

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

The German

workers

rise again

Domesday postponed

By Eric Heffer MP

The idea that the free market economy and the Stock Market are the answers to our problems is completely and utterly absurd. The Stock Market is part of the capitalist system, which is in serious crisis. And it has been for a long time.

The idea that the labour movement should be jumping over to free-enterprise capitalism has proved this week to be, beyond doubt, a fallacy. What we should be doing is exposing the nature of the system. Instead of that, Labour is talking about patching it up.

We should be starting today in the House of Commons exposing the absurdity of capitalism, the absurdity of the Stock Market. This is a casino economy, and has no real relationship to what is required. Democratic socialist planning can meet the needs of people both here and abroad.

We're getting the arguments that it was just a blip, not as bad as we thought, and so on. What they don't say is that the whole episode, and the system that produces it, is an absurd way to go on. More than ever we need a socialist alternative, and we should be using what happened this week to get that across.



Pioneer German Socialist Rosa Luxemburg



By Bruce Robinson

1 20,000 people marched through the city of Leipzig (October 16): the largest East German demonstration since the 1950s. Among workers there is growing unrest, and the regime of Erik Honecker looks more and more uneasy.

The only demonstrations East German police usually see are the carefully stage-managed parades of the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED). Apparently many of them were unsure how to react when faced with the real thing.

While the first demonstrations in East Germany led to mass arrests and beatings by the secret police, the 80,000 strong demonstration in Leipzig last Monday (October 9) went off peacefully with the same police chatting to demonstrators. The demonstration of 120,000 this Monday also passed off peacefully.

This uncertainty about how to deal with the recent upsurge of opposition protest goes right to the top of the Stalinist party. In the last week there have been significant cracks in its unity. In Dresden 20 demonstrators met city representatives and the party leadership in Leipzig came out openly for some form of dialogue with the opposition. So did the official Academy of Arts. 600 of those arrested have been released. It is unclear how far this is approved by Honecker, though a sign that a serious shift has occurred is the publication of critical letters in several newspapers.

But the possibility of repression of the opposition cannot yet be



Protest in East Berlin

ruled out. The changes may be an indication of a faction fight in ruling circles or an attempt to win time.

The Politburo meeting last week received warnings of serious discontent among the working class and the possibility of strikes. Many workers are simply having to work harder to make up for the absence of colleagues who have fled to the West. The leader of the official trade unions, Tisch, has said: "The climate is now very tense. The atmosphere among the workers has changed."

As yet there has been little open sign of this discontent, but fear is believed to have been a major factor in the government's more conciliatory tone.

The illegal opposition, New Forum, now has around 20,000 members. 120 delegates met in East Berlin and agreed to set up a permanent framework and bring out a paper in a month's time.

The West German weekly 'Die Zeit' describes the opposition as follows: "...one aim is not mentioned anywhere: reunification. The intellectual, church and party political advocates of reform do not want to get rid of the GDR, but to change it...The capitalist Federal Republic is not their ideal. They dream again the dream of 'socialism with a human face', of the 'third road', of a prospering communism."

The author, Stefan Heym, who has been in conflict with the

authorities before, also wrote: "In truth Marx isn't dead, but Stalin is. Socialism itself hasn't failed, only this peculiar, 'real existing' version. The other, better one, in whose name so many brave people gave ideas and their blood has still not yet arrived."

The writer of the Zeit article adds: "...it may be that this view is not shared by the majority of GDR citizens." Two things will determine whether it becomes a mass view: the prospect of mass strikes and the ability of the opposition to go beyond calls for dialogue and put forward a positive programme in the interests of the working class.

The Red and the Green

An open letter to the supporters of the Green Party

Centre pages

Women and housing

WOMEN'S EYE

By Liz Millward

Once upon a time women lived at home with their parents until it was time to get married. Then their role was to 'make a home' for their family, while (supposedly) hubby went out to work to pay the bills. Nowadays women want and need to have their own homes by themselves, or with their children.

I don't know what the rest of the country is like, but in London that sort of independence simply isn't on for most women.

For single women with or without children council housing is a bit of a joke. If you're homeless they'll put you in a grotty b & b. If you have children you might get one of the few remaining (hard to sell) flats at the top of a high rise block with a broken lift.

Many London council estates are good places to live, but many more are disaster areas with repairs never done, litter and graffiti everywhere and no facilities for kids. But even the worst council housing has a huge advantage over the private sector — women can afford it.

The cheapest one bedroom flat or 'studio' (one room and kitchen and bathroom) costs £80 per week. And that is likely to be in an area with poor public transport and few local amenities.

The cheapest flats seem to have the worst landlords — racists, who won't take children, won't do repairs and want huge deposits.

A one bedroom flat in a 'desirable' and convenient area like Islington costs at least £120 pw. The vast majority of single women are simply priced out of the market.

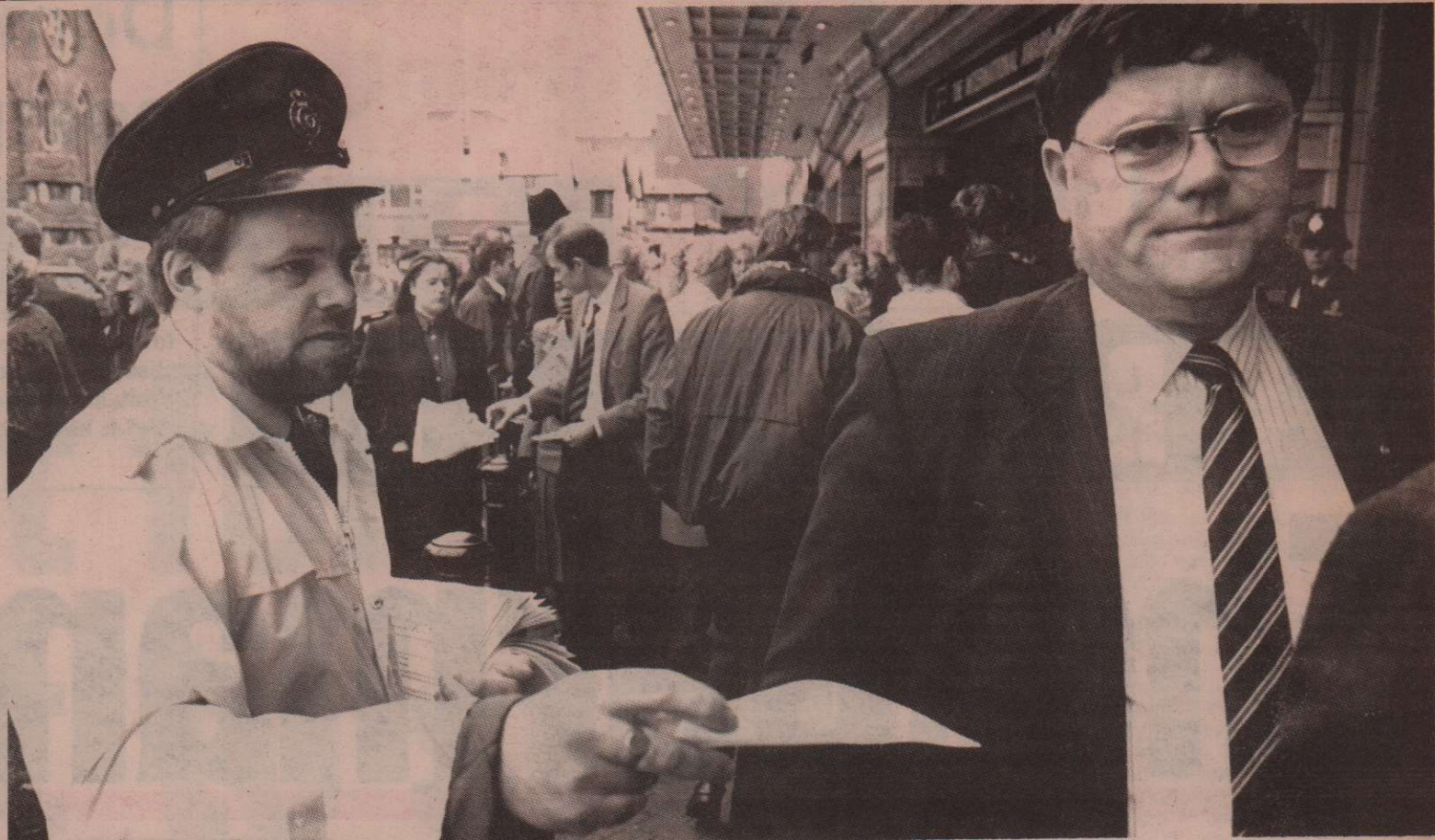
Despite its being illegal many landlords will refuse to take black tenants, using the usual racist excuses. That the 'other tenants won't like it', 'the cooking makes a smell' or 'last time I had a black tenant they left a terrible mess'.

The Tories new housing legislation is starting to take effect in terms of rising rents — but other things haven't changed: tenants with children no longer having security of tenure does not mean landlords are any more prepared to take them.

Single women have few options and for all their talk, the Tories have not created any more. A few more properties are now available but they are available because the mortgage rates have risen so much — not because of the Tory Housing Act!

The news for women on their own is uniformly bad, unless they are white, have a huge income and have no kids. There is of course a simple solution to all this:

- Build and renovate more public sector housing;
- Encourage and subsidise the building of homes for rent;
- Re-instate rent controls and security of tenure;
- Most of all we need more homes in London. With tens of thousands of homeless people, women simply have to take what they can get — if they can get anything at all.



Ambulance workers lobby Tory conference: the faces tell it all. Photo: Paul Herrman (Profile)

New anti-union laws

By Vicki Morris

At his Party's conference in Blackpool last week, the satirically named Employment Secretary, Norman Fowler, announced the Tories' plans for a new war on trade unionists who take industrial action.

As if their present anti-union laws were not severe enough, in the near future the Tories plan practically to ban unofficial and secondary industrial action, and to abolish the closed shop. They discussed banning strike action in "essential" services, but have kept that out of the new anti-union package for now.

Fowler told the Tory conference

his new detailed plans for banning unofficial action.

At present bosses are discouraged from sacking individual workers they suspect of organising action. Legally the only option open to them is to sack all of a workforce taking action or none of it. If, within 3 months of total sacking they want to take some of the members back, they have to take them all back.

Any individual victimised members can take their bosses to an industrial tribunal on the grounds of "unfair dismissal".

Fowler's "Green Paper" proposes to remove the safeguards enjoyed by individuals who strike or lead strikes and by those taking supporting action.

Unions which don't "unequivocally repudiate" unofficial ac-

tion in writing will be subject to the now familiar sequestration of assets, and fines.

Now the Tories are targeting workers who, in the words of Jimmy Knapp, "faced with what they see as a diabolical injustice handed down by management, and seeing no way out but taking action, will do so no matter how disciplined or what the consequences are".

So far the response of major union leaders like Knapp to Fowler's proposals has been outrage, and a certain smug belief that they are unworkable.

Even some bosses are uneasy about what is planned. London Underground bosses will have at the back of their minds the threat by workers at recent mass meetings, to take strike action if any one activist is victimised for organising unof-

ficial action.

It will take the combined efforts of union rank and file members to see that the Tories do not get away with yet more vicious legislation.

The Tories were clearly rattled by the successes of unofficial strikers on the London Underground this summer. Fowler's speech at the Tory Party conference aimed at healing wounded pride, and injecting some enthusiasm back into demoralised members. Even if they are incapable of running the economy, or anything else for that matter, at least they can still have a swipe at the other side, collectively and individually bashing the unions.

This summer showed that a lot of workers are now prepared to bash back.

Greece heads for a new coalition

Ian Swindale reports from Greece

Greece goes to the polls again on 5 November. Having completed the limited programme it set itself last June, the right-wing-Communist coalition government is due to offer its resignation to the President of the Republic on Friday 6 October.

The former adversaries who now jointly govern the country have been busily promoting reconciliation — even to the point of passing a law, long promised but never introduced to Parliament by PASOK during their eight years in power, which terminates the last of the discriminatory measures adopted by the victorious right against supporters of the Greek wartime resistance following the defeat of the left in the Civil War in 1949.

The coalition government has also replaced many PASOK appointees in the state television company and other state industries and passed a law regarding the introduction of privately-owned TV stations.

If some old wounds between left and right have finally healed, relations between the two governing parties and PASOK are at an all-

time low.

The major work of the coalition government was the investigation of a number of scandals which emerged during Papandreou's time as Prime Minister. As a result of these investigations Parliament has voted to prosecute Andreas Papandreou and four of his former ministers on charges relating to the Bank of Crete scandal when businessman, fraudster and owner of the bank George Koskotas embezzled it of £135 million.

