

# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST



**Vote Labour in Greenwich**

**Throw out the Tories in '87**

Photo Report

## SOGAT leaders give in to Murdoch

# Lions led by donkeys

**By Carol Hall, London SOGAT Clerical (Personal Capacity).**

**TREACHERY** to the last. The 23-9 vote by the National Executive Council of SOGAT 82 to end the News International dispute and to hand victory to Thatcher, Murdoch, and Hammond the Scab, was a foregone conclusion.

Dean could not control her glee once the decision had actually been made. Within minutes of the result being reached she took on the role of actress once again, appearing in front of the TV cameras, speaking to the media.

Not once did general secretary Dean mention the courageous and determined struggle of the strikers. Not once did she praise or congratulate. Not once did she say she was proud of the strikers and of their resolute fight for jobs and trade union organisation.

No, we should not misunderstand the role of the leaders like Dean. Moulded in the fashion of class traitors, they took on the mantle of working class leaders only to deceive and cheat, and finally to betray.

Flattered by the attention of the capitalist press, always ready to give a quote, to confuse and cover up, they are both unable and unwilling to take up the cudgels for the members they represent.

The question now before us is very clear. No-one should deny that this is a major reversal for the trade union movement, opening us up to massive attacks.

Jobs, terms and conditions, etc., will be lost overnight. You will see



Carol Hall

agreements reached incorporating no-strike agreements, no closed shops, all the points that the News International dispute was about, decided in favour of 'moderation' and 'New Realism'.

**Our year-long stand for trade unionism nailed the lie that working class people would not fight. After 13 months of struggle, hardships, tragedies, it was not the members in this dispute that quit.**

We should now face plainly the need to challenge the bureaucrats who run the movement at every turn.

**Turn to page 2**



Dean leads Wapping anniversary march. Photos Ian Swindale.

### NCU ballot

## Vote no!

British Telecom engineers, now in the third week of their 110,000-strong national strike, are winning. There could be no clearer proof than the deal BT bosses offered the NCU leadership late on Sunday, which was accepted by them and will be put to a vote of strikers on Wednesday.

Despite their bluff and bluster, the bosses dropped central demands like the demand for a change in the working week. They were the ones who seemed to be urgently seeking a settlement. They want the strike called off because they are shaken by the strength of the workers and the growing effects of their strike, particularly the effect on big business.

In a secret ballot last Sunday, 58,741 NCU members voted to continue the strike, with only 761 votes against. The NCU meetings in Edinburgh were typical. The external branch voted 313 to 1; the internal branch 530 in favour, none against. The meetings informed management that whatever was decided nationally, they would only work the existing working week.

The NCU leadership, however, is doing everything to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. They have offered the bosses a draw when they can have a victory. But they do not have the stomach to fight for victory. Most of the strings BT management originally wanted are still there. A joint union-management committee will negotiate future strings. And it has cost BT bosses, who made nearly £2 billion profit last year, little.

The money payments are calculated as 12.66% over two years. The two year deal will tie down BT engineers' living standards. As Tuesday's Financial Times commented: "(the deal is) around the bottom of the range for two year deals incorporating big changes to working practices, according to analysts at Income Data Services". Despite union policy, some of the payments are conditional on implementing the strings.

Whatever the union leadership's assertions, the deal they are demanding in fact was not finalised until 4pm on Tuesday afternoon. They claim promises of good faith by BT management, but the bosses in some regions have clearly indicated that they intend on a local basis to undermine the 9-day fortnight and use scheduled overtime to win back the ground they have been forced to drop nationally, once the strikers return.

The deal is a sell out. Vote NO!

**Turn to page 11**

**The printers could have won!**

# Labour Investing in people



Kinnock addresses Labour local government conference.

## Support the fighting Labour councils!

What are the Labour leaders trying to do in local government? From the reports I have had of the Labour local government conference in Leeds, it seems to me that the leadership is trying to do two things.

Firstly, they are making it quite clear to councils which have found themselves in difficulties that they can expect a certain amount of assistance, but on the other hand that councils like Liverpool and Lambeth cannot expect to be 'bailed out'.

But obviously, what we need is a clear declaration from Labour that councils which were forced into opposition by government policies — they are the councils with the worst problems — have got to be given financial assistance before anything else. And that is not happening.

From what I can see there was no clear statement that Labour would get rid of the disqualifications imposed on Labour councillors and head off the looming surcharges by abolishing the relevant legislation.

The Campaign Group issued a clear nine-point programme for the conference. In a speech in the House of Commons I spelt out that programme last week.

1. The abolition of rate-capping and the penalty system.
2. The abolition of surcharge and the lifting of any disqualification and surcharge imposed on the Lambeth and Liverpool councillors.

By Eric Heffer MP

3. The restoration of central government grants to the level prior to 1979 and reform of the distribution of the rate support grant based upon a real assessment of local needs.

4. The introduction of special measures through the grant system to assist financially those local authorities who have been forced to use creative accountancy measures.

5. The abolition of controls on capital spending to allow local councils to freely determine and plan their local capital programme.

6. The provision of cheap loans to local councils seeking to expand their local capital programmes to tackle homelessness, urban deprivation, and generate employment.

7. The extension of local authority powers to intervene in the local community and economy, particularly the raising of the 2p limit on section 137 money.

8. The repealing of the Tories' privatisation legislation to be replaced with a statutory requirement for local authorities relating to the minimum pay and conditions of their employees and equal opportunities policies.

9. The restoration of the GLC with some extension of powers, particularly to bring the police service under democratic control, and the introduction of regional government.

## Peru human rights cover-up

Peruvian armed forces deliberately blew up a cell-block after a prison revolt last year and then claimed that missing political prisoners were buried under the rubble, according to Amnesty International.

The human rights organisation concludes that although Peru's President Garcia initially spoke out and helped expose summary executions in one prison, there has since been a cover-up by civilian and military authorities of "the gross human rights violations" that occurred at the time, and may be continuing.

But Amnesty said it had "compelling" evidence that the building was razed only after scores of prisoners had surrendered. Some of them were tortured and summarily executed and up to 60 others were taken into secret custody for interrogation — what happened to them afterwards was known only to the authorities, it said.

The simultaneous revolts at the three prisons — Lurigancho, Santa Barbara (for women) and El Fronton — involved some 350 inmates, mostly members of the Sendero Luminoso guerrilla group. They seized hostages and (at El Fronton) weapons from guards. The armed forces were



called in to quell the revolts and they expelled civilian observers.

All 124 mutineers in Lurigancho prison perished. More than 100 of them were summarily executed after surrendering. Two inmates in the women's prison died.

Although the Lurigancho killings were soon made public — "official secrecy on events at the island prison of El Fronton was and has remained almost total," said Amnesty International.

### Bazookas

Artillery, mortars, bazookas and rockets had been used to subdue the prisoners there. Of at least 154 mutineers, only 35 were acknowledged to have survived.

No member of the armed forces is known to have been prosecuted over the events at El Fronton. A number of officers are said to be still facing military charges for the Lurigancho

massacre — charges against another 30 or more police have been dropped.

Amnesty International says the civilian judiciary has "effectively abdicated" its responsibility to investigate the crimes and punish those responsible.

The organisation has again called on the authorities to set up a full inquiry into the human rights violations committed during and after the prison revolts, and in particular to account for the missing prisoners of El Fronton. It urged the government to ensure the safety of any prisoners still in secret custody — and to set up full investigations into the "discovery" of more bodies, with thorough and independent examination of the corpses, and inquests into the causes and circumstances of death.

Amnesty International, 5 Roberts Place, off Bowling Green Lane, London EC1R 0EJ.

# New Tory anti-union laws

By Frank Smith

The Tories are threatening new anti-union laws designed to control the power of union leaders.

"Reforms" would include a government-appointed 'watchdog' to oversee 'closed shop complaints', and 'politically motivated intimidation'; compulsory secret ballots before strikes; forcing unions to open their accounts to scrutiny by their members; and compulsory three-yearly elections for union executives.

The tragedy is that the Tory 'reforms' seem to address some problems in union democracy. Union executives should be elected much more frequently — no one should have a job for life as a union leader.

Union officials should be paid only the average of their members, and members should be able to recall

them and have new elections whenever the officials don't do their job properly.

Details of union financing should be available to all members.

But these are issues that should be dealt with by the union rank and file themselves. Government-imposed 'democracy' is not democracy at all: its purpose is to control the unions from above, and that will be its effect. Compulsory ballots, for example, slow down decisions — making short-notice strikes almost impossible.

And backed up by the rest of the Tories' anti-union laws, these new 'reforms' restrict the unions' ability to act. If there are innumerable legal restrictions to consider — and so the

threat of legal action, sequestration for failing to comply, and so on — even 100% democratic unions would find it hard to act swiftly and decisively in their members' interests.

Democracy in the unions means democracy for the rank and file — relying on their own organisation, not on the law and the courts. The complete independence of the unions from the state is the basis for real democracy.

Labour should reject these new Tory proposals, campaign against them in the general election and pledge that it will repeal all the existing laws, and implement laws defending trade union independence — the right to strike, to picket, to defend picket lines. And rank and file militants need to organise to fight for democracy.

# Rape: what's the answer?

By Jane Ashworth

JUSTIFIED public outrage followed a judge's decision last week to give the longest sentence in the 'vicarage rape' case to the man who didn't rape.

Gang leader Robert Morscroft got 14 years for burglary and grievous bodily harm, while his accomplices got 5 and 3 years for rape plus 5 years each for burglary.

The sentences indicate the attitude of the judge — who is typical of the legal system. The vicar who had been beaten by the rapists complained: "It was like a gentlemen's club in court... I am frankly appalled at the lack of understanding evident in some of the statements made by the judge and some of the barristers".

That the legal system in Britain holds property as more important than people has thus been put into sharp relief, because all the men were involved in the same case.

But we should not allow the 'beat them, hang them, and castrate them' lobby to use the justified anger at these sentences for reactionary ends. That is how the entire popular press, and Mrs Thatcher herself, are using the vicarage case.

## Power

New laws are to be rushed through Parliament to give the Court of Appeal power to probe cases which cause 'public outcry'. The court will be able to name lenient judges, and order other courts to give harsher sentences.

But what is a 'public outcry'? Often public outcries are orchestrated by the press, by politicians, or by others pulling strings. Many things that *deserve* an outcry are covered up.

Policemen who kill people are always dealt with very leniently. Will there be 'outcries' and investigations there? For certain there will not.

And barbaric punishments for rape, like castration — called for by David Kerr, who was bludgeoned by one of the rapists — belong to the Dark Ages. It is not democratic justice to repay one horrendous act of brutality with another.

We must not allow the Tories to use this issue as grist to the mill of their 'law and order' campaign. Neither brutal punishments nor tougher sentences are an answer to the threat of rape.

For sure, all-women juries and women judges would be more sympathetic to the rape victims. A clearer definition of rape should be worked out, too: at the moment husbands cannot be prosecuted for rape, though the majority of rapes take place within the family.

Making the report of rape a less harrowing ordeal for women would result in more rapists being brought to justice. That requires more democratic control over the police.

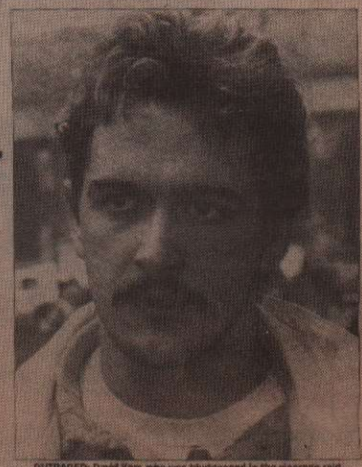
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Centre stage for Edward  
Page 5

Horror at the vicarage:  
Victim joins outrage at 'soft' rape sentences

# MY LAW WOULD BE TO CASTRATE HIM



OUTRAGED: David Kerr, who was bludgeoned in the vicarage raid

Better street-lighting and easily available alarms for women might help reduce rape. There should be more public funding for Rape Crisis Centres.

