

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Protest 7 November

GCHQ DAY

Rally in Central London called by the TUC

Stop the Tory union busters!



'Beat the Blues' demo. Photo: Mark Sandell.

3,000 march against Tories!

By Mark Osborn

Last Thursday, 13th, 3,000 students marched against the Tories.

We were protesting against their threats to introduce loans and to make membership of the National Union of Students voluntary.

The demonstration was an indication that there is plenty of opportunity for NUS to launch a mili-

tant battle against the Tory attacks on education and student organisation. However, NUS refused to support it.

This is not only a measure of the National Union's timidity but also of their factionalism. The *Beat the Blues* march was organised by Sussex Area NUS, and the Area's convenor, Misha Eligaloff, who is a *Socialist Student* supporter.

Joe Marshall, a Communist Par-

ty member of the National Union's Executive Committee, explained he would not support the demonstration because it was "against the Tories, not the Government".

He would not even change his mind when *Socialist Student* told him that the Tories are the Government!

Despite NUS Executive, this year's *Beat the Blues* march on Tory conference was a success, and a base to build from during the coming year.

Strike on November 7th!

By Steve Battlemuch, CPSA Notts Area Sec

In 1984 the Tory Government took the unprecedented step of announcing that it intended to ban trade unions at the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) in Cheltenham.

Overnight, this little known spy centre shot into the centre of worldwide publicity. GCHQ became a household name.

The public reason given by the Tories for abolishing unions at GCHQ was that they "threatened national security". Behind the scenes it was clear that this attack was the beginning of Thatcher's onslaught against free trade unionism.

She hypocritically hailed the birth and growth of the Polish free trade union Solidarnosc, while at the same time she attacked free trade unionism in her own country.

Immediately, civil servants recognised that threat for what it was. GCHQ today would be followed tomorrow by the Ministry of Defence and then by other civil service areas. Nowhere would be safe. There was talk already of banning strikes in the key public services like health.

But the effect of the Government's move was to politicise what had been perhaps the most dormant section of the trade union movement within the civil service.

Next came the response of the trade union movement. Thatcher had given us a chance to mobilise the trade union movement on an issue where everyone wanted to fight. The years of defeats could

perhaps have been put behind us.

The day after the ban was announced the civil service witnessed the largest ever spontaneous strike action. No ballots, no delays, just immediate action.

And civil servants were not alone. Many thousands of trade unionists took protest action. We shall never forget what happened next. With civil servants and many other workers crying out for action, the union leaders, with the civil service in the lead, dampened down action.

Instead of calling an all-out strike we were told to take flexi-leave, annual leave and attend protest meetings. This, we were told, would show how sensible and responsible we could be.

In the meantime, Len Murray, General Secretary of the TUC, accompanied by civil service trade union leaders, went to Downing St and pleaded with Thatcher to change her mind. They offered her a no-strike deal. She gave them just 7 minutes of her time. And of course she refused.

Murray and Co. then issued a half-hearted call for action on February 28th, and it was supported magnificently by over one million workers. However, that was the end of any real campaign as far as the TUC and civil service union leaders were concerned. They'd made their protest.

Now they went off in search of justice in the Tory courts. As the weeks turned to months we were told to await the ruling of the courts. Predictably, we lost. But by this time we'd also lost the vast majority of the trade union members at GCHQ, who did what the government told them to and abandoned trade unionism.

Now in 1988 we face another

Stop Tory union-busters: strike on 7 Nov!

From page 1

challenge over this issue. Only 18 members of the union remain after four years of pressure and victimisation.

The Government gave them until October 14 to rip up their union cards or lose their jobs. When this announcement was made, tens of thousands of civil servants took immediate strike action — action on a scale which had not been seen for four years. Unfortunately the signs are that the mistakes made four years ago by the union leaders are to be repeated once again.

Instead of calling action around the October 14th deadline, the civil service trade union leaders have called a one day strike for November 7th.

No contingency plans have been made in the event of the 18 being sacked before November 7th!

No plans have been made for any action after November 7th.

All-out action in the civil service is not being discussed.

Worse still is the attitude of the TUC. Remember those fine pledges of support from the congress rostrum over the years. What is being planned? The advice given is to do anything you can but "do it legally". In other words, attend a lunchtime protest meeting — but don't strike.



Trade unionists protest outside Tory conference. Photo: Jez Coulson, Insight.

This disgraceful attitude has to be overturned by the rank and file. The TUC should have called a one day **General Strike** on November 7th. But it hasn't, and won't.

Therefore it is up to rank and file trade unionists to take matters into our own hands. The CPSA Broad Left is calling for solidarity action, as are many CPSA branches up and down the country. CPSA members

need to produce leaflets calling for solidarity strike action and visit workplaces in their areas.

Shop Stewards Committees need to invite local CPSA speakers into offices and factories to build for action on the day.

Thatcher will be watching the reaction of the trade union movement very closely on November 7th. We need a massive response from

the rank and file to show Thatcher that trade union rights are not going to be given up without a fight.

Mass action and a big wave of protest strikes would also serve as a warning to Willis and Co. who seem intent on making the Tories' job easier.

If the Tories get away with sacking trade union members at GCHQ then no section of the movement

will be safe.

The power to stop them lies in the hands of the trade unions. Let's start fighting back before it's too late!

Writing in a personal capacity

The Tories sacked the 4 remaining GCHQ trade unionists on Tuesday 18th October.

No to loans!

SOCIALIST STUDENT

By Liz Millward

The Tories have been trying to introduce student loans for years.

For them it is central that no-one should get anything as a right — education, health, housing, childcare, local services. Everything in the Tories' ideal world would be supplied for hard cash (or even better, by credit card).

Education is no different, and even though student loans are, by any measure, an administrative and financial burden on the state, they cannot bring themselves to drop the idea.

The Tories hide the fundamental unfairness of student loans in the language of morality. They say they want to improve access to education, that they want to remove the burden of student grants from the taxpayer and so on.

In other words they want everyone to see themselves selfishly and individually, as if it were possible to cut ourselves off entirely from other people.

By their own standards they are right. Education as a right for all was won by people acting collectively — by people realising that education for all is of benefit to all, and that if we all contribute towards its cost it will be better for everyone.

Access to education, via the grants system, must also be defended collectively. A million individuals, all out for themselves, is precisely what the Tories want students to become — all fighting each other for the right to borrow enough to live on, and for places on those courses which guarantee a highly-paid job in order to pay off the loan.

Students have defeated loans before by acting together — and for the Tories that is the most frightening thing of all.

So the Tories are also determined to smash that collective opposition. The National Union of students, for all its faults, is the collective voice for all students. It is democratic — certainly more democratic and representative than any of the main political parties.

The Tories are trying to claim the moral high ground by saying that NUS is run by a left-wing clique, and that taxpayers' money is wasted on political (read left-wing) campaigns.

The truth is that a minute proportion

of student union funds are spent on campaigns, and that the National Executive Committee are elected annually by a process far more democratic and accountable than that which elected Thatcher.

Even so, those aren't the real arguments. Student unions and NUS are an expression of people working together to achieve their goals. Whether those goals are a well-run football club, student representation on college committees or a campaign against the poll tax, students organise democratically to achieve them.

Profit is not the motive — the motive is to serve people's real needs. The Tories can't cope with that idea at all — it might catch on, and then where would they be?

The attacks on NUS and students go hand in hand with the attacks on the trade unions and on young people generally. The aim, as always, is to divide people from each other and make them easier to exploit — students through loans (at a profit), youth on cheap labour schemes (to create bigger profits), and the constant undermining of collective resistance.

Some so-called socialists call the Tories the true radicals. They aren't — they are trying to drag us back to a time when everything is for sale — health,



Photo Mark Sandell

education, housing, personal safety — and all for a profit to the few people who own capital.

The only way to beat them is by collective organisation, and by the refusal to be divided among ourselves. We must defend NUS together, by turning it outwards towards all the other groups threatened by Tory attacks.

Support 7 November!

By Robert Read

On Monday 7 November the TUC has called a national day of action in support of the trade unionists sacked at GCHQ. The CPSA has called a one-day strike.

It is vitally important that students support and are involved in this action. It couldn't come at a more pertinent time for student unionists — only a week after the Department of Education and Science will have collected all the completed questionnaires for their 'survey' of the activities of student unions.

If students are to stop the Government smashing up NUS, which is clearly their intention, then serious links must be made with the labour movement. Tory attacks on student unions cannot be separated from attacks on the labour movement.

NUS London has agreed to support the action and to mobilise for the

demonstration. Other Areas and student unions should do the same.

This Labour Club motion should be used as the basis for motions to Student Union General meetings.

This Labour Club condemns the government's attempts to ban trade unionism at GCHQ.

This is an attack on trade union and democratic rights. It is linked to other attacks on collective working class and student organisations; it is linked to the threat of voluntary membership of NUS.

This Club resolves:

1. Support the November 7 Day of Action called by the TUC and COCSU (Council of Civil Service trade unions).
2. Mobilise for the demonstration in London on November 7 (or local actions/picket lines).
3. Organise for CPSA members to speak to the club in the build up for the day of action.
4. Write to NOLS to demand that they mobilise Labour Students for the Day of Action.

Football for profit

THIS SPORTING LIFE

By Janine Booth

By the time you read this, the Football League may have a new President. For Tuesday night sees an Extraordinary General Meeting of League Club chairmen, at which President Philip Carter (Everton chairman) and David Dein (Arsenal vice-chair and a member of the League's management committee) face calls for their removal from office.

The sternest allegation against the pair is that their actions and dealings have been dishonest, secretive and rather sneaky all round. The gruesome twosome masterminded the last-minute £44 million exclusive rights, lots-of-money-for-rich-clubs, not-so-much-for-the-small-clubs and naff-all-for-the-supporter deal.

They were also laughably incompetent in their handling of the threat of the breakaway Superleague, a plan which disgusted many people, terrified many lower-division clubs and cast an ominous shadow over the League's Centenary celebrations. It has even been suggested that Carter and Dein's failure to nip the horridly elitist plan in the bud is not entirely unconnected with the fact that both of their clubs would have been Superleague teams!

President Carter, to his additional shame, signed a secret treaty with Robert Maxwell last year, allowing Captain Bob to keep control of Derby and Watford. As is now well known, of course, the treaty was rejected by the rest of the League, and Mr Maxwell always contended that he only controlled one club (Oxford United) and that

the others were in fact controlled by his sons. Rumours that the sons had strings attached to their shoulders or that Maxwell intends to buy a club each for his second cousins, milkman and goldfish are utterly scandalous and should be ignored.

Carter and Dein, then, deserve to go. This, though, begs the question of who is to replace them. Lined up is a mind-numbing array of Football Club chairmen, an awesome collection of cigars, dull suits, cash registers for eyes, pretensions to business acumen, and not the slightest interest in football between them.

Philip Carter gave the game away when saying, of the qualities required of his possible successor, "He must have business experience and be experienced in the organisation and conduct of meetings. The last thing we want to see is the Football League led by someone who is just a football fan." (My emphasis).

These, then, are the people who run soccer. Or, perhaps, the people who sit back and allow soccer to be run by property speculators, selfish TV negotiators, press barons, greedy boards and interfering Tory ministers. Ah well.

A few short pieces of news... Frank Bruno will fight Mike Tyson on January 14th, so they say... Ireland, who had never before passed the quarter-final stage, beat Australia to win the Dunhill golf tournament... And Margaret Johnston became the first woman ever to contest a bowls 'Superbowl' final. En route to the final of the Liverpool Victoria Insurance Superbowl, Margaret defeated such luminaries of the world of bowls as Willie Wood, 1985 world champion Terry Sullivan, and Scottish champion Colin Sommerville.

Last week's answers: Tony Woodcock, Peter Osgood, Ian Storey-Moore, and a certain Mr Von Donop (some time during the 1880s!).

This week's little brain-teaser: Name five Football League and three Scottish League teams whose names begin and end with the same letter.

