

# THE Socialist

50p (solidarity price £1)

The paper of the Socialist Party (incorporating Militant)

7 FEBRUARY 1997, ISSUE 1

**Save Coventry & Warwickshire hospital**

**Protest bed-push**

**Saturday 15 February**

Starting 9.30am, Tile Hill and going through Earlsden, the City, Hillfields, Willenhall to reach Walsgrave at 4.30pm.

**Preparing for the Socialist Century**

pages 8&9

**resistance**

**Asylum seekers - page 7**

**Singing Nicaragua's song - Ken Loach, The Socialist Interview page 11**

# STOP THE HEALTH RIP-OFF PATIENTS BEFORE PROFIT

**C**ASUALTY PATIENTS on trolleys in hospital corridors. Routine operations cancelled, shortages of drugs and bed linen, hospital closures, understaffed wards. This is the reality of the Tories' NHS.

Chancellor Clarke promised extra funding. Health minister Dorrell said there wouldn't be a crisis in the NHS this winter. Who believes them?

The doctors' organisation, the BMA, says the NHS needs a cash infusion of £6 billion. The Social Trends survey revealed a £1 billion shortfall in health spending since 1992.

But low-paid healthworkers and communities are fighting to preserve decent health ser-

vices.

Socialist Party members in Manchester and in Coventry are organising against the plans of the Trust bosses.

"Withington Hospital in south Manchester has existed for decades but the Hospital Trust want to transfer services to Wythenshawe five miles away. They want to hive off the health service through the Private Finance Initiative, where big business owns the hospital buildings and rents to the NHS. The Trust's chief executive gets a salary of £103,000 but staff get a rise of less than 1%.

"We've campaigned to defend our hospital each week.

"Two weeks ago the Trust announced there'll be no further ward closures at Withington for three years. This shows decisions can be changed. Before they said there was no money.

"Now we want our health care put back into Withington. An incoming Labour government must be pressurised into investing in the hospital."

Coventry and Warwicks hospital has been under threat of closure for four years. Demolition could be within weeks.

"The health Trust intend to rebuild our other hospital, Walsgrave with £100 million of private finance but leaving the Coventry and Warwicks leaves

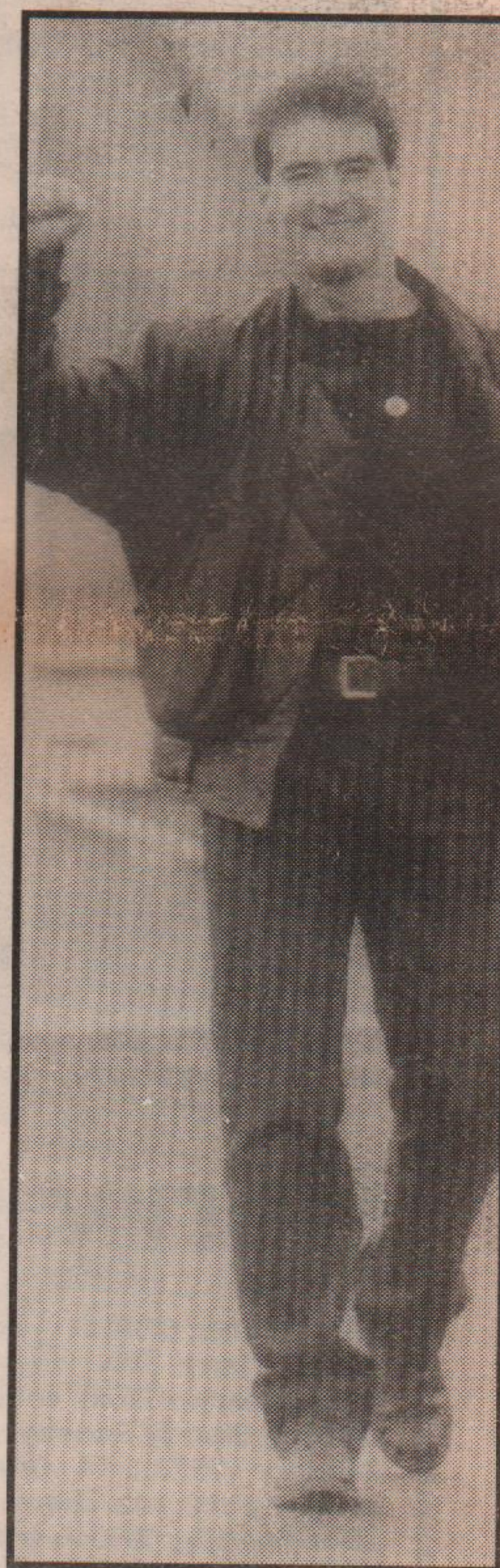
us only one hospital where we had five in 1987. The Walsgrave will have 100 fewer beds than the present hospital."

Dave Nellist, Socialist Party general election candidate, described the plans as "an accountant's dream but a patient's nightmare". When the demolition was announced, Trust boss David Loughton was awarded a £10,000 a year rise to £97,000.

"Our campaign has already got over 100,000 signatures on our petition. And we have started a city-wide ballot.

"We intend to fight for our hospitals and intend to show the Trust and the Tories we mean business. Patients not profits."

**Socialist Party launch**



TOMMY SHERIDAN.

**W**ELCOME TO the first issue of *The Socialist*, the weekly newspaper of the Socialist Party.

Our party was formed to give a campaigning socialist alternative to working-class people disillusioned with Tony Blair and New Labour's move to the right.

At the general election we are standing 28 candidates, including former Labour MP Dave Nellist in Coventry and anti-poll tax rebel Tommy Sheridan in Glasgow.

To mark the launch of Socialist Party, protests to highlight the plight of the NHS have been organised in Merseyside, Manchester and Coventry.

We are organising a massive sales drive and subscription push, along with a recruitment drive which is seeing new applications arrive every day.

National TV, radio and newspapers are covering our launch and there has been extensive regional coverage. Join us today and come along to one of our launch meetings

see page 12 & 16.

# Blair blots out his party

**THE LABOUR Party's national executive (NEC) has approved changes to make the party's conference a shorter "presentational body" rather than a policy-making conference. It will be a rally for the leaders to show off their policies and their toothy smiles.**

**T**HE NEC would change too, getting representation from the Cabinet, the Parliamentary Labour Party and local council leaders to stop party activists getting "disproportionate power" if Labour wins the general election.

The nub of the changes is the NEC's commitment to support the Labour government come what may.

So what, you might ask.

When do either the NEC or conference say or do anything independent of Blair and the spin doctors? But it wasn't always like that.

Blair wants to avoid what happened in 1974-79 when party and trade union activists tried to stop the Labour government taking capitalist measures.

In 1976 a resolution to the NEC (moved by Labour Party Young Socialists representative, Militant supporter Nick Bradley) won the party executive backing for a protest organised by ten unions against cuts in public spending.

The Callaghan government's social contract policies were leading to the biggest drop in living standards for decades.

Cuts in government spending, prompted by the Interna-

tional Monetary Fund, were leading to mass sackings. The resolution was passed and 60,000 came on the protest march.

In 1978, in the midst of a Ford workers' strike against Callaghan's 5% pay rise limit, Labour's national conference passed a motion against the pay limit - again because of Militant's intervention.

Now Labour's policies are even more right-wing, Blair aims to end all such independent life in his party.

The right want to stop any socialist opposition within Labour's ranks and make it harder for workers to make their voices heard in the party under a Labour government.

It's time to prepare for a fight-back. Join the Socialist Party.



## Damping down hope in Scotland

### CIVIL WAR has broken out in the Scottish Labour Party.

Executive member Jim Stevens - Scotland's most vocal Blairite - openly calls for a purge of those who express even mild criticism of Blair. "These people have no place in Tony Blair's new Labour Party", he says.

One of those under fire is UNISON leader, Bob Thompson who, during the poll tax campaign, ferociously opposed the mass non-payment campaign. Now after Labour's move to the right, he is seen as a dangerous dissident.

Stevens and his allies openly want to dampen down expectations in a future Scottish Parliament, which Blair hopes will be just a larger version of the existing Scottish councils.

Scotland's Labour councils today demolish services, close schools and community centres, sack workers and drive

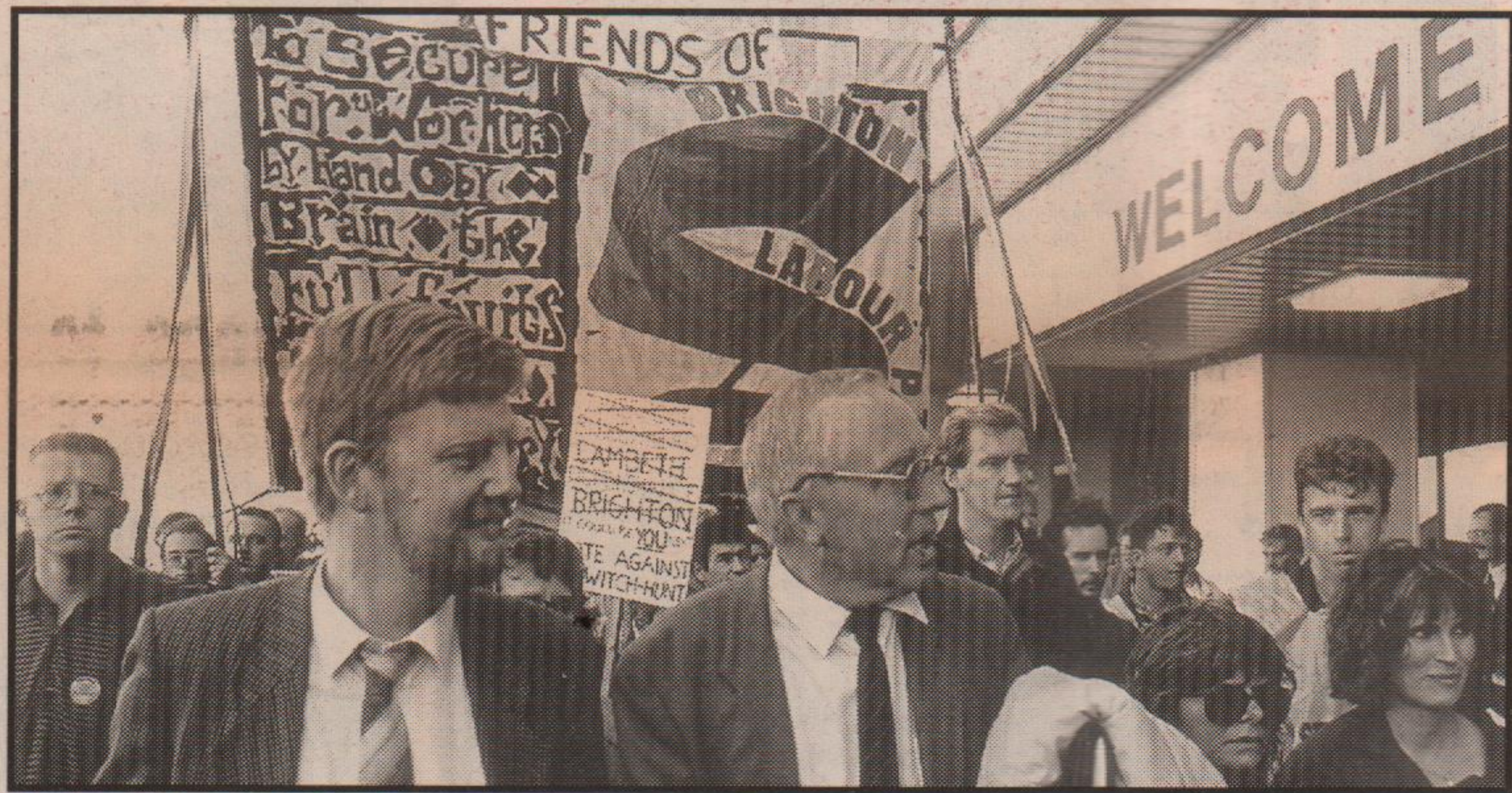
down wages. They think the new Scottish Assembly should do the same.

Fearing that a future Scottish Parliament could become a bastion of resistance to a pro-market Labour government in London, Blair and Co. will vet all Labour candidates for that Parliament - only unswerving Blairite disciples would stand.

Like the Socialist Party in England and Wales, the Scottish Socialist Alliance believes the battle for socialism will only be won if the ideas are openly fought for before the people.

A new political force is needed to challenge New Labour in its own strongholds.

The Scottish Socialist Alliance will fight 15 seats across Scotland in the coming general election - including all ten Glasgow seats. We will help build the fight for socialism where it really counts - in the communities and workplaces.



NOT WELCOME HERE - Dave Nellist and Terry Fields outside the Labour Party Conference which expelled them.

## Derry remembers Bloody Sunday

**GERALDINE QUIGLEY reports from Derry on the 25th anniversary march commemorating Bloody Sunday. On 30 January 1972, 14 unarmed civil rights marchers were shot dead by British troops.**

**A**ROUND 40,000 set off on this year's march, by the time it got to Free Derry corner there were easily 50,000. This was very much a memorial march. I was there with my sisters, who had been together on the original march.

All the way through Creggan into the Bogside they were remembering constantly "This happened here". It was very emotional.

The relatives of all the people killed were there. The families have their own service in the morning where they lay

wreaths at the Bloody Sunday memorial.

They haven't always supported the march but they do now since the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign has been set up and run by the families.

The feelings are still high after 25 years because Major's government are still covering up what happened.

The justice campaign distributed black ribbons which people wore into work. Some workers at one Derry factory where a minority of Catholics work, objected.

On 30 January, there was a two-minute silence which practically the whole town observed. The factory management locked out the workers who observed the silence and the workers were harassed and jeered at.

Some politicians still use this

issue to try to divide working people. Gregory Campbell, the local DUP (Paisleyite) councillor created a lot of tension by taking up the complaints of local bigots.

But other politicians now say there should be an apology. Some of them like the Unionist paper The Newsletter seem genuine.

Some Unionist politicians like Ken Maginnis, after seeing the size of the demonstrations, now say the British government should apologise. They hope to take the steam out of the call to refute the Widgery tribunal and open investigations up again.

The Major government must be under tremendous pressure now. There's been a change in the wind here. We need a genuine investigation into Bloody Sunday.



THE SOCIALIST, like the Militant before it, campaigns for a socialist solution to the problems of Northern Ireland, based on fighting for working-class unity against poverty and repression.

**Greetings to**

**THE Socialist**

**from...**

Best wishes to The Socialist newspaper and to the Socialist Party.

We are confident and determined that by the new millennium, genuine socialism will really be on the map both sides of the Irish Sea.

**Congratulations!**

*From your comrades in the Socialist Party (Ireland)*

the Socialist

**Socialist Party** I'd like to join the Socialist Party.

Name .....

Address .....

Tel .....

Return to: 3/13 Hepscoth Road, London E9 5HB or phone 0181 533 3311.

**THE Socialist**

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**Have you got news for us?**

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Phone us and ask for the appropriate editor.

# Don't scapegoat working mums

## Panorama distorts facts on work and education

**T**HE PANORAMA programme on 3 February tried to prove that working mums made their children underachieve at schools. It attacked women for trying to get a decent job. But the programme completely twisted the facts.

Ann Bannister

They looked at a California survey on middle-class families showing that some working mums' children were doing less well at school. Another survey in Barking, a working-class London borough, looked at how many children of working mothers passed GCSEs.

Of those school students who gained no GCSEs, 11% had part-time working mums while 25% had mothers working full-time. So, they claimed, mothers going to work was harmful.

Mothers in the most poverty - non-working mothers - had the highest number (36%) of lowest achievers, suggesting that "under-achievement" is more due to material poverty rather than whether mum's at

work or not. They ignored these inconvenient figures.

We wouldn't necessarily argue with their finding that part-time working mums' children achieved better. Everybody should have a reduced working week - but that applies to men as well as women!

The research was completely artificial; it did not look at families as a whole.

A report last year suggests that fathers' long, unsocial working hours have far more impact than mothers working on joint family activities as women have to cope with childcare by themselves. More than a quarter of earning fathers works over 50 hours a week.

Working mothers may help their children. They often have more things to talk to them about, instead of being stuck in the house all day, isolated and bored, with no money to do anything.

The problem is that full-time employment in a working class borough like Barking is likely to be in very low-paid jobs with long hours.

Panorama didn't look at the



WORKING-CLASS MOTHERS - attacked if they work, poor if they don't.

Photo: Morag Allen.

**Everybody should have a reduced working week - but that applies to men as well as women**

impact childcare has on achievement. Just because mothers work it doesn't mean children aren't getting good quality care somewhere else.

If parents got good quality childcare or help like home-working clubs (though not quite how Blair sees them) children's chances of outside activities and of getting far more out of their schools would be vastly increased.

### We need a shorter working week

**M**OST PARENTS do not choose whether to work. Mothers take full-time jobs because they need the money. Research shows poverty rates amongst couples would have been 50% higher without women's earnings.

Grinding poverty does more damage to a child's educational success than not having a mother around. Panorama totally ignored the reality of most people's lives.