Papandreou is also to be tried on charges relating to the illegal tapping of telephones of political opponents, journalists and even of potential rivals within his own party.

Papandreou, claiming that the other parties are using their parliamentary majority to try and smear him and destroy PASOK has maintained a haughty distance from the proceedings in Parliament dignifying only to appear briefly in the debate on the Bank of Crete scandal to accept political responsibility for his government's actions but to deny any criminal complicity in the scandal.

The trials of Papandreou and the other ministers by judges selected by the Greek's highest court, will not take place at the end of the year. In the elections on 5 November will take place with the issue of the trial of Papandreou and the other ministers a major campaign issue.

The political situation in Greece became further charged when on 26 September the 'November 17' terrorist group assassinated New Democracy MP Pavlos Bakoyannis.

The assassination was significant for a number of reasons. It was the first killing of a sitting MP since Lambralis — a leftist peace campaigner — was deliberately run down and killed in Salonica in the early sixties. Secondly, Bakoyannis had been a shareholder in the publishing company of George Koskotas — Grammi — and indeed this was one reason mentioned in the communique issued by 'November 17' for his assassination. He was also the son-in-law of New Democracy leader Konstantinos Mitsotakis and one of the main architects of the compromise last June which permitted the formation of a right-left coalition government under the premiership of Tsannis Tsanetakis after ND leader Mitsotakis agreed to withdraw his candidacy for the premiership on the insistence of the Left Alliance.

Whether the 'November 17' group intends to make any further 'contributions' to the election remains to be seen. In the meantime the right wing press, determined to take advantage of PASOK's disfigurement with the prosecution of Papandreou, accuse PASOK of Bakoyannis's assassination and

asserting that 'November 17' is a PASOKite organisation.

So what will happen on 5 November? In an opinion poll conducted by the Sunday edition of 'Ethnos' a few days before Bakoyannis was murdered, the parties were given virtually the same share of the vote as they received on 18 June. All the indications therefore, are that neither PASOK nor New Democracy will emerge from the elections with an overall majority.

It is quite possible that the Left Alliance will follow its betrayal of last June with a further betrayal and form another coalition government with the right. This would again be presented as short-term government which would remain in power until next March when Parliament has to vote for a new President of the Republic. The absence in Parliament of a party with an overall majority will almost certainly mean that Greece will have to go to the polls for the third time in a year, this time on the issue of the Presidency.

But while the three-month coalition government of right and left avoided taking any major decisions on government policy it is difficult to see how this state of affairs could be maintained for a further six months.

A period of continuing uncertainty and betrayal seems certain to lie ahead for the Greek working class.

Lift the ban on Sinn Fein!

EDITORIAL

It is one year since the government introduced its broadcasting restrictions against organisations supporting 'terrorism' in Northern Ireland. Discussion of the issue this week has centred on how journalists have misunderstood it and implemented it more rigidly than they are required to under law.

On BBC2 and in the 'Sunday Correspondent Peter Taylor of Panorama stressed that the measure, introduced by Douglas Hurd last year was not a 'ban against Sinn Fein'. First, it isn't a ban it just imposes restrictions which mean that interviews with certain organisations must be broadcast with subtitles or voice-overs, rather than the actual soundtrack. Second it is aimed at all illegal groups, and at the large organisations, Sinn Fein, the UDA. So both loyalist and republicans are affected.

Taylor and others have also pointed out that broadcasters have over-complied with these measures. Interviews with Sinn Fein have decreased sharply. There has not been a single defiance of the ban and people sympathetic to Sinn Fein's aims have been needlessly affected.

ITV for example, refused to play the words of the Pogues' song 'Birmingham 6', despite the widespread support even from the establishment for its sentiments.

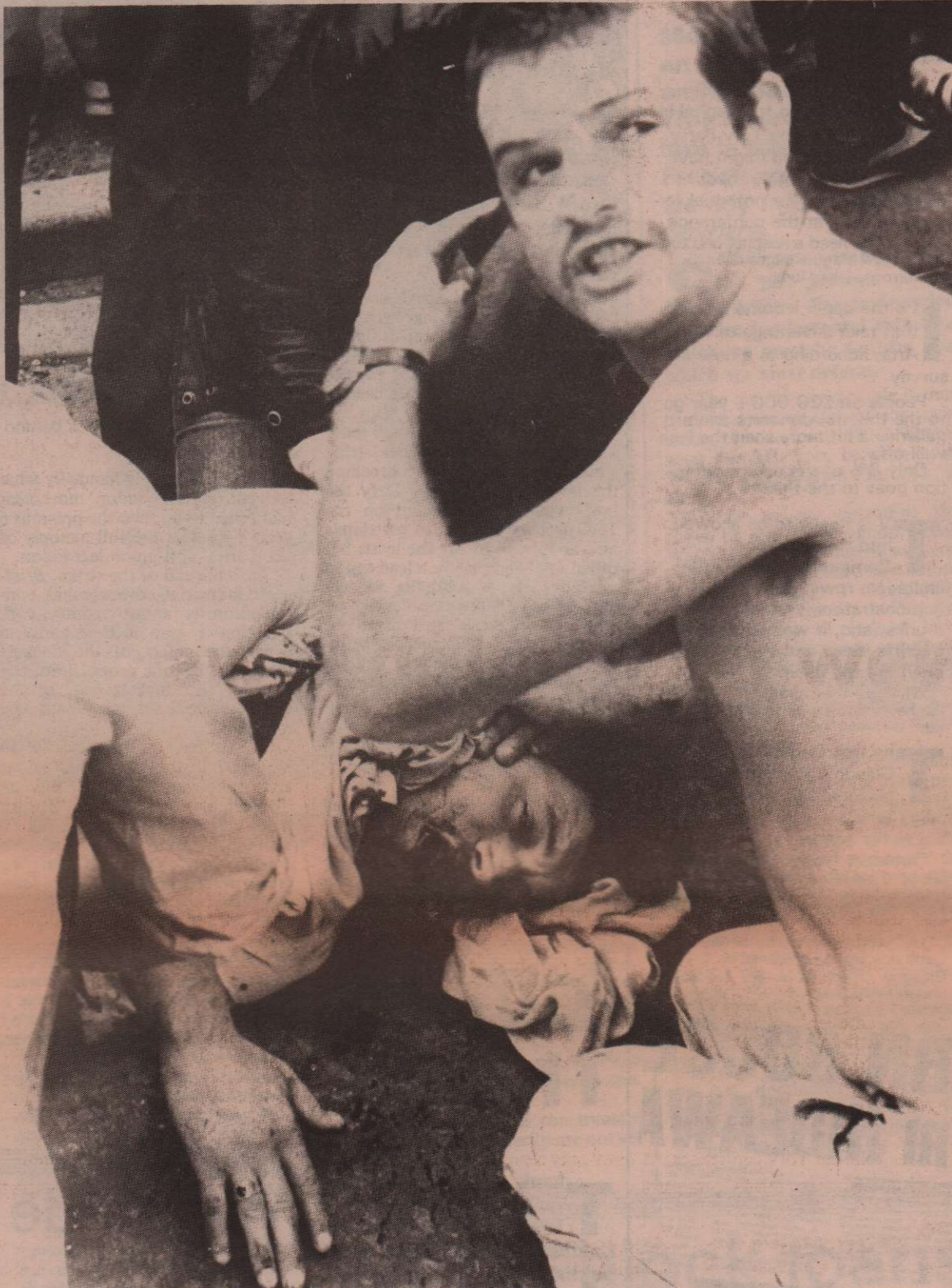
There is something both naive and hypocritical about media comments on this undemocratic anniversary. In the first place the restriction may not be solely against Sinn Fein, but it is clear that they are the target.

It was introduced shortly after last year's bombing in which 8 soldiers died. There was right wing and press clamour for 'strong measures'. Internment was discussed in Cabinet. There was pressure to do something. The result was the media restriction.

Proof of its effect was the fact that Gerry Adams blamed the measures for Sinn Fein's poor results in the local elections in May.

The over cautious compliance of journalists and broadcasting organisations can be no surprise to anyone who has tried to discover anything about what has happened in Northern Ireland in the last 20 years. There is much truth in the old saying that, 'If you don't know what has been going on in Northern Ireland you must have been watching British TV and reading British newspapers'. The most effective restriction on reporting on Northern Ireland has been the self-censorship and bias of the media themselves.

Before the Troubles there were hardly any programmes on Northern Ireland produced. But those that were could be vetoed by the local Northern Ireland chiefs of BBC or ITV who tended to be part



John Downes was victim of a police attack on a peaceful demonstration. Photo: John Spier

of the Unionist establishment. When independent television was set up in 1955 the chief manager of Ulster TV was a man called Henderson who happened also to be the chairman of the Unionist Party's publicity committee.

Many programmes such as for example a profile of Ian Paisley by ITV's 'This Week' were shown in Britain but not in Northern Ireland. Others, such as an early attempt to discuss the border by Alan Whicker were simply banned.

When the Troubles came bans and cuts became commonplace.

The rationale came from the broadcasters themselves. Lord Hill, BBC Chairman in 1971 stated "As between the British Army and the gunmen, the BBC is not, and cannot be impartial". Desmond Taylor, BBC Editor of News and Current Affairs in 1972, said, "The

BBC's normal policy assumed the existence of a rational audience. The Northern Ireland audience at that moment were not rational".

Despite the government's ability to ban programmes under the Official Secrets or Defence of the Realm Acts by issuing 'D' notices this was never done. Instead they could rely on self-censorship by the media albeit, often, after a good deal of pressure.

Programmes on RUC torture in interrogation centres; on the Provisionals; programmes critical of Northern Ireland ministers were all taken off the air after intense government pressure.

A recent example was the BBC 'Real Lives' programme which attempted to show a day in the lives of Martin McGuinness of Sinn Fein and Gregory Campbell of the DUP. After a government protest the programme was withdrawn.

But the government and press have used other techniques which the media in general has rarely resisted. Typical is the accusation that programme-makers have endangered lives or been taken for a ride by republican fifth-columnists. The vicious attack on 'Death on the Rock' suggested that the programme-makers were disloyal to Britain or sympathetic to 'terrorism'. Another nasty feature of that incident was the vicious

treatment of Carmen Proetta by the tabloid press, who accused her of being a high class prostitute and a liar. She was neither.

So the media's poor treatment of Northern Ireland is neither new nor government imposed. In fact, the thrust of most liberal criticism of the current restrictions is distinctly illiberal. Underlying the broadcasters complaint is an appeal to 'leave it to us, to beat the republicans in our way'.

For example, the argument that the restriction lets Sinn Fein off the hook after certain atrocities.

The case for lifting the restriction should be that people need to understand why the ideas of Sinn Fein, or the UDA have the support they do. What is unique about Sinn Fein is not their connection with violence, it is their articulation of the grievances of the Catholic under-class in Northern Ireland, a group whose voice is rarely taken into account.

What the British media establishment is asking for is the right to return to a more subtle self-censorship, the right to uphold British values their own tried and trusted way. With a few honourable exceptions that is what we had before and it was not free speech.

We need free speech on Ireland — free from government bans and free from 'liberal' media self-censorship.

Public enemy at No. 11

PRESS GANG

Daily Express

The Guardian

DAILY MIRROR DAILY STAR

By Jim Denham

The annual gathering of the Tory faithful for what is officially known as a 'conference' is normally the occasion for an orgy of brown-nosing and triumphalism from the delegates and from most of the press.

This year it was a little bit different. With Labour ahead in the polls, inflation hitting 7.6%, the pound plummeting and mortgages soaring triumphalism was not exactly the order of the day.

Mrs Thatcher, of course, is never to blame when things go wrong. But the press must have their villain: step forward Mr Nigel Lawson.

In an extraordinary front page attack, headlined "THIS BANKRUPT CHANCELLOR", the *Daily Mail* let rip in no uncertain fashion. Lawson's policies "lay in ruins", his treatment of homeowners was "scandalous". He must, of course, go; but go where? "Would you give this man a job, as chairman of a bank or a city editor of a national newspaper? The *Daily Mail* certainly would not. So it is no good him applying here for a position. He would be kicked downstairs quicker than you could say 'Another rise in base rate'", formulated the *Mail*.

Who wrote this tirade? When questioned, editor Sir David English did not exactly fall himself to deny authorship.

Today, which is presently posing as a non-Tory paper (it supported the Greens in the Euro-election) competed with *The Mail* in Lawson-baiting. "If he cannot do better than stick out his double chin while raising two fingers at ordinary people, he should stop pretending to be in control of the economy. And like emperors who have outlived their usefulness, fall on his sword".

The Express stopped short of demanding hari-kari, but it did put its finger very accurately on the real reason for all this vitriol — "the plight of Britain's 9 million homeowners: the people who are bearing the brunt of the government's economic policy and are now seeing their mortgage repayments rise by about 50% in little over 15 months. If this increased burden was leading to a substantial capital gain there would be some comfort to be had. But it is not."

