

# SOCIALIST

## ORGANISER

**The left  
must fight  
anti-  
semitism!**

**See page 3**

# Israel out of the West



Palestinian victim of Israeli  
gunman

# Bank and Gaza!



**By Sam Eaton**

**O**utrage at the cold-blooded murder of seven Palestinians by an Israeli gunman has resulted in the fiercest fighting in many months, in Israel, in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, and in neighbouring Jordan.

Some of the heaviest fighting took place in Nazareth, a mainly-Arab town within the 1967 borders of Israel itself. Israeli Arabs have supported the uprising, or *intifada*, against Israeli occupation since it started at the end of 1987, but this week has seen the angriest and most violent mobilisations by them so far.

In Jordan, an unemployed Palestinian refugee opened fire on a bus full of French tourists. Meanwhile nine Palestinians were shot dead by Israeli soldiers, in the heaviest repression of the last year or so.

The storm clouds are gathering for a deeper crisis in the Middle East conflict. The *intifada* has proved impossible to defeat; but after two and a half years, it still looks a long way off victory. This week's fighting is a reflection of deep frustration and bitterness among the Palestinians. After all the blood

they have shed, Israel is no nearer a political settlement.

The gunman responsible for the weekend's murders has been dismissed by Israeli caretaker Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir as an isolated lunatic. But many Palestinians feel that he was doing no more than putting into action the dreams of many Israelis.

And now Israel faces unprecedented resistance from its "own" Arabs. As a result of immobility on the question of peace, the coalition government collapsed earlier this year, but Labour was unable to form a government; power still lies with the most hawkish of the major parties, Shamir's Likud.

'Security' reasons for hanging on to the occupied territories have been given an extra boost over recent months by the bloodcurdling propaganda of the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, which has threatened to use chemical weapons against Israeli cities. Instruction in the use of gas masks is now on the curriculum of Israeli schools.

There may be a very real threat of war in the Middle East. At the moment, Saddam Hussein's propaganda should not be considered more than that, but things could change.

It gives new urgency to the task of making a peace.

There is only one way to end the increasingly bitter fighting and pull

the whole region away from the precipice to which it may be heading. The Palestinian Arabs must be given their rights.

Israel must get out of the West Bank and Gaza, allowing the Palestinians the right to set up a genuinely independent state.

Israel must recognise the obvious fact that the chosen representatives of the Palestinians are the Palestine Liberation Organisation. It must negotiate with them.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation has recognised Israel's right to exist. But it was a gamble on their part. The longer Israel refuses to take the initiative, the stronger will become the most hardline nationalists in the Palestinian camp, including the Muslim fundamentalists.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have proved they will never again accept Israeli rule peacefully. They will continue to fight the occupation until it is ended. Until then, there will continue to be violence.

The ball is in Israel's court.

**Israel/Palestine  
Two nations, two  
states!**

## 2 POLL TAX

# Labour warns off anti-poll tax campaign

By Cate Murphy

**T**he Labour Party organisation sub-committee this week issued a "warning" to Labour Party members not to support the All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation, calling it a "Militant front" organisation.

Although the committee stopped short of banning outright connections with the Federation, support for any of the Federation's activities — attendance on the 31 March demo, or the forthcoming trade union conference, and even membership of an affiliated local anti-poll tax group — can be used to witch-hunt activists out of the Party.

This latest move to distance the Labour Party from effective anti-poll tax campaigning follows the undemocratic barring of some prospective councillors from standing in local elections because they had voted against the poll tax, and against cuts.

Kinnock has made it clear that there is no place for those who advocate non-payment and non-implementation of the poll tax in his New Model, pale-blue Labour Party.

*No socialist can support the move against the Federation. But Militant have played into the hands of the right wing by their bureaucratic manipulation of the anti-poll tax campaign.*

From the beginning, the need to build a broad-based fight against the poll tax on all fronts has been sacrificed to the sectarian interests of Militant. Domination of the campaign was their aim: empty 'front' anti-poll tax unions and local federations under the control of Militant were declared in opposition to real, thriving, open groups.

For the purposes of the National Federation, of course, only the Militant-controlled federations were recognised as "bona fide" organisations, no matter how few their members, or how many the affiliations to the original groups.

The conference to launch the National Federation was a masterpiece of bureaucratic malpractice, with deliberately chaotic debate, hysterical distortion and denunciation of arguments put forward by non-Militant supporters and the Militant "line" being handed down from the chair!

Then, of course, we saw the outrageous denunciations by Steve Nally and Tommy Sheridan of the "violence" of the demonstrators on the 31 March demo, and the promise to "name names" to the police (which Militant only retracted six weeks later).

All Labour Party activists should condemn Kinnock's attempt to witch-hunt poll tax activists out of the Party. We should campaign to build support for mass non-payment and non-implementation in our constituency parties, and



force Kinnock to join the fight on the side of the working class, not tail end the Tories.

Local parties should set up "Labour against the Poll Tax"

groups, with links to local federations and community-based groups, not bow down to the 'pay now and vote Labour' defeatism of Kinnock.

At the same time, we must also

fight within the Federation for a broad-based, democratic campaign, where the interests of the working class are paramount, not the sect-building aspirations of Militant.

## Why cops hang round toilets

### OUT AND PROUD

By Clive Bradley

**T**he number of men arrested for sexual offences with each other, usually "importuning" or "gross indecency", has reached its highest level since the 1950s.

In other words, more gay men are arrested under such charges now than when homosexuality was a criminal offence.

One of my favourite people, the no-doubt aptly named Richard Littlejohn, of the *Sun*, comments apropos of this statistic, "That's why I'm glad police in many areas have decided to target toilets used by homosexuals as singles bars," adding, "the attraction of a smelly cubicle has always been beyond me."

Probably many people, even those who wouldn't share Littlejohn's offensive attitudes in general (having just been done by the Press Council for using the word "poof", the *Sun* is now doing its best to popularise "shirtlifter"), would tend to agree that hanging around in public toilets is a bit sordid, and the police aren't doing a bad job if they make toilets safe for more traditional activities.

Indeed, many gay men, I think, see "cottaging" as an expression of oppression, rather than anything else — something too unpleasant to think about, and certainly too gross to ever actually do.

But repressive policing of public toilets is wrong.

Why do men "cottage"? Undoubtedly, for many men it is in search of a sexual outlet denied them in their otherwise heavily closeted lives. Often, these men are married, or very isolated, without gay friends, and for whatever reason can't face the thought of

walking into a gay pub.

But many men who enjoy cottaging are "out", frequent the gay scene, maybe even have a boyfriend or two, and have no problem with their sexuality at all. Cottaging means easy sex with no responsibilities. In some cases, it wouldn't even be necessary to know the guy's appearance, never mind his name. To paraphrase the author of "Torch Song Trilogy", at least you don't have to cook him breakfast.

Perhaps one or two people get a buzz out of the risk. I doubt if most men who cottage are exactly dying to be arrested, however.

As far as I know, cottaging as we know it in Britain is not as common in other countries, at least not in those countries that have a more liberal attitude to homosexuals, and in particular to the idea that homosexuals actually have sex.

In Amsterdam, for example, if you want casual sex, you go to one of the gay saunas. These are comfortable, well-equipped, safe places, unlikely to be raided or infested with agents provocateurs, and one or other of them will be open all day or night. Admittedly, the sauna is more expensive than a public toilet, but you can't have everything.

There are saunas in Britain, but not like the ones abroad.

Similarly, as elsewhere, there are parks where men pick each other up. Hampstead Heath rather loses its appeal after its been attacked by police with dogs, however: dogs, you may have noticed, are rather resistant to the claim that honestly, you were only having a picnic.

Also, in a country like Britain, parks can be a bit of a loser if it's raining. So toilets figure highly as a source of casual sexual encounters.

But cottaging, even if it is not always exactly discreet, is no threat to anyone who goes into a toilet for the purpose of more crudely biological relief. Nobody is going to run the risk of trying to get off with someone in a toilet who hasn't, through various signs, made his mutual interest extremely clear. Even if you're dying for sex you're not

going to be completely stupid.

So if people have sex together in toilets it's because they both want to. Again, only an extraordinary idiot, or an exhibitionist of fantastic brazenness, is going to have sex literally in public. They will do it out of sight. There is no reason why anyone need be offended.

When people are arrested for cottaging, they are arrested for a crime without a victim. Often (I think it's probably almost always) the arrest is made after deliberate entrapment

by the police. "Pretty police" will, quite literally, wander around areas known to be frequented by gay men, winking (yes, winking) at men, and then arresting them if they show interest. Or they will stand in the toilet flashing their goods at people, arresting someone who seems to want what's on offer.

I certainly think it would be a lot better if we could have saunas, bathhouses, and so on, as they do in other countries, which were not subject to endless harassment by the

law.

And in the meantime, why is it the police manage to find time to loiter with the intent of catching people doing no harm to anyone, when there are all those real criminals, rapists and murderers, for example, that they ought to be catching?

I'll tell you one thing. I'm not paying the bloody poll tax for the privilege of having some plain clothed cop smile at me in one of my local parks.

## Why I don't like travel on Saturday

### WOMEN'S EYE

By Liz Millward

**A**fter experiencing 'modern policing' at first hand, I can't guess how much trouble at football matches is caused by 'hooligans' and how much by the police.

The police appear to have been responsible for the Hillsborough disaster, but fans certainly caused the deaths at Heysel.

I speak as someone with hardly any interest in football as a sport. But like most people I am forced to take an interest in football crowds. Anyone, particularly any woman, who has to travel on a Saturday will know what I mean.

On any Saturday between September and June all forms of public transport are packed denser than in the London rush-hour. These travellers do not sit (and stand) carefully avoiding each other. They are outward looking crowds — mainly looking out for 'gurls'.

What they would like to do to the

'girls' is loudly discussed. What the female travellers would like to do to the football crowds is never mentioned. We are too frightened to raise our heads in case we become the subject of discussion.

But I am sure that most women would agree that what we would like to do to them is much more interesting and imaginative than anything they would like to do to us.

Quite apart from the loud assertion of (boring) masculinity, football-goers are often drunk, loud and thoughtless. Old ladies go flying as they shove their way into tube carriages. Although it has never happened, I am always terrified of being caught in the middle of a fight.

I know that not all young male football supporters behave like this. I know that many women and children attend and enjoy football matches. Football fans are an easy target — the clubs want their money and nothing else and the government uses them as a handy scapegoat, in the same way that it uses blacks or single mothers.

It is a sick world where the highlight of the week is to go out for the day, herded by the police, get sick on tinned lager and yell at

passers-by. Where a 'holiday' is to sneak into Italy and fight foreign fans and Italian police.

Society, not law and order policy will have to change before 'hooliganism' becomes a thing of the past. And it is the working class, including some who are now weekend football hooligans, who will have to change it.

**M**rs Thatcher has come out in favour of Family Values yet again.

That is, she is against too many creches for the children of working mothers. But, but... the employers propaganda machine is busily trying to persuade mothers out of the home. The government has just allowed tax relief on workplace nurseries. Has Thatcher got it wrong?

Could it be that Thatcher is in favour of some mothers going out to work — those whose kids are away at school for example? Like everything else the Tories propose, it's one thing for the rich and something else for the rest.