Kill the Housing Bill!

EDITORIAL

Under the new Tory HAT scheme — Housing Action Trusts — if you are a council tenant you could find your flat being sold off to private landlords. You will have a chance to stop them, because, after all we live in a democracy... But it will be a very small chance.

Tenants will be balloted on whether they want to be handed over to private landlords. But unreturned ballot forms (including from empty homes) will count as a 'yes' vote. And tenants have to vote on each prospective landlord — there will be no once and for all decision.

This is typical Tory choice. And it doesn't stop there. The Housing Bill, agreed by the House of Lords last week, will also mean:

* a huge increase in rents — up to three times.

* big government hand-outs to landlords.

The Tories think "the market" will sort out all problems. They also think they can depend on council tenants' frustration with existing services.

Those services often are awful: repairs don't get done, problems don't get sorted out. Many times this is because of councils' bureaucratic inertia.

But those councils have been starved of cash by the Tories, who have had a deliberate policy to run the councils down. And of course the idea behind the Poll Tax is further to reduce council money.

And private landlords will only be more efficient where and when it is profitable to be so.

These moves have not gone without resistance.

Thousands of angry tenants staged a huge rally in Westminster on 10 October. Tenants organisations and trade unions came together to begin the fight.

The labour movement locally and nationally needs to devote itself to beating the HATS and killing the Housing Bill.

The Tories are committed to reshaping Britain completely. Many commentators have noted that whereas many governments seem to have run out of ideas by their third term in office, the Tories are only now beginning to implement their "full programme" of mass privatisation.

It's an attack on the post-war settlement that British labour helped create. It was a compromise between workers and bosses that in many respects was a rotten one, and at the expense of genuine socialist grass-roots democracy. In beating off the Tories, socialists should not seek to defend or be identified with, all the post-war 'state socialism' the Tories have tried to bury. That 'state socialism' was always just a bureaucratic kind of capitalism.

But there are things worth defend-



ing in our society — rights the labour movement has won over the years. Council housing is one of them. We want more and better council houses. We want more government money spent on housing and real control by tenants over their own estates.

'Voting' for a private landlord is as democratic as 'voting' for your own gaoler. Private landlords will be no friends to tenants.

So in fighting the Tories' new laws on housing, the labour movement needs to discuss its own positive proposals. What kind of council housing do we want? How can working class people take democratic control over their estates?

A mass campaign on the Housing Bill, kicking the Tories into touch, can help revive the labour movement and silence the faint-hearts who currently lead it.

Yugoslavia: another Tito is not the answer

Up to one third of the Yugoslav Communist Party's Central Committee may be forced to 'resign' at this week's Special Plenum.

The Plenum is being seen by the Party leadership as the "last chance for Yugoslavia" as both nationalist unrest and discontent at the government's austerity programme escalates.

At the opening session on Monday, Stipe Suvar, who at present holds the rotating leadership of the party, accused the Serbian party leader, Slobodan Milosevic, of pitting one nationality against another. Milosevic, who aspires to be "the new Tito" has ridden the rising tide of Serbian nationalism.

Serbia is one of Yugoslavia's six republics, which itself contains two autonomous provinces. One of these, Kosovo, has an 80% ethnic Albanian population. It is also the poorest area in Yugoslavia.

The Albanian population has, quite justifiably, demanded full republic status for Kosovo. The Serbian nationalists, conversely, are demanding fuller control over Kosovo, and have accused the Kosovo Albanians of wishing to

secede, and of terrorising the Serbian population.

This explosion of nationalist divisions occurs at a time when Yugoslavia is in the grip of a massive economic crisis. Living standards for workers have collapsed as a result of the 217% inflation rate, and workers have rebelled against IMF-imposed austerity measures.

The crisis in Yugoslavia highlights the impasse of the bureaucratic state monopoly societies. Every attempt of the bureaucrats to restructure the increasingly unworkable economy opens a can of worms.

Not only is Yugoslavia disintegrating into a mess of competing national groupings, but attempts to make workers pay for the bureaucrats' economic disaster has brought a heightening of working class struggle. It is in this latter development that the way forward is to be found.

The answer for Yugoslav workers does not lie in finding a new Tito, but in working class overthrow of the whole rotten bureaucratic system, and an acknowledgement of the democratic rights of all Yugoslavia's nationalities.

PRESS GANG

Daily Express

The Guardian

DAILY MIRROR DAILY STAR

THE INDEPENDENT

By Jim Denham

Glittering prizes

Welcome, ladies, gentlemen and distinguished guests, to this year's Brown Nose awards ceremony.

As you know, this award, carrying with it the coveted Golden Toad of Grub Street, is presented annually to the newspaper displaying the most blind and obsequious loyalty to Mrs Thatcher and all her works.

An innovation this year has been to assess the contestants in the light of their coverage of Our Great Leader's address to the Party conference, thus avoiding complaints that arose last year of a certain lack of scientific basis to the judges' assessment.

But we cannot altogether ignore the overall track record of the contestants. Sadly, last year's winner, the Sunday Times, had to be disqualified due to traces of dissent found in certain of Mr Andrew Neil's editorials dealing with the Spycatcher affair. (*Cries of 'Shame!', 'Disgraceful!', etc.*) Another painful duty has been the decision to disbar the Daily Telegraph due to what the judges felt was a thoroughly perverse and unhelpful interest in the facts surrounding the Gibraltar SAS shootings. Young Max Hastings will have to shape up if he wants to be in contention next year (*Cries of 'String him up!', 'Bring back Deedes!' etc.*)

Which brings us to the finalists. The Sun should have been a strong contender, and many of us looked forward to Saturday's edition, confidently expecting a front page headline along the lines of 'Supermag will rule for ever!' We were to be disappointed: the lead story was about so-called 'lager louts' and coverage of The Speech was no more than averagely enthusiastic. The Sun further blotted its copybook with a snide attack on Mr Kenneth Clarke ("Cigar in mouth, glass in hand, tummy hanging over belt...we give you the Health Minister") which many of us thought to be in thoroughly bad taste (*Hear, hear!*) I'm sorry Kelvin, but you'll have to do better than this if you want to be considered for an award next year — let alone ever being Sir Kelvin McKenzie...

Happily, the Daily Express came up to scratch. The judges particularly liked Saturday's front page: 'Maggie: You ain't seen nothing yet'... And the 'Opinion' column with its forthright endorsement of every aspect of Mrs Thatcher's philosophy — especially on Europe where some of the other contestants have not always been so sound. I quote: "She gave her audience the sentiments she expressed last month in Bruges. This time with knobs on. How right she was to warn that behind the hopes and schemes of the Eurodreamers lurks the desire to boss, control and regulate."

In most years this alone would have been sufficient to ensure that Mr Nick Lloyd carried off the Golden Toad. But I'm afraid even Mr Lloyd's best efforts were outshone by the truly prostrate grovelling of this year's winner (*Roll on drums, dim the lights, expectant silence throughout the hall...*) the Daily Mail.

Look at this front page — 'What a woman — Maggie triumph as she blazes a Tory trail into the next century'.

And the 'Comment' column, closing with the ringing declaration that "Britain is remarkably fortunate to have her to guide its people and shape its destiny into the next decade."

What a magnificent performance, reminiscent of the same paper's adulation of Sir Oswald Mosley in the 1930s. Yes, it was no contest this year: step forward Sir David English, Brown-Nose Editor of 1988, and claim your Golden Toad for the Daily Mail. (*Rapturous applause, spontaneous singing of Land of Hope and Glory, etc.*)

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

Karl Marx

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The Pope, Paisley, and swimwear

GRAFFITI

It seems that the Pope's visit to the European Parliament caused a stir with more than just Ian Paisley.

Officials were panicked when they discovered that J.P.II would be entering the Palace of Europe through a lobby housing an exhibition of female nude statues.

To spare our pontiff's blushes at being confronted with explicit images of the female form, they decided that the statues should be covered with little white paper bikinis!

Then it was decided that, if anything, the makeshift swimwear made the statues more, well, provocative.

So in the end, the statues were removed altogether. Well, the Pope does need to be protected from such obscenities, doesn't he?

Tensions are appearing among the 'new thinkers' of Marxism Today, following the release of 'Facing up to the Future' — the update of the Communist Party's 'British Road to Socialism'.

Three of the eight drafters have spotted one or two little problems with the document. Monty Johnston, Bill Innes and Marian Darke have been attending 'violently', as Gramsci would say, to the final draft and have raised one or two small quibbles.

For starters they feel the document "fails to recognise the centrality of the class struggle in capitalist Britain today". A small oversight, you might

think, nothing for Marxists to fall out over surely? It also fails to ask why the socialist society the MT majority propose "is nowhere defined as a society based on social ownership and control of the major sectors of the economy". The poor old minority obviously haven't realised that the tired old debates of social or private control is now passe. The minority acknowledge the many "valuable and stimulating proposals" of the document but add: "Unfortunately it doesn't seek to link them to a strategy of advances towards socialism". Ah, yes, bit of problem that.

Have the breathless fresh thinkers now gone too far even for some of their own colleagues? Watch this space for further news. In the meantime anyone concerned at the rumour that the High Priest of Marxism Today Eric Hobsbawm expressed the view that he 'couldn't see the connection between the document and human emancipation.'? Is the forward march of Martin Jacques to be halted?

Hungary's 'perestroika' plans for restructuring the country economy will mean 60,000 job losses next year.

It is claimed that most of these will be redeployed in a matter of months, but most informed economic observers reckon this is highly unlikely.

Subsidies to state enterprises and on consumer goods are also to be cut by up to 50% over the next three years.

Rezso Nyers, a leading Poliburo member, made the bureaucracy's aims clear "We will not make headway unless we turn the labour market into one which works more efficiently."

"Efficiency" means the same for Eastern European workers as it does for those in the West — price rises and increasing unemployment.

Disarmament: Where do the Democratic Left stand?

SOCIALIST STUDENT

By Jill Mountford

The Democratic Left have been left with a problem after Ron Todd's set-to with Kinnock over unilateralism: side with Kinnock? Or stand up for democracy and a clear unilateralist policy?

The issues should be fairly clear for any decent Labour member. Even Tribune thinks so: "Labour leaders should draw back from the politically disastrous course on which they are embarked. They should accept the overwhelming call for unilateral nuclear disarmament from Party conference in Blackpool, and incorporate the spirit of it into the final report of the policy review to next year's conference".

Quite right. However, as time goes on there will be more pressure for the soft-left in the Party to cave-in, to adopt multilateralism. So for the leadership of Labour students who have tied their careers to Kinnock, the



Police protect missiles. Will the next Labour government scrap them?

stress and strain of balancing the promise of a future wage packet from a union or War-on-Want with any shred of integrity or political principle will get harder and harder.

That's tough for them. They must be told to stand up for democracy and peace; they must campaign in the Party against Kinnock's drive to wipe out socialism in the Party.

Socialist Students have produced leaflets to distribute amongst Labour students (write to 133 Ashford Street, Stoke-on-Trent), and are circulating this model motion.

1. This Labour Club is disappointed at the attitude of the Labour party Leadership towards nuclear disarmament.

2. We need, and Labour Party Conference has voted for, a clear unilateral nuclear disarmament policy. Labour leaders must firmly stand by conference policy.

3. The Labour Party must energetically campaign for this policy.

We resolve to:

1. Send copies of this motion to the NEC.
2. Send a copy to NOLS NC and demand they issue a statement which clearly condemns the backtracking by the Labour Leadership over nuclear disarmament.
3. Send a copy of the motion to the CLP's to which the club is affiliated for discussion.

State terror against activist

I am writing to expose a blatant example of state oppression against a political activist. He is Mr Terence Moroney, a 27 year old married man of Dungarvon, Co. Waterford.