There you have Lawson's unforgivable crime summed up in a nut-shell: he has clobbered the children of the 'Thatcher revolution' — the young couples encouraged to buy a house for the first time, the older people enticed into buying their council houses, the middle class families tempted to 'buy upwards' as an investment. And worse still, while their mortgage payments go through the roof they see the value of their property actually falling!

The Tories can attack the unemployed and claimants, the tenants of the inner cities and all those recalcitrants who still live in council houses. But when homeowners, many of them readers of papers like the *Daily Mail* and *Today* start to suffer then things have clearly gone too far. The middle classes of South East England whipped up into a frenzied mob outside No. 11 Downing St would make a fearsome spectacle — especially with Sir David English at their head.

'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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Government lies: it's official!

GRAFFITI

Government statistics are not to be trusted, say top statistics experts. The former head of the Government Statistical Service and the former president of the Royal Statistical Society have called for an independent body to monitor the government's use of 'facts'.

Fiddling with unemployment figures is notorious. Less well-known was a new way of convincing people that managed to reduce the number in the poorest category by one million! Thatcher's blocking of the number of people entitled to legal aid has fallen by 14 million since 1979.

10 years ago, 70% of two-parent households with two children qualified for legal aid; now less than 50% are entitled.

These are conservative estimates. Legal aid experts think the problem could be much worse.

This is Tory law: millionaires can pay for top lawyers, but working class people simply can't afford justice.

Research into sexual behaviour, to help the study of AIDS, also caused controversy.

There are further suggestions of 'interference' with the Retail Price Index.

What idiot said: "There is no country in the world today that has absolute freedom of speech, with the possible exception of the Soviet Union"?

Answer: Tariq Ali, enfant terrible of the late 1960s, and author of a book on Gorbachev. Tariq Ali, who for a long time was the leading figure in Britain of the tendency whose descendants produce Socialist Outlook, admits that Isaac Deutscher was more of an influence on him than Trotsky.

Deutscher believed revolution was unnecessary in the USSR. Ali was speaking at a meeting organised by the Campaign Against Repression in Iran (CARII).

If you had to go to hospital in Blackpool during Tory Party conference, you might have had a problem. Lots of beds were earmarked for potential terrorist victims at the conference.

So if you need a hospital bed today which Maggie might need tomorrow — bad luck.

It's the upper income bracket that take advantage of the Arts, according to a new survey.

People on £20,000 a year go to the theatre, concerts and art galleries a lot more than the less well-off.

Only 6% of the adult population goes to the theatre.

TV is finally to be allowed into the House of Commons — with strict limits. No rows, no demonstrators, certainly no drunks, and, it would seem, no midribs (head and shoulders only) are the rules.

What are they afraid of? Even Gorbachev's parliament is better televised.

The first Catholic to play for Glasgow Rangers has been subjected to a hate campaign which has included setting fire to his home.

Protestant fans vowed to make life hard for Mo Johnston when he transferred for £1.5 million. He had previously played for Celtic. He and his family are now in hiding.

The sectarian hostility between Catholics and Protestants in Glasgow should never be underestimated.

Back to 1926?

LEFT PRESS

By Jim Denham

Labour Briefing gives the general impression of being a rather worthy, even dull, publication. It is very concerned with the day to day minutiae of Labour Party affairs and the problems of left wing councillors.

But Briefing's industrial coverage can be quite extraordinary. During the dock dispute, its central slogan was "Todd must defy the law" — a demand that was repeated in successive articles and was even used as a front page headline.

Now, everyone with any sense knew that a successful dock strike would inevitably involve breaking the law. But to make "Defy the law" your main demand on the T&G leadership, was to get things arse-about-tip, to say the least. SO called on Todd to give a lead to the militancy of rank and file dockers and to do what was necessary to build an effective strike: as we pointed out, that meant being prepared to break the law. But we didn't call for defiance of the law as though it was a matter of principle for its own sake.

This is not just nit-picking: Briefing's approach implied a light-minded attitude to the union's funds (and, indeed, its very survival) that went far beyond making the point that defending effective trade unionism means being prepared to put union funds at risk at crucial moments. Worse, it was, in effect, a call on Todd and the



Alan Thornett: the brains behind 'Briefing'

TGWU to do single-handedly what the entire trade union movement had failed to do over the previous 6 years — defeat the full panoply of the Tories' anti-union legislation.

Since the end of the strike, Briefing's industrial coverage has continued on its fantastic course, constructing a grandiose scenario in which the defeat of the dockers takes on "historic proportions, not just for the dockers but for the British trade union movement as a whole".

Of course, no-one wants to minimise the tragedy of this serious and unnecessary defeat. But an "historic defeat"... of the "British trade union movement as a whole"...? Even the 1985 miner's defeat wasn't that. If Briefing means what it says, then we're talking 1926.

As SO pointed out, the dockers'

defeat took place against the general trend of industrial struggles, which have been on an upswing for some time. How does Briefing explain the victories of other groups like NALGO and the railworkers against the background of this 'historic defeat'? Easy! "The recent industrial upsurge was eventually contained by wage concessions designed to isolate the dockers. But it was a high price for the Tories to pay..."

The idea of the government deciding to allow the railworkers the London Tube workers and 500,000 local government workers to win significant concessions simply in order to isolate the dockers, squares rather uneasily with Briefing's own description of the government "squealing with anger" at the NALGO settlement. It also squares rather uneasily with this simple fact: the NALGO settlement and the London Tube settlement were both reached well after the end of the dock strike. The BR settlement came a month after the high point of the dock strike — the National Port Shop Stewards' attempt to organise an unofficial strike between 10th and 12th June.

When SO supporters have raised these points with some leading Briefing supporters we have been accused of 'insulting' the dockers, as though it was all a matter of not hurting peoples' feelings.

Attempting to put the dock strike into context is no 'insult' to anyone. Militant dockers don't need their egos massaged by Briefing: like serious trade unionists everywhere, they want a realistic assessment of the present state of the class struggle. They certainly won't get that from Briefing's wacky (and ultra-pessimistic) industrial 'analysis'.

LETTERS

Thanks

Thank you to all our supporters! It's been a long time since 31 Lambeth councillors were surcharged and disqualified from office. On 2 April 1986 we left the Town Hall with a fine of £106,000 and legal costs of £70,000. We have already raised over £100,000 to pay for our own costs of fighting our case in the High Court.

It seemed a staggering amount to raise. Yet we knew there was a lot of support for our cause and we set up the Fighting Fund to raise the money.

With your help we have paid off our fine but we still have £45,000 of the Auditor's legal costs to pay.

I am sorry we have not been able to write to all those who have helped individually. I hope you saw our "thank you" advert in Labour Party News — we thought this might reach most people who have helped.

But we owe a particular debt of gratitude to all those who have made regular standing orders for the Fighting Fund. In the end it has been the regular monthly payments that have helped us along the way. We still get around £2,000 every month from standing orders — and we have a monthly bill of £2,800. So far we have been able to make up the difference from donations.

But now we face a further threat. The Auditor is now investigating further "losses" (supposedly the interest lost on the rates not collected). Although the cases

against Southwark and Camden have been dropped, it seems he is going to pursue this "loss" and we may be faced with paying a further, perhaps ever larger, fine.

But we can survive with your continued help.

If you have a standing order —

please keep it going. And if you haven't — can you consider giving one?

Stephen Bubb,
Treasurer,
Lambeth Fighting Fund,
171 Clapham Road,
London SW9 0QE.

We made no threats

We had, and have, no wish to denounce the Iranian comrade concerned to anybody — certainly not for leaving Workers Power and becoming a supporter of Socialist Organiser. That is his political right.

As a member he voluntarily committed himself to observing our constitution which says clearly that Internal Bulletins are and remain the property of the group. Comrades who resign are expected to return them for reasons of security. The need to be protected

from the witch-hunters in the labour movement and the press is dear to us as indeed is the desire not to see harm come to an Iranian leftist. For that reason his branch organiser asked for the return of the originals which he refused to do. Of course we have no sanction against such a comrade except to make clear to other left wingers who know him and us that this constitutes disloyal behaviour. What our organiser said to him was that we would brand him on the British and Iranian left as a thief, a liar and a supporter of a pro-Zionist newspaper.

Dave Stocking
Workers' Power

Reply: Readers can judge the sincerity of this 'explanation' in two ways:

(a) By its glib linkage — which is close to being an equation — of the danger to British socialists from Labour Party witchhunters who expel people from the Labour Party, with the threat Iranian leftists face from the murdering Khomeinist state!

Think about it....It's either a piece of smug little Englandism and Labour Party cretinism or evidence that Stocking et al don't let themselves think too concretely about the realities of Khomeinist "anti-imperialist state". Or it is just empty words.

(b) By the incident 5 years ago, when Workers' Power published documents about the situation in the Labour Party circulated within the, now scattered,

"WSL". It was Labour Party Conference time, and right-wingers like John Golding gleefully showed Workers' Power's middle-page-spread around conference to discredit the left. Later, a WSLer spotted Workers' Power leader D. Hughes on a demonstration, and reprimanded him for their factional irresponsibility. Hughes commented: "That's your problem".

D. Stocking sent us a long letter. The excerpt — which we publish here to give them their right of reply to the serious charge we made against them — is the gist of their reply. The rest is self-indulgent abuse, comparing us to the old WRP, etc, etc. We are not inclined to indulge Stocking. "Thief, a liar..." Yes, and smarmy little hypocrites too.

John O'Mahony

BIGOTS BURN SOCCER HERO'S £1/2m HIDEAWAY



IN HIDING: Mo and girlfriend Karen

DEATH threat soccer star Mo Johnston was in hiding last night after religious bigots caused a blaze at his £500,000 home. A bomb set fire to stables near the luxury mansion after burning straw with petrol.

by TONY GALLAGHER

Investives believe it was part of a hate campaign aimed at driving Johnston away from Glasgow Rangers, where he became the first Catholic to play for Rangers when he transferred for £1.5 million more than the £1 million move was all the more controversial because Johnston was about to be bought by his old club Celtic. The blaze caused £1,000 damage before firemen could bring it under control. A police spokesman said: "It does not take a master mind to work out who was behind this. He made a lot of enemies when he signed for Rangers. Some fans would make life very hard for him."

Hands off Our NHS!

Tear up the White Paper

Saturday October 21

March from St Thomas's Hospital (target for 'opting out'):

Assemble: 4pm Belvedere Rd, London SE1

March: 4.30pm via Waterloo Bridge and Kingsway

Rally: from 6pm, Camden Centre, Bedford Square WC1

Cabaret: 7.30pm, 'Rip it Up!' by Popular Productions (Sheffield).

An opposition to Walesa

Marian Jurozyk leads an opposition group within Solidarnosc. This interview with him is taken from the French socialist weekly *Informations Ouvrieres*.

Solidarnosc was born from the just protests of the workers. It was founded on some fundamental values to which we must be faithful and which we must defend.

"The aim of our struggle is thus to defend the identity of our trade union, the one from 1980-1. That is what the difference between Lech Walesa and Marian Jurozyk is about.

"While we are defending the roots of the trade union, Lech Walesa and small group of advisers, on 17 April, registered a new union, a union which is completely different both formally and legally.

"The people of Poland have made great sacrifices and some have even lost their lives to defend this union. Someone rightly said that a nation which loses its memory loses its life. That is a first, moral, reason for our struggle.

"The second: in the round-table talks and the registration of the new union this year, a clause was introduced which limits the right to strike. I know no trade union in the whole world which renounces the strike weapon. No such union can exist.

"The statutes of the union have been flouted. The rules of the union have been broken. Those are the reasons why there is this opposition between Walesa and Jurozyk."

According to Jurozyk's colleague Stanislaw Kocjan, "We are not in opposition to Walesa personally, but to his methods... The fact that he has nominated the regional presidents of the union, for example, indicates the formation of a new nomenclatura around Walesa".

Informations Ouvrieres reports that there are two main opposition groups in Solidarnosc — the one led by Jurozyk and Kocjan, "mainly based in Szczecin, Lodz, Bydgoszcz and Cracow", and the one led by Andrzej Gwiazda "who is also for a return to the statutes and orientation of the union of 1981, but who has separated from the Jurozyk current because he disagrees with the supposed project of this group (or part of it) to create a Christian confederation in alliance with sectors of the Church".

Informations Ouvrieres says that the 'political physiognomy' of the Jurozyk current is "very markedly right-wing, and very linked to a wing of the Church which wants to see a Christian nationalist party established". But Jurozyk maintains:

"Our trade union had Christian roots, from 1980, and I don't see that that has changed. But if it's a matter of writing into the union rules that Solidarnosc is a Christian trade union, I'm against it, even though I know some people would like it. No one has the right to amend the statutes except a union congress."