But we also need to think of new forms of justice.

## System

The present judiciary is tied to an Establishment that loves no freedom as much as the freedom to buy and sell. Its laws are in essence laws defending *property* — it is an offence to steal a loaf of bread if you are starving, but quite legal to throw thousands of people onto the scrap heap; there is no law against homelessness or poverty.

The inequality of women is built into the legal system, too — as

anyone who has had their dole cut for 'cohabitation' can testify.

This legal system can and should be reformed to give women more protection from rapists — and more redress. Longer sentences are probably not the best form of redress, since they might reduce the likelihood of the guilty being convicted.

But, fundamentally, no reform can win genuine freedom for women from rape and the threat of it. Only the total transformation of society — the destruction of the present relations of power over women by men which lead to rape — can change that.

A new form of justice, based on working-class communities, defending people not property, would be a first step towards that fundamental change.

# Lions led by donkeys!

From page 1

We must not shirk our responsibility to speak the truth, for out of defeat can come victory. Unless we learn the lessons properly then that will not be done.

False leaders like Dubbins must not be allowed to walk away from this dispute scott free. Their treachery is the same as Dean's.

Never once in this dispute did he take the lead and time and time again he hid behind the claim that SOGAT 82 had more members and therefore must make the decisions first. Utter rubbish!

The issue facing the print unions was the same. It was fundamental to trade union rights. It had nothing to do with who had the most members.

Refusing to lead a fight against the Tory anti-trade union laws, Dubbins, like Dean, spread the misconception

that we could win the dispute without taking on the state.

Although the News International dispute is lost, with all the repercussions that entails, I am not despondent. I have faith still in the movement, and a total belief and commitment that the working class is on the move. And that move will bring us more and more into conflict with this chaotic and greedy economic system.

For the days of boom are gone. The old fashioned ideology of class warfare, so frowned upon by the likes of Kinnock, Willis, Dean and Dubbins, is back in the forefront and they can do nothing to stop that. They have no answers. So now we must press home our advantage.

It is only through a truly socialist society that workers can receive their real worth.

# Learn the lessons of Wapping

**THE TRADE** union movement must learn the lessons of the Wapping cave-in. It was not inevitable. The factors that caused the defeat are within our power to change.

*The print union leaders were afraid of the Tories' anti-union laws. At every threat of legal action, they backed down; and the TUC gave them no support to take on the law.*

*If the strike had been spread across Fleet Street and the national print industry, Murdoch could have been stopped in his tracks.*

The News International strikers should not have been left to stand alone. Dean and company had a responsibility to lead — to call out the other print workers. And they shirked it.

A leadership not prepared to bow to the courts, and determined to throw all it had into the fight, would have made an immense difference. Dean and the SOGAT leaders proved weak and indecisive.

But it was not only a problem of leadership at the top. *What was lacking also was an organised movement of the militant rank and file across the print industry.*

A rank and file movement able to pull out Fleet Street despite the weakness and indecision of the union leaders would have changed the course of the dispute.

Building such a movement across all the trade unions is an urgent priority. Its absence helped MacGregor, helped Murdoch, and will help other Tory union-busters in the future.

**A rank and file movement could have tried to reach out to the rank and file of the EETPU.**

Expelling the EETPU from the TUC won't deal with the real problems. We need to take the struggle for trade union democracy into Hammond's heartland and organise rank



The militancy that was wasted. Photo Stefano Cagnoni, Report.

and file EETPU members. **That approach — going over the heads of the right-wing bureaucrats as far as we can — needs to be developed in future.** We need to see it as a stepping-stone towards the democratisation and transformation of the whole labour movement.

The Wapping dispute highlighted the increasingly militarised role of the police. As the Tories call for tougher measures against 'picket line violence' — i.e. pickets — and as Labour leaders echo them, we need

to prepare for more and worse police brutality in future.

**As well as organising bigger mass pickets, the trade union movement needs to consider ways it can defend its picket lines, and make them effective.**

**We will need a Labour Party that sides unequivocally with the pickets against the police thugs. Kinnock's vain wish that Wapping would go away and not damage his electoral**

**chances worked no better than his fence-sitting during the miners' strike.**

**For an effective defence of workers' interests, we will need to take on the fight against the Kinnocks and Hattersleys as well as the Deans and the Willises.**

The determination and militancy of rank-and-file printers show that the spirit for a fight is there in the trade unions. We will have to make sure that in future the labour movement is up to the fight.

## Tribune celebrates its 50th birthday

Labour's 'independent' weekly, 'Tribune' this week has been celebrating its fiftieth birthday. Contributions from ex-editors, retired trade union leaders, dead novelists, and Mikhail Gorbachev (writing in detail to UN Secretary General, Perez de Cuellar on 'how the Soviet Union marked the year of peace') are introduced by the paper's recently departed editor, Nigel Williamson.

In 1985, as he recalls, Williamson wrote a 'mini-manifesto' which was "an admission that the left had advanced as far as it could under existing circumstances."

He was criticised, Williamson remembers — among others by Socialist Organiser. "Yet despite all the criticism, I felt elated. It was an

elation born of freedom." He was free of left-wing myths: "One of the first to be thus demolished was the ridiculous notion that there were no 'enemies' on the left and that any attempts to curb the organised infiltration of the Labour Party by Trotskyist groups... had to be resisted."

Thus liberated, Williamson — who let the beans be spilled, used to contribute to Socialist Organiser and was even a supporter's card carrier for a while — pitched himself into the witch-hunt, his conscience salved.

### Sordid

It is a rather sordid little confession. It is made more sordid still — and pathetic too — by the embarrassing prediction that 1987 will be "the year which sees the election of the first Tribune Prime Minister."

Williamson still believes that Neil Kinnock is an ally of 'the left' it seems. Poor Nigel. Sharing the heritage of all those ex-editors, dead novelists and Soviet presidents has sadly gone to his head. As the saying goes — those who do not learn from history are likely to wind up repeating it.

Tribune began life 50 years ago as a Stalinist-hued Labour Party advocate of the Communist Party line known as the Popular Front.

The Popular Fronters, inside the Labour Party and outside advocated not a Labour Government but a coalition government involving also the Liberals and the CP. Rather like the present line of 'Marxism Today' and the Communist Party. As Trotsky pointed out in 1939, these 'left wingers' were to the right of the rightist official Labour Party leaders, who at least wanted a straight Labour government.

In the '40s Tribune moved to the right and then in the later forties it was associated with the 'Keep Left' group of Labour MPs.

In the early '50s, when Nye Bevan, Harold Wilson and John Freeman resigned from the Labour government in protest at the imposition of charges for NHS prescriptions, it was the organ of the left wing Bevanite movement, which developed a powerful following in the Labour Party and the Unions.

Tribune stood up to Aneurin Bevan when he condemned unilateralism in 1957.

Tribune's greatest moment came when the Labour Party conference in 1960 voted to make unilateral nuclear disarmament Party policy. Tribune was at the head of that movement in the Labour Party. So was Michael Foot.

But the PLP, led by Hugh Gaitskell revolted against Party policy and threatened to split. Tribune and Foot didn't fight back — They retreated and started to advocate that Britain and NATO should pledge never to strike first, instead of unilateralism. (That is what it came down to in practice)

### Blows

Not surprisingly, the right forced through an anti-unilateralist resolution at the 1961 conference.

New blows were to follow, Party leader Hugh Gaitskell died suddenly and in early 1963 Bevan's one-time colleague, Harold Wilson, was elected leader. Whereas the honest right-winger Hugh Gaitskell had confronted and frequently outraged the left, Wilson knew how to make faking left noises to keep them in line. Soon he had Tribune in tow.

After Wilson formed a government in 1967 and through to the election of 1970, Tribune remained in tow. It protested here and there and grumbled against the government, but it could do nothing and didn't try.

Tribune's circulation and influence plummeted. The traditional Labour left collapsed in the later 1960s. Events on the left passed Tribune by. It shrivelled to the status of an institution, a fake left cover and an occasional platform for one-time leftist Ministers and ex-ministers, such as Stan Orme and Michael Foot.

Then in 1980, Richard Clements left the editor's chair, after 20 years, and Chris Mullin took over. That was the time when the left in the Labour Party was explosively challenging the Party establishment which had lost the 1979 election after 5 years in government.

Mullin was a committed supporter of Tony Benn and he made Tribune a vigorous paper of the Bennite left. For the first time in 30 years Tribune showed signs of life.

When Williamson succeeded Mullin the labour movement was in retreat, and Tribune reverted to what it had been — a paper slightly on the outside of the left establishment, pushing essentially tame and safe ideas.

Today's editor Williamson suffers from the delusion that the left is the establishment — Kinnock will be a Tribune P.M. Yes, maybe he will, but only in the sense that if Kinnock becomes PM, Tribune will be to him what it was to Wilson — a tame opposition.

It would be better, comrade Williamson, to learn the lesson of Tribune's history than to repeat one of the worst episodes in that far from glorious past.

## The dole queue gets longer

By Jim Denham

I'd been dreading this moment for a long while: it happened on Friday when Brenda Dean did what she'd wanted to do all along, and finally ditched the News International dispute.

It means the dole queue for around 6000 printers and it means I have to start reading the Murdoch press. I'd forgotten just how gut-wrenchingly foul the Sun, in particular, can be. Apart from its sexism and racism and total lack of journalistic or literary merit of any sort, the Sun also has a special smug, self-righteousness that comes into play when it has backed a winner — like the famous "Gotcha" headline after the Belgrano was sunk.

Saturday's editorial ("The Sun speaks its mind", a title that ought to mean a very short article indeed, or even an entirely blank page, but unfortunately doesn't) was headlined "A Famous Victory" and adopted a characteristically vindictive tone:

"We could, and probably should, be magnanimous in our victory over SOGAT and the NGA.

"But there are too many of our employees whose lives have been scarred by these "innocent" printers and too many police officers who bear the marks of their violence for us simply to turn the other cheek..."

"We know from your hundreds, possibly thousands, of letters to us that you above all others knew exactly what was at stake in this dispute: whether — in a free society — a bunch of thugs should be allowed to deprive you of the paper you want."

And so on and so on ad nauseam.

### Classier

The Times likes to think of itself as a bit classier than the Sun. Whether it really is, or whether it is just more hypocritical and a bit more literate, is a matter for conjecture. Friday's editorial (Hard Lessons of Wapping) pontificated on about "freedom", "strife" and "damaging trade union practices".

"The time has not yet come for the full history of this dispute to be written. The temptation to reach instant conclusions about its importance in itself, and the importance of extremists in its course, must be resisted," droned the 'Thunderer'. Interestingly, neither the Sun, or the Times, nor Sunday's News of the World (which described NUJ General Secretary Harry Conroy as a "stupid bully" and called on him to resign) made any mention at all of the person who did most to ensure Murdoch's victory: Eric Hammond.

No doubt Hammond is grateful for this diplomatic silence. When the time does come for "the full history of this dispute to be written" Eric and his cronies in the EETPU leadership might find they have a little explaining to do. But don't expect to read about it in the Sun or the Times.

Meanwhile, I suppose I'll have to carry on reading Murdoch's garbage. Still it makes the Guardian and Today and even the Star seem like quite decent papers. I must be going yet.

Socialist Organiser  
PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

01-639 7965  
Latest date for reports: first post Monday or by phone, Monday evening.

Editor: John O'Mahony.  
Typesetting: Upstream Ltd (TU).

Published by Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.  
Printed by East End Offset (TU), London E2.

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.  
Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the views of Socialist Organiser.