Most people would prefer to work half the hours they do if they could get full pay. But most women can't just make an individual decision to cut their working hours. You usually have to work as many or as few hours as the employer wants.

We need to fight collectively for a reduced working week with a £6 an hour minimum wage and decent, affordable, preferably free childcare.

### Greetings to THE Socialist from...



"So much of politics today is about lies - unemployment being caused by 'scroungers', society's ills caused by single parents, the rich always needing more incentives whilst the rest of us can only apparently respond to whips!"

"Working people and their families need a paper that will tell them the truth - that will be on their side, campaigning against injustice and unashamedly fighting for a real change in the ownership, control and direction of society."

"The Socialist will be that paper. Take out a subscription today - you won't regret it!"

Dave Nellist  
(Socialist MP 1983-1992)

"I was expelled from the Labour Party for standing firm against council cuts. Militant has been very useful in showing the attacks local Labour councils make because they have not been prepared to fight the Tories. More importantly it shows that people are fighting back."

"I am sure The Socialist will keep up this tradition."  
Ian Page, Socialist Party councillor, Lewisham

## 'Superwoman' attacks mere mortals

**W**IRRAL-BORN Nicola Horlick, also known as Superwoman, has shown us her warm maternal side. She makes the beds at weekends and manages to get by with five kids and a seven-figure salary with a little help from the domestic staff.

Cathy Wilson

However according to our local rag, Nicola has no time for working women who fail to match her own standards. The Liverpool Echo reports:

"The reason why there are so few women at the top is because few want to work hard enough. You cannot blame the City for not pro-

moting women, most are not cut out for the job. They let themselves down by being pathetic and crying. They whinge and moan, instead of applying themselves," she said.

You can see why she had political ambitions! Couldn't guess which party though...

Simon Hoggart in the Guardian said investment managers were as loyal as black widow spiders, maintaining that Nicola wasn't making a stand for women or mothers but for gigantic sums of money.

It's all about the "£6 million efficient deferred bonus, kept for her in the Channel Islands, on condition she stays with her existing bank."

Roll on the industrial tribunal.

## Privatisation

### On the track to nowhere

**T**HE TORIES plan another privatisation to enrich the super-wealthy at our expense. Leaked plans of the sell-off of London's Underground tell us information the Tories don't want us to know.

The Tube network's value is widely estimated at £13 billion, but the Cabinet document leaked to the Sunday Times shows that the government believes it will raise £1.4 billion at most, maybe as little as £600 million.

Fares will be allowed to rise by more than inflation before the sell-off and services may be cut afterwards. Transport Secretary Sir George Young said: "We are seeing whether the real improvements we see on the railways can be applied to

London Underground."

But, one year after privatisation, the railway "improvements" do not appear very real. Another report out this week says rail privatisation has failed in every key objective.

Save Our Railways said spending on investment and maintenance has fallen, the cost to taxpayers has gone up and many network benefits have disappeared.

★INVESTMENT: Much of the network was "run down and in desperate need of major investment".

★MAINTENANCE: Railtrack had underspent its essential maintenance budget by more than 25%

★FARES: Privatised rail companies were developing their own fares structures at the

Photo: Andy Walker.



GOING DOWN the tube?

expense of the nationwide system. Special saver tickets were under threat.

The privatised railway cost far more than British Rail did, with subsidies for passenger services doubled to just short of £2 billion. Let's make sure this next privatisation never gets on track.

### Dirty days

**W**HILE THE Tories run their transport policy on the basis of maximising profits for private businesses, cars are choking up our cities.

The number of days when air pollution exceeded the government's safety limit rose in all but three of 15 official monitoring sites in 1996. The main culprits were particulates, small particles emitted by burning fuels.

Central London's dirty days went up by 20% to 55, Leeds by 18% to 45, Bristol by 30% to 35, Hull by 40% to 35, Birmingham by 50% to 34 while Belfast trebled from 40 to 124.

# THE Socialist

# WHAT WE THINK

**JUST WHEN you thought it was all over the pre-election battleground over Europe came back over the line with the World Cup conveniently bouncing behind.**

The last week has seen both Tories and New Labour desperately upping the stakes on who can be the most patriotic and who can be the most Eurosceptic.

The World Cup arguments have given the tabloid press another opportunity to whip up a nationalistic fervour in time for the general election.

Blair calls it a 'stitch-up' and Major says he's putting the full weight of the Tory government behind England's bid - oh well that's that finished then. Working-class people might wonder why they can't spend as much time providing jobs

or a minimum wage.

But, behind all this posturing lies a more serious debate about Europe. As the Tories move to the right and wrap themselves in the Union Flag, so too have New Labour gone along with them.

The head of Toyota warned that his company would invest elsewhere if British capitalism did not enter a form of European Monetary Union.

But the Tories seem oblivious to the long-term future of British capitalism, known as the sick man of Europe, and dismissed the Toyota statement as unimportant.

Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind then launches an offensive throughout Europe to tell other nations how great Britain's contribution in Europe is. His New Labour

shadow Robin Cook follows and says a New Labour government will hold off from joining European Monetary Union in 1999, but may possibly join in 2002.

The Socialist believes that full-blown monetary union is a pipe-dream and opposes the European union because it is a bosses' club designed to further the interests of big business.

Despite the Tory rantings, most European laws are designed to benefit capitalism and offer little for workers.

That's why workers in France, Italy, Germany, Greece and Belgium, to name a few, have taken action against the harsh terms that the monetary convergence criteria entail. In Britain, if a New Labour government is elected, they will have to make £18 billion cuts in public

spending - inevitably such struggles will develop in Britain.

The Socialist Party is opposed to the narrow nationalism of both Tories and Labour. Banging the nationalist drum is truly the last refuge of political scoundrels who have nothing else to offer.

We stand for closer integration of the workers of Europe and throughout the world in a struggle to remove the bosses' capitalist system.

Unlike the Eurosceptics, while opposing the European Community we argue for the creation of a Socialist Europe, as part of a Socialist world, which will remove the rule of capitalism and bring a new era of prosperity for workers across the globe.

## Socialism's global challenge

**FROM THE earliest days of the working class, socialists have always stressed the international character of its struggle. MURRAY SMITH from the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), to which the Socialist Party is affiliated, explains why socialists look to unite the struggles of workers worldwide.**

**N**EARLY 150 years ago Marx and Engels concluded the "Communist Manifesto" with the words "Workers of the world unite". They explained that "workers have no country". This is doubly true.

In the immediate sense workers do not own any country - it is always the bosses and the landlords who do.

The bosses have always cultivated nationalism in order to divide off workers in one country from those in another and if necessary get them to kill each other for "their" country.

But workers have no country in the deeper sense that they do not need one.

The capitalists, even in this epoch of the domination of the world market, need a national state to protect them against both their own workers and the capitalists of other countries.

But socialism does not need national boundaries: it can only be based on the co-operation of the workers of all countries and on international planning to utilise the world's resources for the benefit of all.

Today, with the "globalisation" of the world economy, it is easy to see that no country can live in isolation.

The capitalists themselves have created regional trading blocs - the European Union, NAFTA, APEC, etc.

### Stagnation

THESE ARE attempts to overcome the limitations that capitalism faces constrained within national boundaries.

But they do this within the limits of capitalism, of private ownership of the means of production, of competition. So instead of these developments being progressive, they turn against the workers.

The regional blocs compete against one another and within each bloc there are conflicts between the different countries. Instead of real economic development there is continued stagnation.

Deprived of rational planning, the capitalist world economy only produces more and



**MAASTRICHT NO!** - Left-wing international rally against the bosses' Europe in London on 1 February.

Photo: Paul Mattsson

more unemployment, poverty and increasing inequality, within and between countries. Only through a socialist planned economy can this be ended.

### Solidarity

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY is as old as the working class itself.

Even before the working class properly existed, the poor and oppressed in Europe and beyond supported the great French Revolution of 1789.

Its slogans of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" appealed more to them than to the rich and privileged.

During the American Civil War, Lancashire cotton workers refused to handle cotton from the South, at great cost to their own livelihood, so as not to help the slave-owners.

Workers internationally rallied to the defence of the Paris Commune in 1871, of the Russian Revolution against foreign intervention, and of the Spanish Revolution in 1936.

The solidarity with the Liverpool dockers shown today by dockers and other workers all over the world is part of a fine tradition.

Workers have always been inspired by struggles in other countries.

The impact of the French strike movement of 1995 and

the present movement in South Korea are just recent examples.

But because capitalism is a world system and because socialism will be international, workers need to organise on a world scale. Just as they need to organise their own parties in each country, they need to link up these parties in an international.

From the beginning socialists have sought to organise workers worldwide.

The First International founded by Marx and Engels through the international organisation created by Lenin and Trotsky after the Russian Revolution and again by Trotsky in the 1930s, after the rise of the Stalinist dictatorship in the Soviet Union, represented the best traditions of struggle, internationalism and socialist democracy.

It is this tradition that the CWI seeks to continue.

### Internationalism

THE LATEST developments in capitalism may make it easier to see the global nature of the struggle.

But also the idea of socialism as an alternative to capitalism has been thrown back. The capitalists point to the collapse of the Soviet Union as "proof" that socialism failed.

At the same time the traditional leaders of the workers'

parties have moved rapidly rightwards and become open defenders of the capitalist system.

These developments have disoriented many workers. We now have to reconquer the hearts and minds of workers and youth for the ideas of genuine socialism.

Already in many countries the most conscious workers understand the need to link up with socialists in other countries. This will lay the basis of a future mass workers' international.

The CWI seeks to contribute to the building of such an international by linking up with the best fighters from the class battles that are erupting all over the world.

We are proud of our own history and traditions, but we are willing to work with all other forces which seek to rebuild the workers' movement on the lines of class independence, democracy, socialism and internationalism.



## Greetings to THE Socialist from...

THE LAUNCH of The Socialist inspires us in our difficult struggle to establish genuine working-class organisations fighting for an international and socialist society.

We wish you the best success.

*From your comrades in the Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Russia.*

ON BEHALF of the National Committee of Labor Militant in the United States, we would like to congratulate the launching of The Socialist as the successor to the Militant.

Our best wishes for success and continuing the proud tradition of Marxism in Britain and internationally.

*Labor Militant - USA*

# Belgian scandals bring mood for change

**"EITHER THEY give in or it is a revolution", said the famous Belgian footballer Michel Dewolf after more than 50,000 people marched through Tubize, a little village in the south of Belgium last Sunday. KATYA HANCKE reports on how a solidarity demo with the 1,800 steelworkers from the bankrupt factory Forges de Clabecq became a massive protest about the whole system.**

ly defending the interests of the privileged few.

Politicians and bureaucrats live in their own world miles away from working-class people's reality.

The so-called 'White March' of 350,000 people through Brussels in October did not change anything.

**The slogans on the demo were clear enough: "Flexibility, mobility, competition = dictatorship of the rich."**

Its 'apolitical' appeal for radical change, organised by the parents of the children murdered in the paedophilia scan-

dal, united hundreds of thousands of people from all over the country.

At the time the political establishment was still capable of putting enormous pressure on the parents, who gained big authority, to keep the protest low-key.

Now, the situation is further radicalised and the parents of the children also came out in support of the workers of Clabecq.

On Sunday Gino Russo, one of the parents, said to the tens of thousands strong crowd: "For us, everything is linked: the proper functioning of the justice system, social justice, unemployment, the economic crisis, education, politics... Up until now they tried to divide all of this in pieces. But this won't work any longer!"

The fight for jobs, for social justice is a political fight, a fight against capitalist logic in which everything is measured by profit.

The slogans on the demo were clear enough: "Flexibility, mobility, competition = dictatorship of the rich."

This system is fatal for our children and for our jobs. People are sick of it.

They realise that the only way out is to unite and fight for a better society.



UNITED - Belgians are sick of establishment politicians.

50,000 CHILDREN, pensioners, unemployed, union activists, families, all dressed in red, all showed their discontent, not just about the job losses but about a society in which everything is permitted as long as it yields profit for the privileged few.

Profitable factories are declared bankrupt to force workers into 'new' less secure, more flexible and less well-paid jobs.

Public services are constantly under attack.

The police and the civil guard are completely discredited by a series of corruption scandals and incompetence.

The justice system and the political establishment are compromised almost every day by another scandal but go on as before and are even more open-

## Trade union left conference

**ON SATURDAY 1 February nearly 200 delegates and visitors attended a conference called by a steering committee of various union Broad Lefts.**

**Bill Mullins, Socialist Party industrial organiser**

The teachers' union, NUT, UNISON, CPSA, CWU, printers, finance workers and others all felt that the time was right to launch a new body that would bring together socialists throughout the unions.

Many left wingers work in their own unions to get them to adopt fighting programmes. But with the prospect of a Labour government carrying through anti-working class measures the Left has to organise a fight back starting now.

New Labour spokespersons have clearly said that they will willingly take on the unions to demonstrate to their big business friends that they are able to hold down workers and keep profits safe.

The TUC is preparing to act as a direct extension of the Labour cabinet and police the union rank and file.

The likely battleground will be first in the public sector over a continued wage freeze but also in the private sector amongst unorganised workers.

Platform speaker Bernie Roome, secretary of the Communications Workers' Union Broad Left, called for the Left in the unions to prepare for struggle and to build the forces of the Broad Lefts in an open and democratic way.

He said that "last year Alan Johnson was forced by the Left to back resolutions calling for defiance of the anti-union laws because of the work of the Broad Left."

Some delegates wanted to make it a priority to fight to maintain the union link with the Labour party which Blair wants to break.

Roger Bannister on behalf of the Campaign for a Fighting and Democratic UNISON said that whilst he opposed the



ROGER BANNISTER.

right wing's plans, nevertheless, the shifting sands of politics have moved on

He added that UNISON members working for New Labour councils have found themselves facing vicious attacks on their jobs and trade union rights. Roger argued, correctly, that it was a non-starter for the Left in the unions to make this issue a priority.

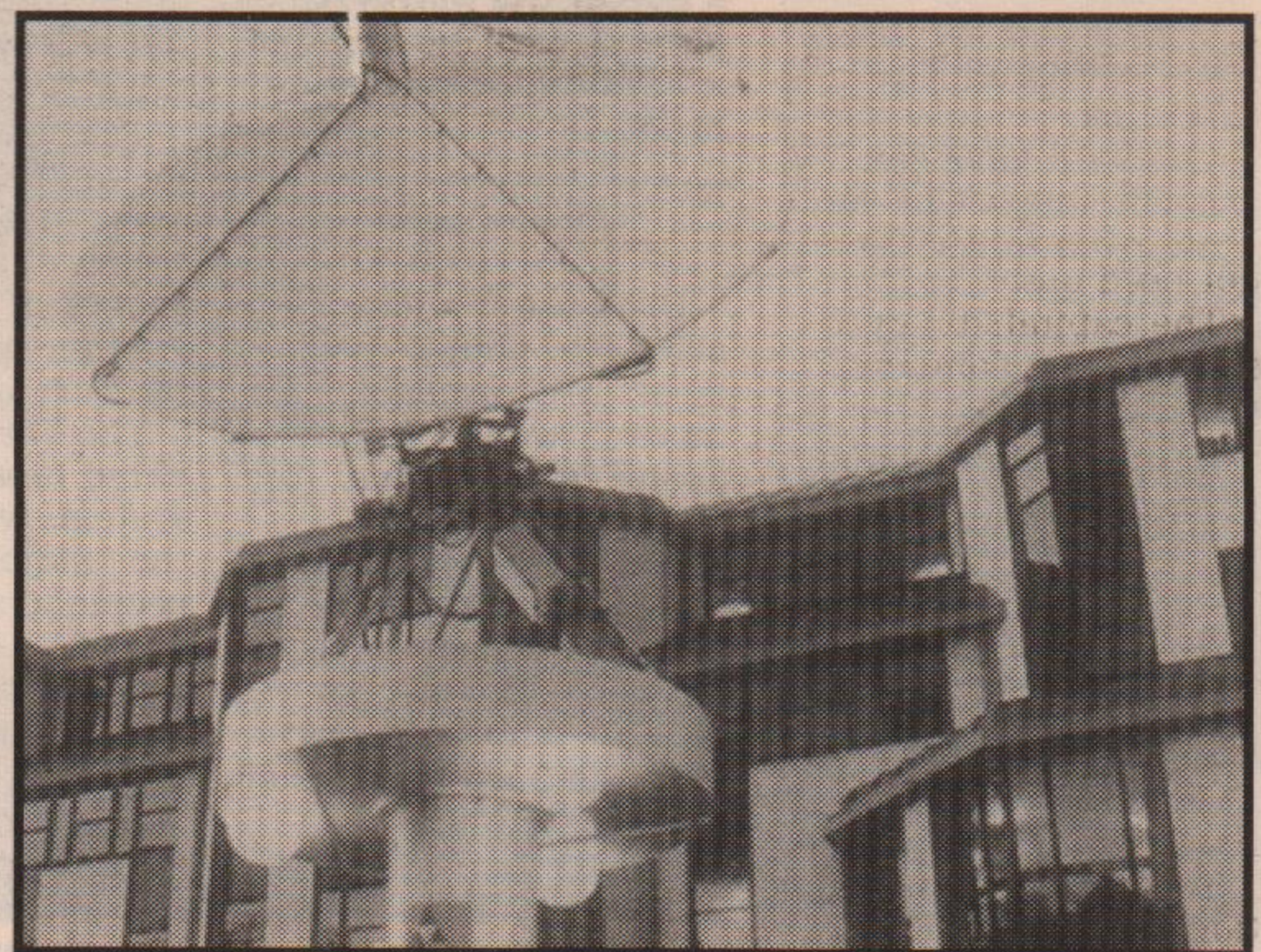
Instead, the Left in the unions needed to draw the lessons of what's happening in the Labour Party and campaign for a new mass workers' party, he concluded.