On the Mazowiecki government, he says, "We would like to help Mazowiecki, but I don't think he will last long. The spiral of price rises is going to provoke an explosion in the whole country.

"It could be held back if all the independent political forces and formations participated in the government", but in fact, in Jurozyk's eyes, it is narrowly "a government of the left", dominated by people like Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik from the old Workers' Defence Committee (KOR).

Since the 'so-called right-wing organisations' (the nationalist and Catholic parties) are not in the government, "it will not be accepted by the people.

"We would like to help our colleague Mazowiecki but we know that he and his government will not really have power in the Polish People's Republic".



South Africa: De Klerk gambles

Riot police in Cape Town stood by as the statue of South Africa's first president Louis Botha was draped in the Red Flag and the gold, black and green colours of the ANC.

Mass celebration rallies greeted the release this weekend of Walter Sisulu and 7 other long-term political prisoners (7 ANC, 1 Pan-Africanist Congress).

The African National Congress veterans made it immediately clear that they are not going to keep quiet. On their first day of freedom they held a press conference in Soweto. Speaking in front of a huge ANC banner the seven newly-released political prisoners pledged their continued commitment to the struggle and to their banned organisation. They handed the press a joint statement under the ANC emblem.

It seems the ANC has taken further steps along the road of unofficially but effectively 'unbanning' itself.

The release of Nelson Mandela must be relatively close. It seems the regime is now prepared to go this far without a formal renunciation of the armed struggle, or even its suspension on the part of the ANC.

Whether or not the releases are a prelude to serious negotiations between the regime and the ANC is another question.

The state remains strong, the opposition weak and the workers' movement on the retreat. De Klerk should be able to maintain control even with Mandela out of jail and the state of emergency lifted.

The strategy is a gamble — because it could set in motion a new wave of black revolt — but it's a gamble that makes sense for De Klerk who wants to take some of the international heat off his government. For the regime to be

seen to be releasing veteran political prisoners, relaxing the emergency and 'talking about talks' would give it useful political capital. It would make the re-scheduling of Apartheid's huge foreign debt a lot easier and it would postpone the threat of serious US economic sanctions.

Negotiations about the transfer of power to the majority are not yet in sight.

NOLS block loans fight

By Dave Barter, NOLS NC (personal capacity)

An attempt to win the support of Labour Party Conference for action against student loans was blocked last week — by the National Organisation of Labour Student (NOLS)!

In the pre-conference compositing meeting, NOLS refused to composite with a Constituency Labour Party's resolution of support for protests against student loans — on the grounds that it didn't say **official** protests. As no new words can be added to a motion at compositing stage the call for support for student protests was unable to find its way into one of the composite motions put before conference.

NOLS's own motion to conference was not even that decided on by NOLS Conference. NOLS NC — at its only meeting since last Easter! — broke the mandate from Conference to submit a motion in support of unilateralism, deciding instead to suck up to Kinnock with a motion welcoming the education policy review.

At the same time, NOLS representatives — like their NUS counterparts — are now going

round colleges arguing against non-payment of the poll tax — again, in direct contravention to NOLS Conference policy.

These episodes are not simply isolated acts of right wing stupidity form the NOLS 'leaders'. They are more than that — part of an overall strategy of consistent right wing stupidity.

The NOLS NC discussion on 'building NOLS' heard simple explanations for NOLS's drastic decline. 'Labour Clubs are too identified with student politics' (Giles Bridge). NOLS's identity should be not only **independent** of but also **seperate** from the student movement (Simon Buckley).

Their aim is a NOLS organisation that is simply the student wing of the Kinnock/Gould/Mandelsson Labour Party publicity campaign — avoiding even any **involvement** in student struggles and confining Labour Club activity to the most sterile advertising campaign-style pseudo-political posturings.

This scabbing right wing stupidity is a recipe for disaster!

Labour Clubs should be centres of campaigning and of socialist discussion in colleges — seeking to lead student struggles at the same time as linking students to the struggles and actions of the wider labour movement.

The NOLS leaders' 'new realism' (or old fantasy) tells them to subordinate all present struggles —

against loans, poll tax, Tory attacks on trades unions to a 'wait for a Labour Government' approach.

Labour Club activists must tell them: that is not how you win a General Election, let alone build NOLS, beat the Poll Tax or — if you're still allowed to say this in NOLS, fight for socialism.

Just at the time that NOLS should be a vehicle for winning labour movement support for the demands of student struggles and for helping formulate positive student demands on a future Labour Government, NOLS is abandoning both the fight against the Tories and the drawing up of positive alternatives to what the Tories are doing and planning to do.

It is up to Labour Club activists to do the work that NOLS's leaders won't do. It is also up to us to **organise** within NOLS.

At the 'Fight for the Right to Study' conference called by Kent Area NUS on 4th November, Left Unity will be calling a meeting for Labour Club activists to discuss launching a new left-wing network in NOLS.

With NOLS leadership now more right-wing than ever in the past, it is both necessary and possible to build a broader and more effective NOLS left-wing than has previously existed. A good turn-out on November 4th will be the start of that essential work.

Unchain your mind!

WORKERS' LIBERTY

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How do we save our environment?

An open letter to a Green Party supporter

Dear Jean

The Green Party, as its name implies, starts from a feeling that the environment is under attack, that this will have profound effects on the living things that are part of that environment, that these effects will be profoundly harmful to living things (including us) and that this is the fundamental political question of our time.

We, on the other hand, start from the situation that people — the working people of the world and their families — find themselves in. Our 'Where we stand' statement deals entirely with the rights of working people and how they may gain democratic control over their lives.

Though we must agree that logically the environment is fundamental to our well-being — we live in it and are part of it; our livelihoods come from it; and we may be harmed by it — we do not agree that it should therefore be the focus of our activity. (Nor, to be fair, does the Green Party focus

solely on the environment).

Let us therefore look at our different philosophies to see if we can explain the apparent paradox.

The Green Party sees the problem starting (or perhaps suddenly getting worse) with the Industrial Revolution, which they place some 160 years ago. At that time, they claim, there was "every expectation that an increase in material affluence would ease poverty".

For working people then there was every expectation that things would continue to get worse! The picture painted by Friedrich Engels, of the condition of the English working class in 1844 is not a picture of the beneficiaries of increased material affluence but rather of the debased victims of a new system of production.

The Green party calls this system 'industrialism' and they claim that its logic is a 'relentless pursuit of economic growth'. They are correct to observe that this 'industrialism' has wasted and depleted the 'natural resources of a finite world'.

They could go a lot further. It tramples on the rights of people; it steals from them the fruits of their labour; it (or the political systems built to maintain and defend it) has set up or maintained or intensified

all sorts of divisions between people; and it has plunged the world into innumerable bloody conflicts, including two colossal and bestial world wars.

Not for nothing has a slogan of our movement been "Socialism or barbarism".

But what is the motor of this 'industrialism'? And does it always push for economic growth?

It is true that there have been periods of economic growth in the last 160 years, and we are certainly better off than the workers of the early industrial revolution (at least in Britain). But there have also been slumps, when the economy contracted and machinery rusted away, and the many wars have often thrown the economies of the participants (even of the 'winners') back to a lower level.

Has the British economy grown during the Thatcher years? The steelworkers and miners might not think so! And the bureaucratic regimes of the Eastern bloc are in crisis largely because of the chronic stagnation of their 'industrialist' (according to the Green Party label) economies.

I believe the Green Party has been fooled by appearances — and perhaps not even that but by the rhetoric of the political parties and

movements that support the status quo.

There is a rhetoric of economic growth which promises to alleviate poverty by giving more to everyone. That is the argument of the Tories. Working on the same principle as feeding more oats to the horse to provide more pickings for the sparrows in the horse's dung, they shower more money on the rich.

It is also the argument of the reformists in the labour movement, unwilling to alarm the rich by talk of redistribution of wealth.

In contrast to the Green Party's rather superficial approach, we in *Socialist Organiser*, as Marxist socialists, look under the appearances of 'industrialism' and find a system whose motor is the struggle for profit and which we call **capitalism**.

Capitalism is a class system whose under-class, unlike under-classes in previous societies, has the organisation and power, but not yet the will to take control of society and run it in the interests of all. We believe that the socialist society thus established would have to swiftly develop a balance with the environment.

Not understanding the reason for the environmental despoliation of the last 200 years, the Green Party relies on moral arguments and appeals to reason, based on what they incorrectly see as a 'natural' order of things.

Unfortunately, their assertion — their 'Manifesto for a Sustainable Society' (MSS) that the Earth is a "steady state system" and that we, the organisms living on it, are "steady state systems" too, is untrue.

If it were true, we would never die — indeed, we could not be born! And on a world scale, it seems that the climate can change drastically over quite a short period of time without the intervention of humans.

In fact, some climatologists believe that our interference with the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere (leading to a 'greenhouse' effect) is preventing the next ice age which would otherwise be due round about now.

To this 'natural' order, the Green Party counterpose what they call "the traditionalist economic view", which they say holds that society's wants are infinite, that these can be met by making production infinite and that technological solutions alone can solve the problems (including environmental) of such growth.

Now, they won't find many people to actually defend such a crass viewpoint but they will find that many individual capitalist setups seem to work on those sorts of premises!

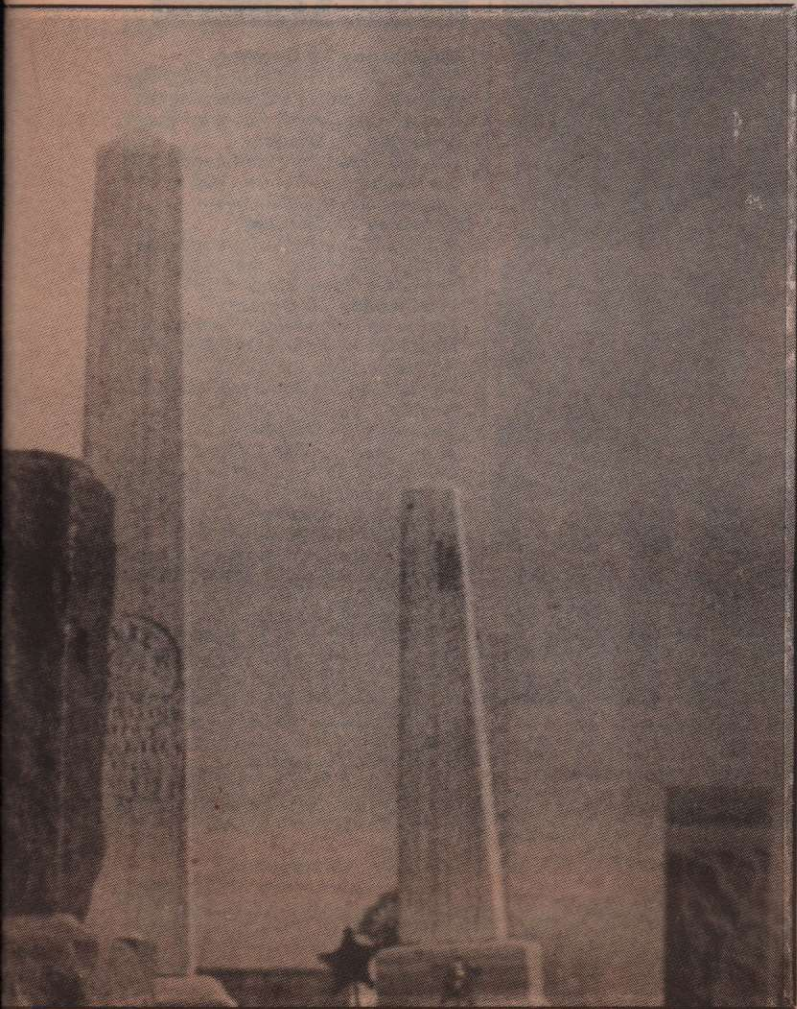
Nevertheless, I think they are incorrect to say that from now on, the main political battles will be between not right and left but supporters of growth and supporters of a steady state economy.

However, here is a point of contact where socialists and environmentalists can and do work together. Resources are finite; capitalism does pour out pollutants which damage our working environment, our living environment, our internal environment, and the natural environment from which we have to draw our livings and from which our descendants will have to draw their livings.

The Green Party's solution is a no-growth economy (though of course there is a lot more to it than that).

We in *Socialist Organiser* should have little problem with this. It has long been accepted by socialists that the means to abolish poverty and inequality exist now, particularly with a redistribution of resources from waste production (arms manufacture being the worst example of this) to health, public transport, genuine aid to Third

and the green



World countries etc.

