

# IDEAS FOR FREEDOM

## 3-5 July Caxton House London



# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

## Longest waiting lists in Europe

# NHS: PAY OR DIE!

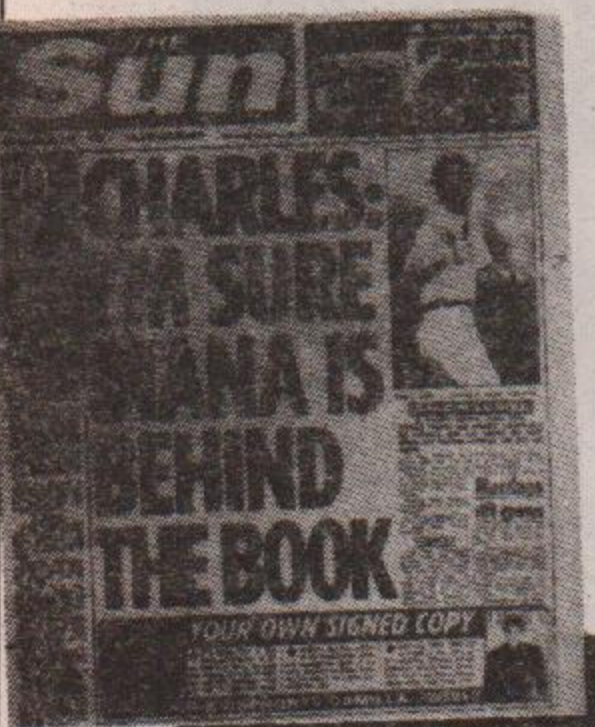
Three year old Hayley Sennett would probably have died unless her parents had scraped and borrowed £8,500 to pay for private health care. In August 1991 she was diagnosed as having a hole in the heart and a misplaced artery. An operation could save her. But it was postponed again and again.

By Friday 8 May, Hayley's parents, now told that Guy's Hospital in London would "try" to arrange the operation by December, were desperate. They phoned the hospital and asked about going private. Yes, of course, the hospital officials replied. Hayley could come into hospital for the operation the following Monday, 11 May! And that would be £7000 up front, please. Another £1500 was later

added to the bill. The Sennetts somehow raised the cash, and Hayley's life was saved. The Independent on Sunday (21 June) told the story, and quoted Hayley's father: "All it paid for was for us to jump the queue. We knew we were probably causing further delay to some other little

Continued page 2

## The lie machine



Signs of the time in the tabloids' tabloid, the *Daily Sport*. Why do you think the 'furious' unnamed MP quoted in the 'story' "Di love boat fury" is furious? According to the *Star*, it is because a "second honeymoon" trip on a yacht for Charles and Diana is to be paid for by... "the taxpayer"! The *Star* is a bit behind with news, as always.

The *Sun* shows Charles showing he is no fool: he knows what Diana is up to! He probably reads the *Sun*.

Maybe he reads the US *National Enquirer*, or the *Mail*, both digging in the same hole.

# Ireland votes yes to Maastricht

By John O'Mahony

**S**ixty nine percent voted yes to the Maastricht Treaty in the Irish referendum last week (June 18th). 31% voted against.

Once more independent Ireland has demonstrated the desire of most of its people for integration into Europe.

The size of the majority was surprising. Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the two main parties, campaigned for a

"yes" vote, as did two smaller parties, Labour and the Progressive Democrats. But against this was ranged a powerful current of Catholic opposition to Maastricht because they believe it must mean the reversal of the state's anti-abortion laws and lead finally to the legalisation of abortion in the 26 Counties. A decade ago in a referendum a big majority of the electorate voted to write the existing ban on abortion into the constitution.

Allied to the right wing Catholic anti-Maastricht forces were most of the left, together with the pseudo-republicans of Sinn Fein.

The bishops' attitude may have made the difference

between a "Yes" to "No" result. They said they were "neutral".

