who had run down the steps to shout "Fuck off back to France, you bloody frog" at the United forward.

Whilst racism directed at French people has a different history and weight from anti-black racism, it is racism and it is unacceptable.

The British press sees anti-French prejudice — anti-European bigotry in general — as acceptable. It is a way of playing up to the prejudices and hatred harboured by a section of their readership. The *Birmingham Evening Mail* carried an article on the Cantona incident headed

"Frenchman is scum." References to his being French pepper the paper's coverage.

The man whom Cantona kicked is allegedly a known fascist. Drop-kicking him might not be the best way to convince him not to hold racist views, but if anyone deserved to get thumped it was the racist!

Opinion seems to be shifting but the initial press response was to call for Cantona to be banned from British football for life and say nothing about the racist taunts Cantona and Ince and numerous players in the Premier and Endsleigh Leagues endure week in, week out.

Kick racism out of football is the slogan used by the Football League and Commission for Racial Equality, and it should mean literally if need be.

Yes, Cantona should perhaps have used the papers instead to speak out against racism on the terraces (or plastic seats, these days) but I fully understand his lashing out.

Calling for British football to be deprived of one of the most exciting talents it has seen in years is stupid! I for one look forward to his return.



Perhaps not the best way to deal with an objectionable fan



Police tactics will end the alliance between working-class youth and Tory politicians. Photo: John Harris

# Profit drive at root of veal scandal

By Wayne Nicholls

**N**UMBERS AT last weekend's protests against the live export of veal calves at Brightlingsea in Essex topped 2,500, and the protests spread further across the country.

The *New Statesman* magazine heralded the birth of a new form of protest: "Middle England has gone militant" they explained. But then they've been saying that ever since the poll tax with each wave of mass protest against Government policy.

They suggest that a new form of protest has been born, that old-fashioned class struggle is no more, and that to be truly successful in the 1990s a political campaign has to win support from across the political spectrum.

After all, the veal protesters are certainly not all trade union militants — one of them has offered a £40,000 reward to the exporter Roger Mills to stop the trade! Some of those protesting against the exports are quite probably share-holders in the very companies which promote them.

But there is nothing new in this, other than the specific issue of live

calves being exported in cramped, dangerous and inhumane conditions. The same cross-party alliances have been seen over and over again in recent years — almost always on the losing side.

And that is the key problem about the veal protests, and about many other campaigns over the past few

months — the anti-roads campaigns, the CJB campaigns, and so on. Do we just observe from the sidelines cheering on anyone who challenges the state? Or do we want to involve those protesters in a dialogue, and take up with them the broader consequences? Veal calves are not exported to the

continent because certain British farmers are cruel and heartless. Neither are they exported live because (as I overheard recently) the French won't buy meat which is slaughtered in Britain.

They are exported live because there are fewer regulations, less red tape and, crucially, fewer costs in exporting live calves than dead ones. It's all a question of profits.

Little is being said by the veal campaigners about the rationale behind the trade, because they know that the alliance they have built up is shaky, and would crumble if the question of class were raised. But their alliance is an essentially false one.

The best chance the protesters have

*"Link up with  
the people who can  
stop the trade:  
drivers of the lorries,  
dock workers...  
unite against  
the profiteers."*

got is to link up with the people who can stop the trade: the drivers of the lorries, the dock workers and so on, and unite against the profiteers of the veal trade.

To effectively stop the cruelty endemic in the farming industry, the rationale behind it will have to change. As long as the industry is run for the profits of the large agribusinesses, little will change for the better.

We should be saying to the veal protesters: "Don't build alliances with the people responsible for this. Make links with the workers, and fight for a different kind of economics, where your views on animal welfare are a higher priority than someone else's desire for profits — fight for socialism."

**YOUTH  
FIGHTBACK**

**Rebellion**

... the voice of  
revolutionary  
socialist youth.

This page is  
separately edited.

Editor: Mark Sandell

Phone: 071-639 7965

for details of our  
activity.

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

*Youth Fightback is...*

## Job Seeker's Allowance threat to students

**A**ROUND 150,000 students — most in Further Education, but some in Higher Education — study under the 21-hour rule. That is, they are registered unemployed, but are allowed to study a part-time course for up to 21 hours per week and still receive benefits.

This system is far from satisfactory — most of these students would be studying full-time if grants were available, and 21-hour rule students have to promise to give up their course for any job that comes along, no matter how unrewarding or poorly-paid.

However, things are set to get worse. Michael Portillo is organising a clampdown on unemployed students and wants to cut the number of hours they can study. The proposed new Job Seeker's Allowance will cut financial support, and will lead to more pressure being applied to students to give up their studies and take up dead-end jobs.

Portillo wants to push the unemployment figures down, and to help employers to exploit workers. He is not interested in helping people get a decent job or a good education.

Student activists should take action to defend the rights of people studying on the dole. The National Union of Students fails to fight for the rights of FE students — despite the fact that they constitute two-thirds of NUS's membership. We have to organise action ourselves. Two key events for organising a fightback are:

- National FE Activists' Conference  
Wed 8 February; hosted by Sheffield College Student Union, phone Ed Whitby for details on: 0742-722348
- Welfare State Network Working Conference  
Sat 18 February, London.  
Details: 071-639 5068.

# "We lay in a world of death and phantoms"

## Auschwitz: who stayed silent?

By Cathy Nugent

ON THE 17 January 1945, in the face of advancing Russian troops, the Germans began to evacuate the network of concentration camps based around Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland.

Most of the prisoners were marched westwards. Perhaps 58,000 perished on the march from hunger and illness or because they were shot by the Nazis.

The "lucky" ones were those who stayed behind: those who were too ill to travel, children who were survivors of the torture perpetrated under the guise of "medical experiments" by the camp doctor Josef Mengele, and some of the Polish prisoners who had been rounded up after the Warsaw uprising in the autumn of 1944. They were liberated by Russian troops 10 days later.

From 1943 the facts about the extermination of the Jews had been known to neutral countries and the Allies. There were few protests. Nothing was done. Jewish groups called on the Allies to bomb the railway lines leading to the death camps. They refused.

Hitler and the Nazi leaders organised the camps and the mass murder. But many others were complicit through silence and inaction. The Allies did not wipe out anti-semitism. When some Polish Jews tried to return to their homes after the war, they faced anti-semitic pogroms in which many were killed. And today — despite the smallness of the Jewish community — anti-semitism is on the rise again in Poland.

Auschwitz was the largest of the slave-labour and extermination camps built by the Nazis. In these camps, gypsies, homosexuals, political and religious dissenters, but most of all Jews were systematically slaughtered. People from most European nations came to Auschwitz: French, Belgians, Dutch, Italians (after 1943), Norwegians, Hungarians, Greeks. There was even a small British POW camp with substantially better conditions at Auschwitz.

The first order to exterminate all Jewish people living in Nazi-occupied Europe was probably made at the beginning of 1941. Before then many anti-Jewish laws and measures such as the confiscation of property had been enacted and countries like the US and Britain had tightened their controls to stop Jews seeking refuge.

On 20 January 1942 SS Commander Heydrich announced a comprehensive plan at the so-

called Wannasee Conference for top Nazi government officials: "The final solution to the Jewish problem in Europe will be applied to about 11 million people."

Twenty labour and extermination camps were built, and these had dozens of satellites. There were also many transit camps governed by similar conditions. The prison population throughout Europe was, at any one time, about half a million.

In Poland ghettos were set up at Lodz, Warsaw and Lublin into which all the Polish Jews but also Czech, Slovak and German Jews were interned. From here they were transported to the camps, usually Auschwitz. All the ghettos were 'liquidated' by 1943. They had served their purpose as quasi holding camps.

In Russia after the German invasion 'Special Action Units' massacred 1.4 million Jews. Often they would be ordered to dig a mass grave, then shot. Sometimes they were killed by the

carbon-monoxide fumes of transport lorries. Outside Kiev in September 1941, at a place called Babi Yar, 33,000 Jews were shot in a ravine.

Ghettos were also set up to "accommodate" people prior to deportation and possible extermination in the Soviet Union: at Vilna, Knorno Shavili, Riga, Dvinsk, Minsk.

At Auschwitz the fittest and the healthiest were assigned to slave labour.

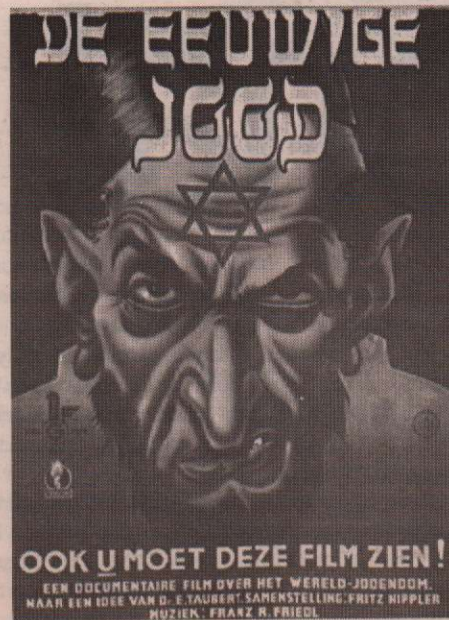
Slave labour was organised for the IG Farben chemical plant built nearby. The demand for slave labour did not stem the exterminations. Perhaps two million people were gassed to death here.