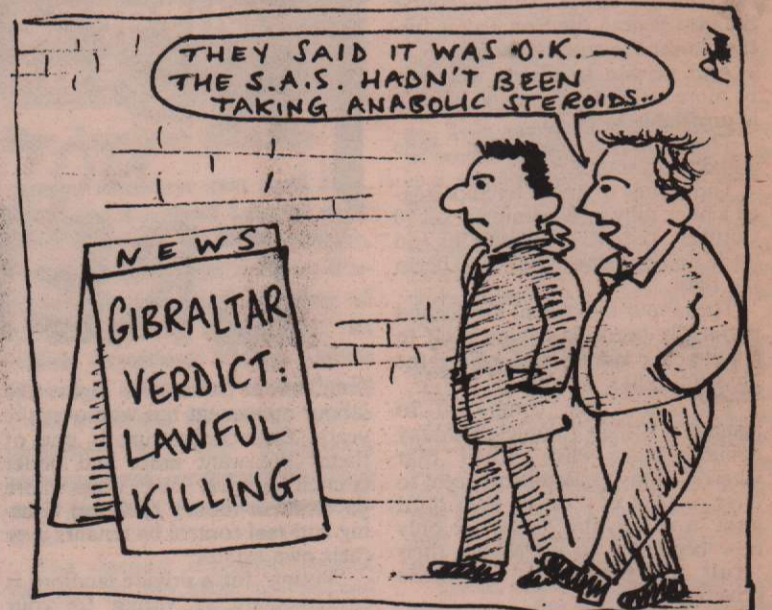
Mr Moroney became politically active during the H-block campaign of 1981. He worked in the general election campaign when the late hunger strike Kevin Lynch was a candidate in the Waterford constituency. This was the period when the political prisoners in the Six Counties were seeking the 5 demands and political status. During this period he joined the Irish Republican Socialist Party. As a party member he became involved in numerous progressive causes.

In 1982 he took part in the "March for Decent Jobs" from Cork to Dublin and stood as a candidate in the 1982 general election in the Waterford constituency for the "National Unemployed Action Groups". He was also involved in many campaigns.

On the 15th February 1988, his home was searched by plain clothes and uniformed police. As a result of the search he was charged with possession of "incriminating documents" contrary to Section 12 of the Offences against the State Act 1939, and on the basis of these he was also charged with membership of the INLA.

These so-called "incriminating documents" were simply 5 1988 calendars, 17 posters, 3 booklets on the recent history of the IRSP and 2 song books. All of these items can be purchased openly not only in this country but also in Britain and America. He received these charges on 18th August 1988, to appear in court on 14th September 1988.

Almost 7 months elapsed between the time of the search and the subsequent charges and all this time Mr Moroney lived openly in Dungarvon. Mr Moroney is secretary of the local IRSP cumann and is very interested in literature of a political nature and would have



large amounts of the same in his house, and to be charged with membership on the basis of possession of posters that only contained photographs that were already published in the national press shows the level the State is willing to stoop to in its paranoia.

What the State is saying is, if you support progressive campaigns or hold left-wing views you can very easily end up like Terence Moroney.

This is no time for complacency as it's obvious that the long term implications of these type of

charges hold frightening prospects for progressive movements and the working class in general. If they get away with this who will be next? We would ask people to bring up these type of cases in their trade union, organisation, etc. and get them greater publicity before it's too late to confront them.

Dungarvon Anti-State Oppression Committee
9 Shandon Street,
Dungarvon
Co. Waterford
Tel: (058) 43356

A welcome decision

Welcome the decision of Socialist Organiser's editorial board to initiate a discussion on the definition of the nature of the Stalinist states.

Obviously you would wish that those participating in the discussion acquainted themselves with at least some of the large body of literature

on the subject. May I recommend that those who have not yet done so read the debates between Ernest Mandel and Hillel Ticktin in the early issues of the magazine 'Critique' and also Adam Westoby's book on Communism since World War II.

Yours fraternally,
Ian McCalman

Socialist Forum
Reassessing the
Eastern Bloc
Meeting with guest
speakers
7.30
Wednesday 26 October
Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq

Children are people

WOMEN'S EYE



By Lynn Fergusson

How often, when a child is playing up in public, do you hear disapproving voices mutter, "I'd give her a good hiding if she were mine"? How often in the supermarket, or on the streets, do you see small children slapped down — either physically or verbally — for asking a question, or otherwise inconveniencing their parents?

All too often, according to Professor Michael Freeman, of University College London. British parents in particular, he argues, treat their children as objects rather than as people. Once you accept that children are people in their own right then hitting them becomes unacceptable. Consequently, he concludes, there should be a law to prevent adults from hitting

children.

It is for certain true that "disciplining" children through violence is not only acceptable but virtually compulsory. If you take a decision not to use violence against your children most people will think you're a bit of an idiot.

Shopping with a tired and tantruming two year old I've had pitying or disapproving looks and comments when I've tried to soothe her and calm her down rather than give her a clip round the ear. People expect you to smack a toddler for simply behaving as toddlers will. Otherwise you will become a slave to your child, which is hardly seemly for an adult.

Hitting children teaches children to accept pain, to put up and shut up. That they should suppress their needs and wants submit to higher authority. It's part of socialisation to accept your place in society, not to make a fuss. And it produces adults who are to one extent or another emotionally stunted.

But should there be a law against it? I don't know. Children are individuals who should be protected, who should have rights. On the rare occasions that I have snapped and hit my children I've felt disgusting. But should those harassed mothers in supermarkets really be hauled up in court for slapping their child? It's hard, if you're lugging about heavy shopping with bad tempered and tired small children, rushing to get home to do the washing, Hoover the house, cook the dinner, etc., etc. not to snap, to take it out on the nearest person — normally the fed up, bored child.

Being a mother is an isolated, unsupported existence. Pressure builds up with nowhere to go. No wonder so many women vent their frustration on their children.



We must understand children

Should they really be criminalised for buckling under the pressure society piles on them?

Between standing up for the rights of children in the here and

now and the ultimate answer of changing the social conditions under which children are brought up, there is a chasm which is difficult to bridge. But a comment by Professor Freeman seems to sum up what should be our general ap-

proach: "We need a new cultural ethic in which children are no longer possessions; in which we accept the child as a person." How we achieve that without criminalising women, who are themselves victims, is a hard question.

No Marxism Today, thanks

INSIDE THE UNIONS

By Sleeper

Sleeper is not normally an avid follower of 'Marxism Today' but October's bumper 'New Times' edition clearly was "essential reading".

The new times we live in, according to those clever folks at MT, can be best declared as "post-Fordism", and amount to a whole new phase of capitalist development.

"Fordism" incidentally, refers to old Henry, who had the idea of putting lots of workers together in a big factory, ordering repetitive jobs on production lines.

But in these "post-Fordist" new times, that's all changed, or is about to: "If the Ford plants at Halewood and Dagenham represented late industrialism, Centropoint and Habitat are the symbols of a new age," says MT.

New technology spreading from retailing into manufacturing, heralds the end of mass production and, indeed, the working class as we know and love it. ("Many of the left's assumptions about its constituency are forged around the idea of a male, manual, manufacturing, unionised worker...in the 1990s the largest group in the workforce will be white collar, non-unionised, women working in the service sec-

tor," says Charlie Leadbeater.)

Most importantly, the "post-Fordist" worker sees him/herself as an individual and a consumer rather than as part of a collective and a producer — and MT seems to rather approve of this development.

The implications of all this for trade unions are not spelled out in detail, but Robin Murray gives us a hint: "Research departments should be expanded and commissions given to external researchers. There should be joint commissions of members and users and related groups, as well as supportive local authorities. The production of the policy would itself be a form of democratic politics."

Struggle, you notice, doesn't come into it.

This sort of pretentious baloney (did you know that "Diaghilev was a Taylorist in dance"?) ignores one or two fairly basic facts: service industry has certainly expanded but the drive in service is towards so-called "Fordism", with workers organised in tight routines (not unlike a factory production line) and increasingly larger units. And nowhere is this more clearly the case than in retailing — supposedly the driving force behind "post-Fordism".

You only have to visit Tesco's to understand that. It is also the case that service industry and white collar trade unionism has expanded rapidly over the past 20 years or so — and has generally been at least as militant as "traditional" industrial

unionism. Look at NALGO, CPSA or the Health Service unions, for instance.

In one respect alone do the MT trendies have a point: the "traditional" image of the "worker" as a hairy-arsed male in a car factory or shipyard is no longer adequate (if, indeed, it ever was).

Women, part-timers, casual workers and people on government schemes now make up the majority of what we old stick-in-the-muds still insist on calling "the working class". But you don't have to be a pseudo-intellectual Acid House expert and MT contributor to know that.

Every self-respecting union bureaucrat (with the possible exception of Bill Jordan) knows it, and will provide you with loads of glossy leaflets saying so.

Neil Kinnock's favourite union leader, John Edmonds of the GMB, unveiled the "Flame" campaign two years ago, aimed at (you guessed it)...women, part-timers, people on government schemes, etc., etc.

Ron Todd, not to be outdone, promptly announced "Link-Up" aimed at...well, need I go on?

"Flame" has never amounted to more than a series of lacklustre press conferences, some arty-farty leaflets and a few sweetheart deals with Community Programme managers. Even GMB officials privately refer to it as "the Flame that fizzled".

"Link-Up" looked like going the same way with piles of glossy leaflets cluttering up T&G offices throughout the land. In Region 5

(the Midlands) Community Programme workers foolish enough to think that the union was now interested in recruiting them were turned away empty handed from Transport House.

Last month's T&G Record was at last able to report a major success for 'Link-Up': "When 800 Yardley workers marched victoriously back to work at the Basildon cosmetics factory after a month-long strike, it signalled a Link-Up double success."

"It was a success in winning a 14% pay rise over 21 months and a success for the T&G's 'Link-Up' campaign with 200 temporary and part-time workers' jobs given permanent employee status."

Women? Part-timers? Temporary workers? Aren't these just the kind of people that "post-Fordist" trade unionists will have to relate to? Perhaps the Yardleys strike can teach us some lessons about the way forward for modern trade unionism.

It started simply enough: when the annual pay negotiations began in June, management tried to impose a 5.5% offer. The workers responded with an overtime ban, but the action was stepped up when the company started laying off the temporary workers. This was a classic "divide and rule" tactic to split the permanent, full-time workforce from the part-timers and temporary workers.

The TGWU convener Joan Penford said: "We couldn't just let management pick people off one at

a time when it suited them. We had a mass meeting in the morning inside the factory to organise the walk out and by 10am everyone was out."

Picketing was immediately organised and every effort was made to organise the entire workforce right from the start. Pickets even lay down in the road to stop lorries. The picket line became the centre of the strike, where workers naturally went for help and advice. Regular bulletins from the stewards ensured that everyone was kept in the picture.

When the bosses tried the old trick of announcing a 'return to work day' the union responded with a mass meeting followed by a mass picket.

After that management asked to reopen negotiations. The workers won a significant pay increase, and perhaps more importantly, the company was forced to put the temporary workers onto fully employed contracts, guaranteeing job security and entitling them to better pension and sick pay benefits.

If all this stuff about mass picketing, rank and file involvement, workers unity and so forth sounds a little, well, old fashioned (Fordist, even) I can only suggest that perhaps the Yardleys women don't read Marxism Today.

A Gremlin in the proofreading department allowed the impression to be created last week that Sleeper is in fact asleep. Frank Cousins was the first T&G leader to be a unilateralist. Deakin was a hard line rightwinger.

By Alex Glasgow

1888 marks the centenary of the 'Match Girls' Strike', a strike by women workers employed by the Bryant and May match-manufacturing factory in Bow in London. It was a strike which heralded the arrival of a new style of trade unionism. In turn, they took forward the movement for independent political working-class representation, which ultimately resulted in the emergence of the Labour Party at the turn of the century.

After the demise of the Chartist movement in the late 1840s, trade unionism in Britain was mostly confined to skilled workers. It accepted the prevailing Liberal economic dogmas, and sought to maintain good relations with employers.