Creches for those who can pay (no expense to the employer) and 'Family Values' (ie, granny) for everyone else.



Daubed on a grave in Haifa: "Saddam Hussein Burn Jews"

## Ego sans frontier

### PRESS GANG

By Jim Denham

It is, of course, impossible to regard *The European* simply as a newspaper: it is a projection of the giant ego of its publisher.

As he told the *Independent's* Maggie Brown, "I'm in charge...I am the editor-in-chief...I am *The European*."

The Cap'n seems genuinely to believe that his personal involvement and identification with a newspaper enhances its appeal to the public and improves its chance of success. It has to be said that there is not much evidence of this to date.

When he bought the *Daily Mirror* in 1984 and immediately began filling it with stories about his own exploits and achievements, sales plummeted. His *London Daily News* sank without trace after 5 months in 1987, largely because of his personal insistence (against all advice) upon making it a "24-hour" publication.

But Maxwell refuses to even consider the possibility that his influence could be anything but beneficial to his papers. In fact, he says, it was precisely his lack of total control over the *London Daily News* that led to its failure: "The printers could not deliver the *LDN* on time...if we had owned the printing process it would still have been in business...I made the mistake, stupidly, of leaving it to the professionals." He does not intend to repeat this "mistake" with *The European*, which is printed on a new colour system called Scitex. The Cap'n told Maggie Brown about Scitex: "Who owns Scitex?" Pause. "I own Scitex". He points at his chest. "Who is the chairman of Scitex? I am the chairman of Scitex". He thumps the desk and the papers jump up and down.

Maxwell is equally emphatic about his role as editor-in-chief: "I will set the editorial policy line. Absolutely. Ian Watson (*The European's* editor) will have the same relationship with me as with Lord Hartwell."

Lord Hartwell, the former proprietor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, cropped up again when Sebastian Faulks interviewed The Cap'n for the *Sunday Telegraph*: Faulks pointed out that Hartwell never interfered in matters like the choice of the main front page story. "I take the final decisions," replied The Cap'n. "But you're not like Lord Hartwell then." "I am happy with my role."

Faulks concluded that human discourse can be rather difficult "when the two of you are playing by different rules".

Faulks did, however, succeed in catching The Cap'n out telling downright porkies about his business interests in Eastern Europe ("I did no business with Eastern Europe before the Berlin Wall came down. There! That's something new for you"). But the *Daily Mirror* itself had proudly reported in March 1985, for instance, "a huge deal with the Bulgarian government to help update the country's printing and packaging industries."

But what of *The European* itself? It's certainly very well produced (thanks, no doubt, to glorious Scitex) but it hardly makes gripping reading. It tells you very little about Europe that you don't already know from reading one of the existing British "quality" papers and the overall style is bland and lightweight.

It actually reminds me of those very worthy publications for snotty middle class kids, like the old *Children's Newspaper* or the present-day *Early Times* and *Indy*.

No-one in the newspaper business can see the point of *The European* or work out what market it is aimed at. Even a Maxwell aide described the project as "the triumph of vision over common sense". But there is no doubting The Cap'n's commitment: "I have put up £25 million. Should that not be sufficient we will put up another £25 million," he told Maggie Brown.

So *The European* looks like being one of those old men's follies, costing its eccentric creator a huge amount of money and serving no useful purpose beyond keeping him occupied into his dotage. **MARCH AND RALLY FOR THE PERGAMON 23, Saturday 26 May, 11.30, Pergamon Press, Oxford. Coaches leave Trafalgar Square, 9am. Details from Pergamon NUJ, 0865 60762.**

## The left and anti-semitism

One small incident at the Labour Party Socialist conference last weekend said a lot about current attitudes on the left about anti-semitism, Jews, and Zionism.

Speaking in a workshop on Europe, Ros Young pointed to the new rise of anti-semitism. It must be fought, she said; and especially so because it will give grist to the mill of Zionism and lead to more Jews going to Palestine where they will oppress our "black comrades", the Palestinian Arabs.

The next speaker asked that the discussion be brought back to what the workshop was supposed to be about — attitudes to European integration, the Euro-parliament, the Social Charter and so on. Of course, he said, no-one would disagree with what Ros Young had said.

He was genuinely astounded when some of us indicated that we did disagree.

A whole series of assumptions was implicit in what Ros Young said.

- That persecution of Jews

should be opposed primarily because of assumed and hypothetical side-effects on the Palestinian Arabs, and only secondarily because of the actual and immediate effect on Jews.

- That oppression of Jews must be opposed not so much in itself as because it may lead to Jews oppressing others.

- That Jews moving to Israel automatically means more op-

pression of the Palestinian Arabs.

- That any statement in favour of Jews in Europe must be "balanced" by a condemnation of Jews in Palestine.

- That Jews are to be considered "white", and therefore in less urgent need of support against persecution than "black" Palestinian Arabs (however light the skin of many

Arabs, and dark the skin of many Jews!)

Those assumptions can pass among a wide range of the left as things with which "no-one would disagree". And that is a serious problem if the left is to be effective in leading the fight against resurgent anti-semitism.

To begin tackling that problem, Socialist Organiser is circulating the following statement.

### Against anti-semitism: a statement by socialists

We are living through an alarming resurgence of anti-semitism. In France, in the USSR, in Poland, in East and West Germany, elsewhere in Eastern Europe, in South Africa, in Britain and in the USA, anti-semitism has begun to crawl out of the gutters to which it was consigned with the defeat of Nazism, and to strut, swagger and bawl along the broad highway.

Jews have been assaulted physically, scapegoated once again in the voice of Hitler and Streicher; Jewish cemeteries desecrated, synagogues attacked. It is as if we have slipped and stumbled backwards by 60 years of history.

Now as it always was in the past, the left must be at the forefront of defending Jewish rights.

In Eastern Europe and elsewhere, the new rampant anti-semitism often follows the Stalinist formulas of the last four decades and chooses to label itself "anti-Zionism". It is necessary therefore for those on the left who condemn Israel's treatment of the Palestinian Arabs, and support the Palestinian Arabs, to define clearly where we stand.

We support the Palestinian Arab uprising in the West Bank and Gaza, and endorse its demand for self-determination in an independent Palestinian Arab state alongside Israel. We emphatically solidarise with those fighting in Israel for full and equal rights for the Arab minority within Israel.

*'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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# Gorby's pay rise

## GRAFFITI

In a move guaranteed to warm the heart of the average Russian stuck all day in a potato queue, Mikhail Gorbachev this week awarded himself a pay rise of 200%.

He trebled his salary to the equivalent of around £45,000.

This puts Gorby's income at approximately 20 times that of most Russians.

Very egalitarian.

He still gets less than either Thatcher or George Bush, however. Thatcher gets a cool £66,851, and Bush £117,000 a year.

But Mikhail makes up for it a bit. He also gets, as a handout from the state, a luxury flat in Moscow, a holiday home by the sea, a whole fleet of cars — and helicopters — and, naturally, round-the-clock protection from the KGB.

Well, mad cows have started killing innocent little pussies now, I see.

I never liked cows much anyway, horrible things that do nothing all day except eat sheep's brains and make cowpats. Which is not to say I thought they deserved to be eaten by cats.

But it turns out that when the government was first told about Bovine Spongiform Thingamy, they told experts to keep the lid on it, so as not to alarm the public.

According to the vet who first spotted cows going loony, the government "were very slow. Certain steps should have been taken to control it much earlier than they were."

Ministers hoped the disease would go away. He was told by the Ministry of Agriculture not to mention the new disease, and also to stop using the word

"scrapie" (the sheep disease which caused BSE).

Actually beef is bad for you anyway, because it's so fatty, unless it's very expensive and as no-one ever heard of a lentil bake going wobbly on its legs, charging around manically and infecting your pets, the solution to all this seems to me perfectly obvious.

One advantage of mad cats, however, is that they could be fed to Rottweilers, not, I hasten to add, in order to cause Mad Rottweiler Disease, which I would rather not contemplate, but in order to be able to get an official government ruling that Rottweilers should be destroyed just in case.

Yet last week a woman in Wales was rescued from drowning by none other than a Rottweiler, who somehow managed miraculously to drag her to the shore without severing her jugular or otherwise permanently disfiguring her.

Since this obviously proves how nice and cuddly the huge beasts are after all, I propose a new use for them. In future, all Sun journalists should be tossed once a week into rivers and Rottweilers sent in to rescue them.

Every time the dog fails to rescue the journalist, we feed him a mad cat as a reward.

Speaking of Rottweilers, the manager of Crayford greyhound racing track has just lost his job because he allowed a comedy sketch to be filmed in which a Rottweiler chases a baby.

Ladbroke's, who own the stadium, thought this was in very poor taste.

Obviously, faced with a runaway baby, any Rottweiler, as we now know, would pick it up gently between its teeth and carefully carry it to the nearest lost and found stand, politely suggesting that its parents be tannoyed so that no further distress be caused to anyone.

# NUT leaders block action

By Liam Conway

The dirty tricks department at Hamilton House, headquarters of the National Union of Teachers, is up and running again.

The 'Action Committee' has "postponed" this week's one-day strike in Barnsley, despite the fact that some 55% voted in favour of the action. But the dirt doesn't end there.

Barnsley are using the postal ballot system. A fairy tale from headquarters implies that postal ballots are a legal requirement of ballots involving the whole membership of an area.

That is not the case. Postal ballots mean short-circuiting the necessary mobilisation involved at local level to ensure a resounding "yes" vote.

400 of the 1,000 ballot papers issued to Barnsley NUT members were not returned, yet many teachers did not receive ballot papers — including the secretary of Barnsley NUT!

The Action Committee's friends on Barnsley's Labour-run council also conspired to thwart the ballot.

In the middle of the balloting process, they put stories in the local press that the redundancy scare was an exaggeration.

Despite all these devices, a clear majority of those voting in Barnsley were for strike action. It's a scandal that the Action Committee has ignored their wishes.

NUT members in Notts are about to receive the same postal ballot. It comes with a weak vote 'yes' letter from Doug McAvooy and a government health warning about strikes being a breach of contract.

The leadership may well be attempting to repeat the Barnsley result in Notts, and then claim that there is no will to fight redundancies.

Clearly the left must start to counter the antics of the leadership in a co-ordinated way. We must ensure that all future ballots are workplace ballots. In Bradford, also facing possible redundancies, a workplace ballot produced an 81% yes vote.

Unfortunately it's too late in Notts. Activists in Notts must call school meetings to discuss the issues and send their ballot papers off in bulk. We must also fill the local media with arguments in favour of the action.

Some Notts NUT officials are placing too much faith in the "goodwill" of the local authority. We must not look for sweetheart deals with right wing Labour councils who, when it comes to the crunch, will, as in Barnsley, undermine and condemn our actions.

Finally, we need national action on this issue, action against the government which has caused these redundancies. Such action will be difficult to deliver unless the whole left assists in all the current local campaigns against redundancies.

Build for national action! Build for the jobs and salaries conference on 7 July in Nottingham!

# Private monopolies, state monopoly: no choice

## LETTERS

The editorial 'Conflicts coming in the USSR' in *Socialist Organiser* no.447 made many important points about the crisis in Russia over economic reforms.