On many issues, socialists have little disagreement with the Green Party. Eventually, a level of production which is sustainable would have to be established by a socialist society though the steadiness of its state might depend on factors outside our control (like the weather).

We agree on other issues too — nuclear disarmament and withdrawal from NATO are two of the more contentious ones in the Labour Party at present. And their idea of a guaranteed "basic income" has similarities with the socialist goal of "from each according to his/her ability: to each according to his/her need".

Their criticism of the centralised power of the state doesn't go as far as ours, though, because they do not understand its class nature. Their goal of decentralising and spreading political power, putting industry, technology, agriculture and social development in the hands of the people they affect echoes our vision of the withering away of the state, with its powers of repression and coercion, after the replacement of the profit system by a socialist one.

On some other policies of the Green Party, we have not taken such a specific position (eg nuclear power) but there would probably be a fair-sized overlap of opinion on these.

But the enormous question begged by the Green Party in its manifesto is "How?"

What little there is speaks of gradual, piecemeal changes, presumably by a Green Party government. But, as someone once said, "You can't skin a tiger claw by claw" (I apologise for the nature of that analogy!)

There is little about campaigning in MSS, except for a very good conference resolution on fighting the Poll Tax.

There is no understanding shown of the possibility of opposition to the implementation of Green Party policy and yet we constantly find all manner of pressure, verbal and physical, placed on those who seek to interfere with capitalism's (or 'industrialism's') drive to survive. This ranges from hate campaigns against Tony Benn, police violence against the miners, and, as in the case of the Brazilian Chico Mendes, defender of the rubber tappers and of the Amazon forests from which they draw their livelihoods, murder.

The sole Green Party strategy seems to be to win elections, and they are a long way from doing that with their admittedly impressive 15%. After all, the SDP/Liberal Alliance couldn't break through in 1984 with 27%!

I would like to suggest to the Green Party supporters an alternative approach. Join the fight to win the labour movement (Labour Party, trade unions, tenants' groups, action groups around a whole range of issues) for socialist environmentalist policies.

The biggest group of 'green' MPs in Europe is to be found among Labour MPs and MEPs, some 46 of whom are members of the Socialist Environment and Resources association (SERA) (together with a solitary Welsh Nationalist!) many of whom were elected despite challenge by a Green Party candidate.

SERA and other groups, such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, have had quite a success getting environmental issues on to the public agenda and the Green Party has benefited from this. Of course, individual Green Party members have participated in this work.

So I would like to see the Green Party become a socialist green party and help in the struggle to transform the labour movement into a socialist and green movement.

Yours, Les Hearn

The dilemmas of Green politics

By Liz Millward

Green politics is full of interesting dilemmas. Nuclear vs coal power, is one example. Depending on your starting point, you can come up with convincing arguments for either (or rather against the other one). Or take global warming — it's the current 'big fear' of the western world, but a small rise in temperature would allow the USSR to exploit vast new tracts of land for food production.

Or did you know that irrigation can actually be bad for the land? Making the desert bloom can drastically lower the water table and create acute water shortages, cause rivers to silt up and (over time) wash nutrients out of the soil.

When it comes to the environment there are no easy answers.

Having said that, there is much observable damage happening all around us which demands instant and obvious action. Had the political will existed Britain could have introduced lead free petrol 10 years ago, or banned aerosols, both of which steps were taken by the Americans.

It has been obvious to British holiday makers for a long time that the countryside, the coasts, the rivers and the mountains are not what they once were. There have been far too few prosecutions of polluting companies, local amenity managers and water authorities.

Dirt in all its forms — chemical pollution, sewage, litter, industrial and domestic refuse has been spreading for decades and is slowly but surely poisoning our environment. Even leaving questions such as nitrate fertilisers and pesticides aside for those more competent to answer them, the wanton destruction of the countryside, the poisoning of the water supply and the air we breathe are obvious to everyone.

You can see how much destruction has been caused. Take litter. Litter, like the Royal Family, is part of our national heritage. Visit most other European countries and you will see that they are visibly cleaner. But the issue is not so much that we Brits just drop our rubbish and leave it to lie where it falls, but that there is a vast litter creating industry of multinational companies making a fortune out of selling us packaging.

Whether we drop it on the streets or put it in the bin at home all that paper, plastic, tin and expanded polystyrene has to be disposed of somehow. As it is we rape the land for raw materials to make the packaging, then poison it disposing of the waste. The whole process is motivated by profit. The whole process is self-evidently mad!

We currently have the technology to recycle much of our rubbish — tins, paper, plastic and in most cases its cheaper to recycle (in the long run in large quantities) than to get more raw materials. But change on the necessary scale would need

massive investments — and it would lead to a drop in short-term profits.

It would also mean a loss in income for those countries and companies which produce the raw materials. Such steps are not taken lightly by capitalist governments precariously balancing their national import/export figures and their banks' shares in 3rd World debt. Such governments take a very short-term view.

An illustration of this is provided by looking at Britain's consumption of energy. Anyone interested in the environment knows that burning coal helps create acid rain. Therefore we need to clean up our act in coal fired power stations. The technology is available but using it puts up the price of electricity.

Burning fossil fuels also contributes to global warming.

Within this irrational capitalist system, of course socialists back the coal miners in their fight to keep pits open. Though, in a proper socialist world you wouldn't send men to dig in the bowels of the earth for their living.

And of course we can't trust the capitalists or the Stalinists to operate nuclear power safely. But from the point of view of the overall needs and well being of human society the truth is, that coal is bad news for the environment.

Other sources of energy are available and could be safely used under socialist planning.

Hydro-electric power is very 'clean' but it does damage the countryside, sometimes leading to the extinction of plant or animal species. The same is true of tidal barrages. We may not notice the difference but local flora and fauna certainly do, and their disappearance will come to have an effect on us over the years.

The obvious solution is to conserve energy — to simply use less. Most of us agree in principle with that as an idea. But have we the money to pay for it? Given a choice most people would opt for £10,000 off the price of a new house and pay more for heating. Or continue to pay for fuel bills because we haven't got £2,000 for double glazing.

Of course the government could insist by introducing regulations for things like home insulation or most simple, direct and quick by raising energy prices. What government would dare do that? It's far, far easier to keep building new power stations and let someone else worry about the environment.

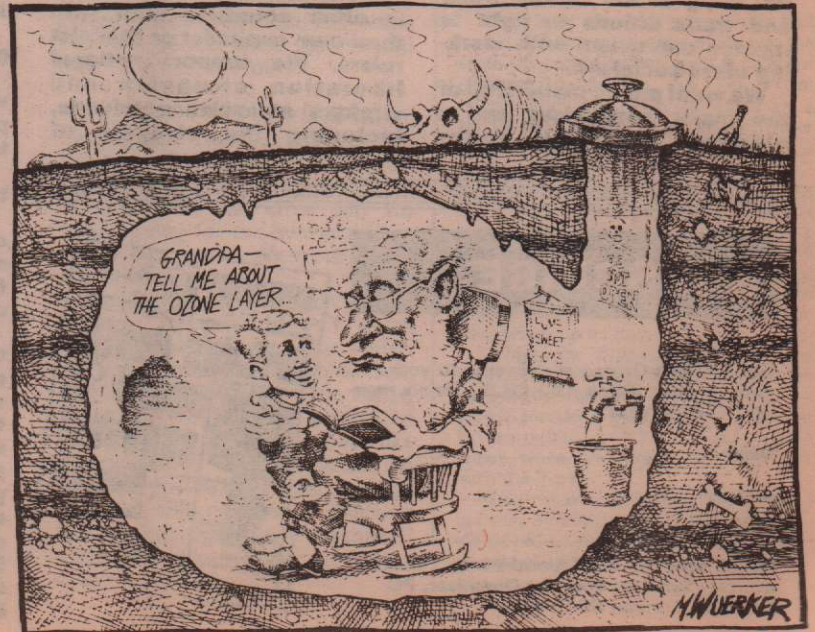
The problems cannot be solved in one financial year. If an economy depends on consistent profits, long term projects like recycling or halting pollution are not on the agenda. Capitalist governments dare not take the political risks associated with protecting the environment — although it must be said that most are prepared to stick their necks out further than Thatcher!

Above all the issue is not a national one. We need internationally co-ordinated long term action. We need to know that what is begun now will not be stopped in 10 years because it is no longer expedient, politically or financially.

But we live in a system where that isn't possible. To hang on to power for another few years the Tories may agree to a few changes and they may be rude to Brazil at the UN. But one nation's government is not pulling all the strings. Until we have a system of rational international planning, the environment will still be the victim everytime someone spots a quick profit.

The ecological crisis facing humankind is one more illustration that the old socialist posing of the alternatives before us is true: it must be either socialism or barbarism.

The answer to the ecological barbarism in which we now live is rational, international working class planning of the economy. That is the answer both to the exploitation of the working class and to the chaos and barbarism endemic to the capitalist way of organising production, and also to the way the ruling bureaucrats in the Stalinist police states run their economies. The ecological crisis is one of the most threatening aspects of this capitalist and Stalinist chaos.



Trade unions in El Salvador struggle for survival

Philip Vine tells of the battle of El Salvador's trade unionists against repression

Part 2 next week

The UNTS is the largest union in El Salvador. Right now it has two desperate struggles on its hands. A struggle to protect its workers interests against an extreme economic package and a struggle for survival in the face of assassinations, disappearances and the imprisonment of its members.

The second is testified to by the double metal doors and line of sandbags at the offices, and the list on the wall of some 50 unionists held in prison, killed or disappeared without trace. Any criticism of the government in El Salvador requires sacrifices activists in other countries wouldn't dream of in their worst nightmares.

Fears that the election of a right wing government in September of last year would bring new levels of repression are proving true. Although ARENA under the presidency of Alfredo Cristiani is making tentative moves towards negotiations with the FMLN guerrillas the popular movements are facing rising levels of military aggression.

Rojas Guillermo executive committee member of UNTS says that although the number of assassinations and imprisonments is not as bad as during the height of the civil war, the frightening thing now is that the forces which persecuted them then, now have complete political control. They have a clear majority in the National Assembly. They are using this control to dismantle popular opposition. "Since the arrival of Cristiani the military has been free to do as it wishes, to capture and torture without fear of punishment.

When asked about specific cases, the names come from Rojas like a roll call. "Jorge Coreus, Oscar

Bolamos, Raphael Zepeda, Juan Francisco Massi, Christia Chan Chan..." and half a dozen more who were all captured in August. Some of them are now in prison and others have 'disappeared'. Despite eye witness accounts of their capture, the security forces refuse to acknowledge their involvement.

It is usual to just categorise these people into statistics. But they are all individuals whose commitment to their principles have led to death or indefinite imprisonment.

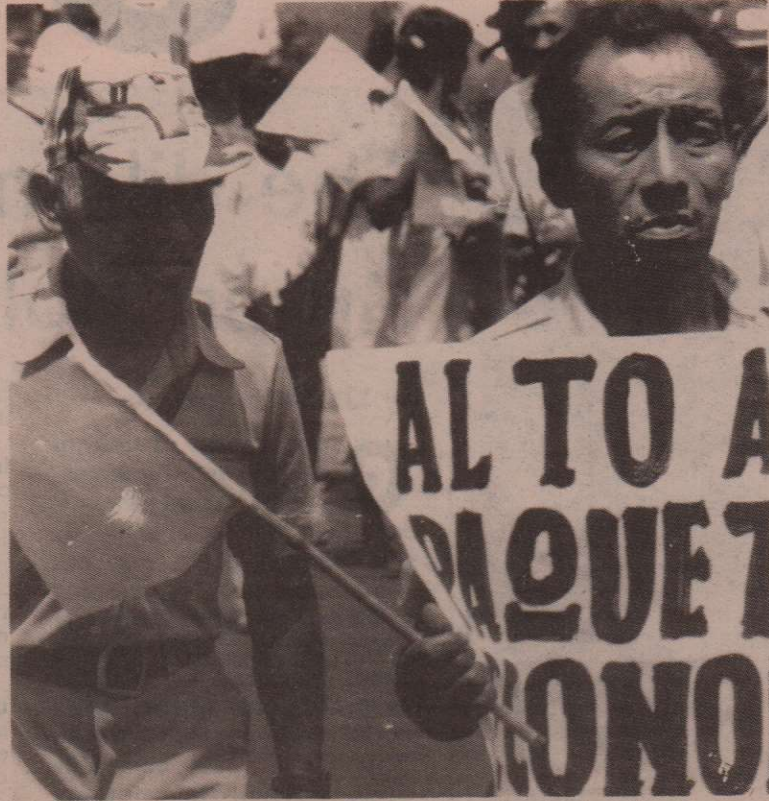
In most cases captured union members and other victims like students, campesinos, and church activists are implicated with the FMLN. If they will not admit the connection, then torture is applied until a confession is gained. The torture varies from electric shocks, cigarette burns and the capuca — a rubber bag with lime placed over the victims head.