Tom Mann, a leader of the London docks strike of 1889, wrote in a pamphlet published in 1886: "The average unionist of today is a man with a fossilised intellect, either hopelessly apathetic, or supporting a policy which plays directly into the hands of the capitalist exploiter."

Few women were unionised, and the trade unions regarded women with indifference, if not hostility. Women frequently appeared on union banners as symbols of virtue, bearers of light, and guardians of domestic bliss. But women as workers scarcely ever featured on union banners, because there were so few of them in the unions.

In the early and mid-1880s trade unionism gradually began to make limited inroads into unskilled workers. In 1884 members of the American-based Knights of Labour arrived in England, and had managed to recruit some 10,000 workers by the close of the decade. Other examples of the extension of trade unionism to the unskilled, such as the formation of the National Federation of Labour on Tyneside in 1886, were modest and local.

One reason for the gradual emergence of "new unionism" was the growing (though still very limited) attraction of socialist ideas in these years.

In 1883 the first avowedly Marxist organisation in Britain was established, the Social-Democratic Federation (SDF). Two years later the Socialist League was set up as a breakaway from the SDF. Such organisations, and those influenced by their ideas, challenged the idea that cooperation between labour and capital belonged to the natural order of things.

1883 also saw the emergence of the Fabian Society, committed to "the reconstruction of society in accordance with the highest moral principles". Hostile in the extreme to Marxist socialism and committed to working with and in the Liberal party, its members nonetheless helped highlight the inequalities in contemporary capitalist society and developed links with some working class leaders.

One of its members was Annie Besant, the leading figure — at least in terms of contemporary publicity and subsequent labour movement



The match girls' strike,

history — in the Match Girls Strike of 1883.

Her marriage to a Lincolnshire clergyman had, not surprisingly, broken down in 1879 after she had published a pamphlet denying the divinity of Christ. A subsequent series of writings and speaking tours on similar themes saw her rise to the position of vice-president of Charles Bradlaugh's anti-religion National Secular Society.

After hearing Hyndman, the founder of the SDF, debate against Bradlaugh in 1884, on the issue of socialism, and after further discussions with George Bernard Shaw, she joined the Fabians in 1885.

She threw herself into the cause of Fabian socialism. She was to the fore in the unemployment demonstrations and riots in Trafalgar Square in 1886 and 1887, organised a socialist defence association to raise money for bailing out political prisoners and spoke at early morning dock-gate meetings in the East End of London.

A meeting of the Fabians in London in June 1888, attended by Besant, heard a paper delivered on "Female Labour", including female labour in the match making industry, and concluded by adopting a typically Fabian resolution that its members would refrain from using Bryant and May matches in protest at the low wages paid to its women workers.

The following day Besant went down to the Bryant and May factory in Bow and asked the women workers themselves about pay and conditions in the factory. The wages were pitifully low — between

four and 13 shillings a week — and were rarely paid out in full.

The women were fined for dropping matches, answering back to the chargehands, and even for having dirty feet. "Phossy-jaw" (necrosis of the jaw) was also a common ailment, due to contamination with



Annie Besant

phosphorus from the matches.

The directors of the firm had even docked the women's pay to finance the erection of a statue of Gladstone in the factory forecourt, though they did not share in the admiration of their bosses for the Liberal leader. The women had been given a day's holiday — unpaid — on the day of the unveiling of the statue.

Besant wrote up the women's story in an article entitled "White Slavery in London" for the *Link* newspaper, of which she was co-publisher. A copy and covering letter were sent to Bryant, who replied by telegram: "Letter to hand this morning. Nothing but a tissue of lies. Article will receive legal attention. Bryant."

But it was Bryant and May who received the legal attention. At Besant's initiative a factory inspector visited their factory, found the allegations about fines to be true, and ordered them to cease immediately.

Alarmed at such developments, the management sacked three women suspected of supplying Besant with information. Chargehands were instructed to get the women to sign statements praising working conditions in the factory. The women refused to sign the statement. Management sacked their suspected ringleader.

1,400 women walked out on strike.

200 of them marched from Bow to Fleet Street, blocking off the street in front of the office of the *Link*. In a discussion with Besant a deputation from the 200 formulated

their demand. Although management had offered to reinstate the suspected ringleader, the women insisted upon the restoration of a penny in the shilling recent cut from their wages.

Management at the factory denied that anyone had been dismissed for giving information to Besant, denied that wages were low, and denied that any fines had ever been imposed. The girls, claimed management, were keen to return to work. But if they failed to do so, then trainloads of scabs from Glasgow would be brought in to replace them.

A mass meeting was held the following Sunday on Mile End Waste in support of the strike. Besant circulated the major national and London papers with news about the dispute. Some refused to print it. Others gave their own version of events. *The Times*, for example, declared that the women had been misled by a "Socialist clique" who were their worst enemies.

Two of the more sympathetic papers opened subscription lists raised money for the strikers. 56 of the women marched to the House of Commons where a deputation lobbied sympathetic MPs about the rates of pay and working conditions with Bryant and May.

By this time the women had also set up their own committee to run the strike, backed up by the experience of Besant and other supporters.

Bryant and May now made the mistake of allowing four students of the then young science of sociology to examine the factory's books. The

End of the Burmese road

Martin Thomas looks at the background to the current uprising in Burma

Burma is one of the poorest countries in the world. It has one radio for every 50 people; prints one newspaper for every 100. It has one telephone, one car, one truck, half a kilometre of road and 100 metres of railway for every 1000 people. Its 38 million people live mainly in the countryside, growing rice.

Under British rule — until 1948 — it was a forgotten outpost, doing little but producing rice and providing jobs in administration for the dullards of the English gentry. The administrative machine, and what industry and trade there was, were mainly run by Indians. Indians also owned most of the land.

After independence in 1948 a land reform took most of the land from Indian landlords and redistributed it. The country, however, remained poor.

In March 1962 the army took power. This army originated not from the army established in Burma by the British Empire — which was mainly made up of Indian soldiers — but from the Burmese Independence Army set up in 1941-2 with Japanese backing. At the end of the war, seeing the Japanese would lose, it changed sides and collaborated with the British. It was not only a nationalist army, but also dominated by ethnic Burmese, excluding the minorities who make up 25% of the country's population.

The coup passed off quietly. But soon the new government made drastic moves. The leading army officers, like their counterparts in many other countries, believed in their mission to modernise the country through energetic state action.

Between 1962 and 1964, the new government declared illegal all political opposition, took over the direct management of most educational and cultural organisations, and established the nucleus of a political party with ancillary mass organisations. The new ruling party, the Burmese Socialist Programme Party, had only twenty full members (all army officers) for its first few years, but it still laid claim to totalitarian rule.

The military rulers said they were following a course equally distant from both capitalism and communism, but their political system was a replica of Stalin's. While all opposition was declared illegal, a network of Security and Administration Councils, and also of Workers' Councils and Peasants' Councils, was set up across the country, under strict military control.

There followed the nationalisation of all internal and external trade, and of large sectors of manufacturing, together with the introduction of quantitative physical planning as the basic mechanism of economic control. What private capitalists there had been in 1962 were almost all Indian or Pakistani; they were forced out. In May 1964 all large currency notes were declared worthless.

Foreign trade was cut back. In the the 1950s Burma had exported 20% of its output, mainly rice. By 1982, despite some liberalisation in the late '70s, it was exporting only 3.8%.

Enterprises were run by military officers, as military operations. They followed military orders rather than any criteria of profit and loss. Prices were set by the central government, not by the market.

A lot of small-scale private business remained. Indeed, since agriculture remained in private hands, only 11 per cent of the workforce was state-employed in 1984-5. Still, state control over the legal economy was total. Even the tiny private businesses that remained — the great majority of them employing ten or fewer workers — were subject to state supervision so tight as to amount to de facto nationalisation. Practically 100 per cent of all investment was by the public sector. The state was the monopoly buyer of all agricultural produce.

After big strikes and student protests in 1974, the government 'liberalised' a bit. State enterprises were required to show profits, and get finance through bank loans. Foreign investment was allowed. But the major limit on state control, at all times was a big black market.

The military rulers had set out to modernise and industrialise Burma as Stalin industrialised the USSR. They failed spectacularly. Industry was only 13% of national output in 1986, exactly the same proportion as in 1965 — and that despite the development of large resources of natural gas. The main achievement of military rule was to create a black market in rice — which had formerly been fairly plentiful — and to ruin agriculture to the point where Burma had to import rice.

Now the Burmese people are rebelling against this system. They will soon learn that genuine socialism has nothing in common with what their rulers have imposed on them under that name.



1888

idents, associated with Charles Webb, who had done much to publicise poverty in London, had a problem uncovering the imposition of fines and the low rates of pay, thus exposing management's and winning public support for the match girls.

By now the support of London Trades Council had also been gained for the strike. Apart from raising money for the women, the Trades Council sent representatives to discuss the conditions for a return to work with Bryant and May, which were subsequently accepted by the strikers.

The firm agreed to end the fines and the penny in the shilling deduction (which, by law, they had already been obliged to do). The women were allowed the use of a room as a canteen (eating food contaminated with phosphorus had been a prime cause of "phossy"). All the women sacked were reinstated.

Management also suggested that, in the future, complaints should be brought to their attention before any industrial action was taken, and that a trade union should be formed to facilitate this complaints procedure.

The Fabians Sidney and Beatrice Webb wrote that "the match girls' story turned a new leaf in Trade Union annals...It was a new experience for the weak to succeed...the lesson was not lost on other workers." And Ben Tillett, a leader of the following year's dock strike, described the strike as "the beginning of the social convulsion which produced the 'new unionism', the

new Dockers' Union, the great Dockers' Strike of 1889."

Besant's own contribution to the labour movement proved short-lived. By the following year she had already become immersed in Theosophy, a typically cranky form of religion of Victorian Britain. But the match girls' strike in which she had played such a prominent role made a more enduring contribution.

It heralded the emergence of the "new unionism", the spread of a more militant form of trade unionism to the "unskilled", such as women workers. And it helped break up the cosy political relationship between the leaders of the TUC and the Liberal politicians to whom the former had traditionally looked to represent the interests of (sections of) workers in Parliament.

It is easy to exaggerate the differences between the "New Model Unions" of pre-1888/89 vintage and the post-1888 "new unionism", just as it is easy to overestimate the immediate impact and extent of influence of the latter. Nonetheless, the match girls' strike of 1888 and the London dockers' strike of 1889 did mark the emergence of a more militant variety of trade unionism and a stage along the road to independent working class political representation.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the leaders of the Labour Party of today, so anxious to again reduce the labour movement to a tame appendage of the bourgeoisie, should have found nothing to celebrate about the centenary of the match girls' strike.

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Socialists and the demon drink

Stan Crooke argues that the struggle against alcohol was — and should be today — a central part of the drive to found a socialist movement in Britain

The struggle to create a politically independent working class movement in this country was inseparable from the struggle against alcohol — sometimes against excessive consumption of it, sometimes against any consumption of it. Nowhere was this more clearly the case than in Scotland.

Until the opening years of the 19th century what would now be termed excessive drinking was a national characteristic, if not a national virtue, in Scotland. It was a practice common to all social classes.

Dr Alexander Webster, a Church of Scotland minister, was nicknamed Dr Bonum Magnum for his ability to drink five bottles of claret at a sitting and remain sober. The judge Lord Newton, described as "one of the profoundest drinkers of his day", was noted for the clarity of his judgements in court after all-night drinking sessions.

Amongst the working classes, drink was associated with all events in family life and in working and leisure hours. Craft guilds and embryonic trade unions imposed fines in drink on apprentices. Sailmakers' apprentices and journeymen paid their entry fee into the trade society in the form of a bottle of whisky.

In 1822 the duty on spirits was lowered from seven shillings to less

than three shillings a gallon. Consumption increased from 2,079,000 gallons a year to 5,777,000 gallons by 1829. Drink now came to be recognised as a social problem.