As the editorial pointed out: "most independent trade unionists in the USSR seem not to oppose the drive for market economics on principle". After decades of economic suffocation by the bureaucrats' plan, after decades of workers having little power as consumers, after decades of little choice being available in the shops — it is no wonder that workers are keen to see increased market competition.

But will the market reforms increase the power of workers as consumers? Will the reforms bring a greater variety of goods at reasonable "competitive" prices onto the shelves of Russian shops?

The Russian socialist Boris Kagarlitsky in his essay 'Perestroika: The Dialectics of Change' makes several important points on the relationship between sections of the ruling bureaucrats and the market reforms.

Over the past decades of Stalinist rule, production has been oriented not to the satisfaction of human need but to the interests of the bureaucrats. Will the economy become more humane through the proposed reorientation from central commands to profit criteria? The means are changed, but the goal re-



mains the same.

The Russian economy is dominated by the state monopoly. Perestroika aims at the reform of this monopoly. But the reforms are likely to replace the state monopoly with independent monopolies under the control and ownership of the bureaucrat bosses.

In this scenario of Perestroika each area of production would end up dominated by a monopoly created out of the existing state industries.

In any part of the economy where production requires substantial investment it is unlikely that new rivals will emerge able to compete in the new market. In a 1990s' economy practically all key sectors of production require substantial initial investment. Where will new rivals emerge from?

The economic system based on state monopolies is likely to remain a system dominated by monopolies even if the state relinquishes central control.

Kagarlitsky reports that "since 1987, when a series of departments transferred to the principles of self-financing, the newspapers have begun to report fast rising prices on the most varied goods and services, from trips abroad and window cleaning to...funeral services."

The slogan of 'self-financing' was transformed in practice into the freedom for bureaucrat bosses of monopolies to increase prices.

Should socialists defend the Stalinist plan against the market? No.

The rigid, suffocating grip of the command economy needs transforming. A workers' socialist revolution would necessarily use market mechanisms as part of gearing production to the satisfaction of human need.

The key to defending workers' interests and the key to economic reforms which will be geared to satisfying the needs of consumers is the fight for workers' control over production expressed by the demands for workers' self-management.

Tony Dale, Manchester

# A new lifeline for imperialism

In their euphoria at the overturning of the "Stalinist" (evidence shows "Brezhnevite" would be a more accurate term) governments in Eastern Europe, some Socialists have failed to realise that the breaching of the Berlin Wall and the opening up of the "East" to western products and western investments not only hurts the peoples of these countries, but gives a new life to capitalism and imperialism worldwide.

Capitalism must expand — "remake the world in its own image" — or die, be brought down by its own contradictions. This is not due to any inherent evil, but to the dynamics of capitalist production. Capitalists want their workers low-paid (so they can increase profits by extracting more surplus value), but need someone else (foreigners?) to purchase their products. Hence the drive of the imperialists to divide up the world.

The Great October Socialist Revolution, and subsequent removal of further countries from the capitalist sphere of influence, put a brake on capitalist expansion and hastened its future downfall. Now the imperialists are being offered, free gratis and for nothing, the markets they once mounted the Wars of Intervention and subsequent attacks (military, economic and political) to achieve. Watch them squabble over the spoils!

Then, when the world was divided up and their own workers growing in strength, the capitalists exported capital, and later processes, employing cheap labour in third world countries and selling worldwide. The current strike wave in, eg. South Korea, demonstrates that this cannot go on forever. When there is nowhere left to go the

contradictions of capitalism will tell.

The peregrinations of such as Lech Walesa, offering cheap and docile labour (meeting with US industrialists in Paris in 1981 and with British industrialists in London in 1989) demonstrate what could well be the next lifeline for imperialism.

It bodes ill for the peoples of Eastern Europe, and it bodes ill for the working class throughout the world.

Socialists should have nothing to do with, and offer no support to, any marketisation or privatisation, which can lead only to a restoration of capitalism. Social ownership and planning (whatever mistakes may have been made or difficulties encountered by those who blazed the trail in very adverse circumstances)

are not dirty words, but necessary conditions for any lasting increase in productive forces, East or West, and their utilisation in the interests of the people.

However formidable, however long the road, the only way forward is to advance beyond capitalism to the building of a genuine Socialism, and then Communism. Only then will it truly be possible to say "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need" in a world where repressive states are no longer needed.

Until then we must stand with those who would rebuild Socialism, not with those who would destroy it.

Sylvia Bolgar, London NW3

# Support free trade unions

Write to let you know how we are getting on with the Workers' Charter for Free Trade Unions.

At the Notts County NALGO executive we passed the Charter with a good amendment, adding disability to the "Right of employment free from discrimination". It was passed unanimously.

At East Midlands District Committee in May it was passed nem con. Now it has gone to the National NALGO Conference as an amendment to a motion by the NEC. It will almost certainly be discussed and has a good chance of being adopted.

I will be sending the motion to our Trades Council in Nottingham and it has also been passed at Nottingham East CLP.

I note that Alan Jinkinson and Rita Donoghue have sponsored the Campaign for Free Trade Unions.

Are the CFTU sponsors also backing the 12-point Workers' Charter promoted by Wallasey Labour Party?

Tim Cooper Nottingham

## CLPs Conference Network

Briefing conference for CLP delegates to Labour Party conference

Saturday 8 September Unity Hall, Westgate, Wakefield

Credentials for delegates and observers: £5 from 11 Egremont Promenade, Wallasey, Merseyside L44 8BG

# A new Labour Left is launched

By Martin Thomas

**A** new movement of the Labour left was set up last weekend at a conference in Sheffield.

320 activists launched 'Labour Party Socialists', with immediate campaigning priorities which include:

- Fighting to commit Labour to full trade union rights;
- Coordination of anti-poll tax activity, and promotion of 'Labour Against the Poll Tax' groups;
- Solidarity with the anti-Stalinist left in Eastern Europe, coordinated with the Campaign for Solidarity with Workers in the Eastern Bloc and others;
- Resisting the witch-hunt;
- Fighting for unilateral nuclear

disarmament.

Platform speakers at the conference included Tony Benn, Martha Osamor, Reg Race, Liz Williams from Wallasey CLP, Sarah Cotterill from the Campaign for Solidarity with Workers in the Eastern Bloc, and Paul Gosling from Leicester.

Detailed plans and policy-making for Labour Party Socialists will be discussed at an AGM in October, but the weekend's conference elected a steering committee, and regional caucuses made some plans for activity in regions. Labour Party Socialists members in Yorkshire, for example, will be working together to build the CLPs Conference Network meeting scheduled for 8 September in Wakefield.

The new movement could do a lot to coordinate and promote campaigning activity by Labour left-

wingers which is at present dispersed and marginalised. Tony Benn sketched a perspective in which Labour Party Socialists would organise outward-looking campaigning activity while another group, Labour Left Liaison, looked after the internal Labour Party battles; but several other speakers said that Labour Party Socialists should be effective on model motions and suchlike as well as on the broad campaigns.

What comes of the possibilities depends on the committee elected at the conference.

Labour Party Socialists is an offshoot of the Socialist Movement which has emerged from the Socialist Conferences sponsored by Tony Benn. Other offshoots, the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee and Women for Socialism, have been inhibited in

their campaigning by domination of their committees by supporters of *Labour Briefing* who respond with reflex hostility to campaign ideas associated with *Socialist Organiser*.

Some leading *Briefing* people at the weekend conference were at pains to insist they wanted something different in Labour Party Socialists, a regime in which *Socialist Organiser* supporters would have a full and equal part. Elections at the weekend produced a committee on which, it would seem, about half the members are non-aligned, about a quarter aligned with *Briefing*, and about a quarter aligned with *SO*; but *Briefing* has a majority of the members at the centre of things, in London, so the balance of influence in the committee is still uncertain. The committee meets on 2 June in Chesterfield.

## Key issues for Labour's left

**Extracts from a paper written by Reg Race for the 'Labour Party Socialists' conference last weekend**

**T**he Labour Party has decided to fight the next General Election on a policy which has five main planks:

- First, to refrain from making specific policy or spending pledges, in order to minimise dissent and opposition;
- Second, to maintain the structure and ownership of the economy in substantially the form that exists at present, to run fiscal policies that are only marginally more progressive than at present, and to combat inflation and stabilise the pound by entry to the EMS;
- Third, to make very few specific pledges on social policy, and to make progress on ameliorating social inequality entirely contingent on economic growth;
- Fourth, to integrate Britain more closely into European Community institutions;
- Fifth, to be cautious on the reduction of defence spending, even in the context of the East European revolutions.

Clearly, this programme will be supported by a vigorous attack on the record of the Conservative Government. But it is not a programme which is designed to meet the serious and new challenges and opportunities of the 1990s; and it is a programme which has been overtaken by the cascade of political revolutions which have occurred in Eastern Europe since late 1989.

The left in the Party developed its policies in response to the crisis of social democracy in government in the 1960s and 1970s. Although some of the lessons that were learned in that period are highly relevant today, there have been many changes of political and economic circumstances which make a revision of the left's policy necessary.

The crucial policy issues that require to be debated and determined by the left are:

1. What new forms of Europe-wide political and economic integration are possible as a consequence of the collapse of the political and economic arrangements in the Eastern Bloc, and what should be the relationship of these new Europe-wide institutions to the powers of national and local government in Britain;
2. How can we achieve the new security, defence and disarmament arrangements that are necessary in Europe; how do we organise the reductions in defence spending that are clearly possible and desirable, and how do we reorganise industry to take account of the reservoir of skills and high technology capability that will be released by defence cuts;
3. What kind of economic, industrial and regional policy would we wish to see a Labour government run;
4. How do we change the structures of Government, in order to make it more democratic and accountable;
5. How do we integrate policies to preserve the planet with socialist ideals of redistribution of wealth and income;
6. What measures should a Labour government enact to change the treatment accorded to women, black people, people with disabilities and lesbians and gay men, in order to empower them and eliminate discrimination against them.

## Combining united action and debate

**O**n broad ideological issues, probably most of the people at the conference were closer to *Briefing* than to *SO*.

The argument on anti-semitism and Zionism mentioned on page 3 was one example. Another: the main political document, while arguing for a more positive approach now, stated that "the left" (no qualifications added) opposed British entry to the EEC in the early '70s. In fact some of us argued even then that the socialist response to the capitalist integration of Europe was not to try to keep Britain out of it but to develop cross-border workers' links.

The structure of day-to-day labour movement politics favours, not rigorous and scientific debate, but lining up on the basis of assumptions and received wisdoms about what is "left" and what is "right". The received wisdom on imperialism, anti-imperialism, and

so on has been shaped by decades of Communist Party propaganda and bits and pieces of ideas from the new left of the 1960s.

*Briefing* reflects that received wisdom fairly uncritically. *Socialist Organiser* dissents radically. We believe that the revolutions in Eastern Europe, the emergence of sub-imperialisms in the Third World, and other developments, make it more and more necessary to develop new ideas, or, to say much the same thing in different words, to return to classical Marxist ideas.

An effective broad left in the Labour Party has to unite those who accept the old received wisdom and those with new ideas, to work together on the wide range of issues where we have common ground. It also has to create space for reasoned debate on issues like Palestine, Ireland, Stalinism, European integration, and so on, rather than decreeing the received wisdom as dogma.