Their price for this was a government promise of

**"Had the bishops recommended a 'No' vote, they would have come into head-on collision with the perceived economic self-interest of the farmers, who thrive in the EC."**

another referendum in the autumn to 'sort out' the abortion issue. This arrangement served not only the

pro-"Yes" politicians, but the Church too.

Had the bishops recommended a "No" vote, they would have come into head-on collision with the perceived economic self-interest of the farmers, who thrive in the EC. The promised autumn referendum separated the abortion issue from Maastricht, and the bishops live to fight another day on abortion.

They say they will 'give guidance' on the abortion referendum. Devout Catholics will not then feel free to make their own minds up, as they did in this referendum. The anti-choice campaigners will have all the advantages.

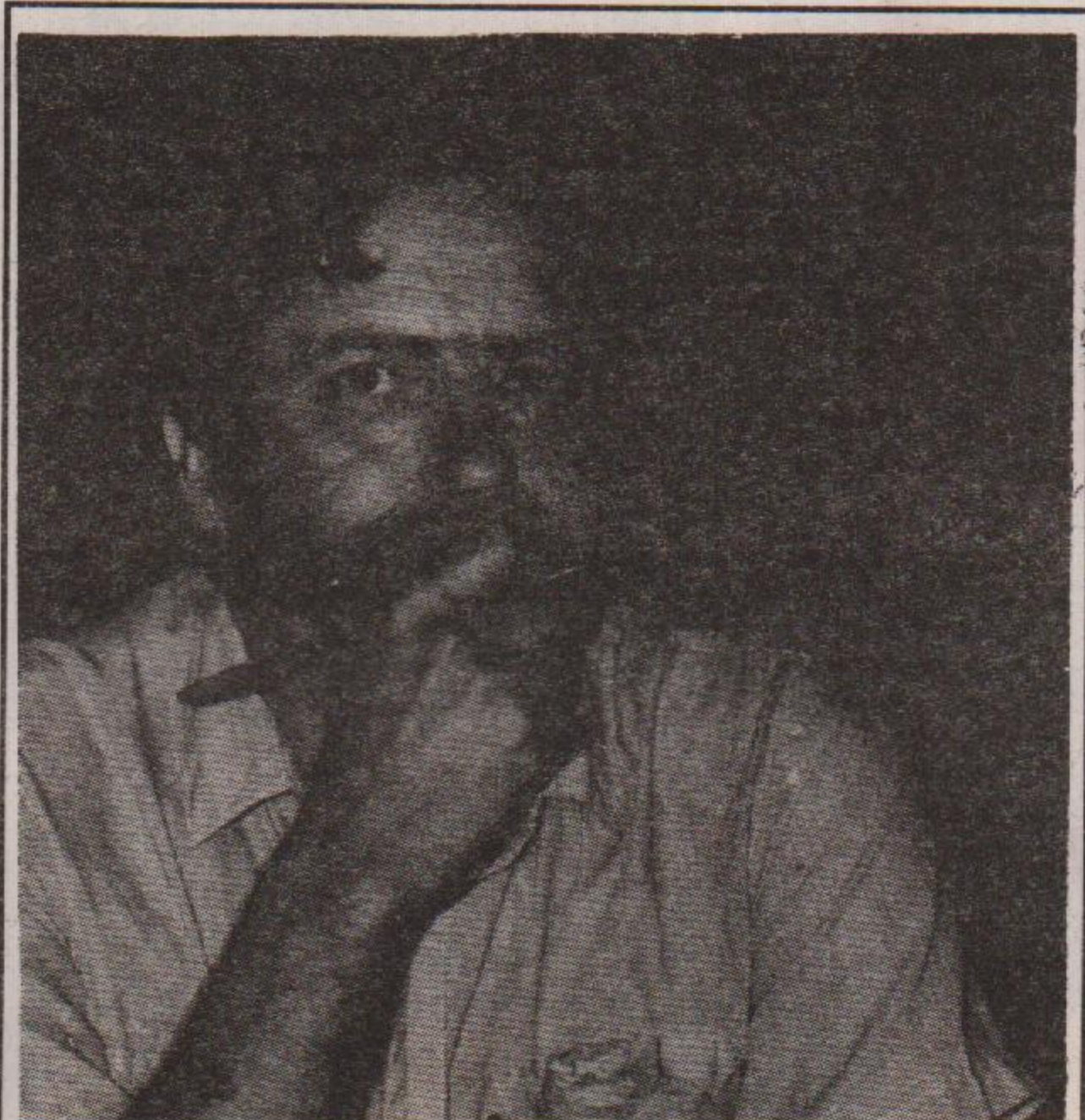


Photo: John Harris

## Relaunching the Labour left

The "Relaunching the Labour Left" conference took place in Leeds last weekend (20 June).

The conference, called by the Socialist Campaign Group, attracted over 500 people.

Originally, the conference was to receive proposals from the SCG itself to set up a working group to oversee the establishment of a network of SCG supporters.

At the last SCG meeting before the conference these proposals were defeated by fourteen votes to two. Only Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Grant supported them. The ex-Stalinist daily *Morning Star* reports (22 June) that Campaign Group MPs blocked these proposals because the new organisation would be "under the control of small Trotskyite grouplets". The *Morning Star* now works closely with Socialist Action, a grouplet which controls Campaign Group News and wants

to keep other factions off its turf.

A motion was passed calling on the SCG to establish an organisation and call another conference in early 1993. It also called for a "working group". Whether or not the SCG will act on these proposals, and who the working group will be, are unclear.

Elaine Jones, a Left Unity member of Labour Students National Committee, successfully proposed that the working group should include youth and student representation.

Debate on motions was crammed into a very short time at the end of the conference, and some votes seemed to reflect as much people not wanting to be rushed as clear disagreement.

This was the biggest Labour left conference for many years. The MPs' blocking moves stopped it achieving as much as it should, but the turnout showed a left revival which will not stop here.

## South Africa: De Klerk out!

From back page