The earliest temperance reformers were aristocratic and middle class philanthropists, such as John Dunlop and William Collins (founder of the publishing firm of the same name). The temperance societies they founded in Glasgow and Greenock in 1829 marked the first attempt to build a coordinated temperance movement.

By the following year Collins had published half a million tracts attacking drink. Most of the temperance societies at this time were opposed to consumption of spirits, with gin, rum and, above all, whisky as the principal enemies, whilst encouraging the consumption of "nutritious" liquors such as beer and wine.

The more radical elements in the temperance movement, however, regarded the "short pledge" (ie. the pledge not to drink spirits) as a plot by the upper classes, "to keep the whiskey from the common people, and retain the malt liquor, wine, cider and perry for the ladies and gents." Collins went further, and believed that the working classes, but certainly not his own class, should drink water only.

When a Glasgow radical suggested to a parliamentary select committee inquiring into "the great increase of drunkenness amongst the labouring classes" that their inquiry be extended to all classes, he was

told that the House of Commons would not tolerate an inquiry which included its own members.

Thus, the Chartist movement in Scotland in the early 1840s, although itself more middle-class in leadership than its English counterpart, combined a distrust of the middle class temperance reformers, whom it saw as too subservient to the employers and the church, with a commitment to total abstinence.

A Scottish Chartist paper of 1840 declared: "We are forming a character for the people which they have never before possessed — making them intelligent by instruction, and moral by including the principles of total abstinence." In 1841 the Chartist Central Committee issued an appeal to "dedicate this year to total abstinence". And many prominent Chartists, such as Robert Cranston and John Grant, went on to found coffee houses and temperance hotels as the movement died away.

Independent working class pro-temperance and pro-abstinence campaigning was often viewed with distrust and even hostility by both the Church and also by employers.

The Church saw such campaigning as a threat to the authority of its ministers, especially when working class laymen began holding their own meetings and preaching against the evils of drink. (In any case, the Church continued to have a drink problem of its own: in 1853 five ministers were deposed for drunkenness — the worst offender had been charged 19 times in five years.)

Employers could be equally wary, fearing that workers who concerned themselves with the social problem of drink might start to concern themselves with other

social problems as well. There were even cases of workers being victimised by their employers for regularly addressing temperance meetings.

As the working class movement continued to evolve into a form more similar to that which it possesses today, its commitment to abstinence remained undiminished. When Glasgow Trades Council was established in 1858 it chose as a

Until the opening years of the 19th century, excessive drinking was a national characteristic, if not a national virtue, in Scotland

matter of policy to meet in temperance hotels and coffee houses. The Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, founded in 1868, refused admission to any bodies retailing alcohol (the ban remained in force until 1958). And the Scottish Labour Party, launched by Keir Hardie in 1888, included prohibition of liquor traffic in its 18-point programme.

The Scottish TUC was established in 1897 and was soon the scene of heated debates over the drink

question. Its 1905 congress voted down by 34 to 40 and 8 to 66 two resolutions from Dundee Trades Council calling respectively for a complete ban on the sale of liquor and for opposition to municipal ownership of traffic in liquor. After another lively debate at its 1906 congress, the STUC voted 82 to 24 in favour of municipalisation and the "local option" policy, with most of the opposition coming from total abstinence.

The Scottish section of the Independent Labour Party, successor to the Scottish Labour Party, was as opposed to the traffic in alcohol as its predecessor. Its aim was "total prohibition of the liquor trade", wrote James Maxton in 'Forward' in 1918. As late as 1926 the Scottish section of the ILP was still passing resolutions at annual conference calling for "the total prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors".

Many labour movement pioneers grew up in or belonged to various temperance movements. Keir Hardie, Willie Gallagher (the future Communist MP) and Davie Kirkwood (one of the leaders of the 'Red Clydeside' unrest) were all members of the Independent Order of Good Templars. Tom Johnston (author of 'History of the Working Classes of Scotland') had been a member of a Band of Hope (the 'youth wing' of the temperance movement). And John Maclean and James Connolly, who soon left his native Scotland for America and Ireland, were likewise teetotalers.

The "Red Clydesider" MPs, elected to Parliament in the 1922 general election, were committed abstainers: "We were all Puritans. We were all abstainers. Most of us did not smoke. We were the stuff of

ET: Against the boycott

Supporters of SO have been prominent in advocating the boycott of ET, to kill this version of 'workfare' off at birth. They have campaigned successfully in the trade unions for this position; they will be campaigning against the TUC's latest attempt to fudge and gut the boycott policy passed at this year's Congress. They have been organising on the ground to implement this boycott.

At this year's Labour Party conference SO supporter Mick Cashman proposed the composite calling for a boycott. It was carried against the advice of the Labour leadership and the votes of right wing unions. It was one of the most significant victories of the left at conference.

The paper strongly supports this position. Bob Fine disagrees, believing that a boycott will hinder rather than help us. Here he outlines the reasons why he sees it like this. Mick Cashman will reply in next week's SO.

Iwant to question the wisdom of the boycott policy toward ET adopted at the TUC and the Labour Party conference this year. The boycott seems to me to be based on an inadequate understanding of the ET scheme and its problems and an inadequate consideration of the effects of a possible boycott.

First, the boycott underestimates the extent to which ET can be turned to useful purpose on the ground, whatever the intentions of the Tory government might be.

The basic difference, as I understand it, between ET and the old Community Programme is that the monies previously put into topping up or paying wages are now put into training. Basically the same overall budget is involved. For 16-18 year olds, a quite different scheme, YTS, is offered by the government and (surprisingly given that it involves loss of dole and exploitation) not subject to the boycott.

Training on ET can mean almost anything. Through DETA (the Department of Employment Training Agency) the training manager on the ET scheme receives £25 per week per individual for a

maximum of 52 weeks toward training costs. This adds up to £1300 for the year. In addition, DETA provides a kind of 'starter pack' of up to £100 for each trainee, except when they are placed directly into work experience. These starter packs may be hammers and chisels for a trainee carpenter or paint and brushes for a trainee painter, etc.

In addition, the training manager negotiates fees with those organisations to which it sends trainees for work training. These may range from £10 a week from a big private company to nothing from a voluntary non-profit making organisation.

The trainees themselves receive their dole plus £10 a week (£5 of which goes towards travelling expenses). The trainee may elect to do any kind of training and a good training manager will seek to facilitate his or her choices: from training to be a farmer, organic gardener, beautician, artist, carpenter, electrician, word processor operator, photographer, etc.

The structure as well as the breadth of the training will vary from one locality to another. It may include formal training in FEs, Technical Colleges, Agricultural Training Centres, Open Learning Centres and private training organisations like those for publishing, printing, silk screening, journalism, etc. All these institutions may be supervised by the training manager to ensure that a proper training takes place. The trainee who attends these courses will normally be able to end up with formal certification.

The training manager may set up his or her own training schemes.

For example, in the area I know there is one in journalism, in which the trainee learns through practice and skilled supervision skills in layout, photography, design, printing, etc. In addition the trainees have day release to FEs to get vocational qualifications like City and Guilds, BTEC or RSA.

Lastly, the training manager has to send trainees for some of their time to work placements for training on the job. How this is organised depends entirely on the local manager in question. So too does the proportion of the training time taken up in this form of training. I think that there is a minimum of 20%. Those training managers with a serious attitude to training closely monitor employers to ensure that training and not exploitation is taking place.

In my area the training manager seeks to ensure that the trainee is trained in a variety of different skills by skilled workers, that the individual's abilities in these skills are assessed and his or her achievements listed and certified.

Both employers and trainees are warned that the training manager will withdraw support from the scheme if it appears that training has been subordinated to exploitation. For example, if a woman, warned by her training manager to beware of exploitation, complains that she is only doing cleaning, a warning is given to the employer. If the situation persists, the support is withdrawn.

The use of all these facilities and their careful monitoring is how the scheme can work at its best. And in some instances it does. But how it works in practice depends heavily on local conditions. What appears

as the central factor is whether training management is in the hands of the local authority or a private profit-making agency.

There is the question of the training agent. He or she is the first to see a potential trainee and is meant to devise an action plan and then send the trainee on to a training manager or straight to a workplace or other forms of private training. The training agent is paid £20 for each trainee who passes through the door and another £15 for each trainee sent to a training manager. If, as is often the case, the training agent is a private profit-making concern, the whole business turns into a farce. The training agent is paid £200,000 by DETA for accommodation and staffing, but in one case I know sees potential trainees in a corridor. Each trainee is given a maximum of 15 minutes to devise an action plan which may be entirely useless. Any serious attitude toward training is entirely subordinated to profit. In other circumstances the training agent may be the careers service of a local authority, in which case a very different picture emerges.

Then the training manager, who organises the actual training, may be a local authority but may be a private profit-making agency. One I know in the latter category makes no use of colleges, offers no formal qualifications except its own valueless certificates, and takes no measures to ensure that training is not just another word for exploitation of cheap labour.

Both training agents and training managers when they are private profit-making concerns are often a total disgrace (private, non-profit agencies are another matter). They



which reform is made," said Kirkwood. One of the proudest boasts of Tom Johnston, himself a 'Red Clydesider' MP, was that

there were no pubs in Kirkintilloch, where he was a councillor (nor were there any until 1969). But whilst the socialist pioneers and the labour

movement in general were hostile to the evils of alcohol, there were differences of opinion as to how the evil should be combatted.

survive because of the government's general 'enterprise' culture and through internal politicking within DETA.

Some are so bad that a concerted labour movement campaign to drive them out of business would have good chances of success. Whether local authorities or private enterprise or private non-profit agencies run the show depends at present on their tenders to DETA. I don't know the overall national picture.

Where local authorities manage Employment Training, they usually take seriously the formal Equal Opportunities directives adopted by DETA. Some schemes target black and other so-called disadvantaged adults.

The fundamental problem with ET is the use of private profit-making enterprise in its management. It is this which more than any other factor determines the training element and maximises the exploitation of trainee labour.

The fundamental task of the labour movement is to expose and drive out the malpractices of those who would make profit out of training unemployed people. This could and should be done both at local and national levels.

If the trade union boycott is implemented — the NALGO amendment at the TUC conference gave the unions two years to phase out withdrawal — the scheme will function but will be left in the hands of the private sharks.

On the other hand, the organised labour movement has no alternative on offer to the unemployed. We should not underestimate the real attraction training offers to those on the dole.

Many trade union members are involved in working the scheme, particularly in NALGO and NAT-FHE. How they will react locally to any attempt to implement the boycott is an open question. I believe that in Coventry the local NALGO region is not going along with the boycott. In Warwickshire the local NALGO is committed to the boycott in two years time.

How then members will react is one matter. Another is what sort of ET will be left for the unemployed once parts are boycotted by the unions.

When Norman Fowler said that the unions were involved in the design of the ET scheme, he appears to have been quite right. Many of its features were a result of trade union pressure. The main goal the unions failed to achieve was the rate-for-the-job for trainees while they are on workplace training.

This is an omission but apprentices have never received a rate-for-the-job and craft unions have jealously insisted on wage differentials for apprentices/trainees. The immediate issue is that training be real training and a meaningful apprenticeship into skilled labour, not just menial labour. Most of the unemployed in this country are unskilled or semi-skilled. However flawed the range of government training schemes they have provided some of these workers, particularly women 'returners' (ie. returning to work) with skills.

So why did the TUC and then the Labour Party decide to go down the road of boycott? One factor was the threat of making ET compulsory but that is not the current situation and it is doubtful whether the government would take this option

as long as real training goes in inside ET.

The boycott policy seems to me to be largely unthoughtout. For some it is a substitute for conducting a labour movement campaign to drive out the profiteers and prevent ET's abuse for exploitation. Boycott is a fairly easy option. You don't have to do anything. Whatever the unions say, I think it is very likely to be read by the unemployed in a negative light as a demonstration of unconcern. For those unions whose members are involved in the scheme, the boycott is likely to cause little more than disarray. ET will survive the boycott but it will be a lot worse. Is this what the boycott movement wants?