Demonstration in Paris against anti-semitism

## Labour women demand secular education

**L**abour Party HQ has ruled out a resolution from Hornsey Women's Section for this year's Labour Party Women's Conference on the spurious grounds that it deals with more than one issue.

The motion seeks to commit Labour to a secular, democratic school system — against both the

Tories' efforts to impose Christianity in schools and the moves for separate Muslim schools.

Women's Sections and CLPs should send in letters of protest.

The banded resolution reads: "This women's section welcomes the emergence of such groups as 'Women Against Fundamentalism' which seek to challenge the current rise in fundamentalism across religions.

We recognise that the control of women's minds and bodies is at the heart of all fundamentalist agendas. We reject the stereotyped assumption that ethnic minorities in this country are internally homogenous groups, without any conflicts based on sex or class. We reject the claims of male 'community leaders' to speak for women.

We recognise that many people in this country, black and white, regard their religion as a source of strength. Freedom of worship is a criterion of democracy and should be guaranteed. But we reject the view that the right to a state-subsidised religious education is any solution to the problem of racism. We believe that a secular state and school system is a pre-condition for a pluralist, non-racist society.

Further, we believe that the emphasis on separate religious schools for girls is based on a narrow view

of them as simply future wives and mothers. It denies them the same right of autonomy and choice given to boys and is therefore contrary to equal opportunities.

Therefore we call for:

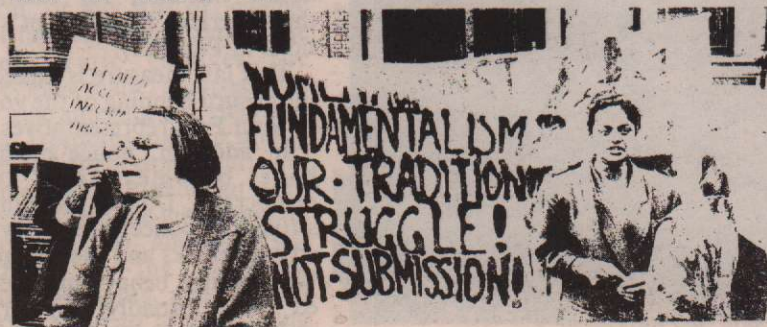
1. The withdrawal of the rights granted under the 1944 Education Act for religious schools to claim Voluntary-Aided status and the phasing out of subsidies to such schools.

2. The withdrawal of the clauses of the 1988 Education Reform Act which refer to 'mainly Christian' traditions in this country and enforcement of Christian collective worship on county schools. There should be no compulsion for any form of worship imposed on

schools.

3. The development of an anti-racist, rather than a multicultural, education policy, which will recognise the different histories and cultures of all people in this country, including those of the white population and the inequalities of power that exist between and within them.

An anti-racist policy should not be of the kind criticised in the Burnage Report as 'symbolic moral anti-racism', which isolates blacks and whites from each other and encourages cultural separatism. It should, rather, appeal to the potential in all of us to work towards the creation of an egalitarian, non-racist, society."



Women Against Fundamentalism picket the Irish Embassy in protest at the denial of abortion rights

**Labour Party Socialists AGM**  
Saturday-Sunday  
27-28 October  
Chesterfield

**Join Labour Party Socialists!**

Affiliation: £8 waged, £4 unwaged and students, £6 CLPs and other organisations. Membership in LPS automatically entitles you to membership in the Socialist Movement, and vice versa.

Write to: LPS, PO Box 118, Chesterfield S44 5UD.

# Rolling forward the state

## The police and civil liberties under Thatcher

By Clive Bradley

**W**inston Silcott was convicted of the murder of PC Blakelock in October 1985 at Broadwater Farm on two bits of evidence.

There was his own confession, and the testimony of one eye-witness.

But the eye-witness, a child, was found to have made his story up to stop the police questioning him further: the judge instructed the jury to find this witness, who was himself a defendant at the time, innocent. The jury were never told the reasons, but the judge believed the case against the boy to be completely ridiculous.

And Silcott's confession was the following words: "You ain't got any evidence. Those kids will never go to court, you wait and see. No one else will talk to you. You can't keep me away from them." And again: "You won't find evidence against me."

Asked about the whereabouts of the weapons used that night, he told the police: "No, you find them".

On this evidence, Silcott was jailed for life. But no one could seriously say it amounted to confession. Equally — or more — plausibly, he was defying the police to set him up.

And suppose he had confessed. In many legal systems, including the Scottish one, uncorroborated confession alone is not enough for a conviction.

People can confess under police pressure. In itself, a confession is not proof of guilt.

Silcott was found guilty because it was politically essential that somebody was. In that, as in much else, his case bears a striking resemblance to those of the Guildford Four, Birmingham Six, etc, etc. As the 'Spitting Image' sketch has it, maybe soon they'll be reopening cases where after ten years they've discovered that those convicted were actually guilty.

The Silcott case is not an isolated one. It points to something sick about the whole legal system. Our civil liberties are being eroded.

The catalogue is formidable. There is renewed talk about more centralised policing. During the miners' strike, the National Reporting Centre was, from their point of view, a useful experience for the police. It enabled them to move large numbers of police around the country, using police to undertake violent anti-picket activities in areas they didn't know and against people they had never met. The public accountability of the police is small enough now. The problems with a national force would be astronomical.

The police are more militarised than before. They have more shields, riot formations, cavalry charges, and guns; and there are more and more specialised 'riot police'. Along with this there is an increased emphasis on 'public order', as opposed to individual crimes.

The police are less accountable, whether to local authorities, parliament or the courts. The police are more overtly right wing: witness James Anderton's outbursts.

And police powers have been increased. The 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act extended police powers of detention, stop and search, and search of premises.

The 1986 Public Order Act extended police powers to ban and impose restrictions on demonstrations and pickets.

And the 1984 Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act extended the terms of the original 1974 Act to include members and supporters of any organisation in the world which uses "violence for political ends" (a definition which no doubt excludes, for example, the American government's actions in Panama).

This last measure is linked to the absurd banning of the voices of Sinn Fein representatives.

In addition, police methods have become more anti-democratic. During the miners' strike, the police extensively used roadblocks and the charge of 'threatening behaviour' (defined very broadly) to arrest pickets. Pickets could find themselves convicted for

# GOVERNMENT



The police on Broadwater Farm, 1985. Photo: Andrew Moore

obstructing the highway and other breaches of criminal law.

Magistrates have extended their powers to grant bail conditionally, for example imposing detention on groups like striking miners and hippy Peace Convoys.

In the crown courts, the defendant's right to silence has been eroded.

In 1988 the Home Office convened a 'working group' not to discuss whether in principle the right to silence should be curtailed, but how to do it. In Northern Ireland, the right was unceremoniously abolished even without the working group coming up with any findings.

The government looks set to make the following changes:

1. The judge will be able to allow a defendant's refusal to answer questions to be commented upon adversely by the prosecution.

2. In a crown court, if an accused fails to mention a fact on which they subsequently rely for their defence, the prosecution will be able to cross-examine

them on why they omitted it.

3. Instead of the old caution, "You do not have to say anything unless you wish to do so," there will be a new one: "You do not have to say anything. A record will be made of anything you do say and it may be given in evidence. So may your refusal to answer any questions. If there is any fact on which you intend to rely in your defence in court, it would be best to mention it now. If you hold back until you go to court, you may be less likely to be believed."

And there are other less striking proposals.

As the bulletin of the Legal Action Group comments: "...Suspects are often questioned away from the police station, without benefit of legal advice, contemporaneous note-taking, tape-recording or — if a juvenile — the presence of an independent adult. False confessions are still given with alarming frequency." (Legal Action, February 1990)

The journal continues: "How



Photo: Martin Shakeshaft

# MENT THREAT



## New evidence undermines police case

### From the Martin Foran Defence Campaign

**I**n the wake of the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad being disbanded, Martin Foran's allegations of police malpractice are now being investigated by the West Yorkshire Police.

Martin Foran is in Frankland Prison, Durham, because he was convicted of armed robbery and then of taking a warder hostage during a protest in prison.

His initial conviction was based on an alleged confession produced by the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad. New evidence strengthens Martin Foran's argument that he was framed up.

The West Yorkshire police investigators have sent the solicitor acting for Mr Foran two supposed copies of the custody sheet relating to his arrest on 10 September 1984.

West Midlands Police claim to have destroyed the original document in accordance with their procedure of shredding material after two years.

During Martin Foran's trial the time of arrest became of crucial importance. The Prosecution maintained that he had given a verbal ad-

mission to DI Paul Matthews at the scene of arrest. Mr Foran maintained that he had been arrested earlier that afternoon, that this showed the police account of the alleged 'confession' to have been false, and that the custody sheet had been altered.

Significantly, there are major differences between the writing and the text of the two sets of papers which are both supposed to be copies of the same original police record.

A spokesperson for the Martin Foran Defence Campaign asked: "How can the West Midlands Police Force explain the fact that whilst the original record was destroyed, two copies were made, and these in turn are different from one another?"

The Defence Campaign has also announced the release of an LP titled 'Justice is our Conviction', a compilation record aiming to highlight Martin Foran's case. The artists' royalties from this project are being donated to the Martin Foran Support Fund, and the record also contains information on the case.

The TV series 'Rough Justice' is preparing a documentary which is likely to be released within the next six months.

More information from 'Conviction' PO Box 522, Sheffield S1 3FF.



Paul Hill, one of the Guildford Four, shortly after his release

can suspects...possibly know what facts they 'may wish to rely on in court'? At this stage, few will be fully aware of the allegations against them."

*"The Tory government has made Britain a far more authoritarian, undemocratic place to live than it used to be, and far worse than most of the rest of Western Europe."*

But complaining about police behaviour is unlikely to get you very far, if you are questioned aggressively or otherwise mistreated while in custody, or if you are beaten up by the police on a demonstration.

A delegate to the Police Federation Conference in 1988 summed up police attitudes to the Police Complaints Authori-

ty, describing it as a "load of middle-class wallies". Lawyers often advise clients not to cooperate with the police complaints system, because, as Louise Christian puts it, of "bitter experience of the way in which the system is manipulated to the advantage of police defendants in a civil action" (Socialist Lawyer, Winter/Spring 1989)

Thus police officers have been acquitted in cases involving deaths or serious injuries: John Shorthouse, Stephen Waldorf, Cherry Groce; the police didn't take action at all after the death of Cynthia Jarrett. No one was ever convicted for the death of Blair Peach. There are many, many other such cases.

That the British prison system is in a dreadful state hardly needs to be demonstrated after the spate of riots by prisoners (including, in some cases, people yet to be convicted) in protest at overcrowding and other bad conditions.

Civil liberties have been erod-

ed under this government on countless other fronts: local government, trade union rights, the rights of homosexuals and so on.

Will Labour reverse this trend? On trade union law, there is reason to be pessimistic; but they have at least opposed the extension of the PTA.

The Tory government has made Britain a far more authoritarian, undemocratic place to live than it used to be, and far worse than most of the rest of Western Europe. If the Labour Party is committed to radical, or any sort of, change in Britain, it should repeal the undemocratic changes the Tories have made, and pass new laws guaranteeing our rights.

Our freedoms and our ability to defend them don't start and finish either in Parliament or in the courts; but the labour movement needs to address itself seriously to the issue of democratic rights, and fight to reverse the trend to the 'strong state' we have seen over the last decade.