If such a movement can link-up with the economic grievances of the workers and rural poor, than a powerful mass movement can be forged to bring down De Klerk.

But that will require democratic organisation in the townships on the lines of the best that was built during the mid 80's. The obvious example to follow would be that of the Alexandra Action Committee, a delegate based fighting township body based on the principle of workers' democracy and mandates.

Without that kind of disciplined self-defence the prospect of massive state repression seem unavoidable. Even with organisation, massive repression is highly likely especially given the regime's overwhelming military supremacy. Pretoria might not call it a "State of Emergency", but then when Pik Botha denies something you can bet it must be true.

## Europe: don't recycle the Thatcherite message!

By Chris Reynolds

Peter Shore is a member of the Bruges Group, an ultra-Thatcherite Tory cabal which campaigns against European integration.

He is also a Labour MP, a former leading member of the Labour right wing - and co-chair with Tony Benn of a new "No to Maastricht" campaign.

The driving force behind this campaign seems to be the new alliance of the "Morning Star", "Socialist Action", and Ken Livingstone MP. What the "Star" says is indistinguishable from Bruges Group nationalism. It is more downbeat now than it was in the 1970s, when it illustrated its campaign against Europe with cartoons of the Union Jack being trampled on, but it still insists that "What is involved is the undermining of

national parliaments and the transfer of their powers to a European super-state".

Its references to "European bully-boys", "the EC colossus", and "the plans of the Euro-federalists", make it plain that its campaign is against any federal Europe (the details of Maastricht being only extra ammunition) and for continued or heightened barriers between European nation-states.

If the left gets drawn into Livingstone's campaign, it will reduce its role in the Euro-debate to that of recycling the Thatcherite message, repackaged in left-wing trimmings and phrases.

We need instead an independent working-class approach: neither Maastricht nor nationalism, but cross-border workers' unity and a fight for a democratic federal Europe!

## Student unions under attack

The Tories want to smash NUS and student unions.

Their main problem is how to do it. But their own admission "the complexity of the issue is considerable" (Nigel Forman, Junior Minister for Higher Education 16.3.92)

Last week MPs discussed student union membership in an adjournment debate. The debate had no legislative power and was merely for publicity purposes. However, the Tories do intend

to introduce, as part of the "Students' Charter", legislation to end the so called "closed shop".