The difference between my position and that of the labour establishment is that the latter is not the slightest bit interested in exposing and ejecting the profiteers from ET. My own opposition to boycott is premised on a turning of the left's energies in this direction.

It is perhaps central to the argument that the TUC and the Labour Party nationally seem to be making little effort to secure the support of the unemployed through the construction of a representative voice in the labour movement — as has been done locally by, for example, the unionisation of community workers.

I can't help thinking that behind the boycott policy is a mix of good old-fashioned protectionism which has little to say on the representation of those who are marginal to the labour market and labour movement, and a syndicalism which would rather have nothing to do with Tory state institutions.

The Dundee labour movement, for example, was committed to total prohibition, as was apparent from resolutions from its trades councils to STUC congresses. Home to the Scottish Prohibition Party, Dundee returned Edwin Scrymgeour as a 'Socialist Prohibitionist' candidate to Parliament in the 1922 general election, unseating Winston Churchill in the process.

Scrymgeour immediately moved a 'Liquor Traffic Control Bill' in Parliament, advocating the immediate closure of all public houses and five years imprisonment for anyone guilty of trafficking in liquor. But the Bill was easily defeated, with only the 'Red Clydesider' MPs voting for it.

An alternative position advanced by socialists was that of municipalisation of the drinks trade. 'Socialism and the Drink Traffic', a pamphlet published in 1905, advocated: "It (the menace of the drinks trade) can only be rooted out by means of local control... This local control can only be got by means of a Bill passed through Parliament which shall enact that on a given day the whole of the licences in the United Kingdom shall be vested in the hands of local councils".

Between half and two thirds of all licences would then be withdrawn. Councils would impose strict quality controls on liquor on sale, until such time as all liquor was produced either by councils themselves or by the state. Profits from the municipalised liquor trade would be used for local improvements, such as free libraries, baths and gymnasias.

A third position, sometimes combined with the former, was the 'local option' or 'local veto', whereby each district could decide for itself whether or not to ban the sale of liquor. Successive attempts to gain Parliamentary legislation to this effect (1883, 1899, 1900, 1905) proved unsuccessful and produced a powerful impetus for the demand for Home Rule as a spin-off effect (as English MPs outvoted a majority of Scottish MPs). A Temperance (Scotland) Act was finally passed in 1913, permitting local plebiscites to be held on the question as of 1920.

Although the "local veto" position was adopted by the STUC, many socialists were hostile to it as a ploy of the ruling classes. "Villadom would protect itself at the expense of the slum," declared the pamphlet 'Socialism and the Drinks Trade'. An earlier pamphlet, 'The Case for a Municipal Drink Trade' had similarly argued: "The local veto in such places is a class measure. It permits those who buy their liquor from the wine merchant to compel to abstinence those who would like to buy from the public house. In form it may be democracy, in fact it is a tyranny."

In the event, such fears proved justified. In Glasgow it was the residential areas such as Cathcart and Kelvinside which voted for No Licence. To make matters worse, in 1890 Glasgow Town Council had voted that no more licensed premises be allowed on Corporation properties. This remained in force until the 1960s, meaning that the massive post-World War II peripheral housing schemes had not a pub between them.

Although divided amongst themselves as to the solution to the problem of drink, the Scottish socialists of the early 20th century were generally united in their hostility to organised temperance societies such as the Scottish Temperance League, which they viewed as anti-working class organisations. "Close every saloon, every brewery, suppress drinking by severe punishment, and the nation will suddenly find itself amazed at

its efficiency and startled at the increase in its labour supply," declared a General Pershing in the League's Almanac of 1920 in characteristically forthright manner.

Other temperance organisations began pursuing campaigns which not even socialists who were "the stuff of which reform is made" could endorse. The British Women's Temperance Association, for example, turned its attention to campaigning against the selling of ice-creams on Sunday. "This ice-cream pestilence has permeated through the country. There is now no small village that has this plague spot," declared the Lord Provost of Perth at one of its conferences.

1920, when the shock waves of the Bolshevik Revolution were still sweeping through the international working class, marked the climax of the struggle of the total abstemious in the Scottish labour movement. The STUC congress of that year voted in favour of prohibition by 110 votes to 74, and the Scottish Labour Party conference likewise voted in favour of prohibition by 47 votes to 15.

But the 'new realists' of the day, claiming that prohibition would be a vote-loser among the working class and that it was "inspired by all the claptrap of Puritanic repression... attaching the labour movement to the tail of the Liberal Party", soon secured a reversal of this position. The STUC congress of 1921 executed a prompt U-turn by 79 votes to 64, whilst at the Labour Party conference of the same year delegates successfully carried the 'previous question' against a prohibition resolution.

From then on the divorce between the temperance movement and the labour movement grew ever wider. The valiant struggles of the socialist temperance and abstinence campaigners became a forgotten chapter in the history of our movement. The epitome of the Scottish labour movement ceased to be the abstemious Keir Hardie, John Maclean and Tom Johnston but rather it became Mick McGahey and Bob Gillespie. By 1979 the alcoholism rate in Scotland was quadruple that of England, and in the Highlands and Islands twelve times that of England. O'Connor Kessack's description of 1907 of Glasgow Saturday evening street-life once again held true:

"Men and women are to be met in all stages of drunkenness, some cursing and swearing and shouting the most horrible of obscenities, others helplessly and painfully depositing the contents of their stomach on the pavement... The horrors of excessive drinking baffle description. Debauchery, immorality and crime have simply run amok among the denizens of the slums."

After three general election defeats in a row, the labour movement is rightly searching for the reasons for such defeats. Equally correctly, socialists are stressing the need for the Labour Party to offer a bold socialist alternative to Toryism. We would do well to remember that the origins of our movement are inseparable from the struggle for sobriety and the elimination of the evils of drink, and to recall the concluding words of 'Socialism and the Drink Trade':

"The Temperance reformer of the old school has attempted to kill the tree by lopping off the branches... But now the true Temperance reformer, the Socialist, has arisen and while lopping off the branches by removing the element of private profit from the (liquor) trade, sets fire to the root by seeking to remove the conditions which make the craving for stimulants and the temptations to excess practically irresistible to many."

Nostalgia in song

CINEMA

By Edward Ellis

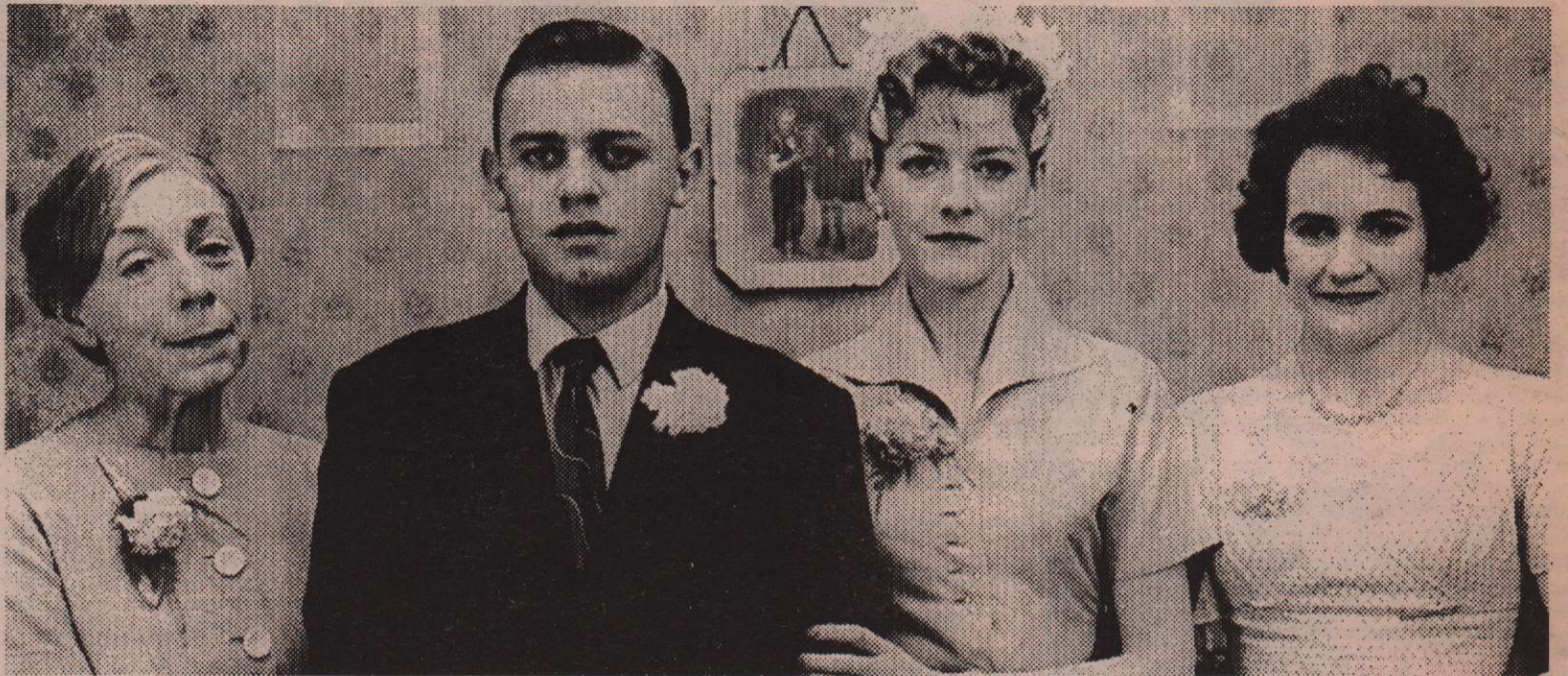
Distant Voices/Still Lives" is really two films that depict working class life in the Liverpool of the 1940s and '50s. It is a sequence of little cameo scenes, almost all of which involve people singing the popular songs of the period. In this way, mixing music and imagery, it evokes life as it was.

It's a nostalgic mixture, even though many of the events are depressing and even violent. The film focusses on one family — parents, two daughters, and a son. It follows their childhood (white Christmases, air-raids); youth ("Can I go to the dance Dad?" "Only if you clean up the cellar" "But there's rats in the cellar"); marriage; father's death.

The father was an extremely violent man who beat his wife and his kids regularly and sulked if he thought people were disloyal to him. One daughter hated him, though the other at her wedding reception, sobs her eyes out ("I want me Dad!")

Life is an endless round of pub sing-songs, domestic trauma and memories. Memory, indeed, seems to be the community's strong point as everyone is able to remember faultlessly all the words to all the songs.

Maybe people did so remember



The family

all the words in working-class Liverpool. But I doubt if they all had voices to rival Vera Lynn. These people all do (except for one, very, very marginal character, and the joke is she can't sing) — and this is one of my first complaints.

It's a film that depends for its impact upon what we at least believe to be realism. Yet there is a lot that seems implausible (or unexplained). Worse, life as it was is portrayed as somehow quaint (how quaint to be bruised up by your husband...) and

so it's not altogether convincing.

The relationships between different characters, and even the characters themselves, are little explored. Father is a loveable brute stereotype; Mother is a long-suffering-woman stereotype. Son seems quite a sweetie who cries a lot. Daughters? Not sure. Husbands of daughters are mini-loveable-brute stereotypes.

I don't think the film's intention is to paint life as lifeless, given colour only by songs. Rather we are

meant to see life as a rich tapestry of love/hate relationships. But it has little real depth or shape.

Partly this is due to the format: each scene is brief, microscopic — and often unexplained. We never find out (though I suppose we can guess) why Son comes home in his army uniform and smashes the front window shouting "Come out and fight me, you bastard" before being hurled into the back of a van by army police. Other things, likewise, we never find out.

I found this frustrating. I wanted to know more about the people, to know what made them tick, why they loved each other or hated each other. Mother's answer to the question, "Why did you marry him?" is typically vague: "He was nice. He was a good dancer".