Socialist Party members should welcome this conference as a first step in uniting the Left across the unions in a common programme and strategy. It has to be far more than just a network or conference where we swap experiences.

It will also have to provide a lead to the thousands of trade union activists. The steering committee will next meet on 1 March.

The Left in UNISON are calling on the alliance to organise a lobby of the TUC and the Labour Party demanding action on the minimum wage.

## Digital TV Big Business boxes off the profits



200 CHANNELS - and still nothing on.

**THE MEDIA hailed the recent announcement of bids for the operation of digital terrestrial television (DTT) as opening a new era of choice in TV. KEVIN PARSLAW argues that exactly the reverse is the case; there are more channels but all will show the same sort of programmes as before.**

**T**HE MAJOR bidder is British Digital Broadcasting (BDB) which is a consortium.

It comprises the BBC, Granada and Carlton, and BSkyB. Apart from showing all the four current TV channels, plus the forthcoming Channel 5, its multiplex, as each package is known, will include the same mix of current affairs, films, sport and repeats which dominate now.

DTT will launch in July 1998.

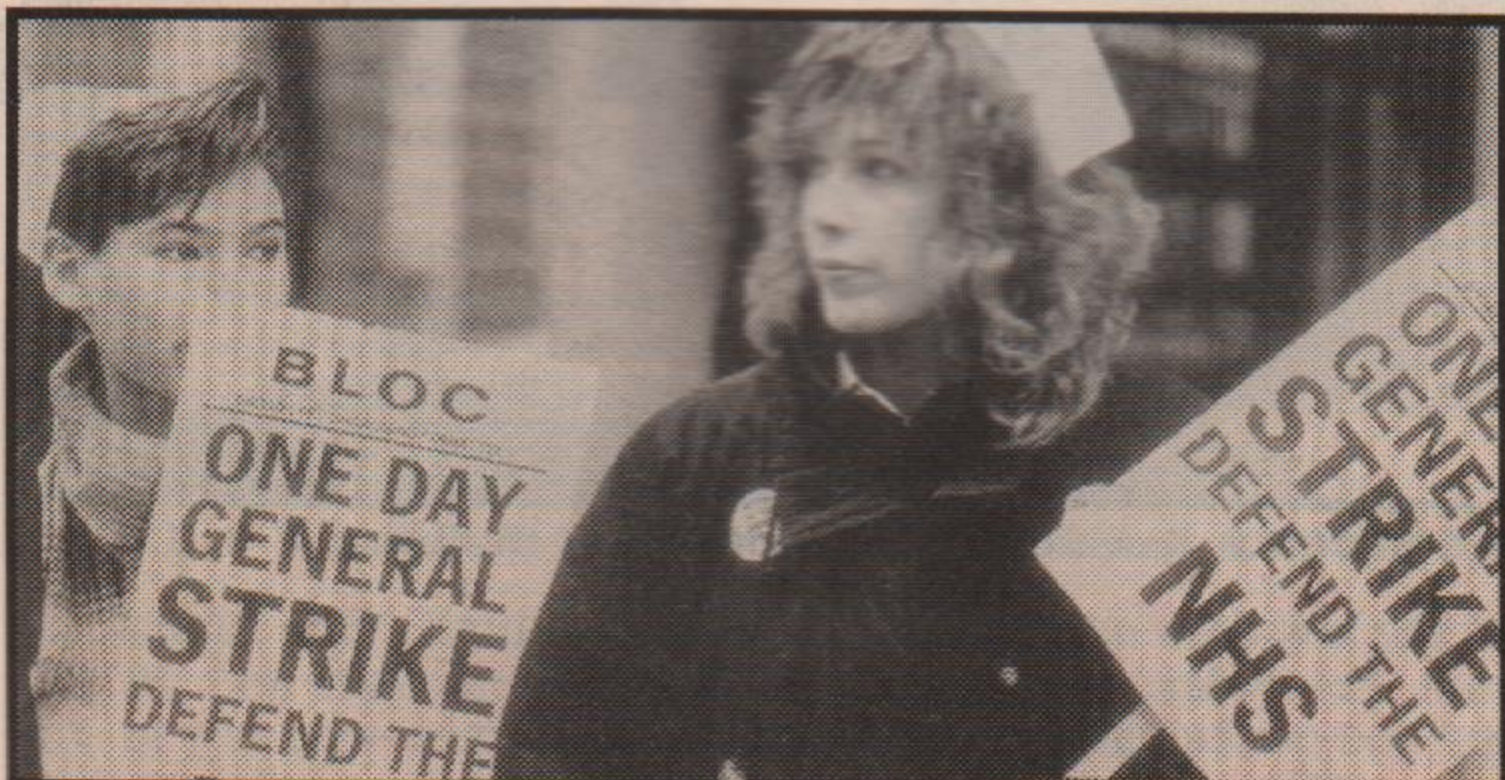
Until TV sets are built specifically for this market, viewers will have to buy a £200 set-top decoder box, which will receive pictures through TV aerials.

In addition subscribers will pay £5 a month for its 12 basic channels, plus £15-£20 per month extra for three BSkyB channels.

BSkyB, which owns 33% of BDB, will have some of its output made available without a dish or cable for the first time. This will boost its profits in the long run, and will become a showcase for its own 200-plus satellite digital channels.

Digital TV, whilst giving big technological advances, will be used to make profits for the communications monopolies.

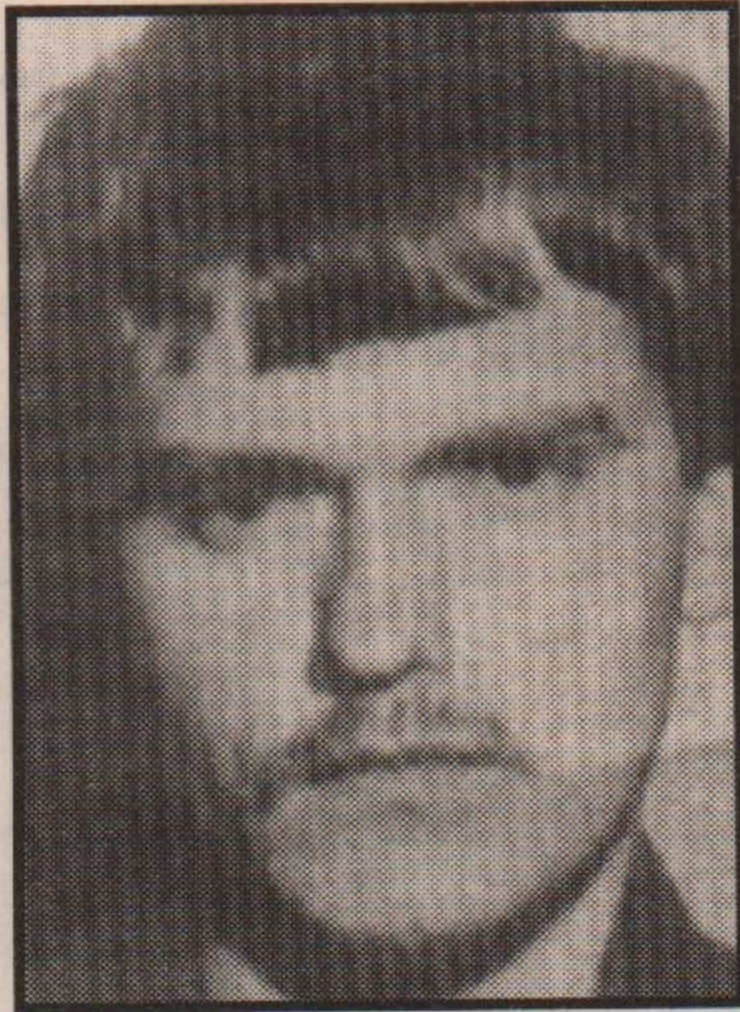
Broadcasting can only show its true potential if access is available to all, through common ownership of the production and transmission facilities.



LOOKING LEFT - public-sector workers will be vital to the new left union alliance.

# Whitemoor escape - set up by the state?

**THE WHITEMOOR** Prison escape trial collapsed last week amidst suggestions of involvement of the security service in the breakout. Vital video evidence has gone missing, a prison officer has disappeared and a witness died on her way to give evidence at the trial. **Anton McCabe** looks at events leading up to the trial and talks to the brother of **Danny McNamee**, one of the defendants.



DANNY MCNAMEE.

**T**HE SIX prisoners were held together in a "SSU" (Special Secure Unit) - a prison within a prison.

Francis McNamee visited his brother there and described security for visitors as being "extreme, you were X-rayed and had to take everything out of your pockets. You couldn't even think of bringing in two guns and a pair of heavy bolt-cutters two-foot long (which the escapees had)."

The unit was often searched, sometimes a couple of times a day.

Danny McNamee is innocent, a new submission on his case

has been with the Home Office for two and a half years. Yet since his conviction ten years ago he has been held in Special Secure Units.

Francis described the conditions: "These units are cramped and claustrophobic. 90% of those held in them are Irish."

"When the escape happened there was all this crap about them having caviar and steak. They didn't."

Men serving long sentences in such conditions would be easy prey for provocateurs suggesting an escape.

There is evidence that the attempted escape was a set up by the security services.

They were also implicated in the 1992 escape of two Irish prisoners from Brixton prison. Staffordshire police admitted that they had carried out a 'long-range' operation within Brixton prison.

An internal inquiry did not refute allegations that a prison officer, under the control of Special Branch, had befriended the two prisoners and discussed escape plans with them in return for information about other crimes.

The Brixton escape happened a month after the IRA ceasefire.

The security services obviously wanted to preserve their own position by creating work for themselves if necessary.

The perimeter of Whitemoor prison is constantly monitored by closed circuit TV. When the alarm is triggered a video recording is made.

On the night the alarm went

off at 8.09pm but the tapes start at 8.13pm, despite a prison officer swearing in court that he began recording 30 seconds after the alarm went off.

The men simply wouldn't have had time to cut through 77 strands of fence in four minutes.

It's not only those four minutes of footage that are missing. Danny McNamee was filmed by prison camera 26 running along the side of the wall.

The film from camera 27, which covered the area where he was captured is missing. On film from camera 28, after his capture, his face is covered in blood.

On top of these 'discrepancies' a prison officer disappeared in March 1995 two days after being suspended for smuggling items into a prisoner and a woman prison officer due to give evidence in the trial died in a mysterious car crash.

The trial of the six collapsed on 23 January after press reports were judged prejudicial.

Francis McNamee described this as a "blatant attempt by the Crown to get the trial stopped. Too much embarrassing stuff was going to come out."

**A prison officer disappeared in March 1995 two days after being suspended for smuggling items into a prisoner and a woman prison officer due to give evidence in the trial died in a mysterious car crash.**

## Greetings to **THE Socialist** from...

The Lesbian and Gay Carers Campaign (LGCC) sends solidarity greetings for the first edition of *The Socialist*.

Militant gave consistent support in our campaign to reverse the Children's Society ban on lesbian and gay foster carers. We look forward to continued support from *The Socialist*.

**Steve O'Donnell, Convenor LGCC.**

The Campaign Against Domestic Violence (CADV) sends greetings to the first edition of *The Socialist*.

Domestic violence is one of the sharpest reminders of the discrimination and injustice that women face in society.

We welcome the launch of a paper that will fight for women's rights and offers a socialist alternative to the greed and violence of the present system.



**Christine Thomas, National Secretary CADV.**

## Debate

# Drugs - are we mad for 'em?

**T**HE REACTION of Tory MP's to Noel Gallagher's comments will cut no ice among young people. In a poll in the *Mirror*, 87% agreed with his idea of a national debate about drugs.

**Molly Cooper**

Drug use is widespread amongst young people, most are probably far more well informed about drugs than the politicians.

The Tories appear to be on a pre-election cheap votes trip. They have no answers for the young people who are faced with the hard realities of drug addiction.

For all their moral lectures, they have presided over the closure of many drug rehabilitation centres, which

might have been able to offer real solutions to young people.

Instead drug users are often at the mercy of dodgy dealers and even more dodgy drug concoctions.

The use of Ecstasy, by its nature involves an avoidance of alcohol, which obviously hits the profits of the breweries, another possible reason for Tory outrage.

The Tories are not prepared to admit that their system, which condemns the majority of young people to a life of poverty wages, slave labour schemes and a life on the streets, may be to blame for drug use amongst young people.

Young people no longer see a chance to have a decent future under the present system, the use of drugs is a temporary



**NOEL - let's have a sensible debate - GALLAGHER.**

escape route from the cycle of poverty and

harassment.

The Tories' reaction smacks of hypocrisy. While they are able to tolerate the production of drugs by pharmaceutical companies which can have lethal side effects, and the use by thousands of people of cigarettes and alcohol, also lethal, they condemn users of illegal drugs.

Of course, the government directly benefits from the profits produced by the cigarette, alcohol, and pharmaceutical companies.

Whilst it might be the case that many MPs in the House of Commons are under the influence of illegal drugs (according to Noel Gallagher) it's obvious that they have their heads in the troughs of sleaze and the profit system!

Young people do not

need any more rhetoric from the Tories or New Labour for that matter. Instead what we need is a minimum wage, jobs with good conditions, cheap accessible housing, and that's just the start!

Young people need a debate around drugs which offers real answers.

The initiative by the London Drug Agency to launch the recent poster campaign outlining the facts about drug use is a start.

But what is really needed is a genuine well funded network of drug information, support and needle exchange centres, to provide the help and advice that young people need.

**What do you think? Phone or write in with your views on this subject.**

## Campaign Against Domestic Violence lobby success

**"M**Y BOYFRIEND beats me up but what can I do about it?" "I've been beaten up and now my daughter's in a violent relationship. I support you all the way."

**Robbie Segal**

Just some of the comments we got on the Campaign Against Domestic Violence (CADV) lobby of the Home Secretary Michael Howard at his Folkestone constituency surgery on 25 January.

CADV are campaigning for more resources and a change in the law to take into account women's experience of domestic violence.

Before we went to the lobby we

collected 30 full petition sheets, including those brought down by Canterbury University women's group who had also raised £15 from sales of CADV material.

When we handed the 6,000 signature petition in, Howard wished us "luck" with our campaign!

What a cheek! He later told the local paper that he was not prepared to review any case unless he had specific evidence drawn to his attention which indicated that the matter was not properly dealt with by the court that heard their case.

He went on to say: "The law is perfectly satisfactory, it enables any allegation of provocation to be fully taken into account in deciding whether somebody is guilty or not."



**HEAR OUR VOICE - petitioning for a change in the law.**

But the law does not take into account the years of physical, mental and emotional abuse that women suffer as a result of domestic violence.

And CADV won't stop cam-

aigning until this abuse is taken into account and all the cases of women who are in jail where domestic violence has been a factor have been reviewed.

## for young people fighting the system

### Asylum seekers demand freedom

**UNLIKE THE** detention centres where many asylum seekers are kept, the regime at Rochester is that of a prison.

The food in the prison is a major source of complaint. Detainees are offered a choice of rice or potatoes. This is then accompanied by an unvaried diet of fish or meat pie.

Many asylum seekers have remained on this diet for over a year. Once you have decided on one of the two staples you are not allowed to change them.

Detainees are regularly strip-searched after visits from friends and family.

Their post, including legal correspondence, is opened. Telephone calls are tape recorded.

A segregation unit is used to discipline detainees who are deemed to have 'misbehaved'. As a result asylum seekers rarely complain for fear of reprisals. Two detainees have been severely beaten in the last month.

Access to the prison shop (known as Harrods due to the high cost of goods on sale) is restricted to half an hour per day, four days a week.

Since the beginning of the hunger strike attempts have been made by the prison authorities to isolate those thought to be the 'ring leaders'.

On D-Wing where most of the immigration prisoners are kept, the hunger strikers have



Thousands have protested against the Asylum and Immigration Act

Photo: Scott Taylor

been moved to the bottom floor. At one point the heating was broken and there was no hot water for showers.

Access to newspapers has been restricted and the television in the common room is switched off when the local news is on.

D-Wing prisoners have been encouraged to

apply for transfers to detention centres after being told for months that there were no vacancies. This is clearly another attempt to break the strike as two prisoners, who were moved to detention centres, were immediately taken back to Rochester when they refused to resume eating at the detention centres.