The NUS leadership is behaving with an air of complacency.

There should be a summer campaign, involving a national rally, using NUS training events to organise new officers, leafleting rock festivals and it should lead into an autumn of direct action, occupations and a national demonstration.

## Stop safe sex censorship

Kevin Sexton, the NUS Lesbian and Gay and Bisexual Convenor faces probable prosecution under the Obscene Publications Act by the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Kevin, along with two other NUS officials, gave out a German Safer Sex poster, showing two men engaged in a blow-job, at an LGB roadshow at Queens University Belfast. Unionist students at Queens took the poster off the stall, placed it around noticeboards in the union building and then contacted the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Ian Paisley and friends are

now putting pressure on the Director of Public Prosecutions to make sure the court case happens and that safer sex material is censored in the North. Paisley is urging war against the Virgin megastore for selling the Gay Men's Guide to Safer Sex.

Socialists must give full support to the campaign against censorship and support those threatened with court cases.

There is a launch meeting for the Campaign for Safer Sex Censorship on 1 July 1992 with speakers from NUS, Outrage and AIDS organisations. Contact Kev Sexton or Janine Booth on 071-272 8900.

## Major's NHS: pay or die!

From front page

girl or boy by going private. But we felt there was no real choice. I don't think she would still be here had we not taken her in when we did.

"It's scandalous that we should have had to make a choice like that".

If the Sennetts had been rich, however, there would have been no drama at all. They would have paid for private treatment straight away.

There will be more and more cases like Hayley's as Tory health policies take effect. The rule in Major's health service is increasingly: pay or die!

Before the General Election the Tories pumped extra cash into the Health Service, and pushed and pulled to cut the number of patients waiting more than two years for hospital treatment. Now the Tories are safely in office for another four or five years, the drive towards pay-or-die continues unchecked.

Waiting lists have increased again since the election.

The cuts in waiting lists before the election were fudged up, for example by sick people not being put on the waiting list at all, or being made to wait longer before seeing a specialist as a preliminary to going on a waiting list for treatment.

Patients wait longer to see a specialist in Britain than anywhere else in Europe. 39% of patients in Britain wait longer than four weeks, and 12% longer than four months, while in Germany, France, Italy and Hungary almost all patients are seen within a few days.

How many patients suffer desperately, or even die, in the weeks or months while they wait for an appointment? For the rich, there is no problem: if you pay, you get an appointment immediately.

When the Government spun off hospitals from the Health Service as "trusts", it also removed the rule which limited private patients to no more than

ten per cent of the intake at Health Service hospitals.

Now the "internal market" must and will push hospitals towards preferring the more "profitable" treatments and the more "profitable" patients.

They will be pushed towards increasing their pay-beds to win business from the private health insurance companies, who can pay more than the hard-pressed NHS Health Authorities.

Some treatments will disappear from NHS hospitals, to become available only from private hospitals, and available through the NHS only if a Health Authority will pay the private hospital's price for them.

Health Authorities are pushed into excluding as many treatments as they can from their contracts with the hospitals, to keep the price of those contracts down.

Already there are several examples of Health Authorities refusing to continue to cover varicose veins, fertility treatments, and abortions. The

patients have to pay cash or go without.

No Health Authority will say that it is refusing to cover major life-saving treatments; but it can get almost the same effect by delays.

Pay, or die! Pay, or suffer pain and disablement for months or years! Pay, or see your child die! Those, increasingly, will be the mottoes of Major's Health Service.

Health care will divide increasingly into a pauper service for the majority, patching up routine ailments and dealing with accidents and emergencies - and a full service for the rich, or for poor people, like the Sennetts, who put themselves hopelessly into debt to save a child's life.

The Labour Party and the TUC should launch a mass campaign, with demonstrations, rallies and meetings all round the country, to demand the scrapping of the "internal market", the restoration of cuts, and the rebuilding of the Health Service.