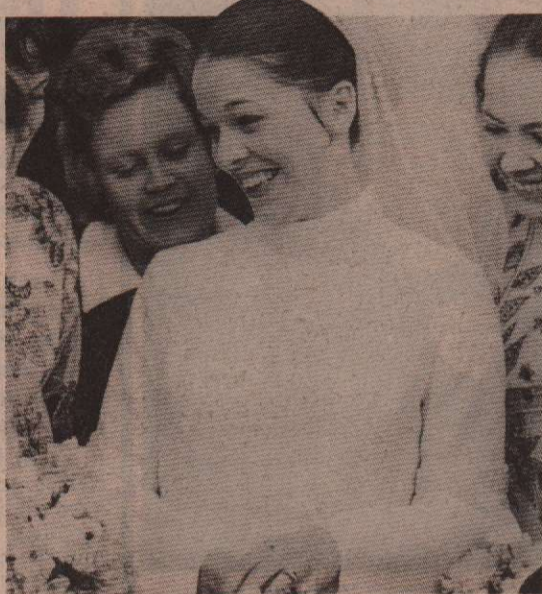
# GRAFFITI

## MARRIAGE

### The end of marriage?

Although the great majority of people still get married, marriage is a less rigid institution than it used to be. Divorces have gone up from 2.1 per thousand married people in 1961 to 13.4 in 1985. 19% of 1985's babies were born outside marriage, while it was only 8% in 1971.

In 1961, 74% of all households were headed by married couples. In 1985 it was down to 64%. Part of the change is due to people living longer, and the consequent increase in the number of single old people; but the number of single people living alone under retirement age has also more than doubled. Single-parent families have increased from 6% of all households to 8%.



## INCREASED INDEPENDENCE

The increase has been particularly sharp in the proportion of married women working outside the home. This percentage went up from 10% in 1931 to 42% in 1971 and 52% in 1985.

The old pattern whereby women went out to work until they married, and then retired to the kitchen sink, is breaking down. In the years between 1971 and

1985, the proportion of married women aged 16-59 who are 'housewives' only went down from 53% to 30%.

Not all the other 70% of married women have become wage-workers. 4% are registered as unemployed (it was 2% in 1971); 4% are self-employed (it was 1%); and 7% are students (0% in 1971).

The percentage of un-

married women who are wage-workers or students has actually gone down since 1971 — from 88% to 70%, in the 16-59 age range.

The side of these shifts which is an increase in the personal and economic independence of women is shown most dramatically in the increased proportion of women students in higher education.

In 1970-1 only 31% of university undergraduates were women. By 1984-5 it was 42%. The number of women undergraduates almost doubled in 13 years.

In part-time higher education, only 6% of students were female in 1961. By 1985, 34% were female.

## 49%

The new issue, just out, of the official yearbook 'Social Trends', shows some of the changes in women's position in Britain over the last 15 years.

49% of women over school-leaving age are now economically active outside the home. The trend for this percentage to rise is long-term. In 1971 it was 43%, in 1931, 34%.

## 'Perdition' ban was right

Your editorial in SO 300 was wrong to condemn the cancellation of Jim Allen's play "Perdition".

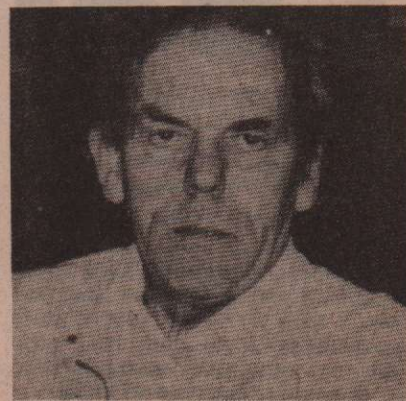
"Jim Allen is not conceivably an anti-semitic," you claim. Perhaps he is not. However, neither this, nor his Trotskyist credentials, nor his previously worthy works, justify the scores of untruths which the play contains. You state that "the urge to ban and stifle is almost always wrong".

I would contend that this is one exception. The distress which you point out would be caused by the play may

have been acceptable if it were a factual account. But it is not; it is a complete distortion of the Holocaust, and one which is disturbingly finding support amongst some elements of the left.

Jim Allen would have us believe that the "Zionist lobby" was intent on getting the play scrapped. In fact, Jewish historians originally only asked for the removal of the play's inaccuracies. Yet Jim Allen and Ken Loach would make only minor changes, and so the only alternative was to call for the play's cancellation.

Yours comradely,  
CLIFFORD SINGER



Jim Allen



Protesting racist attacks. Photo Carols Guarita (Reflex).

## Racism and racialism

Jean Lane's 'Women's Eye' article on hidden racism seems to me to contain some very misleading notions.

Central to Jean's argument is the idea that "racism goes far deeper than the attacks on the streets, the firebombs through letter boxes, the exclusion from jobs and houses. These actions are in the open. They can be fought..."

"But how do you join together to fight the 'tut'; the weary look to the heavens; the hidden, insidious body language and mental attitudes of practically every single white person who passes you in the street?"

Is Jean seriously telling us that being tutted at is as serious a matter as being firebombed? Or that "insidious body language" is comparable with being denied a job because of your race?

Perhaps the tuts and the body language are actually worse than the firebombs? After all, firebombs are

"in the open". You know where you stand with them.

Last year, in Socialist Organiser, Payman Rezai wrote an excellent series of articles (based upon a piece by A. Sivanandan in 'Race and Class' magazine) criticising this approach to anti-racism. He cited the Rampton Report, the Scarman Report and Racism Awareness Training (RAT) as examples of "the same identification of racism with personal attitudes and behavioural problems" — an analysis which rests upon a "socio-psychological" or even "socio-biological" view of racism.

## Structures

Payman Rezai referred to Sivanandan's argument that some of the original confusion in RAT thinking can be overcome by clarifying the terms we use. 'Racism' strictly speaking should be used to refer to structures and institutions with

power to discriminate. Individuals on the other hand display in their attitudes racialism".

This seems to me to be more than just a pedantic distinction: the failure to distinguish between institutionalised/state racism and organised racist activity on the one hand, and individual racist attitudes (that, no doubt, we all harbour to some extent) leads to a wrong understanding of what racism is and of how to fight it.

It accounts, for instance, for the counter-productive, bureaucratic "anti-racism from above" approach of many Left Labour Councils.

It also means that we fail to distinguish between organised racists who must be fought on the streets, if necessary, and individuals with backward ideas, who can be argued with and won over.

Jean says "the majority of white racists in Britain are not attackers or firebombers. They are people who have been brought up to assume that they are naturally superior because they have a white skin — fed on racist history, racist language, brought up on a diet of narrow-mindedness and ignorance."

Such a definition of racism would almost certainly include the vast majority of the working class of Britain. We cannot treat them as though they were organised racists, the fascists, the police, the Tories or racist employers.

Having said that, I think Jean was quite right to shout at the woman on the bus!

Yours,  
FLOYD O'BRIEN

## More letters p. 10.

Send letters to Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. Please try to keep your letters below 300 words, or we may have to cut them for reasons of space.

## PROSPECTS

### Work, work, work

More women are getting advanced qualifications, and more women refuse to be tied down by marriage to a life as a housewife.

But capitalism has channelled these trends to its own advantage. Women are still overwhelmingly confined to a narrow range of jobs, centred round caring, cleaning and clerical work. And women's pay still lags behind men's.

In 1985 full-time women workers earned on average 66% of the rate of full-time males. This is an improvement on 1970, when women got only 56% of male wages. But the improvement was all in the few years immediately after the Equal Pay Act

came into force in 1975. Since then women's relative position has got slightly worse again.

And more and more women workers are part-time. In 1985, for the first time, the 5 million 'flexible' women workers — part-timers, temporaries, home-workers, or self-employed — outnumbered the 4.8 million permanent full-time women workers.

This is a trend being pushed hard by employers today in order to weaken trade union organisation. 'Flexible' workers, female and male, now make up 34% of the whole labour force, as against 29% in 1981.





The dance of death by Felix Nussbaum



Poster by the German anti-Nazi artist of the 1930s, John Heartfield

# Art and anti-semitism

Three powerful and moving exhibitions have opened in Manchester focusing on the life of Anne Frank and the persecution of the Jews in occupied Europe. They are part of a series of exhibitions and events on the theme of anti-racism organised by Manchester City Council.

At Manchester's Jewish Museum is "Before the Holocaust", an exhibition which explores the life of the Jews in Europe in the years before the holocaust and portrays the ex-

periences of those refugees who made their homes in and around Manchester.

At the Atheneum Gallery is "Anne Frank in the World — 1929-1945", a unique photo-documentary exhibition of the life of Anne Frank, the Dutch-Jewish girl who died in the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen at the age of 15. Her short life is set in the context of racism and fascism then and now.

"Where to Now? Paintings, Draw-

ings and Sculpture of Nazi Tyranny" is a remarkable selection of works produced by Jewish refugees, by victims of the concentration camps and by British war artists whose imagery grew out of their personal experience of the Nazi regime and the holocaust.

The work of the German painter Felix Nassbaum is shown for the first time in this country. Nassbaum was murdered in Auschwitz in 1944 after spending four years in hiding. Before he died he said to a friend, "If I perish don't let my works die. Show them to the public". Elie Wiesel once said all Holocaust Art was "the vic-

tim electing to become witness".

Karol Konieczny a Polish communist and Buchenwald survivor, said of his own works, "I wish them to be considered a living and shocking document of a world of horror and torment I want the young to know how it was so that they will understand and will not allow such conditions to ever be repeated in the future."

The remarks left by the schoolchildren who have seen the displays are testimony that these exhibitions are indeed helping the young to understand.



Anne Frank

I found the paintings and photographs profoundly moving. As someone who makes a living by helping to put exhibitions together I have never seen displays first silence and then move the viewers as these did.

Back home in Liverpool that night I watched a television programme which proved from documentary evidence that, under that most romanticised Labour government of 1945-51, Britain ensured the escape of Nazi war criminals to the USA and has remained a haven for Nazis responsible for concentration camp atrocities ever since.

One Auschwitz 'doctor' Valadistov Dering, who conducted experiments on Jewish women was made an OBE before he died, peacefully, in the 1960s.

The exhibition is open until 1 March before moving on the Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Birmingham.

## The story of Silentnight betrayal

Workers at Silentnight beds in Sutton and Barnoldswick have been on strike since June 1985, demanding the right to work, decent pay, and the right to be in a union. Their union, the Furniture Trades and Allied Trades Union withdrew support at the end of last year.

Silentnight shop steward Irene Scott here gives a diary of events leading to the withdrawal of union backing.

prepared to talk to six of the delegates, but in the end all nine did enter Head Office.

They were told that the decision had been made to withdraw official backing and as far as our union was concerned, the strike was over.

At no time was any of the strikers given the opportunity to address the EC, to answer any points we now know that some of the Executive were unaware of. Nor do we know what was said to persuade the EC to vote unanimously to abandon us.

At 8.30 p.m., 15 minutes after the strikers had left London, Colin Christopher phoned our District Organiser, and instructed him to strip the strike office of everything he could remove. They even told him to take our cheque book, paying in book and any cash that was in the office.

### Job

Seeing as he was 'only doing his job', he did remove the telephone answering machine, as many files as he could carry, and the lists of some of our regular supporters. (No doubt so that Head Office can pass them on to the other disputes that they're involved in).

The attempt at sequestration by the Union failed, as all the books were out of the office at the time.

December 19. A further 30 strikers

December 15. Financial Times telephone the strike office for our comments on the proposed ending of the strike by the FTAT Executive Committee. This was news to us as we'd had no idea that the EC was to meet or to discuss our position.

December 16. After a tip off from one of our few friends at Head Office, that the EC were in fact to meet on the 17th, a delegation of the Strike Committee went down to Head Office to find out what was going on.

December 17. The delegation arrived at Head Office about 10 a.m. On arrival they were met and promptly sent away by Colin Christopher, our General Secretary, with the instruction not to return until 6.00 p.m. when they would be met by a sub-committee of the EC.

At first the officials were only



Irene Scott

went to Head Office to appeal to the General Secretary and his two assistants. We got no joy, needless to say. We were told that the decision had been made, we had to accept that we could not win every dispute and that unfortunately we were victims of the Tory anti-union legislation — so we should all go away, get a job, hopefully in the industry, and recruit members for FTAT. Oh yes, and we were all wished 'A Merry Christmas' by Brother Christopher.