## 8 ANTI-SEMITISM

# Another turn on the spiral of Jewish-Arab conflict

### AGAINST THE TIDE

By Sean Matgamna

**L**ike a well-written book, history sometimes pauses to provide a concise summary encapsulating what has gone before, spread out over many decades or centuries.

Right now we seem to be living through the summary chapter in which is recapitulated the tragedy of the Jews in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the linked tragedy of the prolonged Middle-East conflict between the Palestinian Arabs and the Jewish refugees from European anti-semitism.

It is as if a selection of the events which opened with the Russian pogroms against Jews in 1881 and after and led by way of the Holocaust to the foundation of Israel, and now to the continuing Arab-Jewish conflict, is being paraded before our eyes in this summary chapter.

We see a vast wave of Judeophobia sweep across the USSR and its former satellites, as if some lethal virus long frozen, like so much else, inside the Stalinist icefield, has been freed in the general thaw.

Compared with this raw, bareknuckled, strutting, unashamed, rampant, grave-desecrating and would-be Jew-killing new strain of anti-semitism, the old official anti-semitism of the Stalinist states seems to be a refined slow poison. So it was; except that the "subtle" official anti-semitism kept the Nazi-generated strain alive, and prepared society to receive it. In Britain in the past we have first seen Enoch Powell make "thoughtful" and "civilised" racist speeches, and then seen the racist thugs in the East End of London "translate" Powell into knifings and bootings of Asians.

In Russia, then as now, after the assassination of Tsar Alexander in 1881 there was a great eruption of anti-Jewish feeling. Then it was directly encouraged by the State and organised by the officially-backed Union for the Salvation of Russia, the so-called Black Hundreds.

There followed a tremendous awakening of the Jews, and the migration of millions of them westward to the shores of the Atlantic and across it to the Americas. And then, a new growth of anti-Jewish feeling across Europe, traditional Christian anti-Jewish attitudes mixing and overlapping with a newer hostility defined, in line with the intensified nationalism of the West, in terms of ethnicity and "race".

The French Revolution had swept away the old medieval obstructions of religion and caste, created a citizenry, of all religions and none, equal before the law, and finally cleared away the walls of the ghettos in West Germany; nevertheless, it was in France that virulent anti-semitism made itself most felt in the West.

The "Dreyfus Affair", in which a French Jewish officer was wrongly convicted of spying (for Germany) put France in political uproar for a decade. Left and right divided for and against Dreyfus, for and against the right of Jews to equal treatment as citizens, for and against the idea that a Jew could be a French citizen.

Someone plausibly said of the conventional military man, Alfred Dreyfus, that had he not been Dreyfus he would never have been a Dreyfusard (supporter of Dreyfus). Jews who, like Dreyfus, were all for assimilation, were made to feel un-

comfortable and not quite equal. The German Jewish community, the oldest and most thoroughly assimilated of all, would feel this too in coming decades.

It was the Dreyfus affair that turned the passionate Austrian assimilationist Theodor Herzl into a Zionist — convinced him that the Jews would never be "accepted" in the world, never be secure until they had a country of their own. More to the point, Dreyfus and the continuing pogroms in the Tsar's empire ensured that large numbers of Jews began to feel the same way. Herzl's seed fell fertile among the Jewish people.

Still, only a small number of Jews were Zionist at the beginning of this century. By mid-century, events compared to which the Tsarist Russian pogroms seemed the furnishings of an innocent bygone age — the systematic Nazi murder of six million Jews — would have converted the big majority of the world's surviving Jews into Zionists, living in or identifying with Israel, convinced that the existence of Israel was their only guarantee against anti-semitism in the future.

Jerusalem had a central place in the religious history of the Jews, the notional commitment to go there a central place in the emotional-religious life of Jews and Jewish communities. A weak Jewish community had continued over the centuries to exist in Palestine, tolerated as an inferior community by the controlling Muslims. Now an organised, politically-motivated Jewish immigration began, at first a weak trickle.

*"In 1939, on the eve of the great European slaughter of six million Jews, Britain forbade Jewish immigration into Palestine, except for a derisory handful."*

The immigrants who thrived were socialists. Many of them organised themselves in big utopian-socialist farming communities, the kibbutzim.

They came not to exploit Arabs, but to build up their own Jewish communities, depending on their own labour. They formed a colony unlike those typical in Africa, where the colonists were a thin upper social layer of exploiters, but more like the colonies in the USA, Argentina, or Australia, where a whole society was transplanted and displaced the previous population.

Whatever the early socialist-Zionist colonists wanted — and they couldn't have wanted it — that was the logic of their enterprise. Ironic Palestinian-Arab comment afterwards put it this way, contrasting Zionism with other colonising enterprises which exploited the "natives": there was one thing worse than colonial exploitation, and that was not being exploited.

The Zionist colony grew steadily. In 1917 the British government committed itself to allowing the setting-up of a "Jewish national home" in Palestine, while safeguarding the rights of the Arabs. Britain's rulers believed that a Jewish state could be a "little loyal Jewish Ulster", a reliable ally in the Middle East. They could not have been more mistaken.

The Zionist colonists bought land from the feudalistic Arab landlords, clearing off the Arab tenants, and reclaimed barren land. The first big Arab-Jewish clashes occurred in 1919, focused on the issue of religious precedence in

Jerusalem. Fear of Jewish colonists eventually becoming dominant, economic rivalry, Muslim religious bigotry, all combined to poison Arab-Jewish relations. The rich who sold land to the Zionists also agitated against the Jews.

The advent of Hitler transformed the Jewish colony, with a vast infusion of refugees and capital. Britain and the Jewish community allied against the prolonged Palestinian-Syrian Arab uprising of 1936 and after. Then, alarmed at Arab hostility, Britain betrayed the Zionists in the hour of the Jews' greatest need.

In 1939, on the eve of the great European slaughter of six million Jews, Britain forbade Jewish immigration into Palestine, except for a derisory handful. Faced with the visibly gathering forces of annihilation, the mortally threatened Jews of Europe had nowhere to go: no country would open its gates wide, or wide enough; many kept their gates shut and barred against the Jews.

To take a terrible example, one shipload of Jews left Europe on the eve of war for the Americas, and, after sailing up and down the hostile coasts of North and South America, could get permission to land nowhere. The war had started, but they had to return to Europe. Most of them died there at the hands of the Nazis. In France, the heroes of the anti-Dreyfusards were in power in the area not occupied by the Nazis. They rounded up the Jews for the Nazi exterminators.

Hostility or indifference to the Jews did not end with Hitler's death. Two years after the war, tens of thousands of Jews were still in camps in Europe. No country would take them. Britain would not let them go to Palestine. In Eastern Europe, Jews returning home from Nazi near-extinction met with stark hostility and — dozens of them — murder.

The Jewish colony in Palestine was now a nation, with its own developed economy, territory, language, history, and identity, living still under British control in a sea of Arab hostility.

Most of the Jews had backed Britain in the war; a small minority started a struggle for independence from Britain; a handful of political imbeciles, among them, it seems, Yitzhak Shamir, thought they could work with the Germans because they were the enemy of their enemy, the British. The main Palestinian Arab leaders worked with the Nazis, trying to organise a fighting force to ally with Hitler.

Relations between the Jewish nation and Britain, which was still balancing between Jews and Arabs, become hostile over Britain's refusal to let Jewish "displaced persons" from Europe into Palestine.

In 1947 Britain gave up, and the United Nations agreed to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. The Jews agreed, the Arabs refused. The establishment of the state of Israel in May 1948 was met with a large-scale Arab invasion — from Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, in some cases under British officers. They said they were aiding the Palestinian Arabs; far from it, as it turned out.

Their goal was to conquer and destroy the Jewish state and its population. But the Arab states, then mainly decrepit and ramshackle monarchies, lost the war. The victorious Israelis drove the Arabs out of part of their UN-allotted territory. They still had the West Bank — until it was annexed by Jordan in 1949.

Something over half a million Arabs were made refugees in that war. Perhaps three quarters as many Jews were driven out of Arab countries in the next few years and went to Israel.

It was, in an abstract balance



Dreyfus

sheet, not too far off an equitable exchange of population. Except that the Arab refugees were left to languish in refugee camps, consigned to indefinite refugee existence both by the sluggish economies of their host Arab states and by Arab governments concerned to preserve the refugee camps as an argument against acceptance of Israel's existence. Feeble attempts in the '50s by prominent Israelis like President Weizmann to do something to solve the refugee problem were met with complacent indifference by Prime Minister Ben Gurion. The refugees' numbers multiplied to their present four million.

Israel, surrounded by enemies, became an armed camp, and sought international alliances. In June 1967 an Egyptian blockade of an Israeli port triggered a war in which Israel shattered the Arab armies of Jordan, Syria, and Egypt, and occupied the West Bank and Gaza. Pre-1948 Palestine was now once more reunited, but under Israeli control.

The consequence was that the Palestinian Arabs now asserted their independence from the Arab governments. The Palestine Liberation Organisation became a force.

Formally it disavowed the old Arab nationalist programme of "driving the Jews into the sea", but it demanded nothing less than the self-destruction, self-disarming, and surrender of Israel, and Israeli agreement that the Jews would assume a subordinate position in an Arab democratic secular state of all Palestine. In fact such a demand was something completely unrealistic for the Palestinian Arabs to achieve, and in practice could be nothing more than an ideological justification for the military subjugation of Israel by the surrounding Arab states.

The PLO and other groups conducted a sort of international guerilla war against Israel, often indefensibly focusing on soft civilian targets.

Israel has now been in occupation of the West Bank four years longer than Israel had existed in 1967. There has been a sizeable growth of Israeli settlement amidst the Arabs of the West Bank. Israeli politics have been dominated for a dozen years by the would-be expansionist right, by people intent on repeating the experience of the first four decades of this century in the West Bank, and ultimately displacing the Arabs there.

The *intifada* recreates the 1936-9 uprising. And now the horrendous eruption of anti-semitism in Europe, together with the liberalisation of emigration rules in the USSR and its former satellites, seems to throw us backwards in

history by 60, or even 100, years.

Hundreds of thousands of Jews, perhaps millions, want to go from the USSR, to flee the hatred and the threats, as their relatives and ancestors went after 1881. But they have no place to go but Israel. The USA won't let them in.

Their only option is... the Jewish state. And where exactly? The expansionist right want them as demography fodder on the West Bank. No wonder the Palestinian Arabs are alarmed. No wonder the plague-like spread of Judeophobia across Europe alarms the Jews. They have never felt quite secure with the smug liberal post-war certainty that mass-murdering anti-semitism could not happen again, and they have welded the idea of Israel, the irreplaceable Jewish state, into their collective consciousness.

So we have all the elements — apart so far from mass murder, but the Jews today operate with the indelible memory of mass murder, and Israel operates with a ruthlessness sustained by that memory. We have rampant and growing anti-semitism, migration of Jews, influx into Israel/Palestine, Arab resistance, intensified Jewish-Arab conflict.

The action of the Jewish lunatic who murdered Arab building workers last Sunday — in the sort of incident inflicted on both Northern Ireland communities more than once in the last 20 years — was the spark which triggered the present clashes, but only the spark.