90% of the Jewish population of Poland was wiped out. About 300,000 survived out of a pre-war community numbering some 3.3 million — it was the largest Jewish community in Europe. Not all Polish Jews were able to return to Poland. Only 100,000 Jews survived out of the 6 million European Jews who were rounded up and sent to their death.

Some Jewish people who came to Auschwitz last week for the memorial ceremonies boycotted the official memorial organised by the Polish government. They felt that insufficient account had been taken of Auschwitz as a specifically Jewish tragedy.

They have some good reasons for thinking this. At the opening ceremony in Cracow, Polish president Lech Walesa's speech covered the Nazi murders of Polish intellectuals and spiritual leaders. He did not mention Auschwitz and the fact that 90% of all Poles interned and killed were Jews. Before the war Jews were

*"Jewish groups called on the Allies to bomb the railway lines leading to the death camps. They refused."*



How the Nazis demonised the Jews. Left: poster for "The Eternal Jew", anti-semitic propaganda film shown throughout occupied Europe; right: "Here are the Soviets" poster for an anti-Russian exhibition in Brussels in 1943 equating the Soviet enemy with Jewry.

10% of the total Polish population.

Some of the most moving writings about the Holocaust were by the Italian Jewish author Primo Levi.

Levi was born in Turin in 1919 and trained as a chemist before the war. In 1943 he joined a partisan group in northern Italy and was arrested by the Italian fascist militia and deported to Auschwitz in February 1944. Of the 650 people who were sent from Italy to Auschwitz with Levi, only three made the return journey after liberation.

Levi's skills as a chemist, which were useful to the Nazis, helped save his life. Equally important must have been his ability to endure. But in the end it was an arbitrary twist of fate that ensured his survival. On the day of evacuation from Auschwitz Levi was ill with scarlet fever. He could not go on the fateful march.

Two of Levi's books, *If This is a Man* and *The Truce* are autobiographical, about the time he spent at Auschwitz.

Anyone wishing to understand the horror of Auschwitz and places like it must read Primo Levi. In clear, un sentimental and utterly self-

less language he makes unbelievable events real. He also shows us unwittingly, but no less forcefully, why we need to destroy the system that creates such insanity.

In 1987 Primo Levi committed suicide. Perhaps it was because — like many Holocaust survivors — he could not bear the guilt of the fact that he had survived. In a sense his suicide was uncharacteristic because, despite his nightmare experiences, Levi was a man who, in his books, showed he loved life and loved humanity.

Below we print an extract from *If This is a Man*. The Germans have left the camp. The prisoners who stayed behind wait for the Russians, who arrived on 27 January. Conditions all around the camp deteriorate rapidly.

Somehow, as Levi describes, he and his comrades Charles and Arthur, with whom he shares a hut, manage to rise above the conditions and feel themselves becoming no longer prisoners but strong human beings again, as they organise the business of finding food and warmth, and keeping alive the sick people in their hut.

## If this is a man

By Primo Levi

**18 January:** The Germans were no longer there. The towers were empty.

Today I think that if for no other reason than that an Auschwitz existed, no one in our age should speak of Providence. But without doubt in that hour the memory of biblical salvations in times of extreme adversity passed like a wind through all our minds.

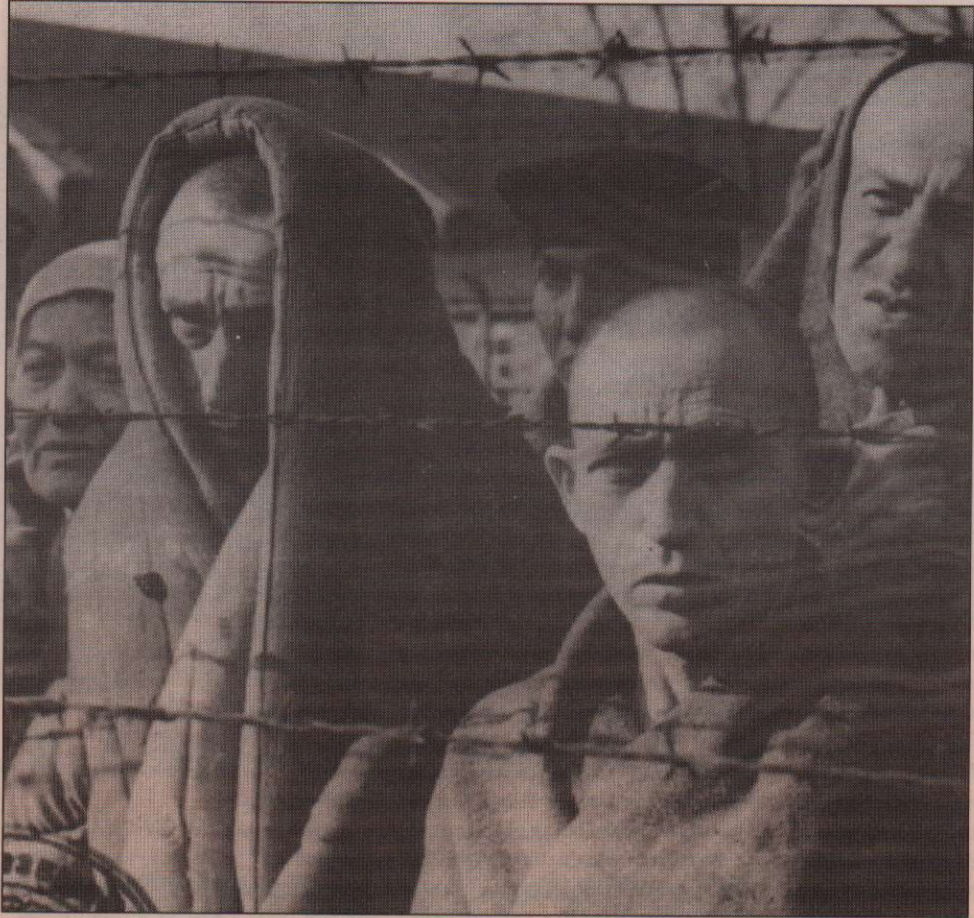
**19 January:** The Lager [camp], hardly dead, had already begun to decompose. No more water, or electricity, broken windows and doors slamming to in the wind, loose iron sheets from the roofs screeching, ashes from the fire drifting high, afar... ragged, decrepit, skeleton-like patients at all able to move

dragged themselves everywhere on the frozen soil, like an invasion of worms. They had ransacked all the empty huts in search of food and wood: they had violated with senseless fury the grotesquely adorned rooms of the hated Blockältester ["block elders"], forbidden to the ordinary Häftlinge [prisoners] until the previous day; no longer in control of their own bowels they had fouled everywhere, polluting the precious snow, the only source of water remaining in the whole camp.

When the broken window was repaired and the stove began to spread its heat, something seemed to relax in everyone, and at that moment Towarowski (a Franco-Pole of twenty-three, typhus) proposed to the others that each of them offer a slice of bread to three who had been working. And so it was



# World of "Antoms"



Camp prisoners after liberation, January 1945

agreed.

Only a day before a similar event would have been inconceivable. The law of the Lager said: 'eat your own bread, and if you can, that of your neighbour,' and left no room for gratitude. It really meant that the Lager was dead.

**22 January:** If it is courageous to face a grave danger with a light heart, Charles and I were courageous that morning. We extended our explorations to the SS camp, immediately outside the electric wire-fence...

We loaded ourselves with a bottle of vodka, various medicines, newspapers and magazines and four first-rate eiderdowns, one of which is today in my house in Turin. Cheerful and irresponsible, we carried the fruits of our expedition back to the dormitory... Only that evening did we learn what happened perhaps only half an hour later.

Some SS men, perhaps dispersed, but still armed, penetrated into the abandoned camp. They found that eighteen Frenchmen had settled in the dining-hall of the SS-Waffe. They killed them all methodically with a shot in the nape of the neck, lining up their twisted bodies in the snow on the road; then they left. The eighteen corpses remained exposed until the arrival of the Russians; nobody had the strength to bury them...

Only a wooden wall separated us from the ward of the dysentery patients, where many were dying and many dead.

In the evening when all the work was finished, conquering my tiredness and disgust, I dragged myself gropingly along the dark filthy corridor to their ward with a bowl of water and the remainder of our day's soup. The result was that from then on through the thin wall, the whole diarrhoea ward shouted my name day and night with the accents of all the languages of Europe, accompanied by incomprehensible prayers, without my being able to do anything about it. I felt like crying, I could have cursed them.

**25 January:** We all said to each other that the Russians would arrive soon, at once; we all proclaimed it, we were all sure of it, but at bottom nobody believed it. Because one loses the habit of hoping in the Lager, and even of believing in one's own reason. In the Lager it is useless to think, because events happen for the most part in an unforeseeable manner; and it is harmful, because it keeps alive a sensitivity which is a source of pain, and which some providential natural law dulls when suffering passes a certain limit.

**26 January:** We lay in a world of death and phantoms. The last trace of civilisation had vanished around and inside us. The work of bestial degradation begun by the victorious Germans, had been carried to its conclusion by the Germans in defeat.

It is man who kills, man who creates or suffers injustice; it is no longer man who, having lost all restraint, shares his bed with a corpse. Whoever waits for his neighbour to die in order to take his piece of bread is, albeit guiltless, further from the model of thinking man than the most primitive pigmy or the most vicious sadist.

Part of our existence lies in the feelings of those near to us. This is why the experience of someone who has lived for days during which man was merely a thing in the eyes of man is non-human. We three were the most part immune from it, and we owe each other mutual gratitude. That is why my friendship with Charles will prove lasting.