December 23. Head Office told Telecom that our phone was no

longer needed. So we were cut off. This was a despicable trick especially as our phone was not paid for by FTAT but by the GFTU, and the bill was not due until the end of January. Anyway, thanks to our friends in Telecom, we were reconnected within an hour.

December 24. The District Organiser was told by Head Office that any cheques that he received for the strike fund he was to return to the people who had sent it, and tell them that the strike was over.

Up to now, this is only part of the determination of our Union to make things as difficult as possible for us to carry on as we want to.

We feel that if FTAT had acted with as much speed and efficiency in finding a solution to our dispute as they have in ending it, then perhaps I'd have been back at work over a year ago. But then I wouldn't have made so many new friends, met so many good trade unionists and made the leap from being an apathetic shop steward into a hardened campaigner.

We want to carry on with our fight. We firmly believe that we can reach a just conclusion to our strike and it is incredible that we are now having to fight our own union as well as Silentnight.

We should be fighting the Tories, not each other, and certainly we should be able to count on the support of the trades unions we belong to without wondering whether or not they are going to cut and run if the going gets a bit rough.

**WORKERS' LIBERTY**

**Under whose flag?**

Trotskyists today working class socialism or Third World nationalism?

60p

Available for 60p plus p&p from SU, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



Photo Stefano Cagnoni (Report)

## Wapping women

**Jean Lane spoke to Chris, wife of a sacked printer, from WAM — Wives Against Murdoch.**

*How did WAM start?*

We got off the ground last October. Christmas was coming up and Murdoch had sent a letter out to the strikers' homes urging them to take the money. So we thought that if the wives got together to help the strikers and the kids through Christmas then fewer people would be likely to take the money.

We gave all the kids £10 gift vouchers for Christmas and had a party in the church hall in Wapping with a Father and Mother Christmas. We managed to create the feeling that we were all in it together and that we can sink or swim together.

*Is it all wives of sacked printers involved?*

Mostly. On the committee we also have a couple of women supporters. A few of the sacked women from the dispute were also involved. We opened it to all of them but asked them not to stand for the committee. That was because those women are organised. They have their unions and their chapels behind them. WAM is specifically for wives because we have no voice or representation.

The first meeting of WAM was a real eye-opener. The anger was phenomenal — not against the strike. Woman after woman just stood up and exploded. They'd carried ten months of bitterness and it all came out at that meeting. I was overwhelmed by it.

We also have links with women from the housing estate around Wapping who come on the pickets regularly and with the local print support group there.

We've had support from the Labour Party, particularly Lewisham who gave us office space, the use of printing machinery, a telephone. That's what they said they were there for. They've given us a lot of support all round.

*What sort of things do you do now, since Christmas?*

We had a women's picket. We don't do that on a regular basis because most of us work now since our husbands are on strike. And we've been to visit mining places and Women Against Pit Closures at Chesterfield and North Kent.

*Will WAM continue now after the decisions of the SOGAT and NGA leaderships to call off the strike?*

At the moment we've got no choice, but I think a lot depends on what happens with the dispute. The attitude of most of the sacked printers is to carry on, but it's hard to tell. At the moment everyone is just incensed with what has happened. I think the women will stay together when the dispute is over, though.

For me personally, my friends now

### WOMAN'S EYE

are the people on the picket lines. I feel quite alienated from everybody else. We've become politically aware over this last year and have left our ordinary friends and relatives behind. My political views have become more polarised.

*How do you think the strike should have been handled to ensure a victory?*

I'm not sure what could have been done differently. The unions were caught up in a fight against the anti-union laws. Apart from, that is, the handling of the Sun by wholesalers in the provinces. That was why we were sequestered in the beginning. I think the union should have told them not to handle it rather than ask them. If they'd done that it would have been over in a fortnight.

The union now is so weak. I don't think the people in the provinces realise what they have done. I don't really care what they think of Fleet Street workers — whether they thought of them as the "fat cats" of Fleet Street. It's just not true, especially of the SOGAT workers. All they've done is to weaken their own union. That's what Murdoch and Thatcher were after all along.

I don't understand the TUC's attitude. Willis is delivering everything Thatcher wants. Instead of standing up and fighting the anti-union laws, they accept them. They put the noose around their own necks. And Thatcher will go to the country and say "Look, I've tamed the unions".

*You are going to the TUC Women's Conference in March. What will you be doing there?*

We are sending two women down who are going to speak there. We are going to have a meeting to decide what they should say but it will be along the lines of what I've just said, and that the women of this dispute have been abandoned.

The cleaners were earning £70 a week — that was their top line after working Saturdays and Sundays. They've been sacked. Along with the clerical workers, the typists, the telephonists and the people who took the ads. A good proportion of those are women. It's not just printers. He has sacked the whole kit and kaboodle of his staff.

*Have you ever been involved in women's politics before?*

No, I've belonged to social groups. You know, going to theatres and things like that, but no political group.

*And has it given you a boost?*

Well—it certainly helped that first night because so many women were standing up and saying what I felt. It's nice to have it put into words because you are usually isolated and feeling it alone.

# Femini

Since its heyday in the early 1970s, the women's movement has fragmented. Despite a vast expansion in the broad influence of feminist ideas, autonomous feminist groups are small and usually not active in campaigning. Many feminists have joined the Labour Party women's sections, but the new radicalism of those

women's sections in the early 1980s has narrowed down into a search for positions and reforms within the Labour Party structure. Why has this happened? What can socialists do to help build women's campaigns rooted in the working class? Mary Corbishley examines these issues in the light of the history of the movement.

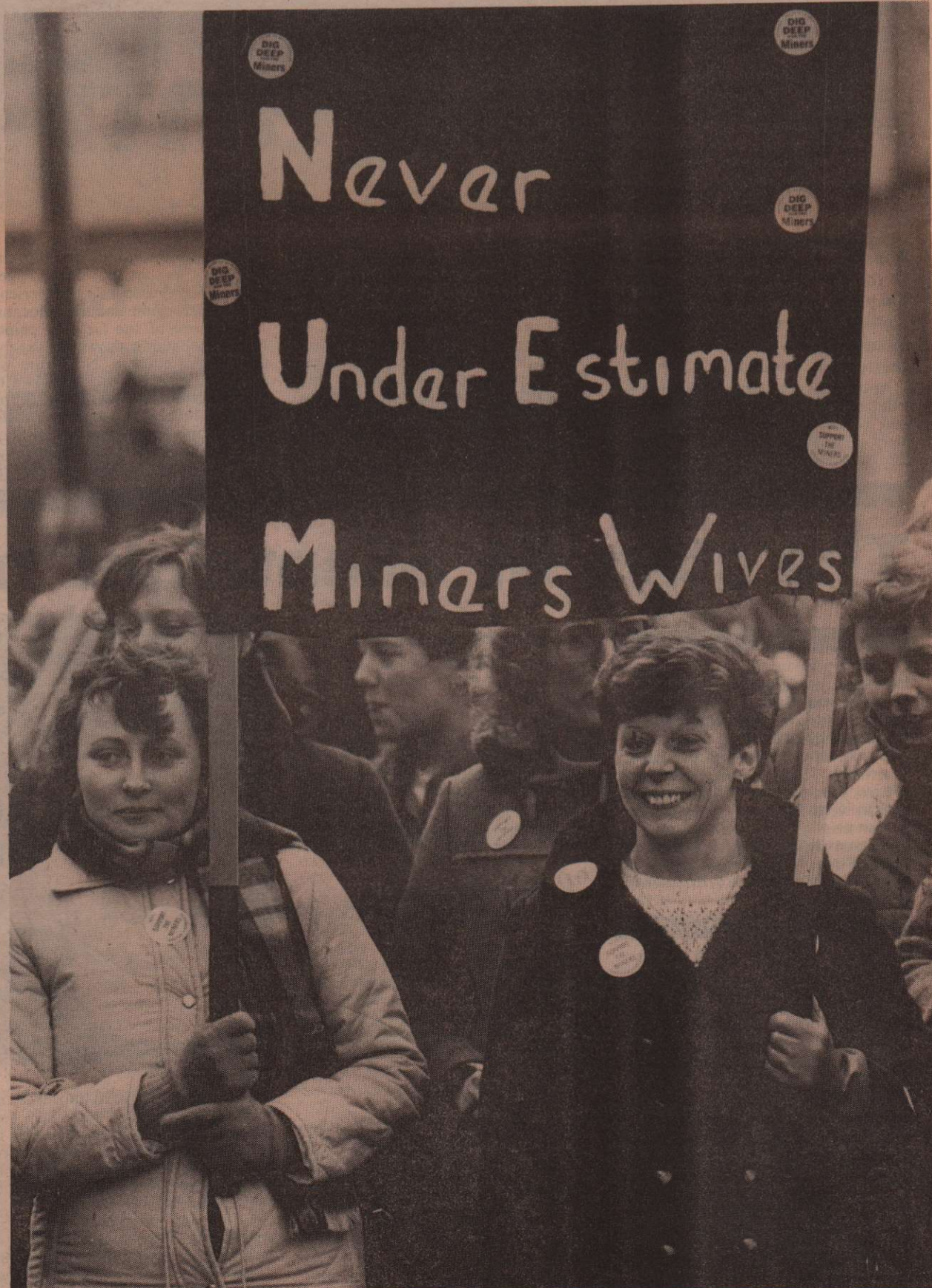
The modern women's movement was born in the radical ferment of the late sixties. It emerged in the first place in the USA amongst the civil rights movement and the anti war movement.

The movement in Britain was influenced both by the US movement

and the increased expectations of women workers, becoming a greater part of the workforce because of the boom. As women workers went on strike at Ford for equal pay, the increasing number of educated women, frustrated in their search for professional jobs and politicised by the radical atmosphere of the univer-

sities, was another influence.

The movement consisted mainly of two elements; the radical feminists, who had the perspective of waging a sex war, and socialist women who still identified with the class struggle, but were disillusioned by the sexism of the left as well as its complete and utter failure to take up the fight



Miners' wives in Barnsley, February 1985. Photo J.Harris, IFL

# ism and socialism



Mary Corbishley



Women strikers at Keegas, Leamington. Photo: John Harris

against women's oppression at all. The radical feminists, originating in the USA, distinguished themselves from reformist feminists, but were completely antagonistic to the male left — their critique developed into an anti-left stance. Their theory rests on the idea that women are an oppressed sex-class. Women's biology and the natural division of labour led to male domination over women and this has since formed the basis of all class oppression.

## Radical

They are anti-capitalist only insofar as they see the evils of capitalism as stemming from males.

The modern women's movement differed from earlier movements in that it originated from a radical, implicitly anti-capitalist current. The early feminism of the 17th and 18th centuries raised the demand that women share in the inalienable rights that were supposed to be the fruits of the bourgeois revolution, i.e. that women be accorded the status of human being. As such, then, feminism was a limited but progressive bourgeois-democratic movement.

As the working class movement developed and began articulating its own demands, a class polarisation arose within the women's movement. This was clearly expressed in the Russian and German women's movement, as well as the suffragette movement in Britain. These movements involved bourgeois women, who demanded their rights as human beings, but were not prepared to see these extended to working class women when it threatened their privileges as members of the ruling class.

## Class

In all the European women's movements a split occurred with proletarian women organising their own separate movement which went beyond the demand for female suffrage and took up issues relating to their position as workers, issues such as equal pay and maternity leave.

Although in the USA a bourgeois wing of the modern women's movement did develop — NOW (National Organisation of Women) — and indeed came to have an important influence, such a phenomenon did not occur in Britain.

The Equal Opportunities Commission and suchlike government attempts to derail the equal pay and equal opportunities campaigns have not become part of the women's movement. They have given some cover to trade union bureaucrats, but have not been able to halt the influence of the ideas of the women's movement on the labour movement.