What the astonishing upsurge of Judeophobia all across Europe says to us is that the Jews haven't been wrong; that the Jews who looked for security in their own state weren't wrong, even though their solution would not have been our first choice of solution, and even though nothing is secure until there is peace with the Palestinian Arabs on the basis of justice for both peoples.

The solution is the programme now common to the Israeli left and, since the mid-'80s, also the PLO: two states for the two nations who live in Israel/Palestine.

But between us and that solution stands the intransigent expansionist faction in Israel, and the upsurge of anti-semitism which is once more sending masses of Jews in search of a home and which may well make them willing to join the Ariel Sharons and Yitzhak Shamirs in a protracted attempt to make that home on the West Bank.

Is this, after all, a freak summary chapter, recapitulating the awful past, or the beginning of a prolonged new display of proof that God is an incorrigibly and implacably malign old bastard!



# Greek general strike called against cuts

Ian Swindale reports from Greece

**G**reek workers this year staged the largest May Day demonstration since 1974, when the Colonels' junta collapsed in ignominy after seven years of dictatorship.

Hundreds of thousands turned out to demonstrate their opposition to the austerity measures announced a few days earlier by the newly-elected right wing New Democracy government of Konstantos Mitsotakis.

In the third general election in less than a year, New Democracy won exactly half the seats in the 300-seat parliament. The Democratic Renewal Party, a split-off from New Democracy, an-

the measures will be to increase inflation to around 20% and cut the real value of wages while reducing the state debt by a mere 5%.

For the second time in six months substantial price rises were announced for petrol, electricity, fares, post, cigarettes and alcohol. Internal air fares have risen by 33% since November, petrol by 50%, electricity by 25%. VAT has also been increased by 2%, and in passing this increase on to the consumer many companies have increased prices by well over 2%.

The price of water is to rise by between 100% and 340%. This is in response to an acute shortage of water caused by an almost total absence of rainfall last winter. However the response is typical of this government's attitude. The wealthy will pay the price rises and continue to consume as before. The poor will have to cut back.

It was also announced that workers whose wages are increased automatically every three months to partially compensate for the effects of inflation will lose 6.5% of the proposed increase for 1990 and the whole system will be abolished next year. Publicly owned loss-making companies, which have been heavily subsidised by previous governments, are to be privatised.

So in a country where tax evasion is widespread, where 75% of high earners don't declare their income to the tax authorities, and where the black economy accounts for one third of the economy, the small people and the working class that are being made to foot the bill for the economic crisis.

The Greek Trade Union Confederation has denounced this one-sided austerity programme and has called a one-day strike for 22 May. Workers in the Greek telephone company and Post Office have already staged a 24-hour stoppage and teachers are currently balloting on strike action timed to coincide with this summer's examinations. The General Secretary of the CP, Farakos, has come out against the strike.

The response of the Greek TUC is completely inadequate. When Papandreou introduced his own austerity programme after his reelection in 1985 the Confederation launched a series of debilitating one-day strikes which failed to



Last time round: mass mobilisation against the dictatorship

defeat the measures. Now they are proposing to follow the same path. Clearly this is not the way to defend workers' living standards.

Mitsotakis has boasted that the existence of a sizeable New Democracy minority within the trade union movement makes a general strike against his austerity measures impossible. He must be proved wrong.

The parties of the left bear the major responsibility for the election of the New Democracy government. Papandreou's two terms in office resulted in a few much-needed social reforms in the early eighties, as well as the linking of wage increases to the level of inflation (for which his policies were anyway responsible).

But the socialist rhetoric of Papandreou remained simply rhetoric. Having built a new base in the countryside, bought with EC subsidies, he began to lose the support of the working class in the big cities, especially after the introduction of austerity measures in 1985.

In 1988 his government got caught up in a number of scandals including the embezzlement of the Bank of Crete by its owner, George Coscotas, and it surprised many people that the Pasok vote didn't collapse completely in the general

election of June 1989.

The role of the left has been little better. A change in the voting system to proportional representation in June 1989 doubled the number of seats held by the Left Alliance, made up of the CP and a CP breakaway group, the Greek Left. Since neither Pasok nor New Democracy had a majority in the new parliament the Left became the power brokers.

They opted for a 3-month 'non-political' government with New Democracy MPs, led by a ND MP with a reputation of defending democracy against the military junta. The supposed aim of this government was the cleansing of public life of the scandals and corruption of the Pasok years.

In the November elections support for Pasok actually increased slightly even though the ND-Left Alliance majority in Parliament had just voted to put Papandreou and a number of former ministers on trial. The Left's collaboration with ND cost it both votes and seats.

The November elections produced a second hung parliament. This

time the Left Alliance joined Pasok and ND in a national government led by a former head of the Bank of Greece. The three parties together agreed to a round of price increases averaging 15%. The result was a further fall in support for the Left in April's elections and Mitsotakis just scraped home.

Opposition to the CP's policy of collaboration with ND has led to a number of defections from its ranks and a split in its youth movement, the KNE, with the leadership breaking with the CP and establishing a new organisation. It is not clear to what extent the leaders of this organisation have broken with their Stalinist past.

Meanwhile workers and their families are beginning to pay the price of the Left's collaboration with the right. There may well be stormy days ahead.

The big question is whether the organised working class can learn the lessons of this latest in a long series of betrayals by the Greek Communist Party and build a new leadership committed to the fight for working class socialism.

*"Workers and their families are beginning to pay the price of the left's collaboration with the right. There may well be stormy days ahead."*

nounced that its sole MP would vote for New Democracy but would not join the government, so Mitsotakis was able, on the third attempt, to form a government with a majority of one in parliament.

This new government has announced an austerity programme aimed at reducing the enormous state debt and reducing inflation from its current level of 17%. However the immediate impact of

## WHERE WE STAND

Socialist Organiser stands for workers' liberty East and West. We aim to help organise the left wing in the Labour Party and trade unions to fight to replace capitalism with working class socialism.

We want public ownership of the major enterprises and a planned economy under

workers' control. We want democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

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

workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist states against their own anti-socialist bureaucracies.

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

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

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

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

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

We want Labour Party and trade union members who support our basic ideas to become supporters of the paper — to take a bundle of papers to sell each week and pay a small contribution to help meet the paper's deficit. Our policy is democratically controlled by our supporters through Annual General Meetings and an elected National Editorial Board.

## Model motions

For Labour Party Conference 1990, Socialist Organiser calls on its readers to back the model motions circulated by Labour Party Socialists and the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and, especially, the following two motions.

When putting one of these motions in your Labour Party, you should change the wording slightly, because identically worded resolutions from different CLPs are not counted as separate for the purposes of conference composing.

Please, however, avoid changing the four points of the Workers' Charter, since it is that exact wording which has won the backing of 33 trade union leaders in the "Campaign for Free Trade Unions".

Conference calls on the NEC to pledge the next Labour government to the immediate repeal of all Tory anti-union laws and legislation for a Workers' Charter of positive trade union rights including:

- The right to belong to a trade union, to recruit fellow workers into unions and to have your union recognised by the employer for collective bargaining;
- The right to be active in your union

and to take industrial action without the fear of the sack;

- The right to strike, to picket effectively, and to take industrial action in support of other groups of workers, without fear of losing your job or legal attacks on your union;

- The right of union members to determine their own rules, in line with the ILO Convention of Freedom of Association.

Conference condemns the "Field dossier" and the NEC inquiry into Wirral Labour Parties and into Socialist Organiser launched in response to it as a diversion from the central task of fighting the Tories.

We further condemn the release of the dossier to the capitalist media, the unwarranted intrusion into people's personal lives contained in the document and the proven factual inaccuracies contained therein.

We oppose: any suspension of the Labour Party bodies in the course of, or as a result of, the inquiry; any imposition of Parliamentary candidates by the NEC on CLPs where the selection procedure has been properly carried out.

We oppose expulsions of Labour Party members for their political views. We believe that the right for Labour Party members to associate to publish and distribute journals such as Socialist Organiser is an essential part of the democratic life of the Labour Party.

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# Inquiry reveals UDR murder links

## NORTH AND SOUTH

By Patrick Murphy

**D**uring the recent upheavals in Eastern Europe, one demand recurred in one democracy movement after another, across all the Eastern Bloc states.

To the surprise of most of the Western left, the masses demanded the rule of law.

After decades of completely arbitrary decisions by secret police accountable to no-one, people craved for some standards of justice. The rule of law meant some equality of treatment; rules of evidence; clear and agreed norms of legal and illegal activity; suitable and unsuitable punishment.

The whole notion is, of course, very different to realise but it is a legitimate aspiration, particularly for the oppressed who suffer most from arbitrary authority.

Not only neo-Stalinist Eastern Europe lacked the rule of law. Northern Ireland lacks it even today.

Law there is arbitrary and treats its subjects with glaring inequality. The law and the forces of law and order have traditionally been used to beat down one community, the nationalists.

When that was made more difficult by a series of limited reforms in the 1970s the state switched to extra-legal methods with complete impunity.

The notoriously sectarian B-Specials and then the one-party Stormont parliament were both abolished. Torture in police stations was restricted.

The main local security forces then shifted to a shoot-to-kill policy and, more recently, collusion with Loyalist murder gangs to assassinate suspected Republican sympathisers.

When the British government was forced to launch an investigation into the RUC shoot-to-kill policy, it was sabotaged by non-cooperation and its leader, John Stalker, smeared and removed.

Collusion between the RUC, UDR and Loyalist paramilitaries was easier to hide. At least, it was until the Loyalists decided to expose the whole murderous game.

After killing an innocent Catholic two years ago, the main paramilitary group, the UDA, revealed that they had received his name and address from RUC security documents. It was a story which grew and grew.

Photocopied documents with lists of Republican suspects, photos and personal details, appeared everywhere from newspaper editors' in-trays to gable-end walls in Protestant East Belfast.

The government were forced again to launch the now traditional "full and frank inquiry". Last week the Stevens inquiry reported its findings.

Full and frank? The *Guardian* captured the flavour of the document in a characteristic understatement. "The contrast between the strength of the evidence and the nature of Mr Stevens' conclusions will fuel debate." Indeed.

The inquiry recovered 2,600 documents from Loyalist groups, containing sensitive information on suspects and Republican sympathisers. This material came from people with legitimate access to the RUC, and given the record of the police in Northern Ireland, there will be plenty of material not recovered.

The Stevens team described the information as low-level, which is probably their measure of the particular lives put at risk.



RUC collaborate with Loyalist murder gangs. Photo: Martin Shakeshaft

The report also found that there had been collusion between UDR members and Loyalist paramilitaries.

UDR members have been found guilty of terrorist-related offences, ie. involvement in the killings of Catholics. Many of these people were known to the police in advance. They warned the UDR against their recruitment but the advice was ignored.

The conclusion drawn by the inquiry is astonishingly complacent. Collusion, says Stevens, is not widespread or institutional. "The regiment," says Peter Brooke, "is fundamentally sound."

This despite Stevens' own findings that there is a network of leaks linking the UDR and Loyalist paramilitaries which will probably never be eliminated.

The recommendations of the Stevens report are feeble and almost beside the point.

They suggest: (1) stronger RUC vetting; (2) an explanation will be necessary "at senior officer level" if the army is to ignore RUC vetting; (3) UDR members should make legally binding declarations that they are not members of Loyalist paramilitaries.