### Solidarity hunger strike

**THE COURAGEOUS** hunger strike by the asylum seekers has blown the lid off the government's dirty secret - the inhumane and barbaric conditions faced by innocent asylum seekers locked up in British prisons.

jude ritchie

To demand the immediate release of the hunger strikers and all asylum seekers in prison, Youth against Racism in Europe and Young Socialist Resistance organised a solidarity 24-hour hunger strike and a picket of the Home Office on Saturday 1 February.

"We're out here because you're in there" chanted demonstrators including people from Save Immigrants and Asylum Seekers, the National Conscience Party UK, the Nigerian Welfare and Monitoring Council and the Campaign for Democracy UK. Over £60 was donated by passers-by and hundreds of signatures were collected on our petition.

Widdicombe and Howard have overstepped the mark with their malicious remarks in the press. The combined coverage of Saturday's protests, including the picket of Rochester prison on national television, radio and newspapers, helped to answer the lies propagated by these Tory hypocrites.

We won't let the Tories sacrifice the lives of asylum seekers in a cynical attempt to whip up racism before the general election in order to win a few votes.

### Philip English: Not guilty

**AT THE** age of 15, in February 1993, Philip English was found guilty on a joint enterprise charge (where more than one person is charged with carrying out the same crime) of the murder of a police sergeant.

Elaine Brunskill spoke to Mandy English, Philip's step mother, who is campaigning for his release.

Mandy explained that it was generally expected at the trial that the charge against Philip would be reduced to assault.

Philip had been unaware that his friend had been carrying a knife. At the time of the policeman's death Philip was over a hundred yards away and under the arrest of another officer.

Forensic evidence given at the trial cleared Philip of being near the scene when the knife wound was inflicted.

Mandy said: "We've never condoned what Philip did". He had at one stage hit Sergeant Forth with a stick. "If he had been charged with assault we would have said he deserved what he got but

no way is Philip guilty of murder."

Because Philip was only 15 he was sentenced to detention at Her Majesty's pleasure and the judge recommended that he serve a minimum of 15 years. Can you imagine how it must have felt at 15 to expect to be jailed 'till you're at least 30 for a murder you didn't commit?

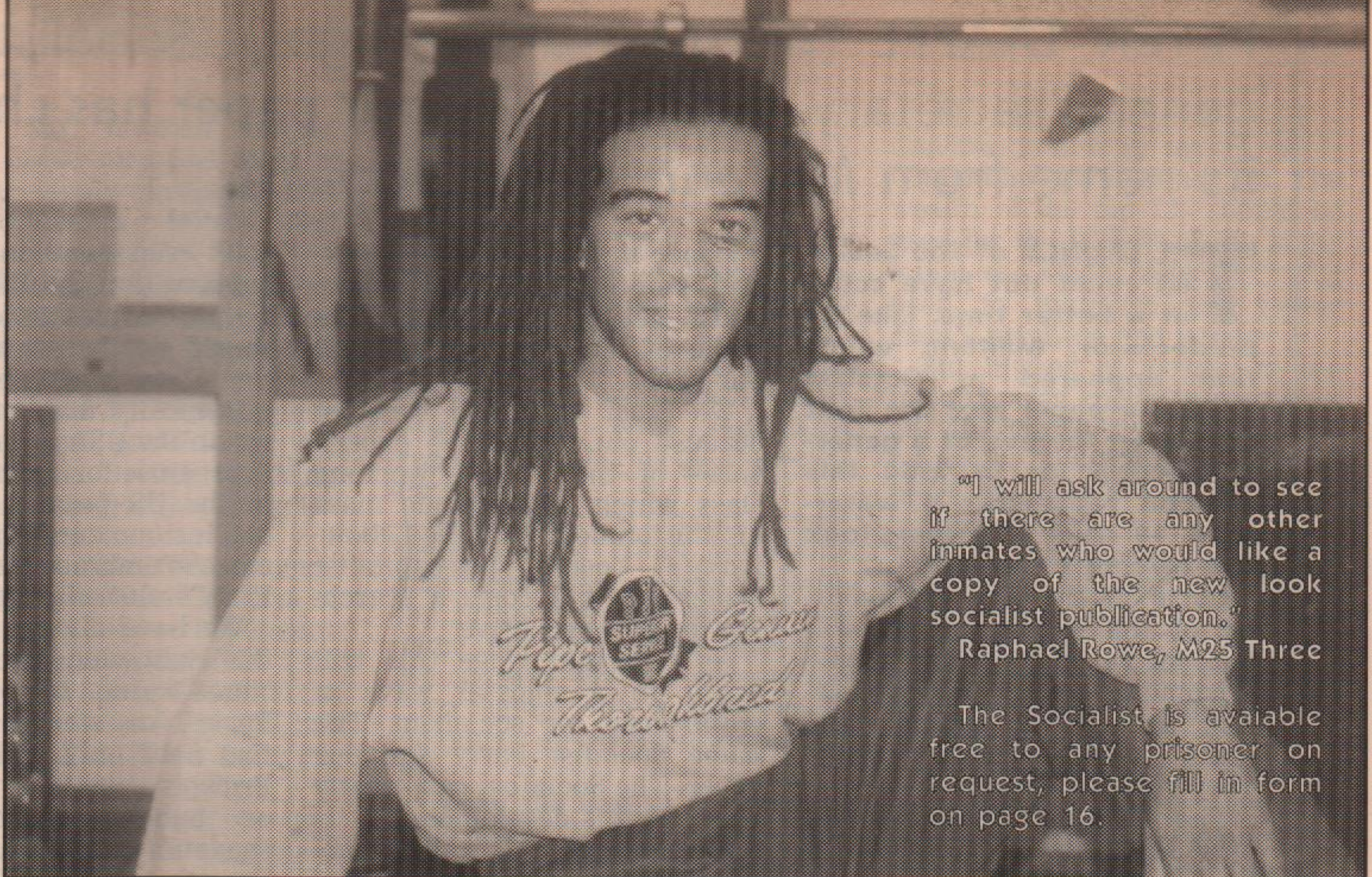
Mandy, who's a Durham Labour County Councillor, said she was pleased to read in the Militant that Tony Blair is supporting Iris Bentley's campaign for a pardon for her brother Derek Bentley.

She went on to say: "I only wish I had the same level of support from some in the Labour Party." Instead Mandy is to be dropped as a Labour councillor because of her involvement in campaigning for justice for Philip.

Philip is to challenge the joint enterprise charge in the House of Lords on 17 and 18 February.

**Please send messages of support to: Philip English AGO 191, HMP Moorlands, Bawtree Road, Hatfield, Woodhouse, Doncaster.**

### M25 three - on the road to justice



"I will ask around to see if there are any other inmates who would like a copy of the new look socialist publication." Raphael Rowe, M25 Three

The Socialist is available free to any prisoner on request, please fill in form on page 16.

**R**APHAEL ROWE is one of the M25 Three along with Michael Davis and Randolph Johnson.

chris moore

In December 1988, three masked men carried out several robberies on the M25 leaving one man dead. Despite witnesses describing the suspects as being two white men and one black man, three black men were convicted of the murder.

A police notebook of a first witness interview, detailing the robbers' skin colour, was lost and a police officer at the trial withheld a description because he said: "No-one asked to see it".

The only witness to the murder changed his account after police said it "did not fit" their version. Another witness described police pressure and threats.

Raphael and Michael have several witnesses who can confirm their alibis.

Three suspects became prosecution witnesses after unrecorded interviews with investigating officers. This is despite the fact that these three fit the victims' descriptions, admit handling and hiding property from the robberies, stealing the Spitfire car used in the crimes, possessing the air pistol used by the gang and dumping cars stolen in the robbery!

A police investigation into the unrecorded interviews (which would reveal if the £25,000 reward money was offered to the three in return for evidence), was denied to the defence by public interest immunity certificates - so-called gagging orders.

These were again used at the appeal in 1993 when, at a secret hearing, it was decided by Lord Taylor that certain material was not helpful or crucial.

The M25 Three are expecting to hear soon if a new appeal has been granted.

**Send letters of protest to the Home Secretary, The Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1.**

### NMP - don't cut the funding

**L**AST WEEK, around 500 people demonstrated in support of the Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) as Newham councillors met to rubber stamp the proposal to withdraw the project's grant allocation.

keith pattenden

Trade unionists, left organisations and local community groups, were all represented on the lobby sending a clear message of defiance to the Labour council.

Young people in particular showed their disgust at Blair's hatchet men carrying home-made placards with slogans like "Don't vote Labour" and "F\*\*\* you Labour Council"! The hostility to Labour raises the question of whether the NMP should throw its weight behind the Socialist Labour Party who are contesting two seats in Newham in the general election.

What the demo really showed is the NMP's ability to mobilise large numbers of the local community at short notice. The Labour Party could not match this achievement?

With other community organisations and groups facing cuts in funding the scene is set for a big confrontation with the council. It was clear that the people on the demo were more representative of local opinion than any of the politicians inside the Town Hall.

# Preparing for the century



LIVERPOOL'S DOCKERS - have gained world wide solidarity.

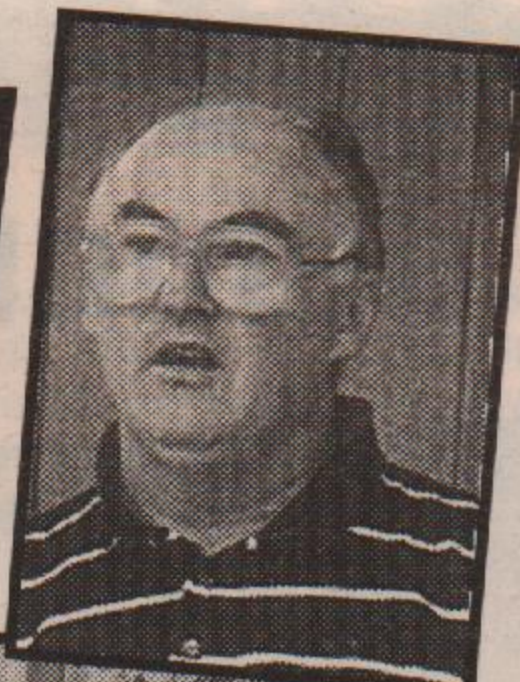


Photo: Dave Sinclair.

PETER TAAFFE (pictured above right), Socialist Party general secretary, explains why our paper has changed its name from *Militant* to *The Socialist*.

**T**HE LAUNCH of *The Socialist* could not have come at a better time. Like its predecessor, *Militant*, which first appeared in October 1964, our paper sees the light of day on the eve of a general election. As in 1964 this election represents a watershed. 18 cruel Tory years look like coming to an end.

Come election day, the majority of the British people will look for revenge for the impoverishment, brutal class legislation against the unions, and mass unemployment which Tory rule has meant.

The election, however, will only mark the beginning of a turbulent period of class conflict, industrial upheaval and the re-emergence of radical and socialist policies. The change in our name from *Militant Labour* to *Socialist Party*, and the change in our paper's name from *Militant* to *The Socialist*, is in preparation for this period.

*Militant* was a good name in the past. It signified a fighting, socialist organisation, which motivated many of those who led Liverpool City Council's heroic struggle between 1983-87. *Militant* supporters were to the fore in the anti-poll tax battle as well.

Yet, to the new generation who will emerge to political and industrial struggle, the word 'militant' can sometimes sound 'too aggressive'. The capitalist media have also quite consciously linked the name to 'terrorism' or 'Islamic fundamentalists'. We want nothing in our name which will prove a barrier to these workers supporting our ideas and entering our ranks.

Hence in December, after several months of intense democratic debate, we changed the name of our organisation and our paper.

We must be called socialist because out of the life experiences of the British working class which will include mass disillusionment with the Labour Party's openly pro-capitalist leadership will come a searching for an alternative.

At a certain stage this will result in a colossal wave of enthusiasm for socialism. The name *Socialist Party* and our paper, *The Socialist*, can greatly assist in this development.

But this can in no way be compared to Blair's formation of *New Labour*, which has jettisoned any pretence of defending the working class, adopted the Tory agenda and completely abandoned any idea of socialism.

We, however, remain firmly wedded to the ideas of socialism and Marxism.

## THE Socialist

Labour moves right

BLAIR AND Brown have moved *New Labour* so far to the right that it is now a capitalist party.

In a recent interview, Blair told the *Financial Times* that his ultimate aim was to abolish the ideological divide with the Tory party over 'the market', that is capitalism, by the end of his first government.

He said: "I want a situation more like the Democrats and Republicans in the US. People

don't even question for a single moment that the Democrats are a pro-business party. They should not be asking the question about *New Labour*."

Ironically many trade unionists in the USA are now starting to organise for a party of labour in the US because of growing disillusionment with Clinton's move to embrace the Republican Party's ultra-right policies.

We have always argued that the right-wing Labour leaders were trying to out-Tory the Tories. Any worker who doubts that need only look at Gordon Brown's complete capitulation on public expenditure. The shadow chancellor accepts everything the Tories have done, cutting services, freezing pay.

Even the *Financial Times*, the finance capitalists' bible, mocks Labour's promise to continue Tory guidelines on public spending for two years. "These targets looked unrealistic when Kenneth Clarke first published them. They now look absurd."

Carrying on a wage freeze for two years guarantees a massive collision between the Labour government's programme and the expectations of the working class, which will be aroused at the Tories' defeat.

Labour is clearly a capitalist party now. We stand for a new mass workers' party. There were high hopes that the first step towards this would be the formation of the *Socialist Labour Party* (SLP). Unfortunately, its leader Arthur Scargill refused to organise a broad, democratic, mass party.

We still stand for that mass workers' party and for collabo-



ration of socialists in the struggle, including on the electoral front. But we have a responsibility to intervene now to win the best workers to socialist and Marxist ideas.

Our new paper's aims are simple; to tell the truth to the working class about the realities of class society. We will combat the lies of the capitalists' enormous propaganda machine and right-wing Labour's apologetics for the "free market", echoed unfortunately by some trade union leaders as well.

It is an irony that Labour's leaders have embraced the market just when it has demonstrated its greatest crisis. Even the notorious capitalist freebooter George Soros, who through financial speculation has made billions of pounds, is terrified at the consequences of untrammelled capitalism. It is arousing greater and greater hostility from the working class.

Never before has Britain had a greater division between rich and poor. The Tories' never-ending cuts in public services and Blair's promises of a diet of more misery and frozen wages

contrasts with the government's announcement of a £60 million handout for the new royal yacht.

We've also got a parliament which represents the rich as never before in history. One third of the MPs are millionaires.

Meanwhile the working class suffers increasing deprivation. One-third of Britain's children now live in poverty. There is growing malnutrition, and the return of illnesses such as rickets and TB which most people would have deemed unthinkable 20 years ago.

## THE Socialist

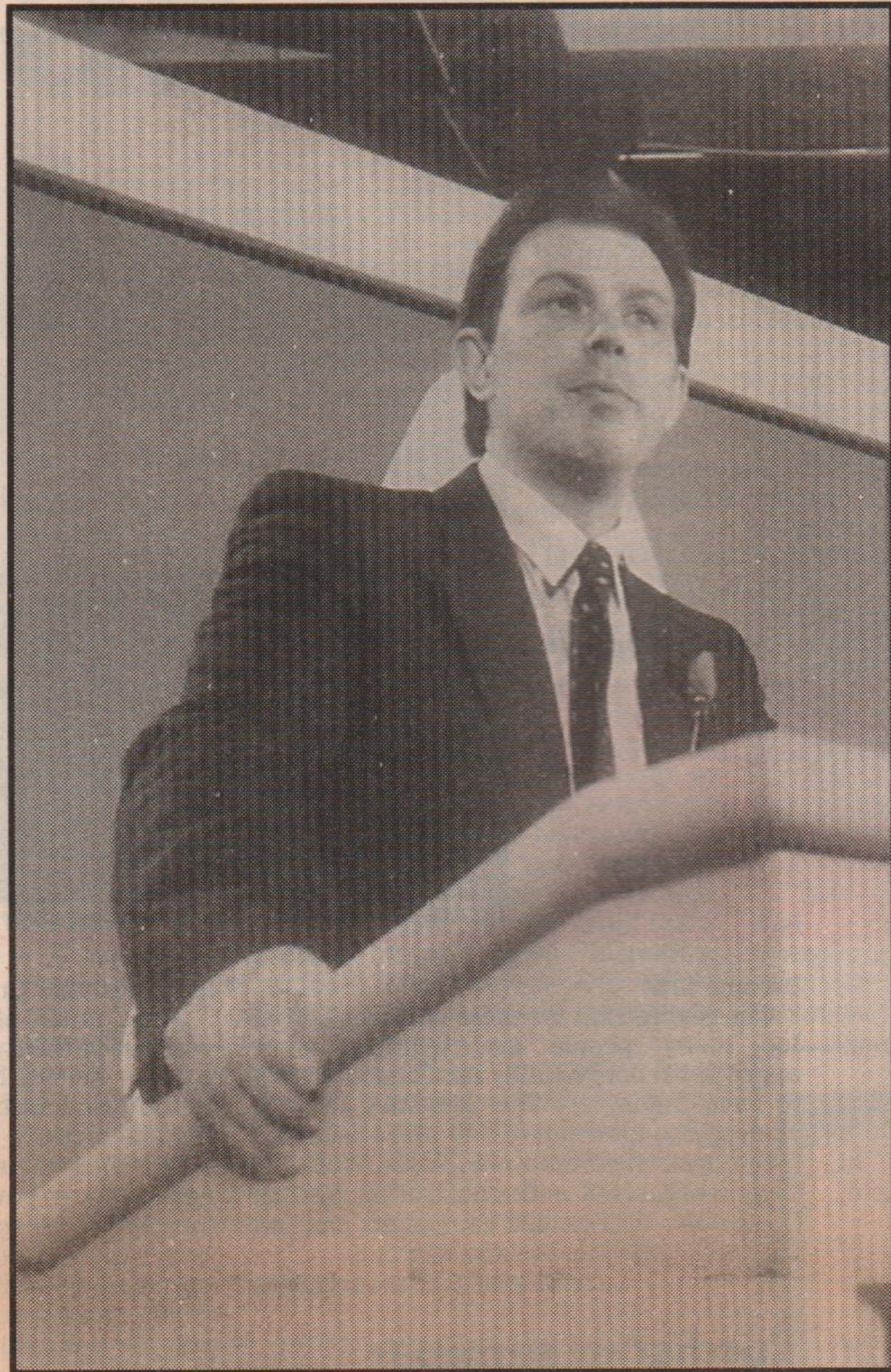
Worldwide struggle

OUR PAPER has given marvelous coverage internationally and will continue to do this. The growing inequalities are not just in Britain. No matter how much capitalist apologists try and prove the opposite, this system maintains its existence with worsening conditions for the





...DY PULLS STRINGS!