Yeltsin's new Russian empire: hundreds have died in this week's fighting in Moldova

**Yeltsin tells US Congress it is "the end of socialism":**

# What would you know about socialism, Mr. Yeltsin?

**B**oris Yeltsin, leader of the Russian Federation, spoke to the US Congress as its honoured guest last week.

It is a rare honour for a foreign head of state to be allowed to address Congress, an honour reserved in the past for men such as Winston Churchill. But this was a very special occasion for the legislators and leaders of American capitalism. They were honouring themselves, celebrating their victory over "communism".

Though it had the trappings of a reception for the head of a friendly state, Yeltsin's appearance in Congress resembled nothing so much as the ceremony on board a US battleship in the Pacific when the Japanese military leaders sur-

rendered their swords to US General Douglas MacArthur in August 1945.

Yeltsin is a collaborator of the US, not a prisoner like the grim-faced Japanese mass murderers who were thus surrendering to the American mass murderers, who had recently dropped atom bombs on two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nevertheless, Yeltsin's role in Congress, like the role of the beaten Japanese militarists surrendering their swords to Douglas MacArthur, was to be the representative of the defeated enemy in a ceremony marking the US's final triumph.

Yeltsin came there as the representative of the people whose pretence to be a world power col-

lapsed with "communism". But he came to the Congress of the US capitalists and their representatives above all as a repentant communist, as the representative of that segment of the old "communist" bureaucracy which has opted for creating capitalism in the former USSR.

The horrors which reascent Russian capitalism is bringing the people of Russia are chronicled in the middle pages of this issue of *Socialist Organiser*.

Yeltsin came to tell the US millionaires' Congress — where Senate seats are priced at \$25 million, the sum that must be spent to secure election — that capitalism and democracy had triumphed. He came to reassure them that it was

just and right that they should have triumphed.

To vast numbers of people throughout the world, Yeltsin's verdict on "communism" and "socialism" will be made to appear as the wise and unanswerable verdict of one who knows, the mature conclusion of a man who had spent nearly all his life as a communist and then "saw reason", bourgeois reason, the only possible reason.

This is the symbolism with which the stage-managers of America's showbiz politics sought to invest the ceremony in which they "honoured" Yeltsin, the better to honour and laud themselves. It will, they hope, work in the minds of millions to reinforce the

idea that capitalism is eternal, the only possible system. *Yeltsin knows*. The communists have abjured communism! Don't even think of replacing capitalism.

That is the message Yeltsin and the US Congress have sent to the millions all over the world who believed in the "communism" they thought the USSR represented.

It is one more immense official lie!

*Yeltsin knows nothing about socialism or communism!* Yeltsin has never been a socialist, still less a communist. He has spent his entire adult life as a member not of a socialist or communist working-class party, but of the Stalinist ruling class in the former Soviet Union.

(Turn to page 4)

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## Communists who fought Stalinism

Leopold Trepper, an honest communist, was the head of the USSR's spy network in Nazi-occupied Europe.

After the war Trepper was imprisoned by the KGB and only released in the '50s. In this extract from his book, "The Great Game", Trepper honours the Trotskyists for their bitter, unyielding opposition to Stalin. They were the only people who stood firm, people who could be proud of their past, unlike many newcomers to the cause of anti-Stalinism.

**"T**he glow of the October Revolution was being extinguished in the shadows of underground chambers. The revolution had degenerated into a system of

terror and horror; the ideals of socialism were ridiculed in the name of a fossilised dogma which the executioners still had the effrontery to call Marxism.

And yet we went along, sick at heart, but passive, caught up in machinery we had set in motion with our own hands. Mere cogs in the apparatus, terrorised to the point of madness, we became the instruments of our own subjugation. All those who did not rise up against the Stalinist machine are responsible, collectively responsible. I am no exception to this verdict.

But who did protest at that time? Who rose up to voice his outrage?

The Trotskyists can lay claim to this honour. Following the example of their leader, who was rewarded for his obstinacy with the end of an ice-axe,

they fought Stalinism to the death, and they were the only ones who did.