**27 January:** Dawn. On the floor, the shameful wreck of skin and bones, the Somogyi thing...

The Russians arrived while Charles and I were carrying Somogyi a little distance outside. He was very light. We overturned the stretcher on the grey snow.

Charles took off his beret. I regretted not having a beret.

## Demonstrate against the "new Mussolini"!

By Paul Golding

**G**IANFRANCO FINI, the man hailed by his supporters as "the new Mussolini", and leader of the most powerful fascist organisation in the world, is coming to Britain.

He has been invited to address a seminar in London on 15 February at the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Last weekend Fini's party, the MSI, changed its name to Alleanze Nazionale and proclaimed itself to be no longer fascist. Yet it remains the same racist, terrorist and Nazi organisation it always has been. Its leaders have a long fascist record.

The MSI was founded in Rome on 26 December 1946 by former leaders and officials of "the Salo Republic", the regime set up under German protection in northern Italy after Mussolini had been ousted, and the Allies had invaded, in southern Italy, in 1943. Ideologically, Salo was closer to Nazism, with its concepts of racial hierarchy, than to pre-1938 Mussolini fascism. Nazi racial laws were ruthlessly applied. Special police units were created to search for and hunt down Jews, who were then dispatched to the concentration camps.

Giorgio Almirante, leader of the MSI from its inception until the 1950s, and again from 1969 until his death in the late 1980s, was head of the private office of the Minister of Propaganda in the Salo republic. When he brought a libel action against a socialist who described him as "a mass murderer and torturer of Italians" Almirante lost the action on the grounds that "the allegations had been proven to be true."

In the late 1960s the MSI adopted the "Strategy of Tension" which combined ter-

ror attacks, especially bombings, to create an atmosphere of chaos and fear, with an electoral drive to present the MSI as the only party that could re-establish law and order by forming an authoritarian government.

The terrorist side of its work was carried out by MSI front organisations like Ordine Nuovo and Ordine Nero, which were openly nazi.

Ordine Nuovo was founded and led by MSI militant Pino Rauti, who is today an MP in the European Parliament and was for a short while leader of the MSI before Fini took over. In 1977 Rauti created the NAR (Armed Revolutionary Nuclei).

These MSI front organisations implemented the "Strategy of Tension" with a murderous catalogue of bombings, assassination and terrorism, culminating in the massacre at Bologna railway station in which more than 80 people were murdered by a massive bomb planted by the NAR.

Clemente Graziani, a founder of Ordine Nuovo, its political secretary and Rauti's number two, stated in his "Notebook of the New Order" that "the murder of the old, of women and of children is absolutely necessary."

Graziani also stated that Ordine Nuovo was "under the protective banner of the MSI."

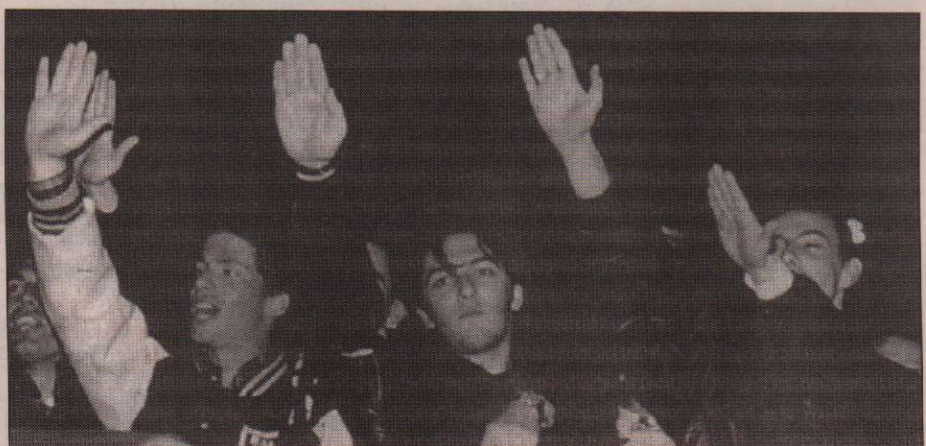
The MSI are also closely linked with the Mafia. In the 1994 Italian elections the Mafia campaigned hard for the MSI, especially in Sicily, often using intimidation to bolster the MSI vote. In the previous December's mayoral election in Naples the Camorra, the Naples Mafia, campaigned hard for Alessandra Mussolini. As Giuseppe Misso, a leading Mafia boss in Naples and a known trafficker in cocaine is just one of many Mafiosi who belong to the MSI, this is hardly surprising.

## Demonstrate against Fini's visit

4pm, 15 February

at the RIIA, Chatham House, St James' Square,  
London SW1.

Called by the Campaign Against Fascism in Europe.



Italian Nazis

# Does anyone deserve millions?

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY

By Martin Thomas

IN ANTHONY Trollope's Victorian novel *The Prime Minister*, the hero of his whole series of "Palliser" stories, Plantagenet Palliser, Duke of Omnium, becomes Prime Minister.

He is pushed into the job as a "safe pair of hands" to head a coalition government. Though Palliser is a workaholic by nature, and a Liberal by inclination, as Prime Minister he opts for "carrying on the Queen's government" with a minimum of initiative. "I have never been a friend of great measures", he says.

This novel is not an angry attack on the way that the Victorian governing classes presided so complacently over misery, squalor, brutality and corruption, conceding reform only when it was pushed on them by great pressure from outside their narrow social circle. Far from it. Trollope, reflecting a wide consensus at the time, portrays the Duke's inertia as wisdom.

Yet for such humdrum work the real Prime Ministers of the 19th century were paid salaries equivalent in modern money to over £1 million a year — similar to the highest-paid industrial bosses today, and in a different league from John Major.

I owe this fact about Prime Ministers' pay to an article in the *Times*, one of a spate defending the ridiculous payouts to people like British Gas boss Cedric Brown. The argument is that high pay is necessary to mobilise talent; with more modest pay we will have incompetent or idle bosses as we have incompetent Prime Ministers.

It is nonsense. Much though I despise and hate everything Margaret Thatcher stands for, her competence and energy in the capitalist cause is undeniable. And her associates — Lawson, Tebbit, Walker and so on — must be judged competent by their peers, or else why do they get such high-paid directorships when they cease to be ministers?

The capitalists themselves, it seems, testify by their actions and choices against the claim that vast pay-outs are necessary or desirable for efficient management. Given that top bosses' pay is not decided by some impersonal market, but by themselves and their friends, the high rates are dictated by little more than greed.

In a way, however, it is a pity that the "economic" arguments for these huge pay-outs are so fraudulent. The row would be much more instructive if they had some truth to them — because it would show how monstrous the free market's norms of "fairness" are, even when not compounded by corruption.

Take high-paid film stars. Their pay-outs are the results, more or less, of an impersonal market system. They do reflect their contribution to the value of a film.

It is not that Jack Nicholson, for example, is so very much a better actor than some unknown Joe Soap. But to the market value of a film — as distinct from the artistic value, which is irrelevant here — he makes a contribution which Joe Soap can never make, however well he acts.

"In bourgeois societies", so Karl Marx noted in *Capital*, "the economic fiction prevails that everyone, as a buyer, possesses an encyclopaedic knowledge of commodities". With films, the buyers lack even sketchy knowledge of the commodity until after they have bought the cinema seat. To decide what to buy they have to rely on the signals and hints given by the "star" names and by the advertising (which, in turn, will generally be more lavish with "star" names to use).

A "Jack Nicholson film" therefore has an extra value, and according to the purest laws of the free market the producer gets a good bargain by paying Nicholson ridiculous millions for a bit of acting.

The rules of the modern capitalist market are rules of gross inequality. Despite all that Tony Blair can say, there is no equality without common ownership and democratic planning.



Not worth it: Gas boss Cedric Brown

## THE CULTURAL FRONT

# Neither colourless nor defined by colour



Mark Osborn  
reviews *Coloured*

*People* by Henry

Louis Gates

£15  
Viking

HENRY Louise Gates — now in his mid-40s and a Harvard professor — has written a sweet, tender book, *Colored People*, about growing up in Piedmont, West Virginia. *Colored People* opens in 1950, when he was born, and ends with the closing of the de-segregation struggle, two decades later. Gates tells his story — of his childhood and adolescence in Piedmont (population two and a half thousand), which he calls a "village" — with sentimentality and tremendous affection for the black community. He was one of the first to have their lives altered by the 1954 Supreme Court ruling, which demanded integrated schools, and he began his education in 1956 along with white children. For years it remained the only integrated institution in Piedmont, and black people continued to suffer the indignity of Jim Crow — inferior — services and jobs.

It was not until 1968 that the craft unions at the paper mill — which dominated the town — opened up to black people, and until the summer of '68 all the black mill workers worked at loading paper onto trucks.

Nevertheless, Gates comments that it was "only later that I came to realise that for many of the colored people in Piedmont integration was experienced as a loss... The warmth and nurturance of the womblike colored world was slowly and inevitably disappearing."

He remembers and regrets the passing of the annual, segregated picnic of the black mill workers, which was a community festival: "Who in their right mind wanted to attend the mill picnic with the white people, when it meant shutting the colored one down?" His aunt comments: "Everyone worked so hard to integrate the thing in the mid-60s... But by the time those crackers made us join them, we didn't want to go."

Earlier in the book — in the preface, written in the form of a letter to his young children — he explains a change in his view. "I used to reserve my special scorn for those Negroes who were always being embarrassed by someone else in the race." But then "I have gradually come round and stopped trying to tell other Negroes how to be black."