The songs and the images themselves are quite powerful, the problem is there's too much we don't know. What jobs did they do? What struggles were they involved in?

Life on the streets of LA

TELEVISION

By Jean Lane

The documentary film 'Gang Detail' (BBC2 last Saturday night) was a frightening insight into what happens when young people are so alienated from society that nothing matters any more — not even life itself.

The film followed the attempts of the police, over 18 months, to deal with gang warfare which is being waged in the predominantly black area of Los Angeles.

The area you are born into will

determine which gang you are in: the Crips or the Bloods. Each gang has its own colour — Crips, blue; Bloods, red; their own self-identifying hand signals, and their territory to defend, on which they deal drugs. That territory is defended with guns. Opposing gang members are shot at and frequently murdered. It is a life of pointless loyalty to a meaningless cause with horrifying results.

A young Blood explained: "I never shot nobody till I got shot myself. Now, I just get drunk, get high, go home loaded. I remember what I did but I don't feel nothing — no pain."

Gang membership starts as early as 8 years old, indeed, is almost automatic. And, "once you in, you

can't never get out" according to one 14 year old Crip, who described the summary way in which anyone caught in the wrong street will be dealt: "You a Blood. You in my 'hood. You gonna get took out."

Prison is clearly not a deterrent; crammed full with whole cell blocks given over to each gang, adding to the bonding between "gang bangers" (members). "They are a little harder each time they come out," says one of the warders.

The police in the film come over as tough social do-gooders: talking to the youths, crushing their heroin into the pavement and giving them second chances rather than throwing them straight into prison; trying to do a job under very difficult circumstances. Just once the mask

slipped in front of the cameras. Two coppers, partners, one black and one white, were asked what their plans for the night patrol were. The white one replied: "Well, he's going to get out of the car and hit people and I'm going to do the social work and hand out complaint forms. Ha, ha." But even if the former picture were true, they clearly have no answers. The death rate remains high. Since January 1987, when the filming began, 650 people had been murdered, many of them innocent bystanders caught in the crossfire.

However, it wasn't until a student got killed in a white part of town that gang warfare became recognised as a problem. Suddenly it was getting news coverage. Films

were being made. One of them, 'Colours' was a box office hit, crowds flocking to see it, actually glorifying what was going on.

'Gang Detail' does place "social problems" as a cause of the gang warfare. Excitement, money, comradeship and peer group pressure were emphasised as motivations.

But it did not investigate these social problems very deeply. The rate of unemployment was not mentioned. The question of racism was not raised: the film never attempted to explain why this was happening amongst black youth.

As an account of what is happening in Los Angeles, the film is effective and disturbing. But if it had probed deeper into the causes I think it would have been more frightening still. Then it would have had implications, not just for a small part of LA, but for most of the capitalist world of which Reagan's America and Thatcher's Britain are leading the way.

They are heading the way in creating a society which offers its youth no hope and no future: which nurtures it on violence, greed, individualism and materialism, and which then punishes the monster it has created with prisons and the police.

Los Angeles may be an extreme version of what happens to young people under capitalism, but its crushing, disfiguring, get rich quick and get stoned to escape the effects — "feel no pain" — result is felt in all its inner cities, everywhere.

Bigger prisons and more heavily armed and equipped police are not the answer. That is one thing the documentary did show. Changing society, from one of alienating greed and profit to one of caring for people in which everyone feels they belong and has something to offer, is. That is one thing it didn't show. But it was still worth the viewing for all that. We can expect capitalism's media to sow the seeds of its own destruction, can we?

Autobiographical hedonism

BOOKS

By Gordon MacMillan

Brett Easton Ellis has switched to an East coast college for his second novel, but that seems to be the only change. I've taken the view that Ellis is really a comic. He wants us to believe that being a young, rich, beautiful undergraduate is hard. This is difficult to believe when the only crisis these wacky kids face is being too inebriated to have sex and missing the odd party. That seems like no problem; let's face it, the guy is funny.

The story is zoomed at us, once more, through the first person. But we are not treated to just one view point but to several: ingeniously

vain and hedonistic youths who slobber their beaker full of heart all over the page.

The highlight of the book is the "dress to screw party". Heartbreak and seduction envelop each other and turn to make as bad bed fellows as the rest of the story's characters.

Rich brat's story

Don't blush and don't look away, it's really just like this; Jay McInerney says as he flashes us the indulgent pleasures of American youth paled and desecrated in the face of its own immorality.

Alison is dead rich and in between smoking blow and speeding she wants to be an actress. She lives fast, but only because that's how

Everyone who was chasing everyone else discovers that no one loves anyone and they all drift off home dissatisfied and world weary.

A lot of contemporary American fiction tends towards the autobiographical, and Ellis seems no exception. A graduate of the ex-

the lanes travel. Supported by daddy she glides through a world where sexual partners are head counted as a matter of course; please don't be offended?

Alison falls for a guy whose credit card craze is only mid-way on his priority list. For a while she pulls into the hard shoulder and tries to be the modern woman in the home, but as her friends scream by she just can't make it stick. If Alison is hurt by more than anything else, it is her unrelenting subconscious which

pensive east coast Bennington College in Vermont, he not only has a sense of humour but he is also a great mimick; and that's all he is.

'The Rules of Attraction' by Brett Easton Ellis.

demands she burns by the torch with the rest of her generation.

McInerney has fled from the world of "Bright Lights, Big City" to a meticulous utopian desert world where the street names and designer labels are now the brightest beacons in the land.

The book like the people is rather shapeless and non-plus. If it really is like this — so what.

'Story of My Life' by Jay McInerney. Published by Bloomsbury.

Stop pits sell-off!

By Paul Whetton

Last week Cecil Parkinson pledged that the next Tory government would privatise the pits — "the ultimate privatisation".

ROF ripoff

British Aerospace (BAe) stands to gain millions of pounds in quick and easy profit by closing factories and selling off land for redevelopment.

The closure of Patricroft in Lancashire and Bishopston, Scotland, ROFs have already been announced, losing 2,300 jobs. But all of the ROFs are possible targets for closure as BAe ruthlessly asset strips both ROF and the Rover group — which it scooped up this year at rock bottom prices from the Tories.

BAe and the Tories are hand in glove. BAe boss Prof Roland Smith is on first name terms with Thatcher and has a long record of union bashing.

A mass meeting at ROF Patricroft on Monday 17th October heard Labour front benchers Michael Meacher and Gerald Kaufmann, local MPs and trade union officials pledge to support a fight against closure "all the way". A fighting fund has been set up.

Any work diverted from Patricroft or Bishopston, Scotland, to other ROFs will be blacked.

But the unions must be as hard nosed as the bosses. The present campaign rests largely on "embarrassing" BAe and the Tories. This will not stop the closures.

Strike action must be central to the campaign; and resistance must be co-ordinated nationally through both ROF and the Rover Group.

On Thursday 20th October, ROF convenors will meet in London. They should be discussing strike action as the centre of the campaign. At the very least, joint action committees should be set up at Bishopston and Patricroft.

The rank and file are the people who can prevent closure. They should be out petitioning the local community, speaking to trade union and Labour Party meetings and planning action.

The Salford Campaign Group is holding a public meeting to discuss how to fight the closure.

I wasn't surprised, and miners who have been paying attention to Arthur Scargill won't have been surprised! Now at last nobody can be in any doubt about Tory intentions.

Parkinson made a silly comment about Arthur Scargill: he said when Scargill's not in Cuba he might find himself negotiating with coal owners. Yes, and when Parkinson's not in bed with his secretary he might find himself with a massive coal strike in the private sector!

If, that is, the Tories manage to pull off privatisation of the mines. The strike wave may hit them long before they get that far.

To get privatisation through, they will promise all kind of money and sweetheart deals. For us the issue is now clear — are we going to accept privatisation or stand up and fight it?

There is danger in the fact that today we have the youngest workforce ever in the coal mines. Even my generation, which is getting towards the end, can't remember private owners.

The horror stories from my father and grandfather about the days 40 years ago before nationalisation, yes, but we have not had the direct experience.

That is even truer of the new generation. Their experience is of the nationalisation we have today with its massive pit closures, attacks on the union and so on. Many of them will have difficulty seeing anything worth defending in the NCB.

The point we have to get across is that the arguments against going back to privatisation are that much greater than any of the many criticisms we have had

of nationalisation, even from day one.

Tugging our forelocks when go into the pit yard — "can I have a job today sir?" — the boss or his agent standing there and saying, "you, you and you, yes; you, you and you, no, piss off home, there's no work for you today".

That's not an exaggeration — we can see the beginnings of that sort of regime creeping back today, in preparation for privatisation. And all the other things — the dividing of miner from miner; more and more pit closures and job losses; what health and safety there is going to pot; wholesale victimisation of militants.

We have to start preparing now for the tough battle that is going to come if we are to stop the Tory drive for privatisation.

We also need to say that, if it comes to Labour having one day to renationalise, then we're not going to have the same mess and mish-mash we had last time.

Now, however, we should fight to hang on to what we've got — and hope and struggle to make it qualitatively better in the future.

A rally and demonstration in support of Manchester ANALGO member Francis Okanlami, who is threatened with deportation, attracted 500 people.

Francis came to Britain from Nigeria as a student 6 years ago. He now works for Manchester City Council's Education Department.

EETPU: stay and fight!

The London Press branch of the EETPU have voted to stay inside the union and to fight the right wing. London contracting branch have decided to convene a meeting in Manchester for November 5th open to all dissident EETPU branches who want to turn the union around to reaffiliation on the basis of accepting TUC discipline.

This is the way to defeat Hammond and his ideas of business unionism. The breakaway EPU claims only 2,000 members. And recent deals between union bureaucrats in the EETPU and TUC affiliated unions suggest that inter-union membership competition

will be a phoney war.

Reaffiliation is an ideal issue to unite the union's left wing, campaign amongst the unions rank and file for basic trade union ideals and to attempt to topple the present EETPU leaders.

London teachers' vote

By Nick Doran

The 14,000 members of the Inner London Teachers Association (ILTA) voted last week by a

IN BRIEF

Talks between Post Office and UCW broke down over privatisation of PO Counters business. Sheffield PO workers refused to handle 1000 bags of mail redirected, without agreement from York.

Walkout at Jaguar stopped management tearing up union agreements and moving workers from one area of production to another. Management trying to introduce speed up to boost productivity, especially with unfavourable exchange rate for American luxury car market.

NUJ members at Rotherham Advertiser win dispute over pay-links made between NUJ and NGA chapels.

Walkout at Massey Ferguson, Coventry, over use of non-unionised contracted painter.

Housing benefit workers in Greenwich beat council attempt to impose job contracts on them.

Colleges: as technicians across the country struck over their 18% comparability linked pay claim on Tuesday; AUT members prepared to stop all co-operation with performance appraisal schemes from Wednesday. They have been offered no pay rise at all this year. Students from colleges around the country demonstrated outside Tory Party Conference last Thursday

Teachers: London teachers strike on Thursday 20 October against IEA's decision to sack 160 supply teachers. Strike ballot carried by majority of 4:1. Scottish teachers to ballot for strike on November 1 over Tory attacks on education.

Banks and finance: MSF has won new rights to assisted mortgages for part-time workers at Norwich Union. Eagle Star Insurance workers to ballot over suspension of one worker and management attempts to derecognise their union. BIFU Lloyds bank staff have voted overwhelmingly for industrial action against an extension of opening hours without agreement.

NUM: Special delegate meeting called for 1 November to discuss details of ballot for industrial action over 1988 pay claim.

Arms race turns worse

SCIENCE

By Mark Catterall

The United States has returned to space after a two year enforced pause, in the wake of the Challenger disaster. Israel has just launched its first satellite into orbit.

Both the US and Israel are driven by their military need for access to space and for the technology that goes with that access.