By the time of the great purges, they could only shout their rebellion in the freezing wastelands where they had been dragged in order to be exterminated. In the camps, their conduct was admirable. But their voices were lost in the tundra.

Today, the Trotskyists have a right to accuse those who once howled along with the wolves. Let them not forget, however, that they had the enormous advantage over us of having a coherent political system capable of replacing Stalinism. They had something to cling to in the midst of their profound distress at seeing the revolution betrayed. They did not 'confess', for they knew that their confession would serve neither the party nor socialism."

*"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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# No tears for Neddy

So farewell then, Neddy. After 30 years of not entirely glorious existence, the old nag is finally on its way to the knacker's yard.

Neddy (or the National Development Council, to give it its correct title) was the last survivor of the many "tripartite" bodies set up in the '60s and '70s, where representatives of government, industry and the unions met to hammer out grand plans, programme and strategies for the well-being of Great Britain Ltd.

Set up by Harold Macmillan's Tory government in 1962, Neddy came into its own in the '70s, when Hugh Scanlon of the AEU and Jack Jones of the TGWU drew up the Social Contract over beer and sandwiches with Harold Wilson at No. 10. In exchange for promises of price controls and planning agreements, the Terrible Twins pushed statutory pay controls through the rest of the TUC. For a while it seemed to work, until the pent-up frustration of the rank and file exploded in the 1978-79 "Winter of Discontent". With the election of Mrs Thatcher in May 1979, corporatism was effectively dead and, one by one, the tripartite bodies were closed down. The wonder is that Neddy survived the Thatcher years at all. Nigel Lawson scarcely bothered to conceal his contempt for the boring monthly meetings he had to attend and came close to wielding the axe in 1987. But Neddy survived, although by the late '80s it couldn't really be called "corporatist" any more, as union influence was minimal.

Despite their marginal role and Neddy's increasing irrelevance, the union bureaucrats relished their places on this last outpost of tripartism and dreamed hopeful dreams of beer and sandwiches with Neil Kinnock and a bright new Britain where Neddy and all the little Neddies would once again be a force in the land.

It was not to be. Last week, as a result of a byzantine power-struggle between Norman Lamont's Treasury and Michael Heseltine's DTI, Neddy's fate was sealed. Some of the functions of the "little Neddies" (sector working parties on specific industries) will pass to Heseltine's DTI empire but, to all intents and purposes, the great corporatism experiment is now dead and buried.

It is a measure of the present demoralisation of the TUC and of the entire union bureaucracy, that their response has been so muted. For years, these people's entire existence has revolved around the pretence that they were still a force to be reckoned with in the corridors of power and that one day soon the true worth of Neddy would be realised, either by Bro Kinnock or by nice Mr Major and the post-Thatcherite Tories. Now, with that dream shattered, Norman Willis and John Edmonds can do no more than bleat pathetically about the "need for government, employers and unions to work together" and what a terrible "act of industrial vandalism" it all is.

We, of course, shed no tears for Neddy or anything it represented. Perhaps now, with corporatism finally dead and buried, unions can get back to their proper function: representing the members and fighting the bosses.

## INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

## PLATFORM

By Ivan Wels

What a confusing editorial on Maastricht there was in *SO* 527! Whilst agreeing with all the nostrums about the EC being a bosses' Europe, which is pretty common currency amongst the Left anyway, it goes on to say that a referendum would "open up a debate now tightly controlled by a very small circle". A referendum on almost anything would "open up a debate" but is it a debate in which we can usefully clarify the main problems with European unification; that is, a class analysis and building working class links? I think not.

It is most likely to be a re-run of the obfuscation of the "No to the Common Market" debate in the early '70s with left wingers sharing platforms with rabid patriots. Ultimately all of them falling into a "Little England" scenario.