He goes on to describe his feelings when Mandela walked out of prison: "I had that gooseflesh feeling of identity... [like] listening to Mahalia Jackson sing, watching Muhammad Ali fight, or hearing Martin Luther King speak, is part of what I mean by being colored. I realise the sentiment may not be logical, but I want to have my cake and eat it, too. Which is why



Henry Louis Gates

I still nod or speak to black people on the streets...

"Above all, I enjoy the unselfconscious moments of shared cultural intimacy whatever form they take, when no one else is watching, when no white people are around.

"Even so, I rebel at the notion that I can't be part of other groups... that race must be the most important thing about me. Is that what I want on my gravestone: here lies an African American? I want to be black... but to do so in order to come out the other side, to experience a humanity that is neither colorless or reducible to color. Bach and James Brown. Sushi and fried catfish.

"Part of me admires those people who can say that they have transcended any attachment to a particular community or group... But I always want to run around the back of them to see what holds them up."

Henry Louis Gates enjoys being black. He is comfortable, as Darcus Howe puts it. Well, I like that. After all, although I am a communist and want to see nations and race fade away, I am also English and white. And I like being what I am, and I do not see it as a problem. I am not a nationalist — quite the reverse — but nevertheless, it is true that I'd be homesick anywhere else.

Finally, the title needs some explanation. Why *Colored People*? "We'd just gone through the summer of 1966, the summer when Stokely Carmichael announced something the called 'Black Power' and many Negroes became black people."

The name has changed before, and writing to his children Gates says: "In your lifetimes, I suspect you will go from being African Americans, to 'people of color', to being, once again, 'colored people'... I have to confess I like 'colored' best, maybe because when I hear the word I hear it in my mother's voice and in the sepia tones of my childhood."

Where is Militant going?

## The opportunist's history



Dan Katz  
reviews *Black*

*Rebellion*

Panther UK

THERE would be little point in commenting on this collection of articles if the final piece, "The history of blacks in Britain", did not shed a little light on where the Militant and their black front organisation, Panther UK, are going.

In the twelve pages of "The history of blacks" — essentially a comment on post-war black Britain — there is no mention of the struggle of black workers in such a key dispute as Imperial Typewriters.

And what exactly is the point of some-

one on the left writing such a history without mentioning a landmark like Grunwick? These people are supposed to be socialists, interested in what the workers' movement is doing. In fact, the words "trade union" are not mentioned once. What is going on? Militant have bent their politics so far towards the nationalists that the specific issue of black workers has mostly dissolved into black people. White workers are considered only from the point of view of white racism, or ignored — a bit careless in a society which is 95% white.

And out of the picture has gone the labour movement — except for denunciations of the Labour Party, which are quite justified in themselves, but hardly amount to a balanced view of the workers' movement.

This opportunism has already led to a nationalist split-off in Panther which went straight through their black cadre. God knows where they will end up.



## The guilty vampires

*THE INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE* is lifted by a surprising Tom Cruise in the role of the immoral vampire Lestat. Brad Pitt's Louis, the guilt-ridden vampire who is revolted by his own need to prey on humans, also looks good.

Perhaps the film suffers from attempting to follow Anne Rice's cult pulp novel too closely, but the story cracks along at a fair pace, driven by characters more than plot.

For all its Hollywood hype and set-pieces, *The Interview* is very superior and watchable trash, with a director — Neil Jordan — who will hopefully earn himself the freedom to do films that utilise the full range of his talents. The picture shows Antonio Banderas (centre) in the films *Theatre Des Vampires*.

## Nannies, yuppies and nappies



Geoff Ward  
reviews *Tears  
before bedtime*

BBC1  
Sundays 9.40pm

**B**REATHING new life into the old "*Upstairs, Downstairs*" theme, BBC1's comedy drama *Tears before bedtime* updated the conflict to Major's Britain.

The main characters were the "well-to-do" of Highgate and Islington, and the nannies they employed to look after their children.

At times the four episodes veered perilously close to being a nannies-shagging-daddies saga, but writer Sandy Welch managed to lampoon many serious issues.

Our sympathies go with the nannies. They are forced to band together in order to improve their wages and conditions.

To supplement their meagre earnings, the nannies begin making and selling "herbal" cigarettes, using a minor narcotic. These are eagerly lapped up by the local wealthy resi-

dents, but police attention leads to a New Year's Eve raid.

One nanny gets the sack when, after she develops a relationship with a father, the children set her up with a video nasty. She gets her revenge on all the families by digging up their "sleaze". Though the child-care workers are meant to bolster the cosy domestic lives of the yuppies, they cannot prevent rotten marriages falling apart.

One character, an ex-Trotskyist turned sociologist, played by Peter Howitt, is not "settled down" like the rest. He pours scorn on the comfortable middle-class lifestyle of his friends, yet secretly covets the same for himself, with the wife of his best friend.

The show also sent up childhood "innocence". The precocious brats outdo their parents in reprehensible behaviour.

With child actors playing such delightful villains — like young Emily Rock Keene painting disturbing pictures with the aim of having presents bought for her — it's a pity BBC1 screened the programme after the "watershed" time.

*"The show sent up childhood 'innocence'. The precocious brats outdo their parents in reprehensible behaviour."*

## Americans after the Cold War



Matt Cooper  
reviews  
*Barcelona*

Directed by  
Walt Stillman

**A**FILM ABOUT two thirtysomething WASP American cousins in Spain, one a naval attache and the other a salesman for a motor company, going through an early mid-life crisis about their identity and women, might sound like a nightmare. But this is a hugely enjoyable and wryly funny film.

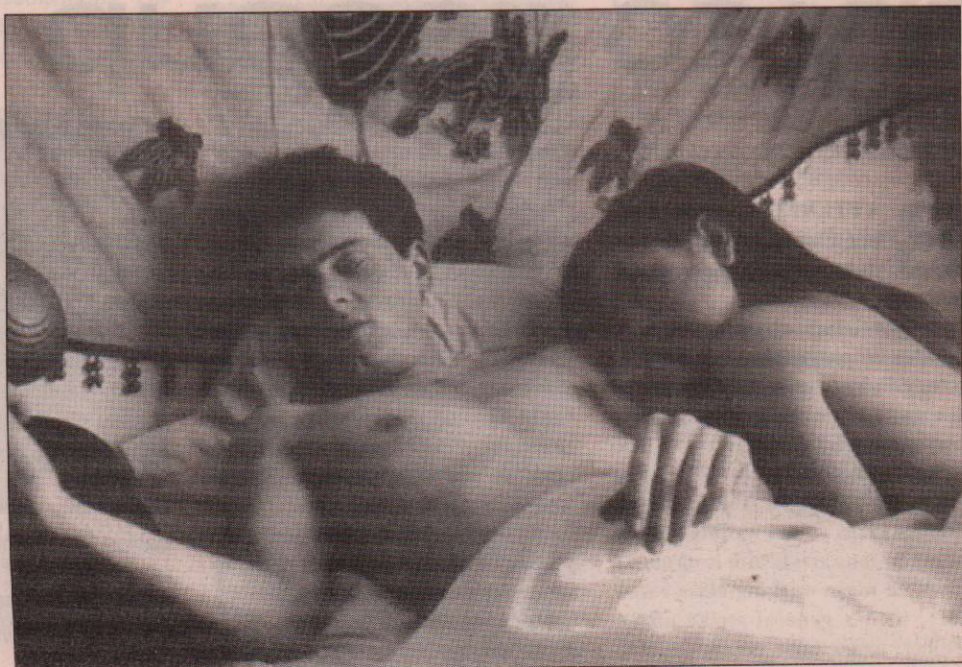
The nervous and pompous salesman, Ted (Taylor Nicholas), is less than happy when his cousin and childhood companion Fred (Chris Eigman) turns up unannounced to stay in his Barcelona flat. What ensues, as the two weave through a post-Franco Spanish society hostile to the Americans, made me think of a Woody Allen film, but one transformed

by the presence of real people in place of the shallow paranoia-on-the-sleeve figures of Allen.

Many of the Spanish characters are cardboard cut-out — crude anti-American "anti-imperialists", or "sexually liberated" Spanish women — but this is more than redeemed by the fact that most of Stillman's humour is of the self-deprecating kind, sly and ironic.

One scene has Fred conducting a solemn naval ceremony for a dead soldier in a warehouse at an airport, viewed through the machinery of an approaching fork-lift truck, coming to load the coffin on to the next flight out. The rituals of America's supposed world role at the end of the Cold War are dealt with through savage irony.

A buddy movie dealing with "what identity can an American have after the Cold War?" really has no right to be this good, and its political assumptions are at best ambiguous. But it is more than saved by its honest, ironic and wry observations.



The "nervous and pompous" Ted with his lover Monserrat

# Justice for the victims of apartheid terror!

By Anne Mack

**S**OUTH AFRICA'S government of National Unity was under pressure last week from the row between Nelson Mandela and FW De Klerk over indemnities from prosecution granted to thousands of policemen in the final weeks of the apartheid regime. These amnesties from prosecution for crimes committed under apartheid were an attempt by minor officials to escape retribution by an incoming majority government.

De Klerk and Mandela clashed in a cabinet meeting over the amnesties and De Klerk's resistance to ANC policies. De Klerk threatened to resign, prompting Mandela to offer to 'go down on his knees' to prevent a split in the government.