Interesting glimpses of the debates that went on in the German and Russian Social Democratic Women's organisations are given in the Comintern Theses on Women, where there had clearly been some discussion on how best to organise women and there was a recognition of the

need for special methods. Clara Zetkin, in recollections of a conversation with Lenin, refers to discussion groups of women, which would seem to bear some resemblance to consciousness raising groups in the women's movement today, discussing issues like sex and marriage relations. Lenin did not approve, rightly if that was all they were doing, but clearly the women's organisations were doing a lot more than that. So, while there was a clear division between the bourgeois and the proletarian women's movements, discussion by no means stopped there.

Another important feature of the rebirth of the current women's movement was the leap in understanding about the nature of women's oppression. While continuing the fight on equal pay, child-care facilities, etc., the movement began to explore a previously relatively untouched area — the issue of sexuality.

The early women's movement had seen the questions of abortion and contraception in a rather Malthusian manner, in terms of population control. The emphasis now has shifted to the right of women to have control over their own bodies — that is one of the seven demands of the current women's movement.

## Personal

This political exploration of the 'personal' side of women's lives encapsulated in the slogan 'the personal is political' was both a strength and a weakness of the women's liberation movement.

The consciousness raising groups that sprang up everywhere brought women to understand that their so-called personal problems had a material basis. Dissatisfaction with sexual relationships, violent husbands, childcare, dependence, lack of confidence in political meetings — these were common to all women; but having set the battleground for combatting this ideology, sections of the women's liberation movement retreated into 'life-style' politics, seeing change coming simply through living a different life-style and hoping to change attitudes that way.

The early women's liberation movement did not easily contain the two diverse currents — and, after the initial founding conference, the socialist women began to organise a separate conference from the radical

feminists. Although these conferences did not continue for long, this particular current has continued throughout. The Working Women's Charter Campaign, and later the Socialist Feminist current round Scarlet Woman, came from this origin.

Having set the battleground for combatting ideology, the slogan 'the personal is political' was turned on its head to depoliticise the fight, counterposing changing life-styles, attitudes and personal relations to the struggle to change society and for material improvement of the lot of all women. We have, rightly, characterised this as reactionary, utopian and elitist, offering no way forward for the mass of women.

Under the pressure of the present crisis this position becomes even more untenable and many feminists have understood this and have moved to a class orientation and activist politics.

The socialist-feminist current, which formed itself coherently in 1976, set out to devise a political theory which went beyond the clear inadequacies of radical feminism and the shortcomings of socialist theory on women's oppression. This search for a 'third force' led to a sterile emphasis on developing theory outside of practice in the class struggle, or for that matter, in the women's movement — where there was an implicit acceptance of the radical feminists — and a fear of doing anything that would split the women's movement, or hi-jack it.

An organised socialist feminist current disappeared just prior to the election of a Tory government, and there has been a general move into the Labour Party along with the 'fragments' of the revolutionary left. As with other currents in the women's movement, the stark reality of the Tory attacks on women faced many women with the fact that developing theory was impossible outside of political practice.

However, while recognising the importance of the class struggle and the necessity to relate to the labour movement, most have not abandoned their ideas, and, indeed, it is many of these women who have been central to the development and regeneration of the women's organisation in the Labour Party.

The revolutionary feminist/separatist current now forms the core of the 'old' women's liberation movement, although it does not

definitively shape it. Spare Rib and Outwrite are clearly influenced by radical feminism (a 'softer' version of revolutionary feminism). Spare Rib claims to speak for the wide women's movement and other influences have been brought to bear on them, notably the socialist feminists. The conflict between Paletinian Arab women and Jewish feminists has forced them to confront some of the tenets of radical feminism.

The failure of the left to take up the political issues raised by the women's movement, accepting the bourgeois ascription of them as personal concerns outside the political sphere, left the field free for our ideological competitors and has resulted in a situation today where the left is in a position of tail-ending the women's movement in a whole number of areas other than the economic, e.g. domestic violence, rape, campaigns against sexism. Many Marxists ourselves did not 'discover' the women's movement until it was already beginning to fragment and sections were orientating towards the labour movement.

## Leninist

They have tried to give leadership with a campaign to reorientate the labour movement, and, in a real sense, to link the struggles of the women's movement to the struggles of women workers in an attempt to forge a new women's movement based on the working class. But this move is still in its early stages.

The general disorientation of the revolutionary movement, the loss of the Leninist understanding of the need to take up the struggle not only on the economic front, but also politically and ideologically, affected not only the question of women but all political practice. Genuine difficulties in formulating class demands

and action around questions that were primarily social and ideological ones and seemed to cut across class divisions, the difficulty of disentangling vested interests in male privilege, etc., in a situation which implied an attack on all men as men, has meant that we have lost a lot of ground to the radical feminists. Many analyses have not been made on class lines.

We are now faced with a situation which makes it more difficult to intervene as revolutionaries, and in explaining our positions we have to spend a lot of energy distinguishing ourselves from the assumptions in the women's movement that now accompany fighting around these issues.

The whole set of feminist issues is important for revolutionaries to take up — huge numbers of women have begun to question the way society is organised through being confronted in their lives with apparently insoluble contradictions. The argument that these questions are ultimately only soluble in the framework of a socialist society is no justification for not fighting around them now as a way of drawing into struggle those who are slaving under an intolerable burden, not just in their public life but also in their personal life.

The difficulties in finding a way of organising women round these issues in line with a proletarian class orientation is no excuse. Especially as the deepening crisis places a hideous burden on working class women and increased economic dependence leads to greater pressure both in terms of domestic workload and increased vulnerability to male violence and abuse.

The socialist programme must be able to provide a complete alternative working-class view, must be able to offer the most oppressed and downtrodden of our class a way out of their subjection, or it provides no alternative to the bureaucratic elitism that so often masquerades as socialism on the left.



Women workers fighting cuts at St Mary's hospital, West London. Photo: Andrew Moore.

# Bold Socialist Policies?

'Labour Briefing', a journal produced by various tendencies and individuals on the hard-ish Labour Left, has called a conference for 'Socialist Policies for a Labour Victory'.

Part of the idea seems very similar to the class-struggle election campaign that Socialist Organiser has advocated for the next election — and which we initiated with the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory in 1978-9. As 'Briefing' put it: "We'll fight for a Labour government — but we give notice that we will be fighting for socialism before, during and after any general election campaign."

## SHORT

So far, so good. Except that the 'socialist policies' put forward by 'Briefing' are a long way short even of a minimally-adequate programme of class struggle — never mind a programme for socialism.

It is important that Marxists in the labour movement insist upon a precise definition of socialism, because the word has been besmirched by decades of Kinnock-style Social Democracy in the West and USSR-style Stalinism in the East.

# LABOUR BRIEFING

No 35 JAN 15-28 1987

By Pat Blandford

The first step towards building socialism is a new political system based on grass-roots democracy, going far beyond the limited democracy of Parliament.

But the ruling class will fight with whatever it has to hand to defend its rule and prevent such a system coming into being.

## PROGRAMME

A socialist programme, properly speaking, has to spell out the impossibility of defeating the ruling class in Parliament, and the need for mass working class action — the need, that is, for revolution.

Where we put forward more limited, immediate proposals — parts of a full socialist programme — we have to be honest with ourselves and with

the labour movement about what we are doing.

That is not 'Briefing's' approach. 'Briefing' proposes nothing more than existing Labour Party policy.

## DEMANDS

Their demands, they demurely note, "are not by any means revolutionary demands: indeed Neil Kinnock could raise them all with the authority of conference policy." Nevertheless if Labour was to fight for its own policies it could "ride to office on a tide of support for socialism".

Some of Labour's conference decisions are quite radical policies. And if Labour fought on them, for sure it could give the class struggle a big boost — help to revive workers' confidence and strengthen the fight against the Tories. It would help boost Labour's election chances in this way.

But that does not make Labour Party policy a 'socialist programme'. Labour remains committed to reform 'from above' rather than working class action against the bosses and socialism 'from below' — despite its most radical policies.

## CALLS

'Briefing' calls, quite rightly, for defence of Labour authorities under Tory attack — but they defend them on the grounds that they "fight the class struggle". Do they? Most local authorities ducked out of a fight; Liverpool ineptly got itself dragged down into a horrendous debacle. We don't have to paint these councils up in order to defend them.

It is ironic that not so long ago, some of the authors of this editorial were denouncing Socialist Organiser as "capitulating to imperialism" and other vile crimes.

All of them, apart from the very small grouping, the Charist Minority, denounced the SCLV in 1978-9. One of them called us "errand boys for Benn". Some of them supported the sectarian stunt organisation Socialist Unity which stood half a dozen candidates in the elections. But now they have sobered up and come down to earth with a dispirited ping.



# Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

## Best for whom?

World medical opinion is united in agreement that breast milk (the original health food) is the best nourishment for babies. The benefits include:

1. **Antibodies** in the fluid called colostrum, produced in the first few days. These pass on immunity to many illnesses.

2. **Superior nutrition.** Human milk contains the correct balance of fats, sugars, proteins, vitamins and minerals for babies. Cows' milk has more fat and less sugars.

3. **Less allergy problems.** Many humans are allergic to the foreign proteins in cows' milk.

4. **Contraception.** When milk is taken from the breasts, a hormone (chemical messenger) is released which signals to the pituitary gland below the brain. In turn, a hormone from this gland stops the ovaries from preparing any more eggs for the time being. The contraceptive effect is more reliable, the more frequent is the feeding. Every one or two hours is best.

These benefits have been known for centuries, which makes the actions of Nestles before 1981 all the more criminal. They used a very hard sell to get their artificial baby milk accepted in Third World countries. So what was wrong with that? After all, modern substitutes are much more nourishing than their predecessors?

The point is that they have to be made up in hygienic conditions, with sterile water and containers — extremely difficult to obtain in some Third World countries. Nestles only pointed this out in the small print. This helps explain the finding by the World Health Organisation that if mothers give birth at intervals of less than two years, their children's chance of dying doubles.

The usual gap is four years if the babies are breast-fed. Going on to bottles allows ovulation to recommence and exposes the babies to infection. The single most common cause of death in the Third World is gastro-enteritis.

Now in Britain with its ante- and post-natal services, you might expect awareness of the benefits of breast-feeding to be high, particularly since health

workers have been running a "breast is best" campaign. This may be so but, according to the Baby Milk Action Coalition, the proportion of mothers solely breast-feeding for the first six months has fallen from 41% to 36% in five years.

So what are the factors working against breast-feeding?

Many women experience real physical difficulties such as soreness and infections. Their ability to feed may be affected by anxiety about the adequacy of their milk flow. It may take some persistence to get a good flow and it is then that women need explanation and support from health workers. However, in many hospitals, shortages of staff make this difficult. Nearly all the 28 hospitals in London agreed that it was quicker to show mothers how to mix artificial milk and hold a bottle than to teach them breast feeding techniques.

Out of hospital, new mothers frequently find it necessary to go back to work, a choice usually made on stark financial grounds. This will interrupt breast-feeding and may cause the flow of milk to lessen.

"Non-working" mothers have to leave the home for shopping and social reasons but find public facilities for breast-feeding unsatisfactory or non-existent. A bottle probably is better than a public loo.

Therefore, breast-feeding needs a lot of support, with education about its benefits, pleasant and hygienic facilities in public places, encouraging women to "express" (squeeze out) milk for future use by their babies, organising milk donors for women who cannot breast-feed, better maternity provisions at work with workplace nurseries.

Instead of this, the government has given a green light to baby milk manufacturers, flouting WHO codes by allowing advertising to health workers and new mothers (glossy bedside brochures), with free milk samples given away in hospitals.

The effects of this can only be guessed at, but in Norway and Sweden where milk companies are banned from hospitals, 80% of mothers choose to breast-feed.

## ACTIVISTS' DIARY

"Fighting Racism; Defending Labour Councils; Campaigning for Socialism." Campaign Forum public meeting. Monday 16 February. Speakers include: Bernie Grant, Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn MP, Eric Heffer MP, Gul Zarina Khan, Dennis Skinner MP, Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, Labour Women's Action Committee. Chair: Linda Bellos. Admission £1, 50p unwaged. Lambeth Town Hall. (Brixton tube).