It is what the report doesn't say that is really important. There are to be no prosecutions of RUC members even though that is the source of these leaks. (28 UDR members were arrested in October.)

There is no reply to or comment on Loyalist allegations that most of the leaks were officially sanctioned, and that the security forces used them as surrogates to wipe out Republicans.

The central, and entirely justified, nationalist demand for disbandment of the UDR is, of course, not even considered. Many of the officers of that regiment responsible for these leaks and the many associated murders are still in position.

It should be remembered that this whole matter only came to light because the UDA chose to expose it.

Am I jumping to conclusions with inadequate evidence? As a lefty with a nationalist background I am not disposed to believe the government side of these stories.

An instructive contrast should be made, however, between the standards of proof required in cases of suspected Republicans and those required in cases of security force crime.

In the first, like the Guildford

Four and the Birmingham Six, very scanty evidence indeed leads to speedy trials, very firm conclusions which withstand volumes of high-powered counter-evidence, and severe sentences.

In the second, persistent and un-

forced evidence is regularly dismissed as untypical and produces minimal punishment for the smallest number of offenders.

In Eastern Europe, the desire to see some "rule of law" is an integral part of the movement for

fuller democracy. The reverse is also true.

In Northern Ireland the law does not protect democracy, as the government often claims. It props up an inherently undemocratic state.

## Mad mogs and Englishmen...

### LES HEARN'S SCIENCE COLUMN

**T**he latest twist in the bovine spongiform encephalopathy saga (apart from John Gummer's public force-feeding of a beef-burger to his small daughter) is the diagnosis of a BSE-like disorder in two pet cats.

After developing a neurological disease, the cats were put down and on post-mortem examination found to have a spongy degeneration of the brain similar to that found with scrapie and BSE.

Vets report other suspected cases which are being investigated. If this is a case of mad moggie disease, then this adds another species to the list of those that have been infected with the sheep disease, scrapie, or its equivalent in cows, BSE.

So far, the list includes goats, antelopes, mink, hamsters and mice, in addition to sheep and cows. The mice were infected by feeding them with massive amounts of brain tissue from infected animals. However, most have been affected through protein supplements to their feed which have contained sheep offal, brain, spinal cord, spleen, etc., infected with the scrapie agent.

Though this somewhat unnatural practice has now officially stopped, it is not known what incubation period the disease has and so it cannot be reliably predicted how many cases of BSE will ultimately occur. Already, some 13,000 cattle have been found to have BSE.

Neither is it known whether the victims will be able to pass on the disease to their offspring or their fellow animals (as is the case with

scrapie); in other words, whether the disease will become a permanent feature of cow populations even after the original source has been cut off.

Still less is it known whether the disease can be passed to those who consume cows and their products. Since the organism responsible for scrapie and BSE has not yet been identified, it is impossible to say whether it is present or absent in milk or meat. Neither is it possible to say whether it is present in the brain or other organs of an infected but symptomless creature.

The argument that it has not spread to humans during 200 years of scrapie in sheep is hardly reassuring, given its sudden spread to other species in the last few years. It may well be that the organism has mutated or been transformed during its passage through the cow. It seems there are about 20 variants of the BSE organism, supporting the theory that it is evolving fast.

What should be done? The chances of human disease resulting from BSE would appear to be exceedingly small, but the consequences would be devastating for the victims.

The feeding of sheep to cows (and of chickens to chickens), dictated by the cut-throat economics of modern agriculture, should be stopped. After all, it was only when soya-based protein supplements became more expensive that this revolting practice became common and it seems there were no regulations to stop it. Pet food manufacturers say they stopped using possibly infected cattle offal last year.

Intensive research should be funded to develop a test for BSE infection. In the absence of this, careful observation of cows' behaviour should be made to see if early signs of BSE infection are evident, as they are in sheep with scrapie.

In the meantime, the suggestion of leading BSE researcher Professor Richard Barlow that calves of BSE cows be marked and monitored should be taken up, otherwise there will be no way of seeing if BSE is passed on to offspring.

The BSE story has highlighted how the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has failed to protect the interests of the poor bloody consumer. Even now, the Ministry's response has been the un reassuring public utterances of the buffoon Gummer, coupled with vicious attacks, under the cloak of parliamentary privilege, on those scientists, such as public health specialist Professor Richard Lacey and neuropathologist Dr Helen Grant, who have called for a cull of all cattle born to BSE cows.

MAFF's policy, changed only in February, of paying only 50% compensation for cattle slaughtered after diagnosis of BSE, may well have led to the entry of BSE beef into the food chain as farmers quite understandably covered up their suspicions of illness. Certainly, the reported cases jumped by over half after this.

MAFF's policy on calves of BSE cows was shown to be against EC requirements which ban the export of calves to EC countries even if the disease is only suspected in their mothers. However, in Britain, calves may still be marketed without restriction.

Another issue is that, despite bans on offal that might carry the BSE organism, such offal may still be getting into food. This is because current slaughterhouse practice allows the use of chainsaws to cut open carcasses down the length of the spine, splashing the rest of the meat with bits of spinal cord. In addition, methods of 'mechanically recovering' meat are used particularly around the vertebral column which contains the spinal cord.

I'm glad I'm a vegetarian!

# Cutting your own throat?

## INSIDE THE UNIONS

By Sleeper

As the CSEU's shorter-week campaign (the 'Drive for 35') all been a waste of time. More to the point, has the campaign played into the hands of the employers by giving them a heaven-sent opportunity to introduce far-reaching changes in working practices which will more than offset the cost of the hours reductions?

This is the view of a lot of militants and accounts, in part, for the left's general lack of enthusiasm for the campaign right from the start. Some support for this point of view is given by a survey published this week by 'Industrial Relations Services', one of those mysterious organisations that provides 'intelligence' for the thinking Industrialist.

IRS says, "Some union members may wonder if the hours' cuts are worth the greatly increased produc-

tivity being contributed by them to employers".

Of the 46 agreements analysed by IRS, 15 recouped some of the hours costs by reducing tea breaks and washing-up time and by enforcing bell-to-bell working. Other firms hope to offset their costs through more flexible working arrangements like multi-machine operation and multi-skilling. A few have taken the opportunity to introduce flexible shift working and weekend shifts.

Only 5 of the firms questioned by IRS say they will fund at least some of the hours reductions. Bonas Machine (a textile machinery manufacturer) conceded the first hour of two hour reduction "without corresponding productivity gains being required". Cascade (UK) said that some working practices have already changed significantly, it could not recoup costs by that route. It agreed to a 2 hour cut anyway, to "remain in the upper quarter of the remunerations league".

So have those union activists who poured scorn on the campaign all along been proved right? Perhaps not. For one thing, gaffers answering questions in a gaffer's survey (ie, not something very likely to be read on the shop floor) are likely to

want to put as good a gloss on their tough negotiation skills as they can.

But even if we accept that the IRS survey is broadly accurate, it still doesn't tell the whole story. A cut in basic hours is a virtually irreversible gain for the workforce, whereas matters like flexibility, rest times and even shift patterns are subject to the level of confidence and organisation that exists on the shop floor at any given time. IRS itself concedes that, "tea breaks and washing up time have a habit of reappearing however definitely they are bargained away".

The 1979 National Engineering Agreement that reduced basic hours from 40 to 39, was accompanied by a flexibility campaign very like the kind of things employers are pushing for now — in fact the reason employers are still pushing for them is precisely because these commitments were widely resisted and often remained a dead letter after 1979. In just the same way, every Ford agreement in recent years has involved extensive commitments to flexibility and productivity increases, many of which the company has been unable to implement in practice.

The other factor that IRS (and the union militants who simply

dismiss the hours campaign) leave out of their calculations is the tenacity with which some groups of workers have fought for the hours reduction and against the strings. This has led to considerable variations in agreements even within companies. At Bae Kingston, for instance, a 23-week strike succeeded in securing a significantly better deal, with less far-reaching strings, than the agreements reached at Bae plants like Chester and Preston, where less of a fight was put up.

None of this, of course, should be used to obscure the fact that many of the deals reached by the Confed, have been pretty rotten and many bear more than a passing resemblance to the sort of deals proposed by the employers (and backed by Bill Jordan) as early as 1987. We should also not forget that quite often (as at Rover this month) workers will chuck out even major hours cuts because of strings like anti-social shift patterns. But that doesn't mean the hours struggle has been waste of time (still less, as some union militants have suggested, has it simply 'played into management's hands'). 'Strings' can be fought, line-by-line, on the shop floor; an hours cut, like diamonds, is forever.

## CPSA mixed bag

By Trudy Saunders (DH HQ)

The Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) conference in Bournemouth last week was a mixed bag for the left.

The Broad Left did badly in Regional, Section and National elections. In a postal election for the NEC, in which only 20% of the membership participated, the right wing swept the board. The Broad Left won only 3 places, an improvement on last year's one.

A 20% turn-out can hardly be said to reflect the membership. This was shown by the fact that the left won important victories on conference floor on issues such as homeworking (supported in principle by the right wing, totally opposed by the left) and Agencies (Civil Service privatisation).

The Agencies vote was a blow for the right wing, who have ignored conference policy to fight Agencies since 1988. Although the motion passed was not the best on Agencies (it failed to call for a national framework and fudged the issue of industrial action) the debate clearly showed that members want to fight Agencies, even if the NEC don't.

Even more distressing for the left was the fact that the Branches Against Agencies (BAA) fringe meeting was attended by over 200 delegates and observers. BAA — set up as a branch-based rank and file initiative to organise a fight against Agencies in the face of the NEC's refusal to do so — has attracted supporters across the political spectrum as more and more realise the need to organise unofficially.

The biggest victory for the left was the reinstatement of the Newcastle 8 — Broad Left members from Newcastle Central Office expelled from the CPSA on trumped up charges in a politically motivated attack by the right wing.

Despite every attempt to bias delegates through scare tactics and a stitched up appeal, the Newcastle 8 were all found not guilty. The result was a triumph for democracy and a slap in the face for the right wing.

The Agencies and Newcastle 8 debates illustrate the strength of genuine unity amongst the left. Such unity is able to pull in independents and defeat the right wing.

In stark contrast *Militant* attempted to force conference to adopt their 'theory' on the class nature of the Eastern Bloc countries! *Militant* supporters abused their majority on Standing Orders Committee to place their single motion ahead of 16 on Sotsprof. Consequently only the *Militant* motion was heard, and not surprisingly it was defeated.

The immediate task of the left is not to ram so-called 'socialist programmes' down the throats of members, but to campaign in the branches, build branch-based rank and file initiatives such as BAA and extend such initiatives. This has already begun.

The Stop the Merger Campaign was launched at conference. The campaign aims to unite all those opposed to the proposed undemocratic and bureaucratic merger with the mainly managerial National Union of Civil and Public Servants. Already the campaign has many supporters across the political spectrum.

## Workers' action needed to save Ravenscraig

The closure of the hot-strip mill at the Ravenscraig plant in Motherwell was announced by British Steel last Wednesday, 16 May.

The loss of the mill will cost 770 jobs, in an area where there are already 6,000 unemployed and only 300 local job vacancies. It makes it virtually certain that British Steel will close down the rest of Ravenscraig, perhaps after going through the motions of trying to find a buyer for it, in 1994.