TONY BLAIR - looks looks towards big business.

shorter working week without loss in pay.

This is at a time when Major's government is taking away teachers' right to retire early. France and Korea show the only way to resist is by working-class struggle.

The main criteria for judging the viability of any system is whether it can harness science, technique and the organisation of labour to develop society. Mass unemployment shows that it cannot.

International capitalism's incapacity was shown by the tremors on the world's stock exchanges in December. Stock exchange gamblers have made fortunes out of share prices way above the value of the assets they are gambling on. New York share prices were at 16 times actual earnings!

As the Western economies end their period of 'jobless growth' and head towards recession, the December events are the harbinger of a collapse in the world financial markets which will rebound back on the economy some time in the next 12-18 months.

## THE Socialist

It's your paper

TO BE successful our paper must not only provide timely answers to problems in Britain and worldwide, it must become a real expression of working people's lives. This cannot be done just by the paper's devoted journalists who make tremendous efforts to produce the paper every week.

If The Socialist is to reflect workers' lives you, the paper's

readers and devoted sellers, need to make sure that there is a regular supply of reports, articles, comments, letters and interviews coming in.

The Socialist has not fallen from the sky. It is the creation of more than three decades of struggle.

Militant and Militant supporters have participated in, or led, some of the British working class's most important struggles in this period.

We will remain forever associated with the heroic battles of the Liverpool labour movement and working class between 1983 and 1987 which humbled Thatcher, and with the mighty poll tax battle and the YRE's struggle against racism and fascism.

Those lessons which we and those associated with us learned in these struggles will be brought to bear in the mighty battles which workers and young people will face in the future.

Blair and Brown's failure to solve the problems of the economy, housing, education, jobs and so on will lead many workers to turn towards a socialist alternative.

But this will most likely be paralleled by a split in the Tory Party - the emergence of an ultra-nationalist right wing, and by forces who may try to emulate semi-fascist demagogues like Le Pen in France and Haider in Austria who built support from disillusioned workers.

By building a powerful Socialist Party as part of a powerful radical pole of attraction, we can help to prevent such a development in Britain. But there is no time to lose in this struggle for socialism.

You should not only read our paper every week. If you have not already done so, you should join the Socialist Party.

## What's socialism got to do with it?



# Asylum and immigration

**THIS COLUMN aims to expose every week the rottenness, injustices and craziness of the bosses' capitalist system. We will take recent events and say what socialists think of them. But our ideas are also a guide to action, helping us change society for the better. NAOMI BYRON, a member of the Socialist Party National Committee, looks at the current arguments over asylum and argues a socialist response.**

the military dictatorship which crushes protests against themselves and Shell by force.

Most refugees want to return to their countries of origin; the only thing stopping them is the threat of death, persecution or war. While multinationals can profit from repression and war, the refugee crisis will continue.

The right to freedom of movement has existed since human society first began. It is only in the last 100 years that it has been restricted by law.

For the rich and powerful these laws are a way of controlling the world's population in their own interests. The number of people we are talking about is tiny. The number of asylum applications to countries in the European Union has been falling since 1994. 44,000 applied for asylum in Britain in 1995 and only 15,000 applied in the first six months of last year.

The top 1% of Britain's population own 17% of the wealth, while the bottom 50% own just 7%. The wealth of the top 1% should be used for the benefit of the population as a whole instead of being used to maintain the ruling class's privilege and power.

But instead of looking at the unequal way society's resources are distributed, for the profit of a minority, politicians instead point the finger at a few thousand asylum seekers.

Redistributing the wealth that exists at the moment could immediately wipe out poverty and unemployment in Britain and help to start rebuilding the shattered economies of countries like Nigeria and Zaire.

A socialist planned economy could develop living standards worldwide without causing the chaos and pollution that has devastated much of the world under the capitalist system.

By combining the best of modern technology with human intelligence in a society democratically run by the entire population, you will see a world where famine and war are wiped out and all restrictions on movement - legal, financial and political - become a thing of the past.

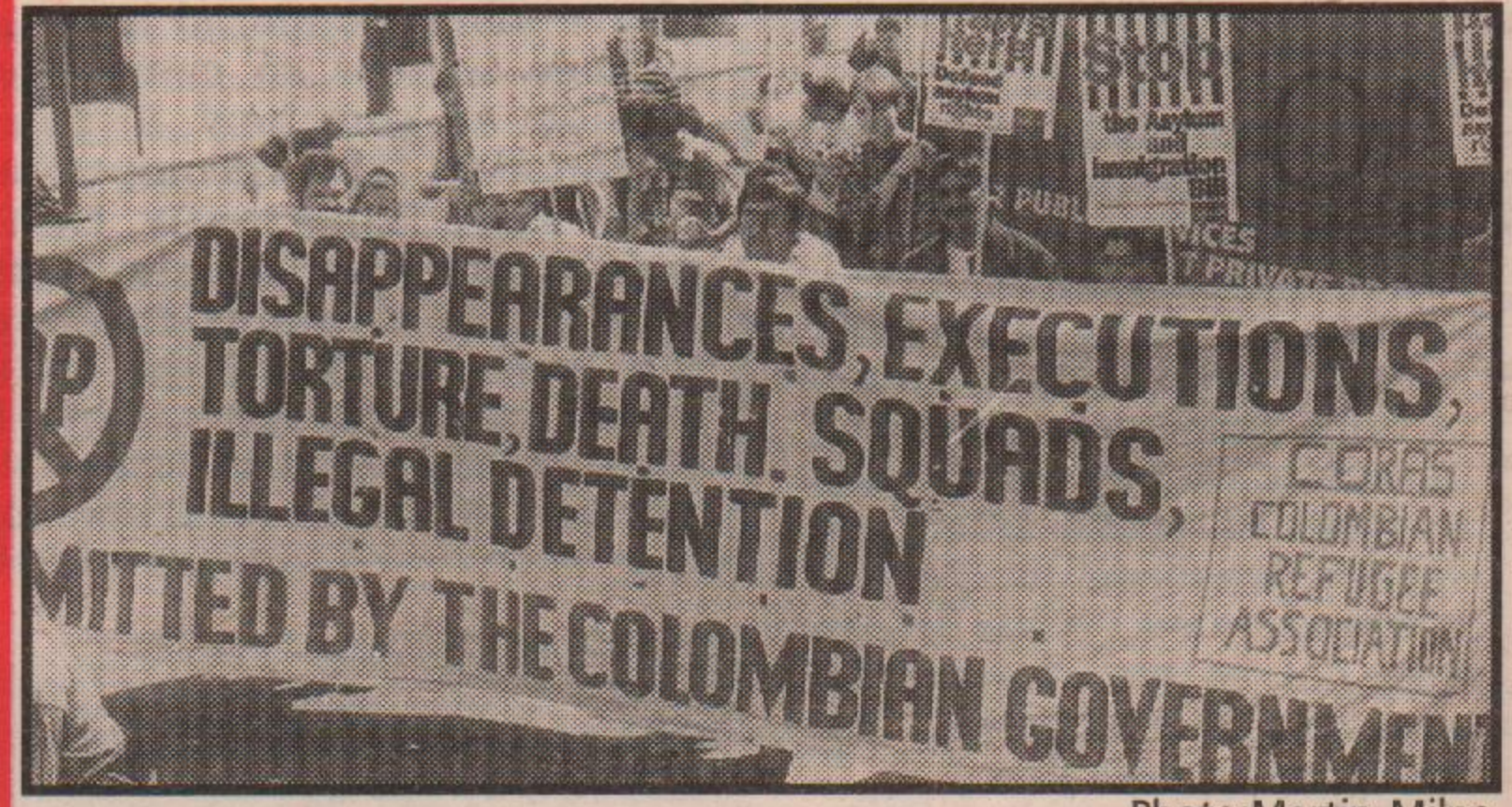


Photo: Martin Milne.

**Evans - sad character**

Chris Evans has had his hands rapped for joking about violence against women on his radio show. But what an insult to young people to call this so-called humour "juvenile". All the young people I know abhor violence against women.

We recently held a Campaign Against Domestic Violence stall at North Tyneside further education college and some of the best responses came from 16- to 18-year-old males.

Evans is possibly a talented presenter but if he carries on verbally attacking women he will become increasingly regarded as a sad character with a grudge.

*Elaine Brunskill, Gateshead*

**Upstairs, Downstairs**

What do you want to be when you grow up? A train driver? An astronaut? A doctor?

Forget it. According to the latest Social Trends survey, in 2020 if you're working class, you'll probably end up a domestic servant.

Nannying, domestic help, and hairdressing jobs are set to expand by 500,000 in order to look after the next generation of rich executives.

This regression to a Victorian, class divided society rests on the assumption that capitalism and its accompanying inequalities will continue unchallenged.

So if you don't want a bit part in a 21st century *Upstairs, Downstairs* then you better become a revolutionary.

*Dave Carter, south London*

**Brassed off censors**

*Brassed Off* is a film about a town facing pit closure and well worth seeing. In fact, I would have liked to take my two children, aged eleven and 13 years, to see it but it has a 15 certificate.

So when I watched the film I was interested to see what in the film was unsuitable for an eleven-year-old and a 13-year-old.

Was it the bad language? But my children hear far worse in the playground. Was it the steamy lover scenes? No there weren't any.

Was it the violence? Apart from one or two punches from a loan shark hitting a dad daring to object to his property being confiscated, there wasn't any violence. They've seen far worse on the TV.

Or was it the 'old-fashioned' ideas of class solidarity and comradeship?

I leave you to judge.  
*Heather Rawling, Leicester*

**Royal joke**

The Queen has so many millions stashed away in different accounts and in different countries that the £60 million to pay for the new yacht would only touch the interest she receives.

I think Prince Chas summed up royalty's views on the public when he spoke at a Lord Mayor's luncheon in the late 1960s and stated: "If the British were not so well known for laughing at themselves, we would not be here now."

*Dave Peacock, Coventry*

**Cruising with rags and riches**

I recently worked on the refit of the QE2 at Apledores Shipyard, Southampton docks.

Along with 500 other workers I did 12-hour shifts for 18 days. My job was fitting fire doors in the crews' quarters, life saving work which you may remember Cunard don't want their top knob passengers to see.

It's a vessel of class distinction alright - ever heard of shower slippers? Well you have now. It's upper-class vocabulary for a pair of flip-flops made from the best towelling fabric and provided in each cabin.

This floating jewel-in-the-

crown may be impressive for some but, for me, each deck reflected the same old rags-to-riches story, the haves and have-nots. It was a real eye-opener.

The crew's decks are full of cockroaches, most of the crew are Filipinos earning £100 for a seven-day week - not so luxurious for them! Compare that with passengers like the American millionaire who hires the Penthouse suite every year for a staggering £3 million a time.

I wonder if they ever told him the ship is riddled with asbestos?

*Keith Gibson, Hull*



**TROUBLED LUXURY - QE2 gets fixed after 1992's near catastrophe.**

**Do you have something to say?**

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to Red Letters, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB, or phone Helen on 0181 533 3311, fax 0181 986 9445, e-mail 101464.3527@compuserve.com.

Don't forget to give your address and phone number.

★ Winners of letter of the week will receive a £5 book token from Socialist Books, 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9.

**Backdoor DSS cuts**

The Tories are trying more back door-cuts in social security benefits.

The Independent Tribunal Service (ITS) provides unsuccessful claimants with a chance to appeal. Tribunal venues in Chesterfield, Derbyshire and Enfield, north London are to close.

ITS argue that claimants would still have an appeal venue within reasonable distance. But how 'reasonable' would a disabled person, claiming Disability Living Allowance for mobility problems, find the round trip of 30 miles from Chesterfield to Sheffield (the nearest remaining venue)?

Many will be discouraged from taking their case up, and this just two months after the Disability Discrimination Act

became law!

The real reason for these closures is that too many people are winning their appeals. No doubt Lilley has leaned on ITS to save money for the Treasury or face even worse alternatives, ie privatisation.

In Chesterfield the Unemployed Workers' Centre organised a demonstration against these cuts. Determined campaigns can put pressure on ITS to reverse the cuts.

*Name and address supplied*

**Kurdistan seminar**

Intensified persecution of Kurds lends new urgency to the situation in Kurdistan.

Refugee camps like Atrush, South Kurdistan (northern Iraq) are being shut down and meagre protection provided by Oper-

ation Provide Comfort quietly withdrawn.

Since much of the persecution goes on without publicity or in secrecy, Defend the Kurds - defend human and civil rights in Britain and Europe campaign is organising a seminar.

The agenda includes anti-terrorist and emergency powers against Europe's minority communities, the arrest and imprisonment of Kurdish political leaders, 'national security' deportations and the ECHR, immigration and asylum policies and the political persecution of the Kurds in Germany.

The seminar takes place on Saturday 15 February 1997, 2.30-5.30pm at the Council Chambers, Camden Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1.

*Sarah Parker, north London*



**Bungs, crap and paperwork**

*Dave Fryatt*

**A**CCORDING TO press reports, staff at the Crown Prosecution Service Office in Ipswich have been told that due to cutbacks they are only allowed eight squares of toilet paper per working day. This pretty much sums up modern management methods - a preoccupation with crap and paperwork.

**T**HERE HAS probably been enough said already about Tony Blair's interview in the Big Issue. All I have to say is that if some smarmy New Labour yuppie comes knocking at my door begging for my vote I will show them zero tolerance they won't forget in a hurry.

**F**OOTBALL'S MATCH fixing scandal involving John Fashanu, Bruce Grobbelar and Hans Segers has certainly set alarm bells ringing in my mind. I have often wondered how Leyton Orient manage to lose so consistently and corruption is somehow a more satisfying explanation than incompetence.

But more importantly, isn't it a bit suspicious that the Labour Party manage to keep losing elections that seem safely in the bag? On the verge of victory they resort to witch-hunts, vote losing right-wing policies and internal bickering and manage to achieve five more years of

opposition.

I reckon we should be ready for an election fixing scandal with photos of Labour leaders taking 'bungs' from shady Far Eastern betting syndicates.

**T**HE GOVERNMENT'S policy on gun control may not have satisfied anyone but their food policy is well on the way to having a nation's men firing blanks. Sperm counts are at an all-time low and chemicals in food are a major contributing factor. The latest culprit is the previously banned sweetener, cyclamates. Contraceptive manufacturers better start protesting quickish or another industry will bite the dust.

**T**HE POLICE desire for wider surveillance powers can perhaps be partly explained by the recent conviction of a copper for selling surveillance records to organised crime. Our local, The Frog and Gynaecologist, is full every Friday with coppers selling transcripts of phone taps, confiscated drugs and illegally obtained photos.

The government may have virtually destroyed apprenticeships but if you want a career as a successful criminal a few years in the police would seem excellent training.

**Socialist Books Celebration Offer**

To celebrate the launch of *The Socialist*, we are offering reduced prices on many books.

- Liverpool - A city that dared to fight: £7.95 hardback (was £8.95)/£6 softback (was £7).
- France '68 - month of revolution: £2 (was £3.50).
- Germany - 1918 to 1933: £0.25 (was £1).
- The Masses Arise - great French revolution: £3.50 (was £5.50).
- Towards a New Revolution - workers of Soviet Union speak: £2.50 (was £4).
- Whose Choice? - working-class women & fertility rights: £2.50 (was £4.95).
- The Unbroken Thread: £2 (was £5).
- Out of the Night: £3 (was £8.95).
- World in Crisis - report of CWI world congress: £2 (was £4).
- Global Warning - socialism and the environment: £5 (was £6.95).
- The Rise of The Militant - the first 30 years: £5 (was £10).