UNTS has no affiliation with the FMLN but Rojas says some of the members are also part of the liberation movement. "We have much sympathy with the FMLN but we believe in negotiation as well as the fight, the future lies in both."

Of those names mentioned by Rojas, Juan Francisco and Cristian Chan Chan were the latest disappearances. Francisco was a union leader at the Sindicato Empresa Lida, a private company which manufactures bread, paper and other products. He and Chan Chan a photographer for another union were picked up at 6pm on 19 August according to testimonies of witnesses. The soldiers were members of the FAS a security arm of the air force.

The military has flatly denied any knowledge of the incident. The families of the two, after lodging their cases at the human rights organisations and exhausting every other channel to find out about their unionists, resorted to a direct appeal. They placed advertisements in the daily papers calling on Cristiani and head of the security forces, Emilio Ponce to tell them whether their relatives were alive or dead.

The statistics from the non-government Commission for Human Rights show that 1,100 people have been captured and 145 have disappeared since the beginning of the year. Even if you



September 15 San Salvador. Unionists marching in the rally for peace on Central American Independence Day. An estimated 3,000 people filled the streets of the capital for the demonstration.

use the more conservative figures from the human rights office at the Catholic Church of 105 disappearances and 574 captures the numbers are an indictment of the new government.

The commission says that while the security forces are less blatant than they have been in the past about open assassinations, under ARENA captures and disappearances are on the increase. Spokesman, Reynaldo Blanco believes torture is now being used on most civilians captured and that the methods are becoming more sophisticated.

"The members of the security forces receive special training from the US special forces to learn the latest techniques which leave no signs on the body".

The commission compiles its statistics from testimonies given by family and friends at offices in San Salvador and San Miguel. It also follows up newspaper stories of

killings and captures but the government rarely allows the human rights group into conflict zones.

The union offices and the commission's own premises are frequently searched by the police and army. Sometimes they have warrants, but other times they enter illegally. On September 11 the cavalry regiment of the army forced entry to the offices of the agricultural workers union, ANTMAG, searching and practically destroying the premises. ANTMAG had called a strike of 7,000 workers that week to protest at the disappearance of the union's section director, Jose Antonio Serrano, another name on the list of missing unionists.

There are more than a thousand members in the UNTS. The organisation covers a wide range of workers, students, state and private employees as well as other syndicates and co-operatives.

The union movement in El Salvador grew from the sixties when popular movements and centralist political parties like Duarte's Christian Democrats began to pose a challenge to the oligarchy and the military. This partnership had ruled the country without relief since the time of Farabundo Marti's peasant revolt in 1932.

Unions became a constant target after the civil war started in 1981, but even before then union leaders were singled out by the ultra-right death squads from paramilitary forces like ORDEN and ANSEAL. These death squads were the oligarchy's response to political opposition and were set up with US advice and training in the early 1960s.

Union strength has waxed and waned depending on the level of repression from the right. In El Salvador now only ten to 12 per cent of workers belong to a labour organisation. The thing to note in 1989 is not the absolute measure of repression compared to the past but its complete contradiction with the image of a clean government which Cristiani is selling to the world with some degree of success.

Rojas fears that the new 'anti-terrorist' code being formulated by the ARENA party will lay the groundwork to destroy the union movement.

"These new laws, when passed (the party has a complete majority in the national assembly) will severely impinge on any freedom of association."

ACTIVISTS' DIARY

- Wednesday 18 October**
Cardiff SO: 'After Labour Party Conference'. 7pm The Comet, Moira Street, near Cardiff Royal Infirmary.
- Saturday 21 October**
NALGO Broad Left conference. 11 am Mechanics' Centre, 103 Princess Street, Manchester.
- Saturday 21 October**
Hands off Our NHS! Demonstrate against the White Paper. 4pm Belvedere Road, London SE1.
- Wednesday 25 October**
Forum on Ireland with Patrick Murphy (SO), Redmond O'Neill (LCI) and a speaker from the CPG. 7pm Merseyside TU Resources Centre, Hardman St, Liverpool.
- Saturday 28 October**
Birmingham Trades Council demonstration against the poll tax. 12 am assemble Chamberlin Square.
- Friday 3 November**
History Workshop Conference 1989. Salford University. Contact, Helen Bowyer, 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4UX (061-736 3601)
- Saturday 4 November**
'Fight for the Right to Study! Defend NUS!' Conference organised by Kent Area NUS. PCL, Marylebone Rd, London W1, 11.30. Details: Mark Sandell, Kent Area NUS, 0227 766725
- Monday 6 November**
SO/Socialist Outlook debate: 'The nature of the Soviet Union'. 7.30pm Institute of Education, London WC1
- Saturday 11 November**
Socialist Conference 'Building the Left in the Unions'. Sheffield Poly Student Union, Pond St, 10.30. Credentials £6 waged, £4 unwaged from Socialist Conference, 9 Poland St, London W1
- Friday 17 November**
Labour Youth conference (three days), Bournemouth
- Friday 17 November**
CND annual conference (three days). City University, London EC1. Contact CND, 22-24 Underwood St, London N1 7JG

IRELAND: The Socialist Answer



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Queen of hearts

CINEMA

Belinda Weaver reviews "Queen of Hearts"

Soft centres turn me off, in films as well as in chocolates. "Queen of Hearts" has a very gooey middle to it.

It's a magic realist tale about an Italian family in London's Rotherhithe. It's set in no definable period; the clothes, hairstyles, cars and shopfronts are an eclectic mixture from the fifties to the eighties.

It's definitely retro in its view of the family as the source of all security and happiness.

Seen through the eyes of a ten year old boy, the film charts the family's up and down history, through good times and lean. The lean are represented by the bleak and curiously empty streetscape, while the good are ushered in by two miraculous runs of luck.

Luck is needed, because the family is stalked by a nemesis, Mr Barbariccia, a fellow immigrant who sets out to ruin the family to satisfy a long standing personal vendetta.

Barbariccia isn't terrifying to us; we can see that he's just a thwarted child, crying over a lost toy. But his



Eddie (Ian Hawkes) confronts Barbariccia in his club

shadow looms over the family, almost destroying their happiness. Will he succeed, or will the family win out against him?

I didn't care that much by the end. Partly it was the genre; magic realism doesn't do much for me. It's hard to fret too much for people who call up miracles when things get sticky.

But the sentiment wore me down

as well. I just didn't believe in it. Families aren't treasure houses of love and loyalty so many films try to show. They are also repressive and life denying. Showing families as only good and only loving and only supportive is simply a lie, and one that detracts from enjoyment.

The film had its good moments. The detail, the characters, the sets were all nicely done, and there were

laughs in there as well as easy tears for the soppy bits. The funniest bit came when the family were watching a suspenseful film on TV, and the spoilsport grandmother kept telling everyone what would happen next. It was played straight, not as if it were just a lovable foible.

"Queen of Hearts" was a sweet movie. Nice as sweet things are, they're not all that good for you.

Answering very little

TV

Vicki Morris

Eminent radio journalist Mary Goldring's first foray into TV interviewing foundered a bit when she achieved a rare interview with Rupert Murdoch, the first programme of her 'Answering Back' series.

It was hard to tell who let whom down most — the interviewer or the interviewed.

Mary's questions were searching; but delivered in such a deadpan way, ITV might as well have booked the inquisitive computer from 'Star Test' to do her job.

'Star Test' is a new teenage programme where someone like Luke Goss, alone in a studio gazes into the camera and answers the questions of an unseen computer quizmistress somewhere behind its lens.

Goldring was menacing in the same arch and disembodied way, like there was an unfavourable opinion of Rupert Murdoch somewhere in the studio, but you couldn't be sure it was hers. It also meant that she didn't press for answers from him.

For all he was prepared to let on Rupert Murdoch might have well been answering the Standard Star Test questions like "Do you have any nicknames?". Answer: Yes "The Dirty Digger".

Perhaps Goldring's intention was to reveal Murdoch — the Slippery. As a personality he can be polite and innocuous as your greengrocer; as your boss or business rival he is reptilian and ruthless.

In that case the programme worked. Murdoch came across as boring, mild-mannered and circumspect. Confessing to being a reformed student radical, an unlikely cliché for the man who now claims to be shaking up the Establishment on behalf of the young talents stifled by legislation, restrictive practices and class bias throughout the land.

From time to time we caught glimpses of the real Rupert: what would you do, Goldring asked, if the editor of the Times Times came to you one day and said he'd come to the conclusion that Neil Kinnock would make a better Prime Minister than Margaret Thatcher?

"I'd send him for psychiatric testing at once!" Guffaw! replied Murdoch. But seriously folks... and then he gave his circumspect answer.

The apparent flexing of reactionary muscles, however, and the soft smiles habitually concealing the monster beneath, seemed to be part of the same act.

Rupert Murdoch treads softly. To what purpose? Perhaps he genuinely wants to be respected for what he is trying to do, the "innovations and pioneering spirit" he brings to the media.

Or perhaps he is just greedy. He has to butter people up so that they won't put additional barriers in the way to his Empire — he already faces barriers like the enormous debts he owes and the challenge of making 'Sky' TV profitable.

Well, long after this programme had ended, I didn't much care which was the truth. Rupert Murdoch, even if he is not personally odious, is far from charismatic. And, after all, there are a lot of people who have done in other areas of the economy what Murdoch is trying to do in the media.

I don't think this series is going to work with guests like Rupert Murdoch and sundry politicians — next week's guest is health Secretary, Kenneth Clark — who seldom tell the truth and an interviewer who doesn't seem to try very hard to make them tell the truth or show themselves up as liars.

I think the British public have the measure of men like Murdoch, and of the government they bolster. I can't be sure if Murdoch has the measure of the British public, or if he is in for a nasty shock when his British ventures sink with the Tories.

When we are celebrating that victory I am sure we will hardly notice it as he has slunk off to sing his fingers and bore people elsewhere.

The savant James

By Frank Higgins

live James is a very witty man. Too modish by far, and too given to playing the ex-colonial intellectual arriviste with the exuberant, unselfconscious glee of the pig in a mud pond.

And he drools and slobbers too much over women, in print and on TV — did you see him with poor Jane Fonda recently? Hanoi Jane meets Frankenstein's colonial kid brother, the one with the libido problem.

He is all of that, but funny with it too. He can write, and sometimes he has interesting things to say. Predictable things from a hard-nosed liberal point of view, but well

said. Sometimes you catch the echoes of a one-time leftist in what he says, and he claims he was a "revolutionary socialist" long ago.

He is also a Yukkie sychophant who published a booklet of verse about...Prince Charles! He is the knock-down-and-drag-out professional polemicist, who did perhaps the most vicious of the hatchet jobs on Labour leader M. Foot in the run up to the 1983 General Election.

Last Sunday he published a big article in the Observer, in which he defended the status quo in TV and broadcasting, and attacked the Tory plans to Americanise British TV — that is, turn it over to unbridled money-grubbing and the free play of market forces.

He savaged the Tories and the Murdochites very effectively. He

also tried to savage the left.

Who do you think is to blame for the attacks which now threaten to destroy the — in world terms — comparatively high standards of British TV? The Tories? The plunder hungry Goths and vandals at whose head stand creatures like Rupert Murdoch? Well, yes. Of course they are to blame now.

But who do you think undermined the foundations of British broadcasting and TV, prepared the way for the Thatchers and the Murdochs? The left! The left — people like the late Raymond Williams — sniped away for years, says Clever Clive, denouncing broadcasting's link with the establishment and its consequent bias. And what did that lead to? Murdoch and Thatcher!



Old Lem

A black man of the old Jim Crow South speaks. By Sterling Brown

I talked to old Lem
And old Lem said:

'They weigh the cotton
They store the corn
We only good enough
To work the rows;
They run the commissary
They keep the books
We gotta be grateful
For being cheated;
Whippersnapper clerks
Call us out of our name
We go to say mister
To spindling boys
They make our figgers
Turn somersets

We buck in the middle
Say, "Thankyuh, sah."

*They don't come be ones
They don't come be twos
But they come by tens.*

'They got the judges
They got the lawyers
They got the jury-rolls
They got the law

They don't come by ones

They got the sheriffs
They got the deputies

They don't come by twos

The got the shotguns
They got the rope
We git the justice
In the end

And they come be tens.

'Their fists stay closed
Their eyes look straight
Our hands stay open
Our eyes must fall

They don't come be ones

They got the manhood
They got the courage

They don't come by twos

We got to slink around,
Hangtailed hounds.

* They burn us when we dogs
They burn us when we men
They come by tens...