Whilst the dispute has been publicly resolved for now, it reveals the pres-

ures on the government of national unity. De Klerk is under pressure from the National Party following its decline in support amongst the Afrikaner population. The ANC has dropped or toned down the radical promises it made in elections last April under pressure from the South African ruling class.

The central issue over amnesties is about pardoning men linked with former generals and police commanders who were responsible for killing and torturing anti-apartheid activists. The issue has brought out a lot of anger from victims and their families. The South African Prisoners' Human Rights Organisation had planned a demonstration outside the Rand supreme court to protest against this unjust an illegal amnesty, which was called off when the government issued a statement saying the amnesties

would not be recognised.

The Workers' List Party told Socialist Organiser that they are campaigning for 'Nuremburg trials' for the generals — democratic trials under a democratic government — to bring justice for the victims of apartheid torture and murder.

The ANC-led government has been slow to act and indecisive. The leading criminals of the "third force" of the apartheid regime such as Adrian Vlok (former minister of law and order) and Eugene de Kock (former minister of 'correctional services') have yet to be brought to justice, and some still receive state salaries or pensions.

In the army, former activists from the armed wing of the ANC have been refusing to return to barracks in the newly merged South African army until they receive equal treatment with the former SADF soldiers.

The "third force," created by a group of army and police commanders to fight the anti-apartheid movement through underground action, is still active and gaining support despite the official claims that it has been disbanded. Unsolved murders of prominent activists such as comrade Tami of AZAPO are still occurring.



Not so united: Mandela, De Klerk, Buthelezi

# Italian capitalists try to recoup

By Colin Foster

**B**ATTERED by mass working-class action, Italy's right-wing government has resigned.

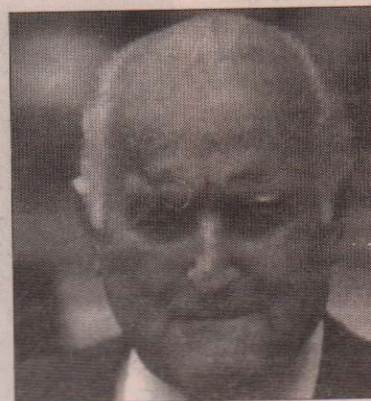
A right-wing alliance with a Thatcherite programme won a clear victory in elections last March. It brought together the new Forza Italia party, set up by media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi; the fascist Alleanza Nazionale; and the Northern League.

But its plans to cut welfare — especially pensions and health insurance — mobilised mass working-class resistance, with a general strike on 14 October, and a huge protest march, one and a half million strong, on 12 November. In December the Northern

League walked out of the coalition, and the government collapsed.

Italy's capitalist class now hopes to retrieve something from the wreckage with a new stop-gap government of "technocrats", headed by Lamberto Dini. The government is supposed to have a short-term mandate on four points: new laws on equal access to the media; new rules for regional elections; to cut the budget deficit; and to continue the drive to cut back pensions.

Dini wants to "cool down" Italian politics — and axe welfare more stealthily than, but just as surely as, Berlusconi. Sadly, the biggest party of the Italian left — the Democratic Left (ex-CP) — is helping him, by supporting him in parliament. Only the



Italian President Scalfaro chose a government of "techocrats" in order to save the ruling class's anti-welfare project

more left-wing Communist Refoundation party voted against Dini.

# Crisis in Mexico IMF's "good boy" runs into trouble

By Pablo Velasco

**S**INCE 22 December 1994 the Mexican peso has been falling rapidly in value. At the beginning of December it was worth about 0.33 US dollars, now it is about \$0.2. This has prompted a stock market crash in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America. Washington has intervened with a \$24 billion investment package to prop up Mexico's dwindling reserves.

The Mexican government has announced an austerity plan. The centre piece of this is an incomes policy which will attempt to hold down wage increases (including on the minimum wage) to 7%. This is way below the estimated rate of inflation for 1995 of 19%.

Mexican bosses have claimed that they will make an "exceptional effort" to keep prices rises down. However prices rises are inevitable as long as Mexico is dependent of US imports. In any case the claims count for nothing. Prices are already soaring and the bosses are taking the opportunity to make superprofits. Workers once again are expected to pay for the mess the capitalists and the government have created.

Since the debt crisis of 1982 the PRI-run government has done the bidding of the IMF: privatisation, free trade, inflation control, free market policies for labour. In 1994 a free trade agreement with the US and Canada was signed (NAFTA). Mexico joined the rich nations' club, the OECD.

For all of these policies the workers have paid dearly. Real wages have fallen consistently since 1976; unemployment is now rising; forty percent of the population receive below the minimally accepted levels of nutrition; only one third of working Mexicans have completed primary education. At the same time the share of the national income of the top 10% of Mexicans has risen to 38%. One of Mexico's billionaires, Carlos Slim (4th richest man in the world), owns the same amount of wealth as 17 million of the poorest Mexicans.

There are some signs of resistance from the Mexican working class. The government is divided, the effects of the Chiapas uprising can still be felt — in the struggles ahead Mexican workers can still claw back all they have lost over the last two decades.



Mexico's president Zedillo: pushing "austerity"

# Israel/Palestine

# Halfway peace breeds chaos

Adam Keller, editor of *The Other Israel*, reports from Tel Aviv

**R**ABIN DOES not want to fulfil his obligations under the Oslo Agreement signed with the PLO.

Oslo obliged Rabin to redeploy the Israeli army out of the Palestinian areas on the West Bank. That should have taken place in July 1994.

The whole military establishment is opposed to this plan. If it was carried out, while keeping all the settlements in place, it would create an impossible military situation. The whole of the West Bank would be divided into Palestinian and Israeli enclaves. It would create endless possibilities for ambushes and incidents.

The Gaza Strip is already developing in this way. In the West Bank it will be a hundred times worse, because there are a hundred times more settlements.

Rabin's options are all — from his point of view — bad. He could just not carry out his obligations, and that means the end of Oslo.

He could carry out Oslo as it is written, and this would create a situation of chaos, confrontations and daily killings.

Or he could remove at least a large number of settlements. That would bring a dire confrontation with the Israeli right. It would also mean that he would lose these settlements as a bargaining chip.

He is looking to the time of the definite, final agreement with the Palestinians, at which point he will give up the settlements he does not really want to keep, in return for an agreement from the Palestinians allowing him to keep the rest.

Rabin does not want to go back to the 1967 borders. He wants to retain a ring of settlements around Jerusalem, together with those settlements which are near to the Mediterranean — making Israel wider than it was before 1967.

That is something the Palestinians cannot accept, because it would be such a big bite out of the West Bank. It would leave them with too little and the area round Jerusalem would nearly cut the West Bank in two. Making matters worse, Rabin is continuing new constructions in the areas he wants to keep. In fact, the building in these areas is much more extensive than under the Likud government.

Rabin has certain time constraints. Obviously he is not taking any notice of the Oslo Agreement's timetable. But he has an election in November 1996, at the latest. So if he wants to make any sort of major initiative it has to come by the end of 1995.

One of the most hopeful developments in the recent past is the emergence of a grass-roots, Palestinian opposition to Israeli set-



Arafat: "cheated"

tlements in the West Bank.

I have been involved — and arrested — in these protests. The actions began in a village near Bethlehem. The settlers began to take land which had been formally confiscated years ago. The villagers began lying down in front of the bulldozers supported by Israeli peace groups and Palestinian political organisations.

Although these protests are still taking place, the momentum was broken a little by the latest suicide bomb attack.

**A**RAFAT IS also in a bad situation. He feels cheated. Both sides feel cheated — both the leaders and even more the common people. Arafat wanted the end of the occupation, which he has not got. Rabin wanted a stop to the killings, which has not happened.

Rabin expects Arafat to take strong measures against the Islamic opposition. That is not written explicitly in the Oslo Agreement, but that was what many people expected. But the one time Arafat tried to take such action — when 15 people were killed

in Gaza in one day, more than in any one day of Israeli occupation — a strong Palestinian opposition led to the possibility of a Palestinian civil war.

A deal was fixed between Arafat and the Islamic organisations. The terms of this agreement mean that the Islamic groups can operate without repression.

Islamic Jihad is much smaller than Hamas. Hamas is a big movement, capable of organising much better social work than the official authorities.

Hamas started out as a conservative movement supported by Saudi Arabia and actually encouraged — for their own reasons, as a counterweight to the PLO — by the Israeli state. During the Intifada it developed a militant wing. But the conservatives are still there and it still has Saudi backing.

Arafat's Fatah organisation is still a capable, living mass movement. Arafat has actively mobilised Fatah's rank and file support during the disputes with Hamas.

**R**ABIN ALSO has other problems. The Finance Ministry pressure him to impose a tax on capital earnings on the Tel Aviv stock market. This is a longstanding issue in Israel. Earnings from work are taxed, as are some of the more productive earnings from capital investment. However, profit from stock market speculations are not subject to taxation.

This was supposed to be a gesture towards the social lobby, to balance the government's right-wing economic policies. But this has brought him into confrontation with those bourgeois who were supporting his deal with the Palestinians. The stock market has responded with a slump in activity and it now seems likely that Rabin will withdraw the proposals.

The endless, unprincipled factionalising in the Israeli Labour Party also continues. The government is becoming weaker and Rabin is seen more and more as a liability rather than as a popular hero who will win the next election. This situation has created a set of people who want to succeed him.

The only thing the government has to show for its efforts is the Peace Process. But Rabin has begun a dynamic process, and has stopped in the middle. In a common sense way, people say "we made peace, but people still die — and more than before — that means the peace has failed."