Tick as required and return with your name, address and payment to: Socialist Books, 3/13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB or phone 0181 533 3311. Offer finishes 14 February.

CLASSIFIED ADS: 30p per word (minimum ten words). Semi-display £4.50 per column centimetre. Special offer 3 weeks for the price of 2. Larger ads by negotiation. All copy should reach here by first post Friday - a week before publication. PHOTOS by The Socialist photographers for sale. 10 inch x 8 inch prints only £6 each from 3-13 Hepscoot Road, London E9 5HB.

# Ken Loach - Singing Nicaragua's song

**KEN LOACH** is Britain's best known left-wing film director. His films range from *Kes* and *Cathy Come Home* to *Land and Freedom* and *The Flickering Flame*. This week sees the release of his latest film *Carla's Song*, reviewed below. In the first part of a two-part interview he talks about his work.

**K**EN STARTED by explaining why he made a film about Nicaragua.

"*Carla's Song* started four or five years ago when Paul Laverty wrote to me. He was somebody who had worked in Nicaragua as a writer and a lawyer during the 1980s during the war against the Contras.

"We tried to work out how we could make a film that captured some of his experiences, told the story of Nicaragua and made it accessible for people in Britain.

"Nicaragua is a subject that hasn't been adequately covered. All the wars and intervention by the United States are never adequately dealt

with because the people supposedly on our side turn out to be the bad guys. In Nicaragua the US are war criminals, so you are obviously not going to get a lot of films made about that."

## Mood

WE ASKED why the mood Ken's films ranged from the bleakness of *Ladybird, Ladybird* to the inspiration of *Land and Freedom*.

Ken explained: "I think it is a reflection of the content of the films because that's how the world strikes you. Understanding what somebody's been through can leave you feeling desolate for them.

"Then you meet other people who are organised, got collective strength, got a lot of spirit and a lot of humour and energy and you feel strengthened by them. I think both responses are true and you can't have one without the other."

## Land and Freedom

KEN HAS mixed views on the controversy

caused by Land and Freedom's portrayal of the Spanish civil war.

"The controversy it provoked among old Stalinists, including some who fought in Spain, was quite sad. The last thing I wanted to do was attack these people.

"They were the flower of their generation and went to Spain to fight fascism. They were young and you cannot hold them responsible for the role of the Communist Party.

"They made such a commitment that it defined their life, and it is very difficult for them to renounce the Communist Party now. Obviously, the film was not made to wind them up. It was made to say look there were these incredible opportunities, why didn't they work out, what went wrong?"

"The response from young people in Spain was extraordinary. We had an inkling of it amongst the cast who were young actors and young people. It came as a surprise to a lot of them who hadn't realised that the civil war had happened in quite that way.



KEN LOACH - on location for *Carla's Song*.

Photo: PolyGram.

"That there had been that revolutionary moment which had been sabotaged and why it was sabotaged was very new

to them. It really was very exciting working with people who were just coming across that. That effect it had on audiences

was very rewarding."

Next week Ken Loach talks about his future plans and his politics.

## Contras, Sandinistas and a Glasgow bus

**C**ARLA (OYANKA CABEZAS) is a Nicaraguan refugee and George (Robert Carlyle) is a wise-cracking Glasgow bus driver with attitude.

Sheena Menzies  
Waltham Forest

Ken Loach's new film, *Carla's Song*, is essentially a love story played out against the background of political events in Nicaragua in 1987. The CIA-backed Contra rebels are launching an assault against the left-wing Sandanista Government and the country is being ravaged by war.

Carla has come to Europe to promote the cause of the Sandanistas but has ended up busking on the streets of Glasgow to make ends meet. A chance encounter on George's bus, and an unpaid ticket, leads to them both taking a difficult journey.

Carla has physical and emotional scars from her life as a Brigadista (a revolutionary fighter) but refuses to discuss anything with George. He doesn't have a clue about Nicaragua. His young sister knows more about it from school.

But, after being sacked for taking his bus on a detour round Loch Lomond, he buys two aeroplane tickets for Managua. He persuades Carla to come with him to confront the ghosts of her past and resolve her relationship with the mysterious Antonio.

Loach uses Carla and George's journey around Nicaragua to show the horrors of the war and the difference the Sandanista Government made for the ordinary people.

The literacy rate rose from 50% to 87% in the four years following the Sandanista revolution. The redistribution of land and food collectives benefited all the people in the towns and villages they serve.

The most moving scene from the film is where George learns about what the



GEORGE AND CARLA - on a Glasgow bus.

Photo: PolyGram.

revolution means for the ordinary people. Their spirit and determination is remarkable given the war around them.

Human rights activist Bradley (Scott Glen) helps Carla find some of her comrades and family.

Loach uses this character to show the US involvement in Nicaragua. Bradley turns out to be an ex-CIA man who helped train Contras.

The main political message of this film, is how US imperialism will use any methods to defeat democratic movements that challenge the ideas of capitalism.

*Carla's Song* may not be Loach's best film but it will undoubtedly be one of the better films of 1997.

## Carla's Song

Special screening in aid of the sacked  
Liverpool dockers

Sponsored by Ken Loach and Parallax Films  
Thursday 13 February 8pm

Odeon Cinema, London Rd., Liverpool.

## Seeing RED

**S**O MICHAEL GRADE, the man who would fight privatisation of Channel 4 "with every breath in my body", has decided to leave television for his family's firm First Leisure. His salary will be considerably more than his current £450,000 per year plus £150,000 perks.

While the immediate threat of privatisation has subsided, future attacks from a government of any colour can't be ruled out. So he leaves the workers and performers to fight off future attacks themselves, once again proving that the bosses are fair-weather friends when it comes to opposing privatisation.

### Saturday

*Assignment* (BBC2, 7.15pm). BP's role in Colombia is put in the spotlight.

### Sunday

*People's Century* (BBC1, 10.30pm, repeated Monday, BBC2, 7pm). A study of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and its role in Iran.

### Monday

*Panorama* (BBC1, 9.30pm). Fergal Keane returns to Rwanda where he reported in 1994 on the genocide against the Tutsis.

With people returning from refugee camps, some of them suspected killers, how much has society been able to return to a semblance of normality?

### Tuesday

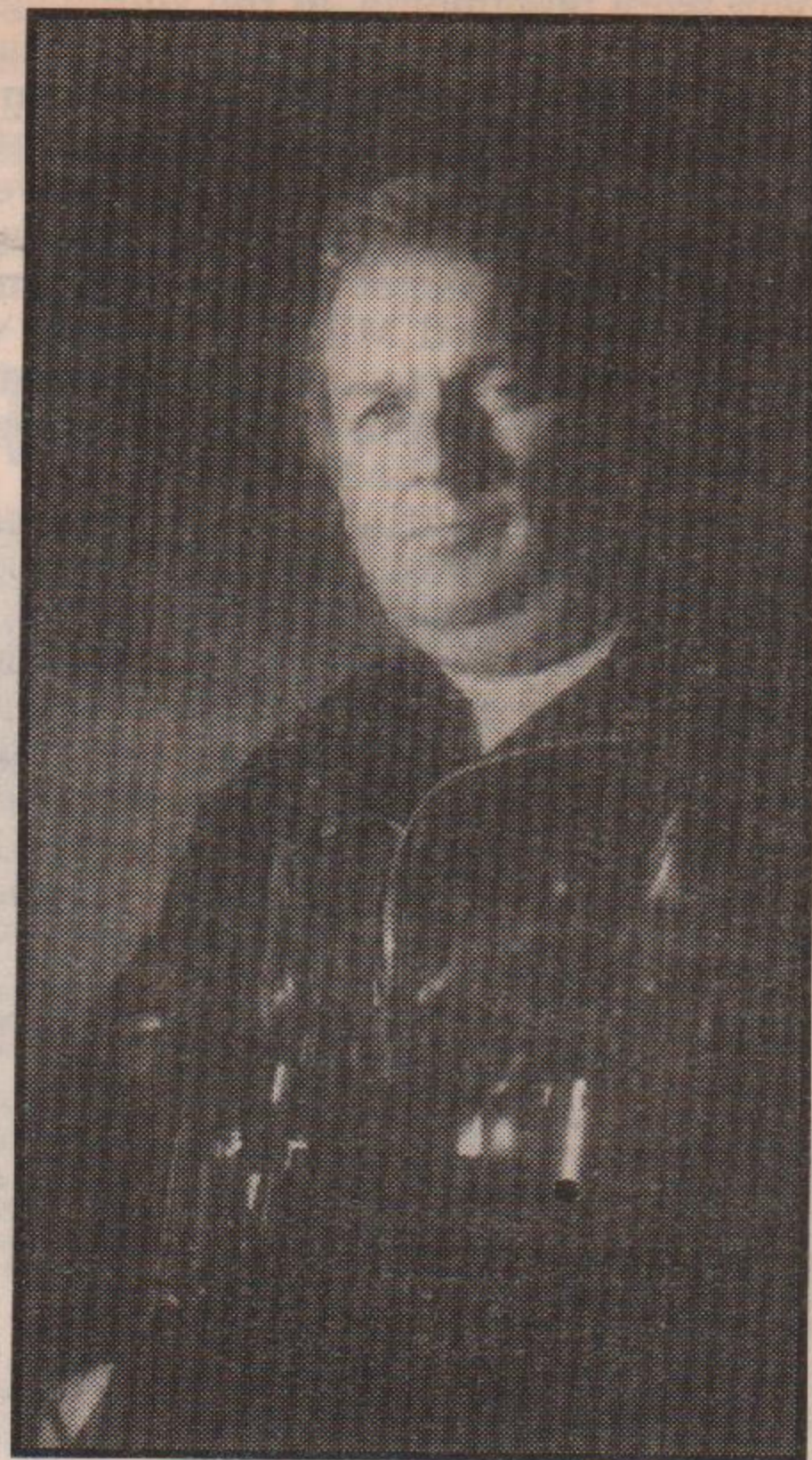
*Omnibus* (BBC1, 10.45pm). With the BBC currently showing his novel *Ivanhoe*, Omnibus profiles Sir Walter Scott and asks whether he was good or bad for Scotland at the time when the Highlands were being sold to the aristocracy. **Pick of the week.**

### Wednesday

*History File* (BBC2, 12.05pm). A five-part series looking at the rise of the Nazis through interviews with those who participated in German life between the wars. The first programme shows a 1946 interview with a Nazi

## A look at the week ahead on TV with Kevin Parslow

Fri 7 February-  
Thu 13 February



TROUBLE AT THE TOP Wednesday, 9.50pm BBC2.

Brownshirt awaiting imprisonment.

*Trouble at the Top* (BBC2, 9.50pm). How dreadful is cable TV? 12 months ago the BBC looked at the launch of LIVE TV with Janet Street-Porter and ex-Sun editor Kelvin McKenzie at the helm. But problems with technology, staff cuts and worst of all low audiences led to Street-Porter's departure leaving McKenzie in sole control.

Can anything be done to a channel which reads the weather in Norwegian, a rabbit that gives his verdict on the day's news and topless darts is a regular late night programme?

### Thursday

*Horizon* (BBC2, 9.25pm). Last part of the *Ice Mummies* series looks at the discovery of a 13-year-old boy, sacrificed by the Incas 500 years ago.

**the future  
is red**

OUR NEW party is now up and running. **HANNAH SELL**, national campaigns organiser talks about who we are and some of the campaigns in which we are involved.

**Socialist Party**  
**THE LAUNCH**

# The Socialist Party

**T**HE SOCIALIST Party is not like one of the 'mainstream' political parties. We are not professional politicians; we are just people who have got sick of watching our hospitals and schools closed, our pay cut and our job security destroyed. We are people who've decided to get organised and fight back.

Before we launched the Socialist Party we were called Militant Labour. Our proud history is of struggling to defend working-class people.

We led the battle against the poll tax when 18 million people fought together to beat the tax and bring down Thatcher.

We have 98 local branches across Britain, each one is campaigning on the issues that effect their local community.

## Job Seekers' Allowance

THE JSA is the Tories latest benefit rip-off. The purpose is to push people off the dole into jobs at slave-labour pay rates. The knock-on effect will be to drag average pay rates down.

We are organising alongside benefit staff and unemployed groups to beat the JSA - so far

**Party** Just people who've  
decided to fight back

nine demonstrations and over 50 pickets have taken place.

## Supporting workers in struggle

WHEN WORKERS take industrial action to defend or improve their wages and conditions the Socialist Party will do everything possible to support them. We campaign to turn trade unions into fighting, democratic bodies that will defend workers' wages and conditions.

Speaking about their victory after an eight-week occupation, Ray Kennedy, Glacier workers' AEEU shop steward said: "Scottish Militant Labour's (SML) [Ed: our party name in Scotland] immediate support was a demonstration of class solidarity in its truest sense."

"It let all our comrades know that support was forthcoming from outside our workplace...

they attribute no small part in our victory to SML."

## Elections

WE STAND in elections to give working-class people a socialist alternative to Labour.

We first stood candidates in the 1992 general election. Since then we have stood in 125 local elections and have four councillors.

In the forthcoming general election we will stand in 20 seats. Any Socialist Party member elected will accept only the average worker's wage so that they remain in touch with the problems of working-class people.

## Campaign Against Domestic Violence

WE SET up the CADV as a broad-based organisation and have continued to play a lead-

ing role in developing it. The CADV now has the support of five trade unions and hundreds of other groups.

## Fighting prejudice

THE SOCIALIST Party Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Group helps co-ordinate our campaigns against anti-gay discrimination and for civil rights.

We set up Youth Against Racism in Europe (YRE). Involving thousands of young people, it co-organised a demonstration of 50,000 to demand the closure of the Nazi BNP's HQ.

The Socialist Party works both independently and with other groups to fight racism, prejudice and discrimination.

**◆If you haven't joined yet, take the plunge. Ask your friends and family to join too. Phone us on 0181 533 3311 or use the back page form.**

## Obituary - Roy Goodwin

WITH MUCH sorrow The Socialist has to report the tragic death of comrade Roy Goodwin from pneumonia, at the young age of 28.

Roy, his partner Genevene and daughter Sarah, moved from Southwark in south London to Newcastle only five months ago where he continued to be an active Party member, helping to reach the region's fighting fund target before Christmas.

Roy had joined Militant in 1988 when a student at Thames polytechnic, fighting for Marxist ideas against the right-wing in the Labour students organisation.

After graduating he worked for Lewisham council and became a branch committee member in UNISON.

He steadfastly defended union members against New Labour-run Lewisham council's cuts and fought for the maximum unity of all council workers. He also strove to link the UNISON members' fight to defend jobs with the local community's

fight to maintain services.

Roy was also a branch committee member of Southwark Militant Labour. He was active in the branch's local election campaign 1994 which fought a tough anti-racist campaign. Roy also participated in the many anti-BNP demonstrations and protests.

He attended the special conference which founded the Socialist Party but tragically never saw The Socialist.

Reliable and hardworking - and having time for a joke (we'll all miss his quirky sense of humour!), we will miss his forthright opinions, delivered without being abrasive. We will miss a fine revolutionary.

Our condolences go to Genevene, to Sarah and to Roy's family.

(As a fitting tribute to Roy's dedication to socialism, Genevene has requested that instead of sending flowers, comrades should give donations to the Socialist Party.)



**Working people and their families need a paper that will tell them the truth - that will be on their side, campaigning against injustice and unashamedly fighting for a real change in the ownership, control and direction of society. The Socialist will be that paper. Take out a subscription today - you won't regret it!**  
Dave Nellist  
(Socialist MP 1983-1992)

**SUBSCRIBE!**

If you want to subscribe to *The Socialist*, fill in and return the form on page 16, with the appropriate payment.

## Fighting fund & paper sales

### Hospitals not yachts!

AROUND THE country the Socialist Party is campaigning against health service privatisation. **STEVE SCORE**, Leicester Socialist Party, describes what's happening in their area.

IN LEICESTER one of three hospitals are threatened with closure. There is a danger that if the Glenfield is closed it will be sold into the private sector to become a private hospital. Already we are being told that there is no cash for operations at the hospital and only emergency operations are available.