"Hear AZAPO Speak". Friends Meeting House, 52 St Martin's Lane, London WC2. Friday 6 March. 7.30 p.m.

**Labour Party Black Sections.** AGM, Saturday 14 March, in Nottingham. For further details contact Narendra Makanji, 41 Darwin Road, London N22 (01-889 7734).

**National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign** (South East Region) miners' benefit: Wembley Conference Centre, 7.30pm, Sunday 1 March.

**Campaign for Labour Party Democracy** regional conferences: Sheffield, 14 February; Edinburgh, 21 February; London, 28 February. Registration £3.50 waged, £1.50 unwaged, to Danny Nicol, CLPD AGM, 54 Southwood Lane, London N6.

BARNET PRINTWORKERS SUPPORT COMMITTEE PRESENT A VALENTINES DAY DANCE TO THE JAMES BOND 8pm-11.30pm FRIDAY 8th FEBRUARY HENDON FOOTBALL CLUB CLAREMONT RD CRICKLEWOOD N.W.2. LARGE CAR PARK TICKETS £2.50 UNWAGED £1.50

"We are here until Mandela is free". March to Trafalgar Square. Saturday 14 March. Assemble 1.00 p.m., Whittington Park, N19. (Holloway Road, south of Archway tube). March leaves 2.30 p.m.

**Brent East LPYS**  
Which way forward for the LPYS?  
Debate: Youth Fightback, Labour Coordinating Committee, and Militant.  
Tuesday 17 February, 7.30, at Anson Hall, Anson Road, off Walm Lane. Tube: Willesden Green.

## WHERE WE STAND

Socialist Organiser stands for workers' liberty, East and West. We aim to help organise the left wing in the Labour Party and trade unions to fight

to replace capitalism with working class socialism.

We want public ownership of the major enterprises and a planned economy under workers' control. We want democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrat's and management's privileges.

Socialism can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers' struggles world-wide, including the struggle of workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist states against their own anti-

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We stand:  
For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. For a mass working class based women's movement.

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

For a united and free Ireland, with some federal system to protect the rights of the Protestant minority.

For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion.

For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

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## Monastic mystery

Based on Umberto Eco's novel of the same name, *The Name of the Rose* is a mediaeval whodunnit — or rather, who is doing it.

An ex-inquisitor, now a monk, (Sean Connery) arrives at an Italian monastery as part of a delegation of Franciscans preparing to do theological battle with Benedictine emissaries of the Pope over the vexed issue of whether Christ owned his own loin cloth. Brother William, accompanied by his scribe Adso, a young novice, discovers that monks are being murdered in gruesome ways, and sets about unearthing the mystery.

The monastery has a secret: and it is clear that the murders are connected in some way to it. And it seems that the abbey's huge library contains the secret. So William and Adso begin an investigation that is to take them to many strange discoveries.

Eco's novel is really a fantastic pot pourri of different ingredients. A mystery worthy of Agatha Christie is woven into a complex account of clerical history, arcane theological debates (although the question of whether Jesus laughed or not turns out to be more important than you think...), sexual repression, and a terrifying confrontation between heretics and the Papal inquisitor.

By Edward Ellis

The film treats all of this remarkably well. Of course the story has to be simplified to a considerable extent, and in a few respects has been altered (detrimentally, I thought). But on the whole it is a faithful reproduction of the book, executed with great atmospheric style. Like the novel, the film almost *smells* of a fourteenth-century monastery. It is very well done.

It is a profound as well as an exciting story. William has abandoned the inquisition because he can no longer be sure what is true and what is false, nor what is heresy and what orthodox.

Gui the Inquisitor has none of his qualms: he is determined to send two members of a virtually extinct sect (who had tried to physically exterminate the rich) and an innocent girl to burn at the stake, merely to serve the factional interests of the Pope.

But the real power of this part of the story comes from its twentieth century relevance. The inquisition did not die out with the Dark Ages. No historically aware socialist can read or watch Gui's trial of the heretics without thinking of the Moscow purges in the 1930s. I'm sure that the obscure stories of the different Catholic schisms must strike a chord, as well.

Eco's novel is an indictment not only of the inquisition and the mediaeval church, not only of intolerance, but of heresy-hunting more generally. The film keeps the horror of the unchallengeable inquisitor and the burnings at the stake. But perhaps it loses the subtleties.

Nevertheless, it is a well-made and arresting picture.

# Women worldwide

By Tracy Williams

A new six-part series on women started this week on ITV at the unusual hour of 12.30 pm.

It looks at "half the world's population", how women's lives have changed, their present situation and our hopes for the future.

If you've ever watched daytime telly it comes as a relief from the mindless chat shows and soaps.

The programme's presenter, Anna Ford, is, I hear, worried about being labelled a 'feminist'. Well she might. Anna's got the right credentials, being white, middle class, English and a careerist.

The programme showed women's role in the labour market and the bitter trade union struggles they have

## on the Box

fought — Supreme Quilting, the 1982 Smethwick strike for union recognition, the Lee Jeans occupation of 1981, the Ford sewing machinists strike of 1968, Mansfield Hosiery, Imperial Typewriters, Grunwick, the list of women's action is long and glorious.

However, this programme dealt with the conditions of working

women throughout the world.

Did you know that women do 65% of the world's work but own 1% of its property and receive 10% of its income? 33% of the world's women are illiterate, only 37% go to primary school and 75% of the women in underdeveloped countries are underfed.

Yet in Africa women grow 75% of the food produced, do 50% of the planting of crops and 75% of the weeding in the fields. (By the way, the men drive the tractors).

### Sisters

Our sisters abroad are not just underfed, but underpaid, overworked and undervalued. Whether it be walking three miles to fetch water for cooking and washing twice a day, or losing children from diseases because they couldn't take any time off to have their babies.

# Death of an entertainer

By Jim Denham

I always rather liked Liberace. Not his piano playing, which was technically accomplished but lightweight, sentimental stuff, to be sneered at by those of us brought up on Art Tatum and Earl Hines.

No, what I liked was his over-the-top stage act; the candelabra, the diamante and the gold lame.

And I liked the way he obviously regarded it all as a big joke on himself, even though most of his audience would take the glitz quite seriously. He said that his aim was always to get people laughing *with* him before they could laugh *at* him.

And he didn't try very hard to hide the fact that he was gay (although he sued the Daily Mirror's 'Casandra'

for a spiteful attack on him when he toured Britain in 1956) at a time when "coming out" was an impossibility in show-biz circles. It seems likely that he died of AIDS.

I recently saw a TV show from the early fifties featuring the Spike Jones City Slickers, a grotesquely fascinating "comedy" band who were hugely popular during the 1940s and early '50s. Part of their act involved a piano-playing dwarf, facially a dead ringer for Liberace. Soap bubbles came out of the candelabra on his little grand piano, and he kept falling off his stool.

In many ways it was a horrible act, grossly insulting to all persons of restricted growth and to Liberace. But I'm sure the King of Glitter enjoyed it, and was flattered to be considered worthy of parody.

Liberace brought immense innocent pleasure to his large audience — mainly middle-aged and working class, and mainly women, whom he flirted with outrageously. He seemed



Liberace

to be a nice guy and I don't see why socialists shouldn't mourn his passing.

The cheap labour force in the Third World is predominantly made up of women, most of whom are between 18 and 21. They work 18 hour shifts in sweat shops doing boring and tiring manufacturing work.

For some the meagre wage provides the essentials — like food and shelter for their children. The programme showed how this "independence" — just getting out of the home — can give the women a tremendous confidence boost.

The programme told of some women who had opened a women-only co-operative bank with low interest rates: the main reason for doing this was so that the women's husbands couldn't take the money away from them.

Beverly Jackson highlighted that in Botswana 60% of households are headed by women — yet women still have very low status in the community.

### Second Class

"I for one, am fed up of being a second class citizen. I'm second to no one. I'm as good as the next person". (Edna Roach, Fakenham shoe factory occupation).

It is a familiar story — cheap labour, women making ends meet, women's main enemy being poverty. Of course the programme didn't offer any solutions, nor did it raise many arguments or answer our questions.

Yes, it's true that "women's work" — which can include anything and everything — is underpaid. But there is a reason for this — money is closely associated with power (it was only in 1882 that married women won the right to own property). Different wage levels between men and women means that various skills are labelled as being of low "value" and profits can be made by those who control capital.

"Let us reject as a husband any man who is not sufficiently generous to consent to share with us all the rights he himself enjoys". (La Femme Libre).

## HEALY'S WRP

## Anti-working class action

One of our comrades, Phil Penn, has been jailed for 12 months, 8 months of it suspended, for assault. He is a highly respected member of our Central Committee, a party member for 18 years, active in the trade union movement and recently in campaigns such as that on the Guildford 4.

Our concern in this case is that members of another organisation claiming to be part of the labour movement were, apart from the arresting officers, the only police witnesses. This would be like miners giving evidence against miners in the recent strike.

As you may know in October 1985 the Workers Revolutionary Party expelled its former leader, Gerry Healy, for sexual abuse, violence and slanders against members of the organisation — charges he never contested. A small group of party functionaries including Corin and Vanessa Redgrave, Sheila Torrance and Richard Price, supported Healy and were expelled by the majority. This group then formed a bogus party calling itself the 'Workers' Revolutionary Party' and publishing a newspaper 'Newline'.

Phil Penn was arrested and charged after a demonstration called by the print unions at Wapping on 3 May 1986. The events as reported in court were as follows. In the Newline of 1 May 1986 the 'Workers Notebook' column carried a crude and provocative attack on Phil, insulting his intellect and presenting him as ignorant and illiterate, speaking in grunts.

On the 3 May Wapping March, as the conflict between demonstrators and police became increasingly fierce, Phil went to fetch his camera. Once away from the main body of demonstrators he came across members of the Healy-Torrance group. They verbally abused him, taunting him with quotes from the above-mentioned article. He refused to be provoked. Four of them — Richard Price, Eric Rogers, Paul Williams and another man — then attacked him physically — in Price's case, with banner poles — and knocked him to the ground. In defending himself Phil damaged the eye of one of his assailants. Only Phil was



Healy's rag

arrested.

No organisation calling itself socialist would collaborate with the police against members of the labour movement. This is a point of principle. But members of the Healy-Torrance group eagerly acted as police witnesses. Three of the four men who attacked Phil did not appear in court, but two women members of the Healy-Torrance group gave evidence which Phil vigorously contested. Had he been found guilty on the charge of wounding with intent he would have undoubtedly been given a much longer custodial sentence.

This is not the first time the Healy-Torrance group have acted in this way. Six of them appeared as police witnesses in Sheffield Crown Court in January this year after an incident between themselves and members of the International Communist Party. On this occasion the court did not believe them, and a defendant was found not guilty.

We should point out that members of the Healy-Torrance group again attacked and beat up Phil Penn on 8 June 1986 in Leicester. They used sticks and knives. The police wished to prosecute his attackers but, as a matter of principle, Phil refused to act as a witness and the case could not go forward.

We are asking all labour movement organisations to condemn the anti-working class actions of the Healy-Torrance group, which were responsible for the jailing of Phil Penn. Messages of support and enquiries should be sent to: Workers Revolution Party/Workers' Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS.

Yours fraternally,  
DAVE TEMPLE  
Chair, WRP/WP

## Defending Liverpool

## To deal with Bas Hardy's letter (SO 300)

Bas says I don't mention the gross underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in the Labour Party in Liverpool. While this is a problem it is also (not) true that just because you elect a black leader you have a socialist council. The record of the inner London councils in tackling the deprivation in their areas is poor to say the least. However this isn't the major issue.

If as Bas says, you need more black people in positions of responsibility, I presume he would have been opposed to SO standing its own white candidate against Kingsley Abrams from the Black Section for the LPYS place on the Labour Party NEC. Surely for Marxists the programme comes first?

Bas says that my claim that Liverpool Council have built more houses in Liverpool 8 than other councils have spent on their total housing budgets is "nonsense". The fact is that it is true, and Bas can't field one fact to prove otherwise.