This would cost another 2,300 jobs at Ravenscraig itself, plus another 17,000 jobs in other industries and workplaces in Scotland heavily dependent on Ravenscraig.

British Steel bosses have claimed that a fall in demand (down by 10% on last year) and increased pressure to cut costs have made the closure of the mill

necessary. But it is also well known that the head of British Steel, Bob Scholey, regards the Ravenscraig plant as having been located in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Unfortunately, the news of the mill's closure was all too predictable. The last two decades, especially the Thatcher years, have seen a massive cutback in Scotland's industrial base: first shipbuilding, then cars, then coal and now the remnants of the steel industry.

No less unfortunate is the predictable nature of the response to the announcement of the closure. Labour Party and trade union leaders have promised to invoke Scottish public opinion (with the emphasis on the word "Scottish") to prevent the closure of the mill.

Every previous performance of this ritual has underlined its complete worthlessness as a way of preventing jobs being sacrificed on the altar of Thatcherite monetarism.



Scab coal at Ravenscraig, in 1984-85 miners' strike

cherite monetarism.

The totem in the ritual is called public opinion. The taboo is called industrial action, especially of the striking variety.

The ritual is performed in gatherings called "full Scottish conventions" where an unholy alliance of trade union leaders, representatives of all political parties, captains of industry, and clerics (usually the most left-wing of all those in attendance) gather together on a weekday afternoon and utter incantations about the power of Scottish public opinion to stem the tide of growing unemployment.

This is followed by a short walk through Glasgow on a Saturday morning, usually called a demonstration, although the term is now falling into disrepute, given its political overtones.

Everyone then goes home. The workplace under threat is shut down. Trade union and political leaders pronounce a requiem mass, consoling the unemployed with visions of the pearly gates of a Scottish Assembly which will resurrect their jobs (provided they keep faith with Labour).

And then the ritual is over until the next announcement of major job losses.

Given the significance of Ravenscraig for the economy in Scotland, the performance of the ritual on this occasion promises to be a spectacular non-event.

Scottish TUC leader Campbell Christie has promised "the biggest and broadest campaign ever mounted in Scotland". Translated into plain English, this means that Christie reckons that he can get verbal support from some Scottish Tories this time round.

Arch-Thatcherite Michael Forsyth has issued a statement opposing closure, and Malcolm Rifkind has called on British Steel to think again. But, according to last Sunday's *Observer*, Rifkind knew all along what British Steel was planning and his behaviour has been "little more than posturing".

Although in the past the Scottish National Party has dismissed the time-honoured ritual as a complete waste of time, it has declared it will get involved this time round, whilst reserving the right to mount its own campaign.

The SNP has declared that it will "mobilise the power that lies inherent but dormant in the Scottish people".

It has made the ultimate sacrifice of cancelling the annual Bannockburn march and replaced it with a march in Edinburgh against the closure. Mind you, the SNP are still fighting the same

## It's all about profit

### WHETTON'S WEEK

A miner's diary

The Coal Board has made a three-year contract to supply the same amount of coal to power stations over three years at the same price.

That means they have got to keep costs to an absolute minimum. In order to ensure that the contract continues to make money, they will want less miners to produce more coal.

The Coal Board and the union are meeting this week, and it is going to be very interesting to see what statement comes out from the talks.

There is talk of a snap early election if Thatcher judges it right.

If the Tories get in again, we know exactly where we stand. They are going to decimate the industry, cut it down to what they see as a manageable size and

then sell it off.

The question mark is: what will Labour's commitment be in the event of a Labour government being returned? I am not all that confident.

We should vigorously press for an expansion of the mining industry and a programme of de-sulphurisation.

It can be done. But it will cost money, and of course a newly privatised electricity supply industry doesn't want to have to lay out money on making power stations able to burn British coal. They will sooner go for buying coal from South Africa, Colombia, all points round the compass except the home produced variety.

It's all about profit. It's about exploitation of the workers. It's not just about individual attacks on unions or individual industries, or individual issues like the poll tax.

The Tories have a systematic programme of applying the principles of capitalism to the maximum — exploiting the workers for every last penny that they can get out of them. That's what it's all about.

Paul Whetton is a member of Manton NUM, South Yorkshire

### IN BRIEF

NUPE has voted for a campaign of industrial action over low pay and against the government's NHS reforms.

NUPE is to fight for a 'substantial increase' for ancillary workers.

The conference voted against mass non-payment of the poll tax.

NUPE also voted to support the broad campaign for British withdrawal from Ireland, 'Time to Go'.

Seafarer's leader Sam Mc Cluskie promised that the NUS will start a 'job register' of its own to fight the shipowners' plans to introduce cheap labour when the National Maritime board is abolished in September.

EETPU leader Eric Hammond claimed at the union's electrical industry stewards conference that he

had offered to mediate between the government and the ambulance workers to secure a 'no-strike deal' in the service.

Delegates to the conference also accepted local pay bargaining in the privatised electricity industry after voting against a proposal for industrial action to defend national bargaining rights.

Hammond also made it clear he wants to get back into the TUC.

Postalworkers union UCW conference voted not to campaign for creche facilities at all mechanised Letter Offices.

Post office counter and clerical workers have voted to accept a pay deal worth 8.7%.

Offshore workers in the North Sea are stepping up their plan for improved conditions and full union recognition. A work-to-contract (working 12 instead of the usual 15 hour shifts) is likely to escalate into a series of North Sea one-day strikes in the next few weeks.

# SOCIALIST

## Gorbachev doubles basic prices

### ORGANISER

President Gorbachev's plans to introduce the free market economy into Russia will mean huge price rises.

This week, the Soviet government called for the price of meat, milk and fish to double, of bread to triple. There will be large increases in the prices of transport, gas and electricity.

To sugar the pill, the government plans to give big wage increases. Every worker will get extra wages in proportion to their current rate, and no-one less than an extra 40 roubles a month (which is about one fifth of the present average).

These wage rises are unlikely to cover the real increases in the cost of living.

The government says that output declined in the first few months of this year, indicating how terrible is the state of the Soviet economy — which is the reason they so badly want to bring in market reforms, of course.

Between January and April there were 9.5 million strike days. Last year (which included the big miners' strikes) there were only seven million; so the huge Soviet working class is getting increasingly restive.

Will Gorbachev be able to carry out these reforms, meaning as they will such drastic attacks on the living standards, already declining, of Soviet workers?

Or will these price rises provoke a big wave of resistance?

Resistance must be likely. The next few months could see enormous struggles by the Soviet working class. We could see the new Confederation of Labour burgeon into a Soviet Solidarnosc.

Gorbachev has ruled out economic "shock therapy" — market reforms with no cushioning — obviously for fear of the political consequences. Such "therapy" would be, broadly speaking, of the type introduced by General Pinochet in Chile in 1973. In Chile it took a military coup and thousands of dead.

But will the "soft" version work? Or will others in the Soviet hierarchy, less squeamish than Gorbachev, decide that the Pinochet model is their only chance?

The coming class struggle in the USSR looks set to be very explosive indeed.

## Kinnock wants an SDP Mark 2

Socialism or SDP Mark 2? Between those choices for Labour's future, outlined in a book a few years ago by Eric Heffer, Neil Kinnock has made his choice.

Last weekend the *Independent on Sunday* (20 May) published this table comparing Neil Kinnock's current policy with SDP/Liberal and Labour policy of 1983. On every issue Kinnock is closer to the SDP of 1983 than to the Labour Party of 1983.

One difference, however, remains between the SDP and Labour. The Labour Party has a big organised working class membership, in the CLPs and in the affiliated trade unions, which can call Kinnock to account. It's about time we did so.

	LABOUR 1983 Michael Foot	ALLIANCE 1983 Roy Jenkins	LABOUR 1990 Neil Kinnock
<b>THE ECONOMY</b>	"Our proposals add up to a considerable increase in public spending. We shall borrow to finance our (initial) programme of investment."	"Our immediate programme ... will not involve irresponsible increases in public spending or borrowing."	"I'm going to maintain a close control over (spending) commitments because I don't want them to get out of hand." (John Smith, Shadow Chancellor)
<b>INDUSTRY</b>	"Public assets hived off by the Tories" will be nationalised, as will parts of the pharmaceutical, health equipment, and construction industries. Shares will be bought back at their original purchase price.	BT and British Airways (still in public ownership at that time) will not be privatised but British Aerospace will remain a private company.	The public utilities - BT, gas, water, electricity, BAA, the rail and postal services - will revert to public control "where funds allow". Shares will be bought back at a "fair market price."
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	"We will repeal the divisive Tory employment laws."	Strike ballots and election of officials to be introduced and the closed shop prohibited.	Strike ballots and election of union leaders to be retained. The party recognises the right not to join a trade union.
<b>DEFENCE</b>	Britain will unilaterally get rid of all its nuclear weapons and bases.	Support for multilateral disarmament and a move away from "excessive dependence on early use of nuclear weapons".	Support for multilateral disarmament, a freeze on levels of nuclear weapons and a policy of 'no first use'.
<b>THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY</b>	Britain to withdraw from the EC.	Britain will join EMS. Support for "development" of the EC.	Britain will join the European Exchange Rate Mechanism as soon as possible. Support for more European political cooperation.
<b>THE ENVIRONMENT</b>	Review pollution control powers and mechanisms.	Acceptance of the principle that the polluter pays.	The polluter should pay for the cost of cleaning up his mess.
<b>HOUSING</b>	Tenants will have to pay market value if they want to buy their homes.	The right to buy will be retained.	The right to buy will be retained with subsidies for tenants.

# Fight TGWU back-track on union rights!

The TUC look set to give their support to the Labour Party's reviewed policy on trade union law.

Central to that policy is keeping Tory limitations on "secondary action" — that is, making strike action effective. With TUC support, the Labour leadership will have no difficulty getting this policy accepted by the Labour Party as a whole.

The policy review also involves a commitment to positive proposals, such as a national minimum wage of 50% of average earnings. But the reason for TUC acquiescence was

made clear by Transport and General leader Ron Todd: he has promised Neil Kinnock that for the sake of getting a Labour government he will not "rock the boat".

The TGWU has 20% of the votes at Labour Party conference. Its support for the new policy is clearly very important for Kinnock.

The task for rank and file workers is therefore a difficult one. We need a Labour government. But we know that on trade union rights, a Kinnock government will not be much better than the Tories. So we must simultaneously fight for a Labour government, and prepare trade unionists to resist the anti-

union laws the government will inflict on them.

Todd's support for union-curbing Kinnock-style is a backtrack from endorsement he gave only this month to the "Campaign for Free Trade Unions", which demands that Labour commit itself to a basic four-point charter of trade union rights.

Official TGWU policy is for the right to strike, to picket and to take solidarity action. A strong campaign through the unions and Labour Parties for the four-point workers' charter can call Todd into line, and deny trade union endorsement to Kinnock's policy.

## Constituency Labour Parties Conference

### Fighting the Poll Tax and the witch-hunt

Saturday 16 June  
11.30 — 4.30

Red Rose Labour Club, 129  
Seven Sisters Road, London  
N7 (tube: Finsbury Park)

Credentials for delegates and observers £5  
from CLPs Conference, c/o 11 Egremont  
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