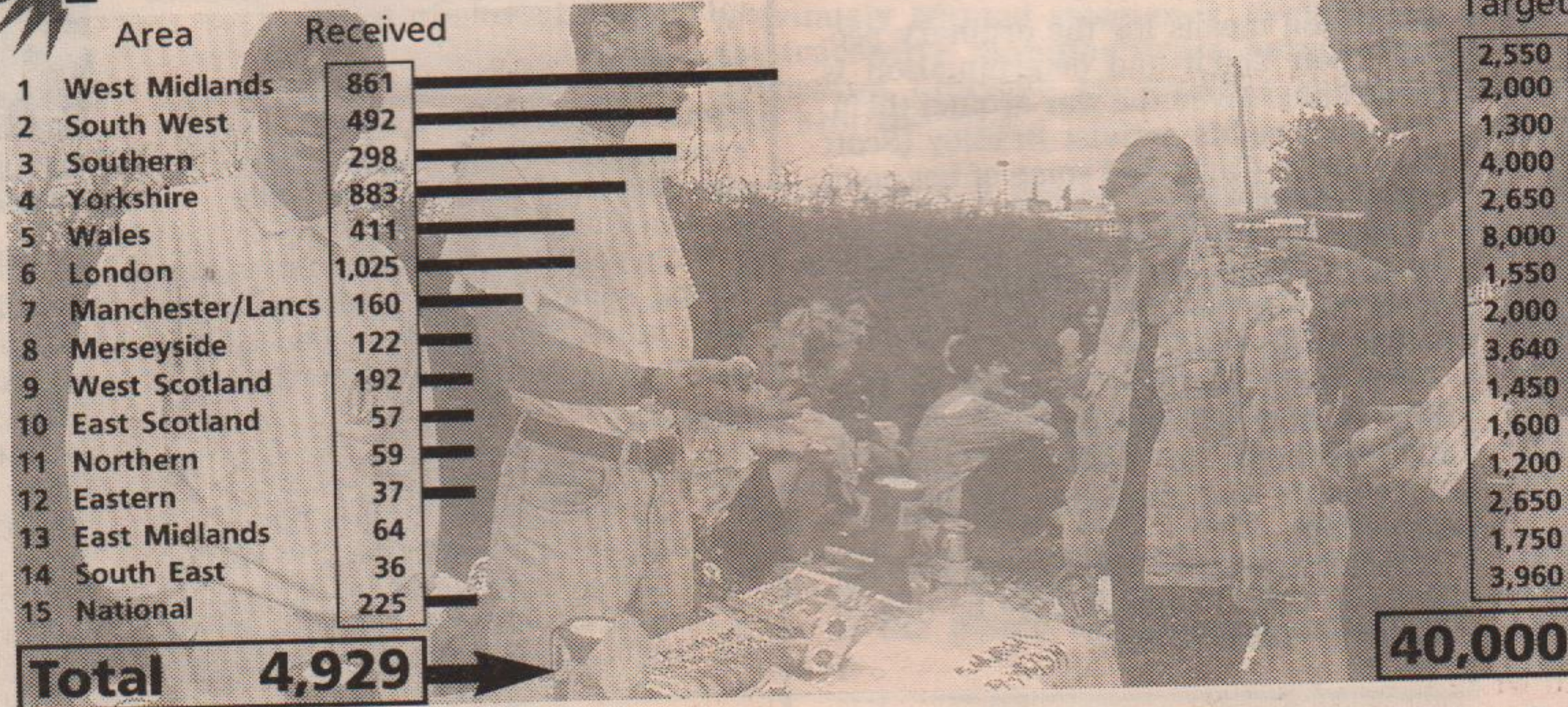
So we organised a stall in the shopping centre with a petition against hospital closures. We received £125 in public donations and sold 47 Militants (forerunner of The Socialist).

We attracted attention using

## Socialist Party Fighting fund Week 5

Total: £4,929

DEADLINE: 1 APRIL



a megaphone to announce who we were and what we were campaigning about. Queues of people came up to sign the petition and donate to the campaign.

People were expressing their anger about the state of the

NHS - "if the Government can spend £60 million on a royal yacht, why can't we have a decent health service".

Coventry Socialist Party received £140 in public donations while campaigning against hospital closures.

### Thanks for donations from:

£120, west London Socialist Party meeting.  
£100, Clive Jones, Gwent Socialist Party.

the Socialist

★ **struggle**  
★ **solidarity**  
★ **socialism**

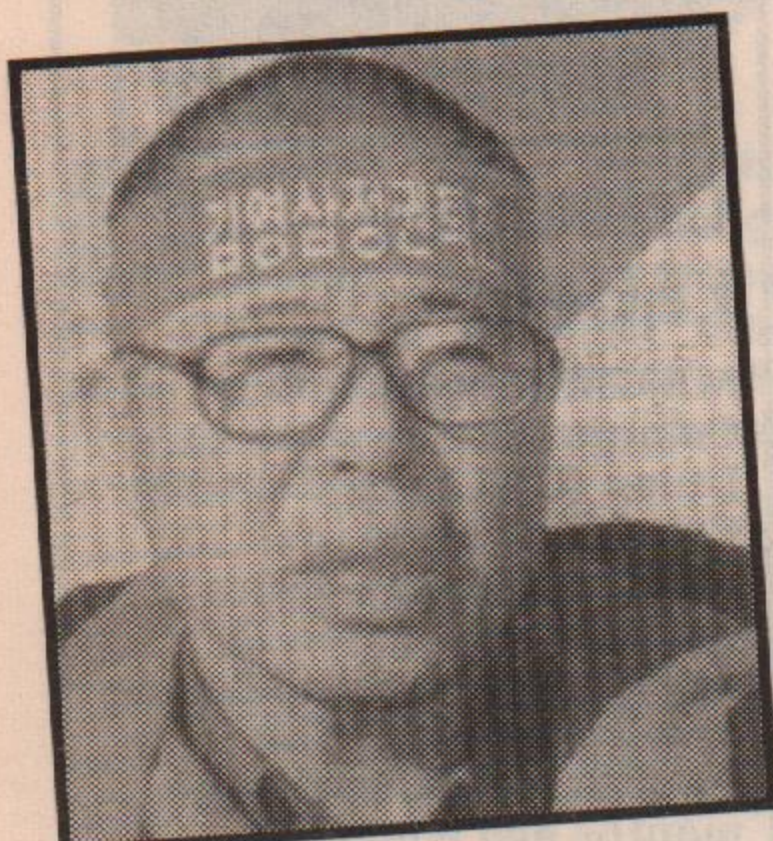
AT A special conference in December 1996, Militant Labour members voted to change the party name to Socialist Party.

Listed below are rallies and meetings to launch the Socialist Party in your area.

If you cannot see your area listed and want to join or have more information, please phone Mike Waddington on 0181 533 3311.

- Basildon:** Wednesday 19 February, 8pm, The Basildon Centre, Town Centre.
- Bradford:** Thursday 20 February, 7.30pm, Bradford Central Library, Jacobs Well.
- Brighton:** Thursday 13 February, contact Mark on 01273 298905.
- Bristol:** Tuesday 18 February, 7.30pm, The Mailcoach, Bond Street/Broadmead, (next to Littlewoods). Contact Robin Clapp at PO Box 1031, Bristol, BS99 1SR.
- Cardiff:** Tuesday 11 February, 8pm, Sandringham Hotel, St Mary Street. Contact Alec Thraves on 01792 476156.
- Chatham:** Monday 10 February, 8pm, Churchill's Pub, The Brook.
- Eastern Region:** contact Jane James on 01438 741 618.
- Folkestone:** Thursday 13 February, 8pm, Oddfellows Social Club, Broomfield Road, Cheriton.
- Hitchin:** Tuesday 11 February, 8pm, Club 85, Whinbush Rd.
- London:** Thursday 27 February, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. Speakers: Joe Higgins, Dublin councillor, Socialist Party parliamentary candidate; Hillingdon Hospital striker; Liverpool docker; an Indian 'Miss World' protester.
- Manchester:** contact John Killen on 0161 283 1872.
- Merseyside:** contact Mike Morris on 0151 260 3111.
- Northampton:** Wednesday 19 February, 7.30pm, King's Heath Community Centre, North Oval, King's Heath. Speakers include Northants County Council UNISON.
- Northern Region:** contact Kevin Miles 0191 262 6694, PO Box 55 Wallsend, Tyne-and-Wear, NE28 0YZ.
- Nottingham:** Tuesday 11 February, 7.30pm, Queens Walk Community Centre, Houseman Gardens, Meadows.
- Oxford:** Thursday 27 February, 7.30pm, Oxford Town Hall.
- Ramsgate:** Wednesday 12 February, 8pm, Red Lion pub, Kings Street.
- Sheffield:** Thursday 13 February, 7.30pm, Sheffield Unemployed Centre (SCCAU), West Street.
- Southampton:** Saturday 8 February, between 11am - 1pm, Regional Conference of SP. Rally 2pm - 4pm, St Matthew's Hall, St Marys Road. (Creche available).
- Stevenage:** Thursday 20 February, 8pm, Bedwell Community Centre, Bedwell Crescent.
- Wakefield:** Monday 10 February, 7.30pm, Black Rock pub, City Centre.
- West Midlands:** Thursday 27 February. For more details contact Dave Griffiths, PO Box 121, Coventry CV1 5DA or 01203 555620.
- Scotland:** In Scotland our party is called Scottish Militant Labour (SML) - if you want to know more about activities in Scotland then contact SML on 0141 552 6773 or at the Socialist Party headquarters on 0181 533 3311 or 0181 986 7578.

# South Korean trade unions celebrate and prepare for future



KCTU LEADER - Kwon Young Kil.

**T**HE ALMIGHTY struggle of the South Korean workers against the Kim Young Sam government's attempt to bring in new anti-labour laws was celebrated at a massive 200,000-strong demonstration at Seoul's Yoido Square on 26 January.

**ELIZABETH CLARKE** reports from Seoul on the speech of Kwon Young Kil, the leader of the then 'unrecognised' Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) which has led the so-far successful struggle.

Kwon Young Kil welcomed the new unity of the two Korean trade union federations and warned: "We must continue a united struggle to establish new labour laws that will protect our lives and rights. We will succeed fighting together in FKTU and KCTU."

Kwon Young Kil recognised that "the FKTU by joining the general strike, has shown what an allied struggle can be like."

"We are here because we succeeded in breaking down the conspiracy to divide us. Let's give a shout to pledge that we will fight together as one unit." He continued: "This fight is

not only that of the working class but for the people as a whole. It is a struggle for the right of all people to a decent life.

"It has been for the abolition of such evil laws as allow for lay-offs, flexible working hours, the prohibition of multiple unions.

"It was to break the false democracy and build true democracy for the people, though the capitalists said that our struggle was only to legalise our organisation."

Kwon Young Kil recalled how the government threatened to imprison hundreds of trade union leaders after they had initially arrested 20 union leaders.

He explained how as "leader of the KCTU he did not declare a general strike" because of the threat of arrest. He said: "When we began we thought not 20 but 2,000 leaders would be arrested.

"At this moment, due to the general strike, many thousands of comrades have been sacked and victimised. All workers who joined the general strike were threatened 'no work, no wages'.

"We must pledge that if they don't drop the victimisation let's go forward and continue our struggle."

He reminded the crowd that they didn't fight just for opposition leaders to meet the president, the reason was to ensure the abolition of the new labour laws.

"The KCTU declares that if



CELEBRATION - South Korean strikers pledge to continue the struggle

Photo: Elizabeth Clarke

the ruling party and the Chaebols [the multinationals which control the South Korean econ-

originally announced", he added.

Kwon Young Kil then told the assembled mass that that day there was a report of police trade unions demonstrating in the USA, while in South Korea "no public officials are allowed to make a trade union."

He explained why the capitalists had introduced the new labour laws. "The capitalists try to justify the new labour laws saying it is necessary to

revive the poor economy. Do you think the new labour law will revive the economy? Who is killing the economy? It's the government and the Chaebols.

"The Hanbo conglomerate shows what they are doing. It was given five billion won (South Korean currency). I cannot imagine such a sum."

"More than 500 small companies are going bankrupt for want of five billion won. But they spent that money in supporting that Chaebol. So this government and the Chaebols are responsible for the poor economy" he said to massive cheers.

*More on South Korea in future issues.*

**"This fight is not only that of the working class but for the people as a whole. It is a struggle for the right of all people to a decent life."**

omy] refuse our request we will declare a general strike earlier than the 14 February date we

## Germany

# Where socialism lives on

ON 12 January, 70,000 people came to the graves of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in Berlin to honour the two German socialists who were murdered in 1919 by the Berlin police on behalf of the right-wing leadership of the SPD (Social Democratic Party). BJORN SPEIDEL reports from Berlin.

Every year since 1923 - except for 1933-45 when the fascists ruled Germany - there have been demonstrations for Rosa and Karl - to ensure that their political heritage, the need for a radical fight for justice, peace and socialism, lives on.

Last year the Berlin police, on behalf of the local SPD/CDU (Christian Democrat) government, heavily attacked the rally which also occurs on the same day and tried to criminalise it.

This year the SAV (German section of the CWI) and others urged the PDS (former Stalinist, now "Socialist" party, still the biggest party in east Berlin) to mobilise their members and supporters even more than last year to protect the demo against police attacks.

But the PDS leadership - in their attempt to become an 'established' party - completely refused to support the demonstration at all and called on their members to only go to the cemetery.



ROSA LUXEMBURG.



KARL LIEBKNECHT

Nevertheless, the number of demonstrators doubled. Many youth joined a socialist demonstration for the first time in their lives.

The SAV comrades made up a section of the demo with over 200 members and supporters of our party, dozens of red flags and banners.

We were the most lively and combative section of the demo! Other political groups were quite impressed.

We were the only ones demanding a 24-hour general strike against the massive cuts, the abolition of over 20,000 pub-

lic-sector jobs and the privatisations carried out by the local Tory/Labour coalition in Berlin.

After the demonstration we held a SAV rally. 200 took part, many of them youth.

Two young women and one public employee joined our party during the rally.

The finance appeal made 440 Marks for the building of our party.

To keep alive the political heritage of Karl and Rosa means fighting for an international socialist alternative today.

## Greetings to

# THE Socialist

"WHOEVER WORSHIPS the accomplished fact is incapable of preparing for the future." (Leon Trotsky, 1936)

Your courageous step to launch the Socialist Party in the best example of how to prepare the future. Members of the SAV in Germany are following this event with great interest and pleasure.

We wish you every success in building a strong socialist force to fight the bosses and their rotten system.

Forward to international socialism. The future is ours. Socialist Alternative (SAV) national executive committee (Germany).



The Militant Organisation in Australia wishes our British comrades the best of luck as they change the name of their organisation and paper.

Nothing is automatic in politics, but with a bolder approach to building the party, we are hopeful that this name change will put your organisation in a strategic position to capitalise and grow under a Blair government.

After 13 years of a so-called Labor government in Australia we know well that only our International offers a way forward for workers and young people.

Militant - Australian section of the CWI

THE 550 strikers at the Haifa Chemical Works in Israel thank readers of The Socialist for the solidarity and support they have already received.

For those of you who still have to write them or just in case you want to keep in contact; here is the new address for Haifa Chemicals strikers.

Eli Lotti  
Haifa Chemicals Work's Committee  
PO Box 104  
Udi, 17949, Israel  
Fax: 00 972 4 845 6493



Photo: Paul Mattsson

**L**AST SATURDAY'S demonstration by teaching unions against the Tory government's plan to abolish early retirement, attracted two thousand protesters.

The low turnout was due to role of the unions' leaders. The National Union of Teachers (NUT), for example, did not produce a single leaflet for the demonstration. It was left to London NUT branches to mobilise union members.

At the rally after the demo, union leaders congratulated themselves on united action but

could only propose a campaign strategy of teachers writing to their local MPs!

Teachers belonging to the Socialist Party leafleted the demo and rally calling for a one-day strike of teachers and lecturers to defend early retirement and to demand extra resources for education.

Union branches should continue to press for these demands with their respective union executives.

*NUT member*

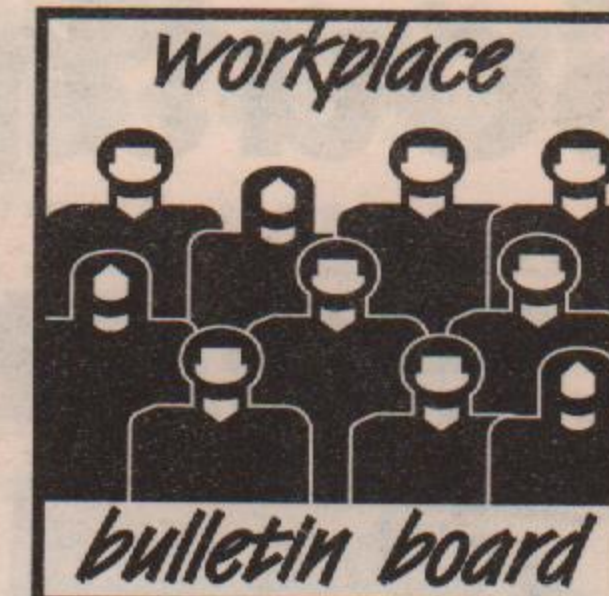
## Greetings to THE Socialist from...

"Having been a keen reader of Militant since 1968 I'm confident that The Socialist will inform and inspire me in the way its predecessor has for nearly 30 years. In particular I look forward to coverage of trade union struggles against the Tories in their last weeks in power and the battles that loom ahead under a New Labour government."

*Andrew Price, NATFHE national council, Wales region*

"Establishment of the Socialist Party and The Socialist is tremendous news for all workers looking to take on the bosses and their system. We can build on the tremendous work done by the Militant and look forward to fighting for a socialist future."