I feel of course that the real problem is that the army is still in the Occupied Territories. The question now is how to convince the Israeli people of this.

● For up-to-date news and commentaries on the Israeli peace movement and the Middle East situation read *The Other Israel*. A year's subscription £20, students/hunwaged £10. Free sample from PO Box 2542, Holon, Israel 58125.

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## What is the Alliance for Workers' Liberty?

TODAY ONE CLASS, the working class, lives by selling its labour-power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the social means of production. Life is shaped by the capitalists' relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes unemployment, the maiming of lives by overwork, imperialism, abuse of the environment, and much else.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty aims to regroup socialists in a democratic organisation which can convince and mobilise the working class to overthrow capitalism. We aim not to create a new labour movement, but to transform the existing workers' movement, trade unions and Labour Party.

We want socialism: public ownership of the major enterprises, workers' control, and democracy much fuller than the present system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

- We stand:**
- For a fight to rebuild the Welfare State; for health care, housing, education and minimum standard to be available to all, by right. For the extension of the principle of social provision for need from a limited range of services to the whole economy.
  - For social planning, for a sustainable use of natural resources.
  - For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. For a mass working-class-based women's movement.
  - For black and white workers' unity, organised through the labour movement, to fight racism and the despair which breeds racism. For labour movement support for black communities' self-defence against racist and fascist violence; against immigration controls.
  - For equality for lesbians and gays.
  - In support of the independent trade unions and the socialists in Russia and Eastern Europe. We denounce the misery caused by the drive to free-market capitalism there, but we believe that Stalinism was a system of class exploitation no better than capitalism.
  - For a democratic united Europe; against the undemocratic and capitalist European Community, but for European workers' unity and socialism, not nationalism, as the alternative.
  - For a united and free Ireland, with some federal system to protect the rights of the Protestant minority.
  - For the Palestinians' right to a state of their own, alongside Israel, and for a socialist federation of the Middle East with self-determination for the Israeli Jews.
  - For national liberation struggles and workers' struggles worldwide.
  - For a workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, to take solidarity action, and to decide their own union rules.
  - For a rank and file movement in the trade unions.
  - For left unity in action; openness and clarity in debate and discussion.

# Common ownership and state ownership

## ABC of socialism By Prometheus

IN *TRIBUNE* of 27 January, Chris Mullin MP explained why he agrees with scrapping Labour's Clause Four.

"Having seen at first hand in Vietnam, Laos and elsewhere the catastrophic impact of the 'common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange' on the lives of the very people who were supposed to benefit, I would not want anyone to think that I was advocating such a system here."

Mullin is a member of the Campaign Group of left Labour MPs. He was a leader of the campaign to get the Birmingham Six freed. In the early 1980s he was a good, radical editor of *Tribune*.

But he is completely wrong. The Stalinist economic system in Vietnam, Laos and other countries never was one of common ownership. State ownership is common ownership only

if the state is "commonly owned", that is, if it is thoroughly democratic.

The Stalinist states were and are viciously undemocratic. State ownership by those states is not common ownership, but the opposite: private ownership by the privileged elite which runs the state.

The horrors of Stalinism are an argument for common ownership, not against it.

A thoughtful opponent of Clause Four might reply that common ownership of large-scale enterprise has to be state ownership of some sort, and if state ownership of every sort has turned out badly, then maybe that proves that the ideal of common ownership is unworkable.

But not all state ownership has turned out bad. The National Health Service is better than a health system regulated by private profit. State-owned railways are better than privately-owned.

The basic argument for common ownership is confirmed again. Whereas the Stalinist states suppressed all democracy, the British parliamentary state allows a half or quarter-democracy. State ownership

under that quarter-democratic state is, so to speak, quarter-common ownership. It produces some benefits, but only a small part of the benefits that full common ownership, with thorough democracy, would. Conversely, the feebleness of the benefits from nationalisations in Britain is a measure of the feebleness of existing British democracy.

If thorough democracy is possible, then common ownership is possible. The Labour right wing's argument against Clause Four holds true *only if democracy is impossible*.

Democracy, like common ownership, has suffered many counterfeits. Every modern state, even the most hideous Stalinist tyranny, calls itself democratic. It does not follow that democracy is impossible. It follows that we must be clear about our idea of democracy, and fight for it against counterfeits. The same goes for common ownership.

Authentic socialists said this, not only against Stalin, but long before Stalin. The German socialist movement's draft statement of aims in 1891 — which would become a standard text for socialists worldwide — declared that it had "nothing in com-

mon with so-called state socialism... a system which puts the state in the place of the private entrepreneur and thus unites in a single hand the power of economic exploitation and of political oppression."

The party's commentary on the finished text explained further: "As an exploiter of labour, the state is harsher than any private capitalist. Besides the economic power of the capitalists, it can also bring to bear upon the exploited classes the political power which it already wields."

Sidney Webb, who wrote Clause Four, would probably have been happy with "state ownership" in place of "common ownership" if he had been expressing his own free preferences. He was a Fabian, no radical democrat, and later an admirer of Stalinism.

But he was not expressing his own preferences. He was writing a formula to satisfy and placate a labour movement where critics of "state-socialism" — syndicalists, "guild socialists", Marxists — were vocal. Nothing less than "common ownership" was enough for them.

And nothing less should be enough for us today, either.

## An open letter to Socialist Workers Party supporters

By Neil Hazlitt and Stephen Orb

THE BATTLE over Clause Four of the Labour Party constitution has once again shown your position on the Labour Party to be utterly incoherent and irrational.

You say in your recent four-page special, *Where is Labour going?*, that Clause Four "is more relevant to today's world than even when it was agreed in 1918." You believe the battle in the Labour Party over Clause Four is important enough to give four pages of your paper to it — yet you say that socialists should leave the

Labour Party and opt out of that battle!

When Tony Blair announced his intention to ditch Clause Four at last year's Labour Party conference, the *Socialist Worker* sellers outside the conference exhorted delegates to tear up their Labour Party cards. Socialists from the Alliance for Workers' Liberty took the lead in organising opposition to Blair inside the conference. By the time it was announced on the Thursday that we had defeated the leadership and won an initial vote to save Clause Four, your comrades had already packed up and left Blackpool.

Now you argue, rightly, for your supporters to pass motions at their union meetings urging a vote against Blair's proposals. But why should they not also do so at Labour Party meetings?

Anyone who read *Socialist Worker*

to find out what is really happening inside the Labour Party would be disappointed. They are told again and again that there is no hope for socialists inside the Labour Party. But this line is maintained only by refusing to report on what the left is really doing inside the Labour Party. Your lavish coverage of the Clause Four battle does not mention the "Defend Clause Four" campaign, an organisation that has the backing of a number of crucial Labour-affiliated trade unions such as the NUM, the GPMU and the FBU, and wide support in the constituencies. In a recent survey, 58 out of 60 Constituency Labour Parties had voted to defend Clause Four. One had had a tied vote, and only one had sided with Tony Blair.

By abstaining from the fight inside the Labour Party, the SWP blocks itself from being effective to "build a

revolutionary socialist organisation that fights on every issue." The SWP is effectively siding with Blair and the modernisers, allowing them to run the Labour Party as they choose, with a passive membership and reduced internal opposition.

If such a fighting revolutionary organisation is to be built, it will be done only through mass struggle inside the organisations of the working class, the trade unions and the Labour Party. A victory for socialists on Clause Four will be one small step in that direction.

• One of the authors was a constituency delegate to the 1994 Labour Party conference; the other was a member of the Socialist Workers' Party. Both are now active in the "Defend Clause Four" campaign. They use pen-names because the Labour Party leaders consider writing for *Socialist Organiser* to be a crime meriting expulsion.

### National Assembly Against Racism

10.00-5.00, Saturday 4 February  
York Hall, Old Ford Road, London E2

## Alliance for WORKERS' LIBERTY Public Meetings

### BIRMINGHAM

Thur 9 Feb

**How to win lesbian and gay liberation**  
1.00, Student Union, University of Central England, Perry Barr site

### GLASGOW

Thur 16 Feb

**After Chechnia, where now for Russia?**

Speakers include Bob Arnot and Hillel Ticktin

7.30, Partick Burgh Halls. Sponsored by the AWL

### LANCASTER

Wed 8 Feb

**Can capitalism be reformed?**  
1.00, Lancaster University Students Union

Tues 14 Feb

**Lessons of Chile, 1970-3**  
7.30, Crown Pub, St. Leonards Gate

### LEEDS

Thur 16 Feb

**Defend Clause Four!**  
7.30, Cardigan Centre, Cardigan Lane, Headingley

### LEICESTER

Tues 7 Feb

**How to save the environment**  
12.30, Room 2, Students Union, Leicester University

### LONDON

Wed 15 Feb

**The Max Shachtman-Hal Draper tradition**

Speakers: ● Ernie Haberkern (Centre for Socialist History, California) ● John O'Mahony (editor, *Socialist Organiser*)  
7.30, Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Road

Sat 25 Feb

**10 years since the miners' strike**  
An AWL educational  
12.00-5.00, South London. Details: phone Mark on 071-639 7965

### MANCHESTER

Mon 6 Feb

**Where is Labour going?**  
Speaker: John O'Mahony (editor, *Socialist Organiser*)  
8.00, Town Hall

### MIDDLESBROUGH

Sun 12 Feb

### Trotsky and historical materialism

For details of the AWL discussion group meeting phone 0642-203006

### NOTTINGHAM

Thur 23 Feb

**Socialists and the Labour Party**  
8.00, ICC, Mansfield Road

### SHEFFIELD

Sun 12 Feb

**Questions for socialists day school**  
11.00-5.00, SCCAU, 73 West Street

### YORK

Tues 14 Feb

**Is the Welfare State sustainable?**  
Janine Booth of the AWL debates the libertarian right  
8.00, Room G045, York University

## London post workers walk out

150 POSTAL workers were suspended on Thursday morning 18 January after returning to work after an official strike.

The postal workers, based at London's North-West delivery office, struck from 6am to 7am over managers' plans to step up workloads. They refused to sign a 'return to work' document.