Its most confusing aspect, however, is when the editorial goes on to say that left wingers who think it is socialist to say "No to Maastricht!" fall into wishful thinking. Their policy trans-

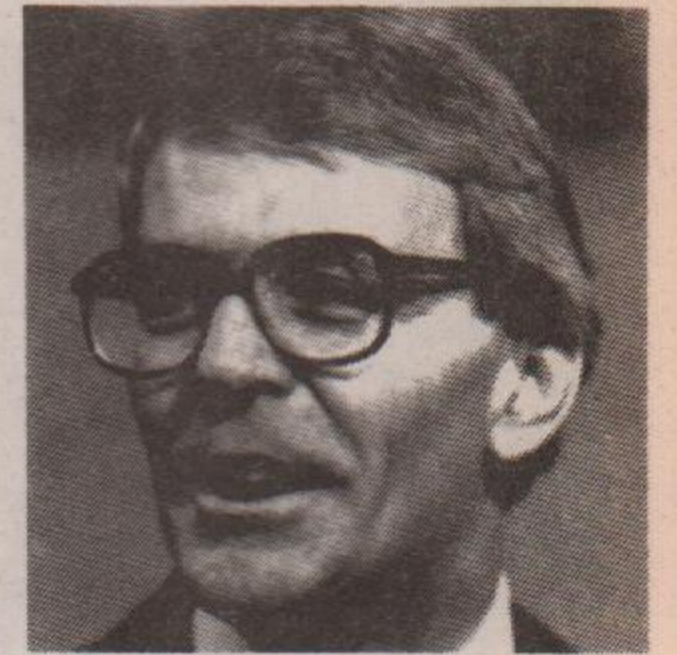
lates (my emphasis) into: "Yes, to higher barriers between nations now! Yes to a socialist Europe sometime in the future!" It goes on to say "Our slogan should be not just 'No to Maastricht!' but 'No to Maastricht! No to the barriers between European nations! Yes to workers' unity! Yes to a fight for democracy within the EC and a democratic Europe!'"

Two points on that: First, would any of the 'No to Maastricht' left-wingers disagree with that? It would be a bit strange if they were to say 'Yes to barriers! No to a more democratic Europe!

No to workers' unity!"

Secondly, does the editorial not fall into the same trap of coming up with a slogan which *despite its good intentions translates* into the same old narrow England-centred confusion of most of the Left on this issue? If there is a difference between the two, it might be an idea for someone to point it out!

If it comes to making a choice, I think we should err more towards European unity than its opposite. But since it is, as the editorial says, a bosses' Europe we cannot give our blessing to the machinations of the



Major's positively against it European capitalists.

That's why we should abstain on the question of a referendum and call for an abstention if there is one.

# Don't back the nationalists!

I don't agree with the editorial (*SO* 527) that argues the left should campaign for a referendum on Maastricht.

Two reasons are given for such an approach. Firstly, it would "open up a debate" and, secondly, it could damage the "credibility and authority" of various capitalist governments.

The forces that such a campaign would unleash

are competing wings of the Tory Party, little England 'left wing' nationalists and so on. The Danish and Irish ballots are evidence of this. Our voice would be drowned out.

This isn't an argument against all referenda. If the vast majority were in favour of such a call we should back it, or if it were likely to strengthen a working class or democratic struggle our support

would be obligatory.

The opposite is the case here. A yes vote would indicate support for Major, a no vote, nationalism. It would be a tactical mistake to join a campaign headed by a section of the Labour left (and worse) which is nationalistic. No good, in present circumstances, can come out of a referendum.

Martin Peters  
South London

# Links with the union rank and file

Neil Kinnock keeps on moving the goal posts and blames the other side when things go wrong. This happened in the General Election aftermath. Now he and his red-rose chums argue that Labour should be more right-wing.

So there had to be another manoeuvre, folks.

This time the scapegoat is the trade union movement. Forget that workers created

the Labour Party, forget that Kinnock cynically used the so-called "block vote" when it suited him — he says he wants more rights for party activists!