*Tony Church, CPSA Benefits Agency section assistant secretary (personal capacity).*



### Critchley Labels

MEMBERS OF the Communications Workers Union (CWU), employed by Critchley Labels in Cwmarn, South Wales are taking strike action to defend their right to belong to a trade union. The dispute started over nine months ago when ten workers, including the union branch secretary and chair were made redundant.

The workers voted to impose an overtime ban and called for all the workers made redundant to be reinstated. In retaliation the management withdrew union recognition.

After a further ballot, 24 of the 28 workers involved voted for strike action despite management threats to sack anyone who took part in the action. Two one-day strikes have already taken place and a further week-long strike started on 3 February.

This small group, despite intimidation, have been willing to take action to defend their right to belong to a trade union.

What is needed is to get all workers who were sacked reinstated and trade union recognition. Workers locally should show solidarity and visit the Critchley picket.

*Bernard Roome, Swansea CWU*

## Civil service unions Ballot set back

**C**IVIL AND Public Services Association (CPSA) members have voted by a six to one majority for a statement of 'Aims and Values' as a step towards a merger with the other main civil service union, the Public Services, Tax and Commerce Union (PTC).

*Tony Church*

Socialist Party members in both unions support a merger in principle but are fighting for a new rule book which gives democratic control to the rank and file.

Both the right-wing leaderships of the CPSA and PTC on the other hand are seeking to strengthen their grip on power.

The decision to put these Tony Blair-style 'Aims and Values' out to an all-members postal ballot was a deliberate ploy to force through a merger at any price.

Both unions issued ballot papers over the Christmas period, to frustrate opposition to the Aims and Values statement.

The right-wing union leaders deliberately portrayed the statement as innocuous. Most members would have found it

difficult to vote against bland assurances that union resources would be switched to improving services and campaigning.

Many members would have also thought that having an individual vote on all major developments within the union was a positive step.

However, the Aims and Values document will stifle democratic debate through the use of referenda and maintain right-wing control in the new union.

The vote is a setback in the fight for a strong democratic and campaigning merged union.

But Socialist Party members will continue to argue for a constitution and supporting policies which give union members real control of their organisation.

The next big battle will be when the CPSA and PTC publish the draft new rule book for debate at the union conferences in May. The right wing should be warned: We will fight tooth and nail to prevent the merger going through on these terms.

*(Tony is a CPSA Benefits Agency section assistant secretary writing in a personal capacity)*

## Textile workers occupy factory

**T**EXTILE WORKERS are occupying the Tudorgold factory in Tottenham, north London.

*Chris Newby*

70 workers, many of them Turkish and Kurdish, have not received wages for at least three weeks and many of them for at least a month.

Despite various promises from the owners, no money has been forthcoming. The workers are owed about £40,000.

On Tuesday, bailiffs arrived to secure the premises pending removal of machinery on behalf of the factory owner.

At the time of writing, the workers are still occupying and are calling on supporters to assist them.

Apparently, one of the owners has gone missing with all the company's bank balance.

The company has now declared itself bankrupt in an attempt to avoid paying its debts including the work-

ers' wages.

The workers are determined to get their money. But they are also very clear that it's not just their own money they want sorted out. There are many other textile workers facing the same situation.

They want to send a message to the bosses that if they try this on anywhere else they're not going to get away with it. They have also pledged their support to any other workers in struggle.

This is the fourth sweat-shop-type dispute in this area over the past year. The previous three disputes at JJ Fast Foods, Jenny's Fashions and Euroscene, all resulted in victories for the workers involved.

◆ Donations and for further information contact: Tekin Kartal (secretary, north east London Textile Workers Branch, Transport and General Workers' Union) 8-10 Stamford Hill, London N16. Tel: 0181 806 6636.

## Magnet No to Victorian conditions

**T**HE WORKERS sacked by Magnet kitchen manufacturers in Darlington are standing firm in the fight for reinstatement and decent pay.

*Kevin Miles*

The latest indication that their action is hitting home came in an outburst by a spokesman for Magnet's parent company Beresford who described the battle as "the most vicious dispute in history" and denounced the sacked

workforce as, "old fashioned and inflexible."

Magnet strike committee secretary Ian Crammond told The Socialist: "It's a bit rich for them to call us old fashioned - they are the ones who are trying to bring back Victorian working conditions. What they've done is to introduce a new, uneducated workforce in the hope they can coerce them into accepting unsafe working practices."

The sacked workers are stepping up their campaign for a boycott of goods, organising

pickets of retail outlets. They are calling for a large turnout of supporters to the mass picket called for Friday 14 February. Transport has been organised from Tyneside by Tyne and Wear TUC, departing from Newcastle central station at 5.30am. Transport can be booked on (0191) 232 4506

◆ Financial support is still urgently required. Donations should be sent to Magnet Families Hardship Fund, c/o Ian Crammond, 103 Jedburgh Drive, Darlington DL3 9UP.

## Greetings to THE Socialist from...

"We welcome the arrival of The Socialist and wish you all the best for the future. We have been impressed by the coverage and support given to our dispute by the Militant in the past and we know we can expect the same help and support in the future. Good luck!"

*Ian Crammond, Secretary Magnet Strike Committee*

### Waltham Forest

"FOR YEARS I've felt powerless while the council has been making cuts, now I feel that our union is really doing something to fight back," said one UNISON member attending a half-day conference against council cuts.

The conference organised by the public-sector union UNISON, the National Union of Teachers and tenants organisations in Waltham Forest heard from Dave Knights on the proposed cuts of 5% across the board in council services, while Linda Taaffe for the NUT showed the devastation the cuts would cause in the under-five's service.

Louise Thompson, local campaigner and Socialist Party candidate in next year's local government elections, showed the council was attempting to transfer housing away from the council.

The mood of those attending conference was that cuts would not be tolerated and the unions must lead a fight back. The UNISON executive should organise a 24-hour council strike. The conference resolved to build for a mass lobby of the council on 24 February at 6.00pm-7.30pm.

*Simon Donovan*

# Fight for justice

**DESPITE THE UNISON** union withdrawing official support from the Hillingdon Hospital dispute, trade unionists have rallied in an outstanding show of solidarity.

Gary Harbord

Donations are pouring in to sustain the 16-month-long dispute. Regional union donations of £10,000 and branch donations ranging from £1,000 to £3,000 have been sent or agreed.

Meanwhile, UNISON officials have been pressurising the mainly women strikers to accept the paltry offer from private contractors Pall Mall. Most of the women have polite-

ly told them where to get off!

The majority of strikers are due to have industrial tribunals this week but they are under no illusions that they will gain reinstatement on their old wages and conditions.

The strikers see this dispute as a fight against injustice and in defence of the NHS.

A conference has been called of all supporters on Sunday 9 February to develop solidarity action. It will be held at the Civic Hall, Civic Centre, Uxbridge.

◆ Donations are urgently needed and are payable to: Hillingdon Strikers Support Campaign (HSSC), c/o Councillor Kennedy, Civic Centre, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 1UW.



**Greetings to**  
**THE Socialist**

"Militant were the first party to give us support. We are proud to be associated with the Socialist Party and wish you success in the general election and with the launch of the Socialist Party."

Malkiat Bilku, Shop Steward for the Hillingdon Hospital strikers.

## Public sector pay

**AS PART of a general election bribe the Tories could accept the pay review body's recommendations of above-inflation wage rises of over 3%, although staged and without extra government funding to implement them.**

New Labour's shadow 'Iron Chancellor' Gordon Brown has ruled out pay rises under a Labour government, saying there would be "no blank cheques" but a two-year pay freeze.

The Socialist asked public sector workers for their reaction.

"TEACHERS' PAY has been continually eroded by Tory pay policy. It has now reached the stage where, according to the Times Educational Supplement survey, nearly half of primary school teachers want to leave teaching altogether.

"The pay review body's recommended 3.25% wage increase does not mean the Tory government will increase spending on education.

"Lewisham council for example have only budgeted for a 2.25% increase in pay. That means to get a decent pay rise the council will make cuts in jobs and increase school class sizes.

"A decent pay rise must be fully funded by the government. Teachers must prepare to take industrial action whether against New Labour or the Tories, to achieve a proper pay rise and to reduce class sizes."

NUT member

"THE PAY review body doesn't cover the entire health workforce, all it covers is nurses and professions allied to medicine which may include radiographers and physiotherapists but

it doesn't cover any of the ancillary grades or the clerical staff.

"Does this mean that some healthworkers will receive a rise but others won't?"

"Also, it's a paltry amount which will not seriously address the problem of low pay which is leading to a decline in people entering the NHS.

"We still have the farcical situation where half the health Trusts have yet to settle last year's pay claim. The trust bosses have made it clear that without government funding next year's pay award will be met from resources meant for staffing levels and patient care. This is completely unacceptable.

"We need national action by the healthworkers unions to win extra resources for our pay and to properly fund the NHS."

Len Hockey, UNISON joint sites secretary, Whipps Cross Hospital

## Dockers welcome The Socialist

**FOR OVER 16 months the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers have been fighting for reinstatement and the wider issues of stopping casual labour and for trade union rights.**

Despite financial hardship, police harassment, vilification in the media, condemnation by the Tories and New Labour leaders, the dockers have stood firm. Their struggle, without the official backing of their union the TGWU, has gained solidarity support all over the world.

The Socialist aims to give the same regular and wide coverage of this dispute that our predecessor, Militant, did.

We print extracts from several Liverpool dockers who welcome the appearance of The Socialist.

/// The name has changed but the ideas and aims remain the same.

Our party embodies everything about expanding socialism nationally and globally. And without the presence of its journalistic force involved in struggles we would be at a loss.

"The party's involvement in our dispute has helped break the total media blackout and furthered our cause, immeasurably.

"Let's stride forward into a new era of socialism and workers power. Victory to the dockers. Long live The Socialist!"

Jimmy Davies jnr, Torside Shop Steward.

/// The importance of a free press giving direct access to the working class must never be understated.

"The Militant paper throughout the dockers' struggle, together with the role of their supporters worldwide, has contributed to the objectives of the Liverpool dockers internationally, politically, financially and practically.

"This new paper, I am sure, will continue this historic tradition."

Mike Cander, TGWU GEC member.

/// The decision that Militant Labour will change its name is most welcome.

The Socialist Party (and newspaper) can draw support from all workers who are under attack from their employers.

I also think that the unemployed can and will accept the word socialist because they will readily understand that the only way that they can improve the prospects for their future is to organise and play an active role in changing the present system."

Andy Dwyer, Branch Secretary 610 docks.

◆ Donations and offers of solidarity to: Jimmy Davies, secretary port shop stewards committee, 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool L6 4AS. Tel: 0151 207 3388.

## Councils

### UNISON members gatecrash Tory party

**ONE wall hung pictures of Major and Thatcher. On another wall draped Bromley UNISON's banner. Party officials looked shocked as striking Care Link workers and UNISON members peacefully invaded local Tory MP Sir John Hunt's constituency surgery on 1 February.**

Roger Shrives

It was the final day of the Care Link workers' three-day strike. Tory council leader Cook had gone off skiing whilst his council threatened to issue redundancy notices on 17 February if workers don't sign new, worse contracts.

Care Link workers give an emergency response and call-out service for elderly and disabled people who have an alarm. The council tried to cover for the strike with a 'dirty dozen' of personnel officers and administration staff with no

training or experience.

"We're mostly middle aged, long-term workers who never thought we'd strike. The union usually exempts us as an emergency service. Now we're carrying UNISON banners," one worker said. They were polite to John Hunt but they were angry.

Staff had already made savings of £100,000 but the council wanted to cut another £69,000, less than the Mayor's Rolls-Royce costs. They want to cut jobs by 30%, wages by up to £3,000 and want staff to work seven-day, 60-hour working weeks from 1 May.

Emergency duty social workers now say they are ready to ballot for industrial action.

Strikers have now voted to step up the action with a further week's strike and have collected £1,300 from local people for the hardship fund.

◆ Messages of support to Bromley UNISON, UNISON office, Civic Centre, Bromley BR1 3UH.

## Haringey

**SEVERAL HUNDRED council workers, parents and children turned out to a lobby of Haringey council organised by UNISON, NUT and FACE (Fight Against Cuts in Education).**

Haringey Council are planning cuts which hit education in particular. Job cuts are anticipated in terms and conditions of work to bring Haringey into line with national guidelines will mean job cuts.

These cuts fall particularly heavily on women, cutting special leave and increasing the working week from 35 to 36 hours. Maternity leave will be cut from ten weeks to six on 90% pay.

Haringey UNISON executive are advocating industrial action and will be organising a ballot.

Teachers from Holloway School told demonstrators that they had just taken a few days unofficial strike action after further cuts were proposed by the government Education Association that had taken over running the school. Two other schools in the area also struck in solidarity.

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Issue 15

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the Socialist

# THE Socialist

The paper of the Socialist Party (incorporating Militant)

50p (solidarity price £1)

**Mass demo. in support of the hunger strikers**  
**Sat. 8 Feb. 2.00pm**  
**Rochester Prison**  
**Kent**

# FREE THE ASYLUM SEEKERS

**Socialist Party**  
 Struggle,  
 Solidarity & Socialism

## What we stand for

- ★ An end to the persecution of the unemployed. No to Workfare and Job Seekers' Allowance; the right to decent benefits, training or a job for all.
- ★ Ending the public-sector pay freeze.
- ★ A national minimum wage of £6 an hour or £210 a week.
- ★ Employment rights and statutory benefits for all workers from day one of employment.
- ★ A range of policies to achieve full employment including:
  - the introduction of a maximum 35-hour week without loss of pay.
  - a massive increase of public spending into health care, housing, education, childcare, leisure and community facilities.
- ★ Free, good quality education for all from nursery to university; with a living grant.
- ★ An end to unelected quangos. Returning the expenditure and powers removed from councils and the NHS by Tory quangos.
- ★ Rebuild the National Health Service, free at the point of use and under democratic control.
- ★ Decent housing, with affordable rents.
- ★ Scrapping the Tory anti-union laws. Trade unions to be run under the democratic control of members. Full-time union officials should be regularly elected and receive the wage of the average worker.
- ★ The freezing of the current road-building programme. Major investment into a cheap, accessible, integrated publicly owned transport system that meets the needs of the people and the environment.
- ★ For the right to asylum. The scrapping of the Asylum and Immigration Act and of all racist laws.
- ★ An end to police harassment. For the abolition of the Criminal Justice Act and scrapping of the Police Bill.
- ★ An end to discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, sexuality, disability and all forms of prejudice.
- ★ For solidarity of the European working class. No to Maastricht, oppose the bosses' European Community. For a socialist Europe.
- ★ Take into public ownership the privatised utilities and the top 150 big companies, banks and building societies that dominate the economy under democratic working-class control and management. Compensation to be paid on the basis of proven need.
- ★ An end to the rule of profit, for a socialist society and economy run to meet the needs of all instead of for the profits of the few.

**ASYLUM-SEEKERS** at Rochester Prison are continuing their hunger strike in protest at their detention. 16 hunger strikers are refusing liquids and have reached a critical stage. Several have been moved from the prison to Medway hospitals for treatment.

Brian Debus

One detainee who was refusing fluids, just released, said he was locked into a single cell on the medical wing with no water. Medical supervision was a nurse who looked through a spy hole occasionally to see if he was still alive. A doctor who saw him after five days was appalled at his condition and ordered his transfer.

Maureen West, who visited her

Algerian boyfriend Ben Bekhiche Hamid, said: "He is only a quarter the person he was. He has refused fluids for five days. His eyes are rolling. There is only one blanket and a canvas sheet on the bed. I would not put my dog in that cell.

"He's either going to die in there or they'll have to release him.

Home Office minister Ann Widdecombe says that she will not grant temporary admission to the hunger strikers; she is prepared to let them die.

The Home Office has started a dirty tricks campaign, combing all the hunger strikers' files for any muck they can rake up. It is claimed that 14 of the protesters have exhausted their appeal rights and are awaiting deportation.

While some hunger strikers may have had their appeals dis-

missed their appeal rights are not exhausted. The Home Office has had to concede refugee status many times following Appeal Tribunals or High Court action.

The procedure that they have all been through is flawed; often adjudicators merely rubber-stamp the initial Home Office decision to refuse asylum.

Canada accepts 55% of asylum seekers as refugees but Britain only accepts 4%. Can it really be the case that genuine refugees go to Canada and 'bogus' refugees come here?

While the government defends the indefensible the British Medical Association warned last week that there was "a likelihood of irreversible neurological and kidney damage" for those maintaining the hunger strike.

People prepared to subject

themselves to such dangers must have a very good reason for doing so. We believe it is because they fear returning to countries where they know they will be persecuted.

- ★ Release the hunger strikers.
- ★ Release all asylum seekers.
- ★ Scrap the racist Asylum and Immigration act.

### Urgent action needed

Send protests to:  
 Malcolm Lewis, governor of Rochester prison, Fax 01634 826712.  
 Michael Howard, Home Secretary - 0171 273 3965.  
 Anne Widdecombe, Prisons minister - 0171 272 2043.

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