'I had a buddy

Six foot of man
Muscled up perfect
Game to the heart

They don't come by ones

Outworked and outfought
Any man or two men

They don't come be twos

He spoke out of turn
At the commissary
They gave him a day
To git out the county
He didn't take it.

He said 'Come and get me.'
They came and got him.

And they come by tens.

He stayed in the county —
He lays there dead.

They don't come by ones

*They don't come by twos
But they come by tens.'*

What Trotsky really said about the USSR

Laurens Otter replies
to Duncan Chapple

By the very march of events this question is now posed very concretely. The Second World War has begun. It attests incontrovertibly to the fact that society can no longer live on the basis of capitalism. Thereby it subjects the proletariat to a new and perhaps decisive test.

"If this war provokes, as we firmly believe a proletarian revolution, it must inevitably lead to the overthrow of the bureaucracy in the USSR... In that case the question as to whether the Stalinist bureaucracy was a 'class' or a growth on the workers' state will be automatically solved..."

"If, however, it is conceded that the present war will provoke not revolution but a decline of the proletariat, then there remains another alternative..."

"The historic alternative, carried to the end is as follows: either the Stalin regime is an abhorrent relapse in the process of transforming bourgeois society into a socialist society, or the Stalin regime is the first stage of a new exploiting society. If the second prognosis proves to be correct, then, of course the bureaucracy will become a new exploitative class". (Extracts from *'The USSR in War': 'The present war and the fate of modern society'* New International 1938, available as pages 10 & 11 of *'In Defence of Marxism'*).

The passages omitted arguably paint a bleaker picture of what would happen if there were no world revolution at the end of the war, than did in fact happen. But 50 odd years after Trotsky wrote that, there can be no doubt that at the end of the war there was no world revolution that swept away the Stalinist bureaucracy — though there was an extension of the area of Stalinism, the product not of proletarian revolutions but of peasant armies or Russian troops.

Cde. Chapple claims that Trotsky did not say that if there were no world revolution then the bureaucracy would have become a new exploiting class. For him Trotsky only thought "the war could lead to revolution". He is obviously right in saying "but he stressed that revolution is conditional on the strength of the workers". But Trotsky's passage: "The inability of the proletariat to take into its hands the leadership of society could actually lead under these conditions to the growth of a new exploiting class from the Bonapartist fascist bureaucracy" — hardly proves his case.

"A quarter of a century proved too brief a span for the revolutionary re-arming of the world proletarian vanguard and too long a period for preserving the Soviet system intact in an isolated backward country..."

"If contrary to all probabilities the October Revolution fails during the course of the present war, or immediately thereafter, to find its continuation in any of the advanced countries: and if, on the contrary, the proletariat is thrown back everywhere and on all fronts — then we should doubtless have to pose the question of revising our conception of the present epoch and its driving forces... Have we entered the epoch of social revolution and socialist society, or



Trotsky in 1933 with left oppositionists

on the contrary the epoch of the declining society of totalitarian bureaucracy". (Ibid. foot of page 17 ff)

I fear it is Cde. Chapple, not I, that distorts Trotsky. Moreover when he says: "if a wrong prediction means you have to junk one of Trotsky's theories, why not junk the rest?" he ignores the fact that it was Trotsky, not I, who said that if revolution did not happen within a generation (of the writing of the *Revolution Betrayed*) then this theory must be thrown in the dustbin of history. So, comrade, it is you who have junked one of Trotsky's theories — your own question rebounds on you.

(Certainly for me the matter is different — I am a Rosmerite, ie an anarcho-syndicalist who despite basic differences in fundamental conceptions with Trotsky, nevertheless sees great merit both in the bulk of his actions out of power and in his theoretical method. Like Rosmer before me, I am continuously asked by anarcho-syndicalist comrades, why I have not junked the whole of Trotsky?)

Cde. Chapple thinks it is dishonest to quote Lenin, (it wasn't actually one quote, it was a phrase Lenin used very often), to show that the term a 'workers state' was in fact a short hand for a workers' state capitalism. Presumably that is because he quite rightly noticed that Lenin was using the term state capitalism in rather a different way from — say — Tony Cliff; and he failed to notice that the part of the phrase I stressed was **workers' dominated**. That is, that the term workers' state (as a short hand) was used by Lenin — not I agree,

necessarily by Trotsky — to denote a society in which despite the economic basis political power was exercised by the proletariat.

Even Trotsky said: "The statification of the means of production is, as we said, a progressive measure. But its progressiveness is relative; its specific weight depends on the sum total of all the other factors" (*ibid* pp 23) — which shows that he did not agree with Chapple that "so long as they were under the control of the state it would not mean a return to capitalist power".

But Cde. Chapple is here more markedly mistaken. Lenin did not mean by state capitalist merely "using some capitalist methods", he meant the fact that 85% of all property was at the time still in capitalist hands, and only through state intervention was it possible to prevent unrestricted capitalism operating. Being a Marxist and therefore believing that the state represented the interests of the dominant class, he recognised that a state in such a society has to be a capitalist state. (Cde Chapple evidently thinks it is one of his virtues that he has never read anything by the reformist, Lassalle. But considering that Marx held that the particular document was essential reading for any socialist, the virtue is less than evident).

It was this fact (the 85% of the economy in capitalist hands at Lenin's death) that occasioned the first article (by Simone Weil) in *Revolution Proletarienne* sketching out the theory of bureaucratic collectivism.

During Stalin's 'Third Period' the bulk of this was taken into state ownership. Consequently, if one

believes — with Cde. Chapple — that state control is the sole criterion, one has then to believe that Stalin in 1929-33 made a revolution, — albeit in a brutal and barbaric way. When people who had admired Trotsky, — as well as many who had until 1923 been left critics of Trotsky — said that for all the fact he had a courageous revolutionary past, was urbane, humane and a notable Marxist thinker, Trotsky was nevertheless now an 'objectively counter-revolutionary' they meant just that: Stalin was objectively — though not subjectively — a revolutionary and so Trotsky was...

Precisely because the state capitalism analysed by Lenin was being abolished at the very time that all the elements of workers' autonomous power were being crushed, and when tens of thousands of good revolutionaries were being executed, it was necessary to find a new term, distinguishing what existed from what Lenin had described.

Trotsky certainly opposed the belief that the bureaucracy was already a class and at first that it ever could be. Note incidentally how his theories developed, as one would expect those of any dialectician to do.

In 1923-4 he was still opposed to the formation of factions within the communist party, backing the 1921 ban on factions. The communist party world wide was identified with the revolution.

In 1928-9 (when he was exiled) he decided that factions were necessary, but still was opposed to permitting any other soviet parties, let alone to trying to form such; he insisted that Russia needed to be

reformed but denied emphatically that this amounted to any form of revolution.

In 1933-34 (after Hitler's accession to power) he came to believe in revolution — albeit political revolution — in the Soviet Union, and the need for new revolutionary parties on a world scale. He then denied that it was possible that there could be a bureaucratic collectivist ruling class.

In 1938-39 (after the purges/Moscow Trials, the betrayals of Spain) he conceded the theoretical possibility of a new class rule; though insisting that it was a premature analysis.

What would he have said after the Third International was wound up?

Would he really fifty years later still be saying exactly the same as in 1938, and not — as he did on earlier occasions — allow the realities of the world around him to influence his thinking, and see a need to modify his analysis?

Obviously Cde. Chapple has less respect for Trotsky as a theorist than I have. Incidentally I must apologise to Cde. Chapple for being 'a bloody foreigner', I didn't notice that I had lapsed into my native language — which I now speak rather badly — but I may have done; to Cde Chapple and any other British chauvinists I duly and humbly apologise. (I suppose he was referring to discussion of Thermidor, a fairly frequent aspect of Trotsky's theories). He says he has never called himself orthodox, implying that no other Trotskyist does. Experience over forty years, of Trotskyists in four countries, tells me differently.

Tory God turns against them

WHETTON'S WEEK

A miner's diary



Thatcher was promising that everything was okay and the economy was going from strength to strength. Lawson had taken some unpleasant measures, but everything was okay. Then came the stock market crash.

The Tory god of market forces can work against them as well as for them. How many folks are thinking that the Prime Minister and Chancellor have made fools or liars of themselves? How many young couples are realising they will lose their homes, unable to pay their mortgages? How many pensioners are dreading the winter? How many workers who voted Tory have seen the steady progress they thought they were making eroded overnight?

Labour should go on the offen-

sive with an all-out attack on the government — it should be a non-stop attack to the general election.

The Tories have tried to turn the limelight away from the economy with the usual hang 'em, flog 'em brigade talk of making wildcat strikes illegal.

I've heard all this before — the last time they made strikes illegal in this country was under Order 1305 during the war. In actual fact, strikes escalated instead of going down. They're treading a very dangerous tightrope if they talk about making strikes illegal.

It's ironic that it's easier to go on strike now in Poland than it is in this country. To take the limelight off the economic situation there will be more and more finger-pointing at trade unionists and all sorts of groups of people.

In the pit, more people were discussing Tory Party conference

than Labour Party conference. All those Tories talking with their mouths full of prunes and their nose up in the air really did offend a lot of people. Just the posturing of offended people.

British Coal are refusing to talk to us on our pay claim. We need to find out whether they intend imposing a second-year pay rise on us for last year's UDM negotiated deal. Or are they going to speak to us?

We've picked our annual holidays and will submit them to the Board and they've already warned us they will not accept the usual pattern of holidays. They're going to introduce flexi-holidays. It looks as though lines are being drawn. I believe this is true in every pit. We shall continue to push our holidays as we have done every year since 1974.

It will be interesting to see the UDM's reaction to an imposed pay

rise, when they've seen other groups of traditionally 'non-militant' workers all of sudden taking pay rises in excess of what they've been offered.

It's still a slow hard slog against the UDM. Sooner or later the dam will crack and the UDM will collapse. But I don't know when. People are keeping their heads down.

Nottingham Trades Council called a meeting to organise protection for victimised workers. Other trades councils or Labour parties should think about doing the same. We're going to get hammered, whether it's by Thatcher's laws under Thatcher or Thatcher's laws under Kinnock. It's going to get worse before it gets better. We must prepare for this rather than just react after the event.

Paul Whetton is a member of Manton NUM.

Islington CDC strike

With chants of "Margaret Hodge, what's the difference? Not a lot!" Islington Council's 'caring' leader was given a rough ride by 150 angry parents who lobbied the Labour Group last Monday. The parents' campaign were showing their support for the 150 child care workers the council

has locked-out.

The borough's 13 nurseries are closed, on the council's insistence. The managers are still suspended for refusing to admit extra children in breach of safety guidelines. And 150 staff are now in their second week of all-out strike action to support their colleagues.

Faced with this the council is still barely prepared to negotiate. A meeting last week pushed them to slightly alter their proposals and come clean about

the number of extra children that they want to squeeze into the centres. It adds up after various fiddles have been eliminated to an extra 27% but the same number of workers.

Not content with sitting back and making hundreds of parents' children and workers suffer the council has decided to insult them too.

A council press release not only attacks 'callous' workers but also 'greedy' parents who are supposed to be hitting the children of other parents getting their children into the centres... This ludicrous reply shows how scared and angry the council is of being made to look silly by a successful joint campaign between workers and parents and the support that parents with children on the waiting lists are giving to the action too!

With only £50 per week national strike pay the CDC workers, many of them single parents and already low paid, desperately need support from other trade unionists.

Messages of support, donations and speakers from Islington NALGO CDC workers c/o 2 Orlestone Rod London N7. 01-354 7470.

One-day strike at Vauxhall

Vauxhall remains the only major car producer in Britain which has not yet introduced 'Japanese' style working practices.

Such practices often called Quality Circles, involve organising the workforce into teams who will oversee and improve their own work, their reward being a feeling of identity and pride in the product. In short, quality circles means getting the workers to think up ways of improving productivity, turning a 4 person job into a 3 person job, undermining workers' solidarity in the plant and undermining the union.

When Vauxhall unions put this year's pay claim to management they were met with a counter-document ironically entitled "Meeting the Challenge", demanding the introduction of quality circles.

If the unions agreed they could then go on to discuss issues such as pay, paternity leave and creche facilities which make up the union's claim.

Unions representing workers at Ellesmere Port, Luton and the Parts Division responded by calling a one-day protest strike on 6 October as a warning to the bosses that they will not be bullied into accepting what amounts to a union-bashing agreement.

Two years ago management delayed the pay rise for 6 months; no doubt they will try delaying tactics this year too so come next spring workers will accept "Meeting the Challenge" simply to get the pay rise in their pockets.

The unions, aware of this tactic, in calling the strike have sent a clear message to management that they demand concessions at the next meeting on 16 October.

Battle at Tilbury

The fight at Tilbury continues for the reinstatement of all the shop stewards and 140 other dockers sacked during this summer's strike.