As the news spread to other delivery offices in London, unofficial strikes rolled all across London by Friday morning, as far as Harrow.

The basic dispute is over Computer Assisted Delivery Addition (CADA), which is a management scheme to speed up delivery. In the two weeks before the action, 40 staff had been suspended for working too slowly!

The project of privatising the Post Office led to many management schemes like CADA. Now the threat of privatisation has abated, there are still pressures on Post Office managers to come up with increased

productivity. There are still targets, set by the Treasury, of cuts of up to £100 million in the budgets.

Despite the fact that a meeting of Union of Communication Workers (UCW) district members on the Thursday morning facilitated the spreading of the action on Friday, union officials have blamed "outside agitators" for the walkout. They

would, wouldn't they?

They might be hoping to avoid sequestration, but the Post Office has already been to court. UCW general secretary, Alan Johnson wrote a letter to UCW members urging them to return to work and not let themselves be "hijacked" by "outside groups" into taking industrial action and being "common fodder in the class war." What

planet does he live on?

At a meeting on 21 January, a return to work agreement was made. It included a commitment to take no further action on the basis of the original ballot of the North-West office! So, in effect, the workers backed down.

However, this issue will not go away and more ballots are likely in the future.

## Stop the closure of Hove Post Office!

By a Brighton postal worker

ON 17 DECEMBER the closure of Hove Main Post Office was announced. In fact there is a more cynical plan afoot. Some managers want to buy out Hove Post Office and open up another, privately run, Post Office at a smaller shop 50 yards down the road!

This is back-door privatisation and it is an utter disgrace, but it is happening all over.

A few days into the New Year we heard that one of the Crown Offices in neighbouring Brighton would also be closing. One rumour is that a new post office will instead be opened in Safeways supermarket 20 yards away from the one to be closed.

Both the post offices due for closure are well used by pensioners and social security claimants.

Hove Labour Party has condemned the closure in Hove and has organised a campaign to fight it, including Saturday petitioning.

This Thursday (2 February) UCW members will meet to discuss what their response will be. This could include industrial action. This will be the only form of action that can stop not only these closures but others that are in the pipeline.

A public meeting is planned. This will give UCW members a chance to build a joint campaign with other trade unionists and with Labour Party members.

## Fight cuts in Havering!

By a Havering UNISON member

THE LONDON Borough of Havering's Labour council is preparing £17 million of cuts, including plans to shut two swimming pools, reduce libraries to three day opening, slash provision for the elderly and close a nursery. Hundreds of jobs will go. The council is refusing UNISON's demand for no compulsory redundancies.

The campaigns being run so far by the council, Labour Party and UNISON revolve around writing to the Tories pleading for more money so that the public will "pin the blame on the Tories" when extra money is not forthcoming.

But working-class people need their Labour council to stand up for their interests — not merely act as administrators for the Tory government.

A number of Labour Party and UNISON activists are demanding that the council refuse to implement the cuts. We say that they should set a budget based on the needs of local people, not government spending limits. They should confront the Tories head-on.

Local people are extremely angry and the Tory government is very weak. A concerted campaign led by the council, backed by the Labour Party, trade unions and local residents, which involved lobbies of Parliament, demonstrations, occupations and strikes could really force more money from central government, especially if the council joins forces with other local authorities which need more money.

But the councillors and Labour Party leaders in the borough are demoralised and spineless. They have accepted defeat in advance.

"No one cares enough to demonstrate", "we can't beat the Tories as our hands are tied by the law", "if we don't impose the cuts the Tories will do so with no thought for the most vulnerable, at least our cuts will be kinder", "our duty is to hang on to control of the council until a Labour government gets in which will give us the money we need" are some of the excuses

I've heard for not putting up a serious fight. These so-called representatives of labour are a disgrace.

They may well make "kinder cuts" than the Tories this year. But what happens next year? Or the year after? If they don't make a fight of it now they are condemning working-class people in Havering to devastated services and for many people the dole, sacrificed to the goal of hanging on to "power" at any cost in the vain hope of "jam tomorrow" under a Blair government.

## Rolls Royce job cuts

ROLLS ROYCE have announced plans to shut down the research and design division at their East Kilbride plant on the outskirts of Glasgow, with the loss of up to 600 jobs. They intend to transfer work to their Bristol and Derby plants.

This closure will have a serious knock-on effect on the local economy, still suffering from the closure of the Ravenscraig steelworks.

There is a lot of anger among the workforce, especially as they had recently beaten other Rolls Royce divisions to win new design contracts, and have clocked up overtime to meet production schedules.

That work is to be transferred to Derby and Bristol has led to claims that Scottish jobs are being sacrificed to save English ones.

But if these jobs are to be saved, the workers in Derby and Bristol must be won to a policy of refusing to handle work transferred from East Kilbride. Suggesting that workers in Derby and Bristol should be sacked is no way to save anyone's job.

Union leaders in the design division, where the main union is the MSF, have not excluded the possibility of industrial action. But, for now, they are concentrating on winning support from local councillors and MPs.

## Birmingham lobbies Labour

LAST MONDAY (31 January) 200 people lobbied Birmingham City Council Labour Group to demand that they do not cut local services. The lobby was organised by Birmingham Community Conference.

Birmingham City Council has been told by the Government to make a cut of £45 million. Proposed cuts include old people's and children's homes and a swimming pool.

Birmingham City Council have taken the line that it is the Tories making the cuts and that they are seeking to protect some services by targeting so-called "non-front line services."

Whilst we are in favour of a cam-

paign which points out that the Tories are ultimately to blame for the cuts, this should be backed up by resistance from Labour councillors. We should advocate deficit budgets.

As Richard Evans (a Labour councillor who voted against the cuts) said when he spoke to demonstrators: "It is not the job of Labour councils to do the Tories' dirty work for them. It is our job to protect services to local people."

Birmingham Community Conference are planning further action, including a demonstration, in March. They can be contacted c/o 723 Pershore Road, Birmingham B29.

## Keep up the fight on SATs!

By an NUT Member

BY A convincing majority, members of the National Union of Teachers have voted to end the boycott of SATs (Standard Assessment Tests). This is the result the NUT leadership wanted, but it does not reflect the mood in the classrooms.

The decision to call off the action by the leadership was announced just as schools closed for Christmas. The ballot took place in the first ten days back at work.

Union general secretary Doug McAvoy sent a barrage of vote-yes material into schools and to home addresses. And, most controversial of all, the wording of the question on the ballot paper was so ambiguous that many teachers believed that a yes vote was the only way to keep the boycott. All the material from HQ stressed in bold letters that a yes vote was "the only way to continue the union's campaign against SATs."

Union activists worked hard over the New Year period to save the boycott but they were hampered by the refusal of national officers to reveal the wording of the ballot question. Simple effective propaganda advising teachers to vote no was impossible.

The task now is to maintain the boycott where possible and work to reinstate the union's action. There are a number of things we can do to minimise the setback and try and turn it around.

The NUT is claiming that it will still support teachers who refuse to do the tests because of excessive workloads. The union having decided to co-operate with the SATs at such a late stage, there will be hundreds of schools where the workload now is "excessive" and

thousands of teachers who will want to continue to boycott them. We should ensure that they receive the backing they have been promised.

Local union branches should prepare to take the arguments to the Annual Conference at Easter. The most important issues there will be a reaffirmation of our opposition to league tables, including the value-added tables currently so fashionable among Labour leaders. Also a commitment to hold a Special Conference of the Union as soon as the proposed review of testing has reported, to decide the NUT's response.

We should continue to encourage parents to take up their right to withdraw children from the tests, and we should object to the use of education funding to provide cover for testing while severe cuts are made elsewhere in schools.

The end of the boycott is a serious setback but it was achieved in a corrupt manner by the leadership of the NUT. It must not be allowed to end the campaign to abolish SATs and league tables.

## Defend Sylvia Pye!

DURING THE campaign against pit closures in 1992-93, Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures set up a pit camp outside Parkside pit. After the eviction of the pit camp from British Coal property, the court chose to make Sylvia Pye, the National Chair of Women Against Pit Closures, personally liable for British Coal's costs. This is an attempt to intimidate those who are willing to fight. A Sylvia Pye National Appeal has now been set up and is holding a public meeting (see right).

# Looking into brains

LES HEARN'S  
SCIENCE  
COLUMN

SCIENCE HAS had limited success in unravelling the workings of the brain (or "brian", as *New Scientist* misprinted it recently). To be fair, it is one of the most difficult areas to access for study, at least when it is operating. The phenomenon of consciousness is particularly difficult to pin down, leading many, including some scientists, to conclude that it is not susceptible of analysis.

Ignoring this opinion, some groups of researchers are using some very sophisticated techniques to catch glimpses of the brain at work. The pioneering brain surgeon, Wilder Penfield, discovered that stimulating different parts of the brain with an electrode could elicit memories and emotions in his conscious patients. Such research is necessarily difficult to do, since it relies on the subject's being conscious during a brain operation which must itself be the normal treatment for some condition.