The Challenger accident was caused by NASA, the US's so-called civilian space agency, having to both launch civilian satellites for profit, and to service the US's military's desire for ready access to space. The US military requires the Space Shuttle for 'Star Wars' experiments, and for the Space Shuttle's large cargo bay, out of which are launched spy satellites. Forced by these pressures, NASA cut corners and 6 astronauts and a school teacher paid with their lives.

Allegedly, during the two year lay off in the Space Shuttle programme, safety standards were improved. But once again the US military are tightening the screw and forcing NASA to cut corners.

The US military has been unable to launch a spy satellite for the last three years, for two reasons.

Firstly, there was the failure of the Shuttle and secondly the failure of the conventional Titan launcher which blew up destroying the last of the previous generation of spy satellites. The Shuttle was the only launcher able to put the next generation of spy satellites into space.

So Star Wars experiments have been stacking up in labs awaiting launch. The result is that NASA is again under pressure to cut corners.

So much so that the new supposedly tighter launch criteria have now been ignored.

The Israeli launch of an experimental satellite has effectively demonstrated Israel's missile-launching ability. Israel is now known to have a number of Jericho II ballistic missiles, with a range of 1,400km and with over 200 nuclear warheads available. Israel can now bring destruction to every major Arab capital. And of course Iraq and Iran have been hurling similar Chinese missiles at each other for almost a decade.

Now it is reported that Egypt, Libya, Syria and Saudi Arabia are trying to obtain the technology to build missiles similar to Israel's at the same time develop nerve gas and other chemical warheads.

The long running arms race in the Middle East takes another turn for the worse.

Strike for union rights!

The NUM EC meeting last week decided to call a special delegate conference on November 1st to discuss balloting on action over the issue of negotiating rights.

The Coal Board is trying to impose a conciliation procedure on us, forcing us to sit down with the UDM. It also gives sole negotiating rights to the majority union in any pit — which means the NUM still not being recognised in almost every pit in the Nottinghamshire coalfield.

The national union has consistently rejected this. It reaffirmed that decision at the last conference despite some opposition. Now we need to attempt to force the Coal Board to agree a procedure under which all NUM members can be recognised.

When it comes to action I hope we don't have a re-run of the last experience, when we had the weakest form of overtime ban we could possibly have come up with! I hope the delegates reject such feebleness and go for strong action that will hit and hurt the Coal Board.

People keep telling me that 'the lads aren't ready for action'. But they are willing to come out,

WHETTON'S WEEK



A miner's diary

whether the issue is 50p water money or some other issue. I think that both the Coal Board and some in the union are seriously misjudging the mood of the men.

If the call for a stand-up fight was made there would be a substantial response. Everybody at the pit knows that the bosses are riding too high and that it's time they were sorted out, and that we're not going

to be able to do that with kid gloves. The bosses need some knuckle, so do the Tories.

I think there will be strong support in the pits for a day of action in support of the GCHQ trade unionists — although most will understand that a TUC-style day of action will be next to useless. They are banning trade unions and the TUC want token resistance!

It is just going to encourage the government. The future of trade unionism is at stake and we need a proper response — along the lines of the battles to ditch the Industrial Relations Acts in the '60s and '70s, and to get the Pentonville 5 out of jail. In 1972 those were won much more because of the rank and file than by the efforts of the TUC.

"Spycatcher" was legalised in Britain last week. I read it a year ago and wasn't very impressed. I thought he left a lot out about the activities of the secret service — infiltration of parties, acting as 'agent provocateurs' and so on. What it has done, however, is to lift one small corner of the blanket and show us a little bit of what the state is really up to.

Taken with the experience of other countries, like Chile and Allende, it's a lesson the labour movement needs to learn.



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Who rules Britain?

By Clive Bradley

1 975: in a fourth-floor flat above Euston Road tube station, an elite MI5-MI6 squad called K5 was plotting the downfall of the Labour government of Harold Wilson. One of K5's top men was 'Spycatcher' author Peter Wright — who was convinced that Wilson was an agent for the KGB.

The plot came to nothing, and Wilson, who became aware of it, complained publicly to The Observer (although without getting much public sympathy).

Wright, who as a result of a recent stroke, seems less than one hundred per cent there, told BBC's 'Panorama' last week that his book may not be reliable on the details. But the basic facts have been confirmed.

So in 1975, the British secret service began to move against a democratically-elected Labour government under the conviction that it was led by a Russian spy. Moreover, the rationale for this conviction appears to have included such incontrovertible proofs as the fact that selling raincoats is a frequent KGB cover (with reference to a friend of Harold Wilson's).

There are many lessons in all of this, beyond the fact that the Thatcher government would prefer it if we didn't know.

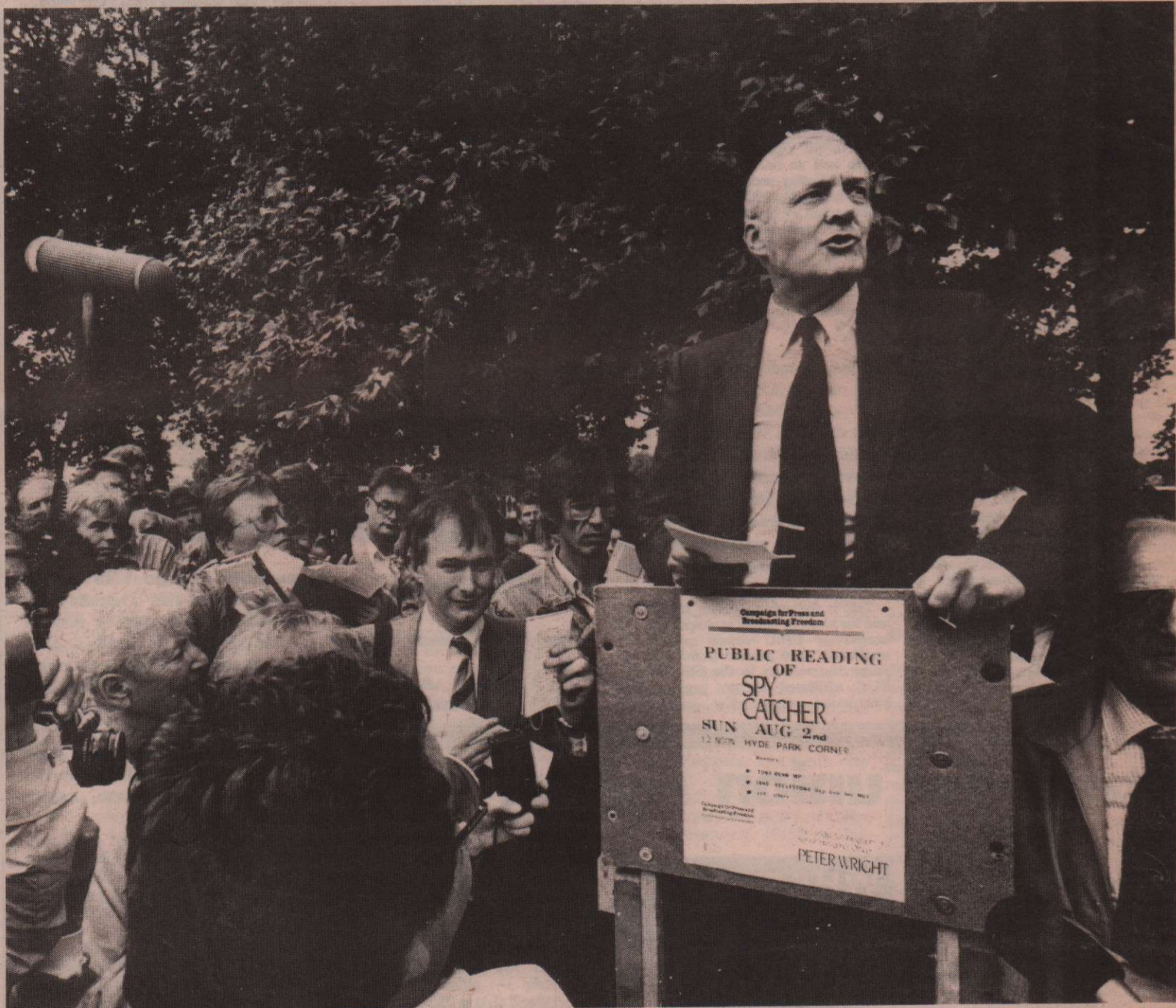
Wilson's government was not by any stretch of the imagination a radical threat to capitalism. So how could Wright and others come to believe that it was?

Wilson owed his election to the stormy period of class struggle that preceded it. In 1970, Edward Heath had been elected. Compared to the Tories of today, Heath's government was outrageously wet, but its plan of action included a major assault on the trade unions. Heath wanted to break the 'trade union barons' who had been 'running the country'. The trade union movement was very strong: it had seen off an attempt by the 1964-70 Wilson government to impose anti-union laws.

The Industrial Relations Act was the first Tory effort to shackle the unions — less subtle, and ultimately less effective, than the Thatcherite versions. It provoked a storm of protest by trade unions; in sharp contrast to most union leaders' response to the 1982 Employment Act and other recent legislation, in the early '70s they mounted a campaign. It was a sluggish campaign, but at least it was one.

The struggle against the Act culminated in July 1972. Five dockers were put in Pentonville prison for breaking the law. And a huge, spontaneous strike wave swept the country in response. Workers were furious. Several hundred thousand workers took strike action, and the TUC named the day for a one-day general strike.

The Tories panicked and backed



Tony Benn at public reading of 'Spycatcher' Photo Andrew Wiard (Report)

down, releasing the dockers. Effectively the Industrial Relations Act was rendered inoperable (although it remained on the statute books until after Labour's election victory).

In 1972 also there had been a successful miners' strike. It was the miners who were to go into confrontation again with Heath at the end of 1973 and into 1974. Coming as it did at the same time as the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the OPEC oil price increases, the Tories seized an alleged energy crisis, exacerbated by the miners refusing to dig coal. A three-day week was imposed.

So in February 1974 Heath went to the polls on the issue "Who rules Britain?" — the Tories or the labour movement?

To his surprise and initial disbelief, Heath lost. Labour under Wilson was elected. They needed another election in October 1974 to confirm themselves in power (and then unconvincingly). But Wilson had come to power on the back of

the most profound wave of industrial class struggle since the 1940s. Much was expected of his government.

That was what scared MI5. Labour's Manifesto was radical up to a point, at least in comparison with Kinnock's Aims and Values. They promised a "fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families". Dennis Healey had talked of squeezing the rich "until their pips squeaked".

Yet that Labour government played the decisive role in creating what has beset us for the last nine years — a Tory government full of confidence, and a labour movement that fails over and over again to act.

Most workers trusted Wilson to deliver, the trade union leaders were able to sell a "social contract" that included (principally) wage restraint to their members. The industrial militancy of the anti-Heath struggles was siphoned off.

So in the event, the Wilson government played the role of restabilising capitalism. In the process it confused and demoralised the labour movement, so enormously aiding Thatcher both to win the 1979 election and to go on to win subsequent battles. What is more, the Labour government initiated the monetarist policies (cuts in education and health spending, for example) that Thatcher was to champion.

The dominant and more intelligent sections of the ruling class understood that Wilson could play this role.

The more right-wing and stupid sections, including people like Peter Wright, believed firm action was needed.

But suppose Wilson had been a threat. Wilson himself recounts how the Bank of England informed him sternly upon taking office that it was out of the question that he be allowed to fulfil his manifesto pro-

mises. The security services would have been just as firm if capitalism had been in any danger. The Peter Wrights would have had their way. Wright's wasn't the only plot in the 1970s.

When the Allende government was toppled in Chile in 1973 by a murderous military coup, The Times commented that any army officer would have seen it as his "constitutional duty" to intervene.

Wilson was safe, in the end, because he was not radical. But the activities of Peter Wright should be enough to prove that a genuinely socialist government would not be able to act without serious — even violent — resistance from the ruling class.

Peter Wright may be, as shadow Attorney-General John Morris described him, "a semi-gaga old man". He may be being painted as a nutcase by the Tory press. But he has a lot to teach us — or warn us — about.