Management are on the offensive at the port. As the local T&G newspaper Tideway explains:

"The management are calling groups of dockers together to talk issues through as a team. Odd sorts of committees are being set up with no properly elected Union Stewards present. Dockers are being ordered to do a variety of jobs they previously didn't do. Extensive hours of work are now necessary due to job cuts. Wage cuts have been imposed and then a subsequent improvement seems to be a victory, while Health and Safety standards deteriorate with no Union Safety Reps. Actions by the Port that could never have been im-

posed in the past, are now being imposed."

The port employers are attempting to create a 'flexible' workforce and undermine union organisation through various 'employee involvement' schemes such as team briefings and quality circles.

But the T&G is fighting back. As Tideway advises:

"Quality circles: Make them a negotiating meeting (ie make demands) not a discussion. They are usually then abandoned. Team briefing: ask only one question. "When will you recognise our Trade Union?"

The T&G has set up a special hardship fund for the victimised Tilbury dockers.

Checks to be made payable to: TGWU strike fund. And sent to: Ken Reid, Regional Secretary, T&G, 218 Green Lanes, N4 2HB.

Dagenham threat

Ford Dagenham to shut! 13,000 Ford workers to be sacked, thousands more to lose their jobs in related industries. Well over £1 billion per year of manufacturing output to be lost. A nightmare. No, only a too real possibility.

In the latest round of plant modernisation, Ford has missed out Dagenham. For example every other assembly plant in Europe is to have very expensive body-making machinery installed, except for Dagenham. Already Ford has switched car production from the plant so that it now only makes one model. Dagenham has suffered years of

under investment and to be left out yet again means that it is becoming increasingly obsolete in European terms. All this at a time when Ford Europe is making the bulk of its profits from the UK market.

Of course all this could be leading up to blackmail on a grand scale. For years Ford has been playing one plant off against another, threatening to move production if workers don't give in to the company's demands. Just recently using the same tactics Ford forced workers in Belgium to accept Sunday working and radical changes in shift patterns.

It was the Catholic Church which put the biggest fight against the changes not the workers.

What is urgently needed is for all the

unions across Ford Europe to co-ordinate and fight the company as a block rather than be picked off one by one. It is hoped that later this year that a meeting of European Union officials will take place in London. We can hope that it is only a matter of time before rank and file links are made between all Ford plants. Increasingly not only at Ford, but in all major companies, the age-old cry of workers unity will have to be transformed into a concrete reality as the European free market comes into being.

Poll tax conference amendments

POLL TAX

The draft 'constitution' and 'statement of aims' produced by Militant supporters for the national poll tax conference on 25th November are disappointing to say the least.

We urge supporters to put forward the following amendments. Of particular importance is the final amendment which takes out the clause in Militant's constitution which gives almost unlimited power to the officers.

Amendment to Statement of Aims

Replace b/ by:

To prevent a campaign in Britain for:
— mass non-payment by communities;
— councils to refuse to penalise those who do not pay or do not register; non-

implementation by councils, and a struggle by those councils together with the local community and trade unions for more money from central government;

— trade unions to support their members in refusing to collect the poll tax or to accept deductions from wages to pay poll tax arrears.

Amendment to Draft Constitution Under 3/a/ after 'labour movement bodies' add "(including Labour Parties)".

Delete 4/e/.

Under "Officers and National Committee", delete all and replace by:

"The National Committee shall be elected by conference, in regional sections. Each region's representation shall be four from community anti-poll tax groups, two from trade unions, and two from Labour Parties and youth and student groups.

The National Committee shall elect officers and a smaller executive committee to deal with day to day business. The executive committee shall have at least eight members, including four from community anti-poll-tax groups, two from trade unions and two from Labour Parties and youth and student groups".

Death protest strike

Since 1979 over 1500 building workers have been killed in accidents, murdered by greedy bosses who cut corners on health and safety to save money and line their own pockets. In London alone there were 36 deaths from construction accidents between April 1987 and March 1988.

One week ago, Canary Wharf site worker Stephen Reilly, fell 60 foot to his death. Tools on the site were immediately downed as steel erectors ended work for the day out of respect for their dead comrade.

This tragic incident, and others like it has led London rank and file steel erectors' leaders to call for a half-day stoppage on Thursday 20th October. Strikers will give support to the construction safety campaign's lobby of Parliament on that day. The campaign

itself will be welcomed by building workers who every day risk possible death on building sites.

Like the London steel erectors recent successful strikes over pay, the strike on Thursday will be unofficial. Such strikes will be outlawed and workers taking part in them open to victimisation if Fowler and the Tories push through legislation to prevent unofficial action.

Keep death off building sites!
Lobby of Parliament
Thursday 19 October
3pm-6pm
Starts with meeting in Grand Central Committee room
Called by the Construction Safety Campaign

IN BRIEF

The college lecturers union NATFHE staged its first ever national strike on Tuesday October 17.

The latest Equal Opportunities Commission report shows the gap between men and women's pay at its widest since the Equal Pay Act of 1975 came into force. This is largely because of women workers' continued concentration in part-time and low-paid jobs.

The AUT are drawing up plans for industrial action in support of their 27% pay claim for 1990-1991. They are also worried about government plans to break up national bargaining.

Daily and Sunday Telegraph bosses have withdrawn their threat to cut 13 NUJ jobs after a 36-hour walk-out by journalists on the two papers.

NUPE officials in North Manchester have received copies of a secret document outlining plans to sell off 4 hospitals in the area which would lead to substantial job losses.

Offshore catering workers who threatened prolonged strike action on North Sea oil rigs have won their demand for a 14% pay rise, together with union recognition and negotiating rights.

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Fight for the right to study!

By Emma Colyer NUS Exec, Left Unity Convenor

From the number of times that the Tories use words like 'freedom' and 'choice', you'd find it hard to believe that this is the same Tory party which has been running our education system into the ground over the last ten years.

The Tories idea of freedom has nothing to do with real freedom. When they blabber about freedom what they mean is — freedom to exploit and subjugate people. The true symbol of Tory freedom is the Stock Market, the same Stock Market which this week once again came close to spiralling the world economy into a 1930s-style collapse. This is the freedom which most concerns the Tories.

'Free' it may be for the rich who gamble with the lives of millions of workers to rake in massive gains. But for the working class the 'freedom' to be a plaything, the 'freedom' to be a wage slave — that is no freedom at all.

But this is now the freedom the Tories offer in education. They plan a system where business is free to produce the right sort of product, that is, the right sort of student, out of an education system in which 'education' is for most people nothing more than cheap training.

Young people have already seen the Tories' idea of freedom and choice. If you are between 16 and 19 now, you have the 'choice' of either going on a cheap-rate YTS — sweeping-up-floors scheme — or living off your parents for two years

while you study. If you can't support yourself the choice is either YTS or some really crappy job (if you can get it).

The Tories intend a complete transformation of our education system.

The introduction of loans is central to the Tories' plans for education. It will mean that the 'choice' of higher education will come with a massive price tag attached. Even before the loans are started, the Tories have made it clear that they intend to introduce fees, showing that the loans system opens the way for full cost education fees.

Full cost fees would be between £5,000 and £7,000 a year, making the cost of a degree in the region of £25,000. How many students currently in higher education could afford to take on a loan of that size?

For working class students, for women, for racial minorities, for disabled and mature students, this would present a complete bar to higher education. It will mean that those at present least represented in higher education will be squeezed out of it altogether.

It will mean that potential students will first have to prove their credit worthiness. Students will get a loan or have it refused according to the earning power of their desired qualification. The 'free market' will define its needs, and education will be tailored to supply it.

Gone will be any idea that education is to enlighten or inform, let alone teach mind-broadening criticism. Gone too will be any idea that the student's needs and interests matter. When two freedoms clash — that of students and that of big business — the Tories know which freedom, and whose freedom, they are for.

Loans are not just the cutting edge of the Tories' plans in higher education, they are at the forefront of the Tories' attack on the whole education system.

The Tories have already given themselves the powers they need to transform education in the Education Reform Act, but they need to push through their ideas as a whole new concept, a new view. They need to batter down the growing opposition to their plans.

Loans are the ideological spearhead of this drive.

A loans system will be connected to a system of fees. Students will be barred from benefits. The Poll Tax will impoverish students and squeeze local government funding of education. This malign package will mark a major victory for the Tories in education. If we let it happen it will firmly close the door on



No solidarity for Chinese students

Open letter to Maeve Sherlock

President NUS



Emma Colyer

So, Maeve, you still don't support the Chinese Solidarity Campaign? At Labour Party Conference you refused even to sign our petition.

I suppose that when the campaign was first set up you had a fairly reasonable excuse for hanging back. Anyway, you had an NUS soft left tradition to keep up!

And what about Poland? You people were still talking to the state created, state sponsored students union in Poland while the troops of that same state were putting down Solidarnosc's strikes, and an independent student union was struggling to be born.

Only after the big struggles were over did you condescend to 'recognise' the free Polish student union, the NZS.

Presumably you are still meeting the East German 'official' unions and commiserating with them about the people who are leaving for the West? And when the East German people organise themselves into unions and trade unions — as they will for certain! — won't you spread stories about how they are 'dominated by the Catholic — or the Lutheran — church' even as they fight with the riot police? That's what you did about Solidarnosc.

"But", I hear you say, "what about our work on South Africa? We have mobilised the student movement behind the people's struggle for liberation. Obviously we only support the genuine representative of the South African people which is the ANC, but we have done a lot of good solidarity work".

That's true Maeve, NUS's work in supporting the ANC has been tremendous. But NUS's work in supporting the democratic emerging trade union movement hasn't been so hot, has it? The ANC didn't like those unions so neither did you. Remember?

When Moses Myekiso was on trial for his life NUS told people not to demonstrate for his release. Remember.

Of course, once the issue wasn't so politically hot, NUS supported his wife's speaking tour of Britain — 2 years later. The ANC and the trade unions had made a kind of peace by then so there was no need to make a political judgement about the situation.

Better late than never — but Maeve, it would have been better still if you'd helped Moses while he was fighting for his life.

And now we come to the present day, and China. NUS once more suspends judgement. NUS once more takes a back seat, refusing to throw its weight behind the political struggle at home and abroad.

This time, Maeve, the responsibility is wholly yours. You are not just one democratic left supporter on a DL dominated executive, you are President. Admittedly you've lost your majority, but when it comes to the vote you can always rely on the left's support.

We've, on the other hand have always been absolutely consistent. We always vote for solidarity action for international struggles.

We always go to picket overseas embassies when the army is piling in to shoot trade unionists.

Left Unity Meeting 'Fight for the Right to Study'

Speakers include: (personal capacity)

Ian Sutton — Welfare Officer UMIST

Maurice O'Reilly — Newcastle Poly work-in

Janine Booth — MANUS convenor

Jim Bailey — Education Officer UMIST

Emma Colyer — NUS NEC, Left Unity Co-Convenor

At: The Green Room, Whitworth St West (not far from the coach park) immediately after the rally.

grants for students in further education. Tories' plans to restructure the whole education system will have taken a giant step forward.

The student movement must face up to this challenge. We must reinvigorate our movement. We must fight off the Tory attack on education. We must combat the whole project of the Tories.

For too long now the student movement has allowed the agenda to be set simply by the day to day defensive battles to fight off Tory attacks.

The battle against loans is not merely a battle to stop our incomes being cut, yet again. It is a battle for education. It is not only a battle for us ourselves now, but a battle for future generations of students who will have to live with the new Tory education system — if we let them install it.

We should approach our task not only armed with an understanding of the aims of the Tories, but with a clear alternative of our own — a radical programme for what education should be, and clear demands around which to organise students to fight to achieve it. In short, we need to meet the fundamental attack on education contained in the

loans proposals with a new agenda for education.

This new agenda for education can only be built as part of the living struggles against loans and the Poll Tax, by those involved in those struggles, who have a real understanding of the principles and practicalities of a truly open and enlightened education system.

The fusing of the biggest possible mobilisation of students in action against loans with the collective working out of a new positive agenda for education can defeat loans, and in alliance with the labour movement win us a truly open education system.

To the Tories, who have been glorying in their 10th year of vicious ruling class attacks on working people we must say: "Enough. We are tired of your phoney 'freedoms', your 'choices' — 'freedoms and choices' for the rich".

The student movement must turn round the Tory attacks on us and fight for real freedoms and real choices in education. Now more than ever before the student movement — and the labour movement — must mobilise in every part of the country to Fight for the Right to Study.

Kent Area NUS Activist Conference

How to fight loans
4 November at Poly of Central London (Marylebone Rod site)

For more details contact:
Kent Area NUS, c/o Students Union UKC, Canterbury

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