On the question of "20% of the new intake being black". 20 out of 100 YTS trainees with a guaranteed job at the end of training is 20% unless my 'O' level maths fail me.

I stand by everything I wrote in my letter in SO 298. SO readers and supporters should think about the record of the Black Caucus since Sam Bond was appointed. They have attacked Labour councillors, broken up

Labour Party public meetings, and vilified anyone with any criticisms, however mild, of their policies as being racists. Honest Marxists should treat the Black Caucus with the contempt they deserve.

Perhaps SO could publish a pamphlet on Liverpool vs. The Black Caucus. The title could be "Lies, Damn Lies and Bas Hardy Articles".

Yours comradesly,  
SIMON LAWLOR  
North Nottingham LPYS



Available from SO, PO Box 823,  
London SE15. 20p plus postage.

## SSiN belittles the struggles of women

This article by Sarah Mann originally appeared in CLPD Bulletin and was reprinted by Socialist Action (no. 158, February 6). A reply by Jane Ashworth will follow next week.

To coincide with NUS Conference, held in December 1986, Jane Ashworth and Michele Carlisle of SSiN (Socialist Students in NOLS) produced an article entitled "Feminism Yes, Femocracy No!" (Socialist Organiser, 4 December 1986).

This outlined their position as to whether class or sex is the greater oppressor. The article is both misleading and crude, and underlies SSiN's decision to abandon their former policy of support for women's autonomy. At 1987 NOLS Conference, they will now be calling on Conference as a whole to elect the Women's Officer, rather than women themselves.

SSiN is a Socialist Organiser-based organisation and their decision is no more than sectarian; a means of ensuring the election of a Socialist Organiser candidate. If this means forfeiting the principle of women's autonomy, then this they are prepared to do.

## What is femocracy?

SSiN begin by examining the nature of the word 'femocracy' which they define as "a stealing of feminism and using it for personal career advancement". Femocrats are compared with bureaucrats and we are told of their reluctance to actually work within the labour movement. Throughout the article, the implication is that 'femocrats' have no real desire to fight alongside men for socialist ideals. In SSiN's words: "They have distilled an objective truth which cannot be challenged because everyone else's view of the world is male." Femocrats will not try to convince people and build campaigns. "They are the pure feminists, unfettered by left-wing or any other ideology."

Yet simultaneously, SSiN continue by stating that femocrats "only attack from the left." So now we have an admission that there are femocrats within the Labour Left. But wait a moment. Of course! Femocrats are not fighting for all women, or for working class socialism. They are using the Labour Left purely for their own gain. They care not for their sisters, they care not for a redistribution of power in society between men and women. Their sole aims are to carve out niches for themselves within the corridors of the Commons. Femocrats are renegades; Margaret Thatchers in disguise! Cry "Sexist"

We are told that it is no longer possible for a man to challenge a woman's politics for fear of the word "sexist" being thrown at him. "Objective arguments don't matter, facts don't matter much either. It is impossible to win. The rules of their game forbid honest debate." SSiN's position is that "there is no doubt that some women cry 'sexist' when politically challenged."

What this really means is that women really haven't got the political expertise to argue their own case. But rather than fade into the background (after all, that would be a wholly passive act of behaviour!) they rant



2,000 women take on the state at Greenham Common.

and rave at men, winning their argument only on the grounds of making the male sex feel guilty. These poor left men are forced to retreat and have the ideas of petty-bourgeois women foisted upon them, because failure to accept these ideas would lead to female intimidation of men.

This in itself is ludicrous. How many meetings do we attend where women speak for at least half the time, or even speak in relation to their numbers? Most political debate is by men, and about male experience. Most women would feel too intimidated to speak out. And even if they did, and dared to call a man 'sexist' in public, the likely consequence would be the labelling of the woman as neurotic and 'hysterical'. If SSiN really believe that women have got the monopoly on the discussion of political ideas, they're walking around with blinkers on their eyes.

## Slandering men?

SSiN's criticisms have no limits. Femocrats, they tell us, have no objection to using their gender as a means of slandering men. We are told that femocrats invest incidents of sexual harassment, not just to win political arguments but to "score points". SSiN openly say that femocrats indulge in ruining men's reputations with accusations of harassment, justifying it as "fair game".

This is blatantly misogynist, and adds weight to the myth that women are mentally unbalanced and have nothing better to do than shout 'I'm being sexually harassed'. We only need to take the argument one step further and we have a situation where it's plausible to say 'women shout rape for the fun of it'.

In actual fact most women are frightened to reveal cases of sexual harassment for fear of adverse publicity and the knowledge that they will have to relive the incidents over and over again in their minds instead of trying to forget them. Sexual harassment affects all women, and is not taken seriously enough. It is

disgraceful that SSiN can peddle an argument which lays the blame for sexual harassment at women's feet!

## Fight for working class women

SSiN's position can be summarised in an outrageously simplified paragraph stating that: "the power that a working class man has over a working class woman is absolutely negligible when compared to the murdering, decadent, crushing power of the international ruling class." Try telling that to a working class woman who's being battered behind doors by her working class husband! This article is now taking on a Militant/SWP outlook: that we should only fight for working class women, and not because they are women, but because they are members of the working class! Let me remind you, SSiN — rape affects all women; abortion affects all women. And it's not just working class women who are afraid to walk the streets at night!

## No liberation without socialism

Whilst we accept that there can be no women's liberation without socialism, it is no longer enough to say that female oppression is going to disappear overnight. Instead of attacking women, relentlessly, we could do better to examine and criticise the behaviour of men in the Labour Left, for they are not without faults. It is important to remember that there can be no socialism without women's liberation.

SSiN's article on femocracy belittles women on the Labour Left and tries to invalidate our experience as women. Women are portrayed as essentially apolitical, hostile to the idea of class conflict, and disinterested in promoting real struggle. SSiN say that we can do without femocracy or femocrats. Rather, I would say that the Labour Left can do without this type of spiteful, sectarian and misogynistic writing. If SSiN want to build alliances for socialism, they'll have to do better than this, for essentially it amounts to nothing more than petty-minded, Daily Mail-type lies.

## Occupation ends — but the fight goes on

By Lol Duffy

As reported last week, the negotiations about the sacking of the 250 workers at Crossville's Love Lane depot, Liverpool, centred around redundancy payments rather than reinstatement. It now looks as though the management has withdrawn its original offer of state redundancy

pay plus a 25% top-up and the workers remain sacked. Normal redundancy payments at Crossville were state redundancy pay plus a 50% top-up. There are now plans for more national negotiations.

Meanwhile the occupation was ended peacefully last Friday when the workers were presented with a court order by the county Sheriff and a number of bailiffs. A picket has now been mounted on the Love Lane depot.

Some of the factors that have put the workers on the defensive in this fight seem to be:

- A lack of decisive leadership;
- Over 100 vacancies at Mersey Bus that no doubt many of the sacked workers have applied for;
- A lack of solidarity from some of the other depots such as Chester and Warrington, whose workers were prepared to lose their T&GWU cards rather than support Love Lane: They believed that they would have more secure jobs after the sackings. Collections are being organised in other Crossville depots.

## TEACHERS

# All out on 5 March!

The NUT National Disciplinary Panel last weekend decided to reinstate every suspended member of the Inner London

## Senior-Colman

Workers at Senior Colman Ltd., of Sale, Manchester, have been on strike since 19 January in a dispute engineered by management over changes in working practices.

The company's workers have been unionised for three years and have never before had a strike. But in July 1986 the company was taken over by SEGL, which has a history of provoking disputes to smash union organisation.

They introduced new timesheets without consultation and then dismissed four workers for failing to comply with management directives. Workers decided to go on all-out strike action in support of the four who had been sacked. The vote was carried by 112 to 110. The AEU made the strike official.

All the strikers were then issued with redundancy notices.

The strike has been pretty solid, though ten of the original workforce are scabbing.

Management are now recruiting a scab workforce (from, amongst other places, a local borstal) and they have used disgraceful tactics to break the strike: they phoned the homes of four deaf strikers with return-to-work ultimatums, telling them that otherwise they might spend a lifetime on the dole "because you are cripples".

Senior Colman workers are determined to win what they see as a dispute over trade union rights. They have been visiting local factories to appeal for solidarity.

They are holding a demonstration in Sale on Saturday 14 February — meet in Sale town centre at 10.30 am.

More information/messages of support etc., contact T. Lowe on 061-969 9486.

## Students in action

By Jane Ashworth

THE NATIONAL Union of Students week of action is taking off in some areas.

In Newcastle, the Polytechnic is in 24 hour occupation, and for the first time in living memory the University is taking direct action.

## SSiN

The philosophy and music departments at Newcastle University are faced with closure. The Student Union executive, at last week's General Meeting, put forward an alternative cuts budget and refused to allow any amendments to be taken.

The General Meeting voted to reconvene this week and insisted that amendments be taken. The meeting on Tuesday 10th then voted to occupy the University library. The executive was still running around saying that the reconvened General Meeting was unconstitutional.

By Cheung Siu Ming

Teachers Association (ILTA) Council, the Inner London division of the NUT. The 7 ILTA officers received a reprimand.

This is a great victory for the forces in the NUT fighting to take on Baker, as well as the Labour-led local authorities, who are attempting to impose drastic working conditions on teachers. (Our list is as long as that for NCU engineers).

The pressure generated by the ILTA decision to take one day strike action on January 13 against the Baker Bill is now mounting every week on the NUT EC. Its policy of propaganda and letter-writing to the

House of Lords is in tatters, as Baker's Bill is rushed through with no significant amendments at all. Now they will have little choice but to call on members to take industrial action against the Bill — just the very 'crime' that ILTA Council was suspended for.

When the Baker Bill becomes law the Education Secretary will have powers to impose any pay award and changes in working conditions on teachers. The teachers' unions' right to negotiate will be ended.

The reinstatement of ILTA is a signal to every local association which has not yet done so to call on the NUT leaders to organise industrial action against the Baker Bill, starting with a national one-day strike on 5 March.

## RESTAURANT STRIKE

# BOYCOTT

The four Chinese chefs are still on the picket line outside Wheelers Restaurant in Market Street, Brighton. Last week's public meeting in Covent Garden Community Centre was an excellent boost to the boycott leafletting campaign, now hitting selected Wheelers restaurants in London.

The Wheelers management even produced a leaflet trying to counter the points made against them by the support group and the generally favourable newspaper and television coverage so far given to the strike.

## MANCHESTER Deportations

Last week well over 1,000 people demonstrated in support of George Roucou, a shop steward in Manchester City Council's Direct Works department who has been under threat of deportation for over two years.

The Support Group urgently needs help from labour movement activists to leaflet Wheelers restaurants in the West End on Thursday and Friday evenings, 6 to 8 pm. Union branches are being urged to volunteer one evening in the next period ahead.

All offers of support, requests for speakers, to: Wheelers 4 Support Group, 152-6 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2.

## MANCHESTER Victory

NUPE Housing returned to work on February 10th after scoring a resounding victory. The 2½ week strike started when the Housing Aid workers walked out after a threat of disciplinary action. NUPE has won extra office space for Housing Aid workers — the immediate issue that sparked off the dispute.

But the dispute was about a lot more than just Housing Aid space. It was about the way NUPE Housing, and unions in general, are being treated by the Council.

NUPE's objections to office accommodation proposals were ignored, and workers threatened with disciplinary action.

Throughout the dispute serious threats of attack were made on union rights. The council produced a return to work agreement which was a charter for shackling NUPE Housing in future. It threatened victimisations by giving management the right to deploy staff at will. It aimed to get NUPE to agree to a blanket emergency cover deal for significant sections of the workforce.

Strikers under the deal would be banned from speaking on council premises. The final clause would have banned picketing. In future strikes there was to be 'no disruption by way of noisy or other behaviour outside council workplaces'.

Management in the end withdrew the document and accepted NUPE's requests for no victimisations, no disciplinary actions and a guarantee of continuation of service benefits.