Some four decades later, many researchers are observing the activities of "slices" of conscious brain with no more discomfort to the subject than having to lie perfectly still.

In the 1930s, physicist Paul Dirac predicted the existence of the anti-matter equivalent of the electron, the positron. This positively charged electron is annihilated in a burst of gamma rays when it meets an ordinary electron. The technique of positron emission tomography (PET) uses these minute catastrophes to observe what happens to blood flow in different parts of the brain when mental activity is caused.

Chemicals used by the brain are "labelled" with radioactive atoms which give out these positrons when they decay. The positrons are annihilated almost instantly and the resulting gamma rays are picked up by detectors encircling the head. The subject is given various tasks, such as solving a visual puzzle or judging the strength of a tap on the hand, and the detector picks up more gamma rays from certain parts

of the brain.

This extra activity can be thought to be evidence that those areas are responsible for those sorts of conscious thought. Thus, a thought map of the brain could be built up. However, the process is slow and very intensive in its use of labour and technology, from the cyclotron where the positron-emitting atoms are made, to the powerful computer which sorts out the relevant gamma rays from the billions of irrelevant ones.

The technique of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) also shows which parts of the brain are more active when thoughts are stimulated or actions ordered by the brain. fMRI uses powerful magnets to align the tiny nuclear magnets found in some atoms, such as hydrogen. Radio waves are then used to stimulate them to emit a radio signal. This is picked up and used to determine how much of the target nuclei there are in a particular part of the brain. Changes in concentration indicate changes in blood supply to parts of the brain undertaking activity.

Some metals lose all resistance of electric current when cooled to a few degrees above Absolute Zero (273°C), as predicted by Einstein. In these superconductors, currents can then flow for ever without losing strength; more usefully for brain research, they exclude magnetic fields, whose presence can be detected through the forces on the superconductors. Such magnetic fields are produced by the electric currents in the brain's nerve cells or neurons, when these are transmitting impulses. Unfortunately, magnetoencephalography (MEG) can be disrupted by any nearby moving metal, even passing cars, and so elaborate shielding is needed to exclude outside magnetic fields.

All the methods are improving rapidly in the amount of detail they can detect and will presumably become cheaper as techniques become more routine. If detailed maps of the regions of the normal brain associated with particular types of thought or feeling or with short and long-term memory, or with control of different parts of the body, can be built up, then diagnosis, and perhaps treatment, of some brain diseases may be made easier.

Sylvia Pye National Appeal and Fighting Fund  
Public meeting

7.30pm, Monday 27 February

Speakers: Tony Benn MP, Sylvia Pye, Sue Wilson (Lancs. Women Against Pit Closures), Karina Knight (Defend Clause Four Campaign)

Red Rose Club, 129a Seven Sisters Road, London N7

Further info: 081-520 5237

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

talking point

Lee Clegg and Karen Reilly

## Pawns in the Northern Ireland game

By Cathy Nugent

IF LEE CLEGG and the other Parachute Regiment soldiers who shot at and killed Karen Reilly and Martin Peake did not know they were joyriders, why then did the patrol *immediately* try to cover up their crime?

Why did they try to make their fire look reasonable, in fact, it was *not* reasonable?

Why was a hideous mural of a car prepared after the shooting and hung in their mess room saying "Vauxhall Astra, built by robots, driven by joyriders. Stopped by 'A' company."?

Why, if this band of soldiers were not simply displaying the ignorance and racism that runs through the British Army in Ireland?

They knew they were shooting at joyriders. They didn't care. They were hyped up and ready to fire at anyone. It was one incident in the many that have built up the Northern Ireland Catholic community's deep anger.

It should come as no surprise to anyone who has any knowledge of the severely curtailed system of bourgeois justice that has been applied to Northern Irish affairs over the last twenty-five years. There have always been clear double standards and inequities.

- Over 300 people — many of them unarmed "civilians" caught in the crossfire — have been killed by the security forces in the Six Counties. Only four people have ever been prosecuted for these killings.

- This month sees the twenty-second anniversary of Bloody Sunday, when the army shot-down dead 14 people peacefully protesting against internment without trial.

- The Birmingham Six and Guildford Four and Maguire Seven were maliciously prosecuted for crimes they did not commit and left to languish in jail even though the state knew they were innocent and conspired to cover up their innocence.

It is the height of hypocrisy and dishonesty for Clegg's campaigners to claim he is as much a victim of a miscarriage of justice as, for instance, the Birmingham Six.

But we should not just say "no" where the great Tory/media campaign for Clegg says "yes". A "throwing away the key" reaction will not do the cause of justice any good.

No justice can be served by making Clegg singly responsible for Karen Reilly's death. Why, for instance, was the officer who blundered through failing to give clear instructions not equally to blame?

That Para patrol was *jointly* responsible for Reilly and Peake's death. It does not matter who fired the fatal bullet. All the soldiers who fired at the teenagers should have been prosecuted and charged with manslaughter — because that is what it was.

On 30 September 1991 a 14 man squad from the Para Regiment was on patrol in Glen Road, West Belfast. They were supposed to be stopping and arresting joyriders. No proper checkpoint was set up. Instead the soldiers were walking up the road with the apparent intention of stopping people as they went. A car drove at speed past the soldiers. Eight soldiers fired 36 bullets. Clegg fired one shot after the car had passed him (and could not possibly do him harm), which killed Karen Reilly, riding in the backseat of the car. The driver, Martin Peake, was also killed. Another passenger,

Markievicz Gorman, was injured.

At the trial the soldiers justified their fire by saying the runaway car had driven into one of their squad. This was proved to be a lie.

The army now claim that only the commanding officer of the patrol and an RUC constable accompanying them knew they were meant to be looking for joyriders. But why did the officer not tell them to stop shooting?

The army now claim that sparks were coming from the back of the car, so the soldiers had an excuse for opening fire. Clegg never claimed to see sparks or any similar thing at his trial or his appeal.

Joyriding is endemic in this part of West Belfast — in a community wracked by unemployment and deprivation, where there is absolutely nothing for young people to do and nowhere to go. The people of West Belfast know the joyriders, they are not difficult to spot.

And the army know joyriders. They stop them and arrest them every day. And over a dozen have been killed by patrols over the last ten years. They were all young people, maybe like Karen Reilly, who was said to "love life", shot down, mercilessly, by an army that has complete contempt for the people it is policing.

The army should be accountable for its actions wherever it is based. They *should* be called to account for the 300 people who have died at their hands. Many have been "civilians", unarmed people. Ironically, the army is fearful of the law on killings by soldiers being changed because the routine adoption of the lesser charge of manslaughter might result in more convictions.

Minimum redress would be:

- Prosecuting soldiers by the same standards and the same laws as everyone else.
- The reinstatement of trial by jury in Northern Ireland.
- The immediate repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.
- An amnesty for all Republican prisoners. (Martin McGuinness of Sinn Fein has condemned the pro-Clegg campaign, but Sinn Fein's line is that they do not object to Clegg being freed as long as Republican prisoners are freed too.)

In the normal course of events Clegg would have been let out after serving his short sentence and without much publicity. But this case has become embroiled in the politics of the situation now developing after the ceasefire.

The army have claimed that Clegg was "set up". A decision was made to prosecute him only *after* Panorama had shown a programme about the "shoot to kill" policy in Northern Ireland. It was a public relations exercise. In retrospect, they say, this was the first signs of British Government's intent to make overtures to the Republicans and negotiate with the Southern Government.

Some of the top brass appear to resent the whole "peace process". They want to reassert the army's authority. Para padre Fred Preston expresses this opinion very well: "The British Tommy is admired worldwide and the vast majority of people in this country know the contribution he has made. We've taken it so passively from the IRA, made so many concessions, been so soft with them... but as soon as it's an English lad in trouble they go draconian."

But the Government must figure that they can now "get away" with setting Clegg free.

Other developments can be presented as concessions to the Republicans, such as the suspension of day-time patrols in Belfast, Derry and other towns. The Southern Government helped by fast-releasing Republican prisoners. There are rumours the provisions in the Prevention of Terrorism Act allowing "exclusions" will be repealed. Such "concessions" could be used to justify Clegg's release.

Clegg has become a pawn in a political game being played by the British and Irish Governments, the British security forces and also to some extent the Republicans.

But these are very poor, capricious and aimless manoeuvres indeed. And this is in keeping with the tone of the ceasefire so far. After more than five months of a ceasefire, there has been precious little dialogue between the two communities. We are as far away as ever from a political settlement.

Sinn Fein moans about how unserious Major is about talks. The army pouts and sulks and says it has been betrayed. The Unionists stonewall. The British Government tries to be all things to all people. Clegg will go free, but it will not alter the stalemate one iota.

The need for substance in Northern Irish politics has never been greater. We need an independent socialist organisation that argues for workers' unity and, as a means to that, a democratic political settlement of the division between the communities — a federal united Ireland with local autonomy for the Protestants.



Pub bombings should not have happened, says McGuinness

Sinn Fein Vice-President Martin McGuinness spoke in Birmingham on 27 January. He said that the Birmingham pub bombings should never have happened. "The two great wrongs were the injuries to Irish people on Bloody Sunday and the injuries to British people in the Birmingham bombings of 1974." He also condemned the moves to free Pte Lee Clegg as "hypocrisy and effrontery". Photo: Mark Salmon.