An important lesson of the strike was the successful way the issue was brought to the fore in the Labour Party. A growing revolt in the Labour Party over the strike was one powerful factor which pushed the council to concede.



## Birmingham is solid

The overwhelming majority of Birmingham's 2700 NCU members attended a meeting on Sunday to discuss latest developments in the dispute.

Their mood was militant, but as striker Malcolm Spake explained to Socialist Organiser, many are unhappy with the way the NCU leadership are handling matters:

The NEC jumped the gun. Talks between the negotiating officers and BT management had come up with an offer. The NEC went round the country on Saturday to sell the deal and they suddenly realised the depth of feeling that existed against any sell-out.

So on Sunday — the NEC did not dare present their deal and the resolution to continue with the dispute until a better offer is obtained was carried virtually unanimously.

Late on Sunday the negotiating officers went back to management and told them they had to come up with something a bit better to satisfy the membership. I should say at this point that none of these deals, including the latest one, have ever been officially announced to the members. Officially we still have not received details of the latest offer and our only

information is from management circulars!

But as far as we could make out the latest deal, or 'honourable compromise', as John Golding keeps putting it, is a complex package:

\*5.2%, backdated to 1 July 1986.

\*0.8% to be paid between April and June 1987 conditional on us accepting the productivity strings.

\*4.75% in July 1987 and 1.6% on 30 June 1988.

But all the strings bar one are still there, in particular the watering down of duty definitions to the point where we have almost complete flexibility. The only string that has been removed is management's previous demand that we extend availability for work between 5 and 7 p.m.

In a nutshell the deal is a complete sell-out.

To win this dispute we will need rank and file control, keeping the members in the picture all along the line. We need an effective leadership willing to wage a real struggle.

But there have already been some gains. We have won back members we lost during the privatisation campaign. And in Birmingham at least we have proved that we can strike for a month and stay solid — something that could be very useful in the campaign for the 32 hour, four day working week, which is part of the answer to new technology and job loss in the industry.

## BT workers can win

By Richard Moore, Chair, London Met South NCU Branch.

Our branch officers have already decided to recommend rejection of the deal to Wednesday's meeting. We will be producing a leaflet to help get across our arguments.

The strings are still there. They have dropped some of them but not all.

There is no real change on the money offer. 5.02% is basically the original offer. And members do not like the idea of them negotiating for next year's wage increase now. The executive had no authority to do it.

## Hard core wants to fight

By Ray Moon, Chair, Tunbridge Wells NCU Branch

I think it will be a very close vote on Wednesday. There is certainly a hard core prepared to carry on; but there are also others, including some on picket lines today, who are wavering. Three weeks on strike, they are saying, is enough. Some of the membership do not believe in themselves, and that is an attitude exploited by the leadership.

We need to convince them that the

And they have negotiated for 4½% inflation then, but it could well be above that. As far as I am concerned the actual level of inflation is just the bottom line.

Members feel that we can win. They do not think the strings should be part of the deal. They are very distrustful of the executive and angry at the way they have handled it. In any way it is one big parody. On the one hand management attacks are keeping our members solid; on the other hand, the executive are dividing them.

Last Sunday's mass meetings cannot have done Golding any good. With over 50% turn-out and 97% voting to stand firm, the vote solidified the members and made a sell-out more difficult.

system is not holding up; they think that because their own phone is working the strike is having no effect.

My own view is that if we can convince members to put up with the sacrifice and fight a bit longer, we can screw BT down to the ground and we can win hands down. It is BT who are desperate for a settlement.

The deal is a sell-out, there is no doubt about it. We are strong enough to have got much better.

The NEC did not want to fight in the first place; they were forced to. Right from the beginning Golding has been pulling out the stops to find a get-out. But they have found it difficult to placate both BT and the membership. BT see Golding as the link but it is not going to be as easy as they think.

# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

## Poisonous Tory brats

The gutter press rants on and on about 'loony lefties', but keeps its judicious mouth shut about the real loonies — seen prancing about at the Young Conservatives' conference in Scarborough this week.

This intellectually high-brow event was noted among other things for the chant of 'string 'em up, string 'em up,' during the debate on hanging.

A growing faction in the Young Conservatives is the far-right 'libertarian' group who ran the Federation of Conservative Students until it was

shut down last year by a Tory head office doing its best to hide its blushes.

The FCS used to parade up and down national student conferences with posters declaring their support for the murderous 'Contras' in Nicaragua, and for the 'democratic government' in El Salvador — 'fighting for freedom' — with death squads.

The 'libertarians' more enlightened policies include complete legalisation of heroin. Maybe some of their leading figures have made their fortunes from dealing in the stuff — at a safe distance, of course.

A group of Young Tories organised a pub crawl to celebrate Hitler's rise to power. And the whole lot of them to one degree or another support apartheid.

At FCS conferences, delegates would wear union jack t-shirts and openly invite accusations that they were fascists — indeed they thrived on such accusations. And, indeed there was evidence of fascist infiltration of the FCS.

Now more moderate Tories are worried about their growing influence in the YC.

The Young Conservatives are, of course, all absolutely insufferable middle class brats, and the far right are just more insufferable still. No doubt many of them don't care what they say, so long as it's offensive, and just like the conferences so they can get disgustingly drunk.

One recent FCS conference did lead to disgusting scenes of debauchery and damage to property, leading to a sharp rebuke from Tory Party tops.

But what is particularly revealing is the growing alliance between the libertarians and the Thatcherites. The far right believe that Mrs. T is really one of them anyway, and as their influence grows in the Young Conservatives, so their hold on the Tory Party will grow too.

Lord Hailsham (Quentin Hogg), addressing the conference, spouted the usual stuff about Labour threatening to introduce an Eastern-European state. What the Tories want is a 'share-owning democracy', he said — which rather gives the game away. (How much democracy will you get if you've got no shares, we wonder?).

But the real threat to society was there in Scarborough. Just imagine a government consisting of those brainless, malicious pigs. Imagine what it would mean for workers, the unemployed, women more generally, black people, homosexuals (who should be stuck in gas ovens, according to one right-wing Tory councillor in Staffordshire)...

It would be even worse than this government. Imagine that. Unfortunately, it is possible to imagine it. Something must be done about 'Maggie's Militant Tendency'.

## Labour must

# Oppose Tory authoritarianism

The raid on the BBC was part of the attack being made by the Conservative government on the basic rights of the British people and on the rights of the British working class movement in particular.

In the last few years this government has made authoritarian moves aimed at tying up the press, the BBC and the media and to intimidate them into publishing their point of view — and that means to suppress other points of view. That is really what the whole thing is about.

### Outcome

To some people this may seem to be an exaggeration, but it is by no means an exaggeration. It is the logical outcome of what they have been doing.

Look at the record.

\*They have attacked trade unions, which can now very easily find their money sequestered and their pickets arrested — people like jailed print worker Mike Hicks and others — merely for carrying out normal picketing.

\*There is a national police force — the police have got more powers than they have ever had. First there was the Police Act and now we have the Public Order Act, which can make demonstrations illegal.

So the latest moves against the media and the BBC and against Duncan Campbell and the New Statesman — all this is part of the general drift towards tighter government control over society in the interests of capital.

That is what it is all about.

The leadership of the Labour Party was conned, there is no question about that. Trundling over to see the Foreign Secretary and then coming back to say the BBC film was concerned with national security, that

By Eric Heffer MP

was the biggest con ever.

As a result the Labour front bench response in the House of Commons was feeble and muted. They were saying that the film had been about national security but nevertheless that action should not continue — because it was all now known by everybody anyway. That is not the argument at all. They should never have got themselves into that situation.

We have to raise the question what is 'national security'? All Duncan Campbell said in the New Statesman was that there is a satellite being developed to overlook Russia, and at the same time the House of Commons were not told what was going on.

In my opinion there is nothing remotely concerned with national security in that. It is being used as an excuse to further intimidate the media to get it to do what the government wants.

### Election

In the coming election the Labour Party has to make it absolutely clear that we are opposed to this type of intimidation and to the use of government powers against the press and media.

We have to explain to people that the historic struggle for a free press in this country was waged against the state, though today it is no longer a free press, because it is dominated by big business interests. Nevertheless we have to fight to maintain — and reclaim from big business — the right to speak and publish freely.

The New Statesman is by no means



Police knock Wapping picket unconscious. Photo Nigel Clapp.

a left wing journal. If action can be taken against the New Statesman it can be taken against every genuine left wing paper — and even against right wing papers if they come out against the government on certain questions.

We have to make it a real central issue in the election and say loud and clear that we passionately oppose

these authoritarian moves by the government. We have to link the raid on the BBC with the moves by the government to greater centralisation and show that it is part of a sustained drive towards the destruction, stage by stage, of Britain's hard-won democratic rights — and particularly of the rights of the labour movement and the working class.

## Coal board step up harassment of NUM

Last week the Coal Board stepped up its efforts to harass and intimidate members of the NUM.

They went to the High Court and got writs against all the NUM members on the Ollerton/Bevercotes Miners Welfare Committee. My own was delivered on Friday morning.

They were delivered to each individual house, trying to involve the wives and families in the intimidation and hoping that the men would panic.

They did not panic. The Welfare committee is standing firm.

The Coal Board want to deny the NUM any rights to elect representatives to the Welfare Committee. They would prefer it if we did not exist. They want to impose a UDM committee on the Welfare. If they cannot do that, then they want to get a receiver sent in.

One of the allegations in the writs is that the Welfare is being run as a 'political' centre, and not for 'recreational' use. It is not the first time we have heard the charge. It depends on your outlook.

WHETTON'S WEEK

If working class people getting together and talking about their working lives and what affects their communities is 'politics', then yes it is a 'political hotbed'. But they were casting other aspersions — about 'political activists', about UDM members being excluded and so on.

It is just not true about the UDM. UDM members use it; some members of staff are either UDM members or married to UDM members. UDM and NUM are not embracing each other with open arms, but they are sitting down and talking. And this coming together is what the Coal Board fear: it is what they are trying to disrupt.

Last Saturday we had one of our regular meetings for the 29 men sacked in the Notts coalfield. One thing that came out was the need for a na-

tional meeting of all the sacked lads, so that we can come together and iron out our problems.

We need to find out what is happening in other areas. We need to stop ourselves being divided by promises like Haslam's to reinstate some sacked miners but not others, and to discuss how those still left out should continue to organise; we need to talk about how to lift the sacked and jailed miners' campaign.

We need now to get the proposal for a national meeting passed at Area level. From there, we can either ask all sacked miners to meet here or get the national union to call a conference.

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At long last we have been given information by the Coal Board on who at Bevercotes is paying their subs through the check-off system to the NUM. At Bevercotes there are something like 80 NUM members whose money the Coal Board is still paying to the UDM! Our immediate job is to chase them up and

get them to instruct the Coal Board yet again to pay their money to the NUM and to no other organisation.

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It is a tragedy what happened at Wapping. It seems to be 'cave-in' time, with trade unions withdrawing support from workers in struggle left, right and centre.

There has been Wapping and Silentnight. The executive of SOGAT and the NGA deserve to be severely censured by the rank and file for their cowardly retreat in the face of such a blatant attack by the government, the courts, the police. It is a double tragedy that it has been foisted on the workers without them having a say.

I do not think the defeat was on the same scale as the miners', but we have to learn lessons from both defeats. You can only resist the threat of sequestration by standing firm. Now the union leaders are using it as an excuse to sell-out. We cannot have a situation where all the bosses and courts have to do is shout 'sequestration' and the workers give up.

## AIDS: spend more money!

THE DEATH toll from AIDS has reached two a day, according to the latest reports. Last month, 62 people died and 76 developed AIDS.

The government has provided an extra £10 million to the Medical Research Council to look for a cure — but it is still too little, too late.

The Tories spent far more advertising the sale of British Gas than it has spent on AIDS research. Even another £10 million (added to the £20 million largely spent on publicity) will only scratch the surface.

A lot more money is needed — fast, before more people die.