Of course, anyone believing that will believe anything. Already he and his London executive have powers to virtually alter rules at will, and even democratically-selected parliamentary candidates (witness the Leith scene) can

be bureaucratically removed if they don't fit the new yuppie image. Indeed, many activists have been hounded and expelled because of their left-wing politics, particularly if they resisted the poll tax. Dave Nellist, Terry Fields and Ron Brown, although he is not connected with Militant, prove this point.

The obvious irony is that Kinnock's pro-capitalist "Labour" Party not only loses

elections; it loses members. Perhaps someone should tell him. More importantly, isn't it time for socialists to reclaim their party and strengthen ties with the trade union rank and file?

Whatever the difficulties, this must be done if there is to be a real challenge to the Tories, both inside and outside of Parliament.

James Ross Adams  
Edinburgh

# What would you know about socialism, Mr. Yeltsin?

(Continued from page 3)

That ruling class persecuted communists, socialists, anarchists and rebellious workers. It used censorship, police beatings, jails, labour camps, mental hospitals, and ultimately the licensed state killer's bullet in the back of the neck, to suppress socialism, communism, anarchism, and the faintest stirrings of working-class revolt!

They ruled through a political monopoly which gave them all power in the state and therefore collective ownership of the means of production "owned" by the state, which they in fact owned.

They called their association of police-state administrators and outright gangsters a party. But it was not a self-selecting politically motivated party. It was a hierarchy of the privileged elite. It was held together not by ideas or by a programme but

by material privilege.

They called themselves "socialists", "communists", and "Marxists", but in fact they operated in the countries they controlled as a savagely exploitative ruling class.

Their real attitude to the people was like that of slave masters in the ancient world to the slaves. They embodied, through all their decades of rule, the very essence of all that socialism and communism came into existence to fight and overthrow.

Socialists! Communists! Hitler called himself a socialist! We live in an epoch of debased political coinage and institutionalised lies. Words alone tell us nothing. Judged by their foul deeds, these were Stalinists, not socialists, not communists. Yeltsin spent his life inside the Stalinist ruling class. It was their ideas, and their historical rationalisation for their

own rule, not socialism, not communism, that Yeltsin grew up with.

Yeltsin is a renegade Stalinist, not an ex-socialist or ex-communist!

It is the Stalinist bureaucratic ruling class which collapsed in the ex-USSR.

It was Stalinism, not socialism, which came in the person of Yeltsin to genuflect before the priests and gods of US capitalism.

It is Stalinism, socialism's murderous enemy, which has failed, not socialism.

The assembled members of the US Congress — plutocrats and the tools of the rich — who listened to Yeltsin tell them that socialism is dead and that communism will rise no more, have had professional thugs and gangsters — men like Oliver North, Gordon Liddy, and "Stormin' Norman" — to do their thuggery for them. In all

likelihood Yeltsin had to do a lot of his own thuggery for himself — against the working class, against the second-class nations in the Russian empire, and against real socialists in the USSR.

It is the Stalinist bureaucratic ruling class which collapsed in the ex-USSR, with part of it, led by Yeltsin, opting to replace their moribund bureaucratic class rule with capitalism. It is Stalinism, socialism's murderous enemy, which has failed, not socialism. Yeltsin knows nothing of socialism.

Socialism is dead? What do you know about socialism, Mr Yeltsin! How could you know? Socialism in the former USSR is very weak. But it is more alive there now than it has been at any time since Stalin massacred the Bolshevik party 55 years ago. It will get stronger!





Like father like sons: crooked, exploiting swindlers

# The Maxwells and the discipline of the market

By Chris Reynolds

If you owe a bank £100, said the economist Maynard Keynes, then you have a problem. If you owe the bank a million pounds, then the bank has a problem.

Likewise, if you steal £9, then you have a problem; if you steal £900 million, then the people you steal from have a problem!

Robert Maxwell, who stole, on current estimates, about £448 million from his companies' pension funds, and £485 million from the companies themselves, is dead and has no more problems. His sons Kevin and Ian were arrested last week, with their sidekick Larry Trachtenberg, on criminal charges of fraud, and also face civil proceedings in which the liquidators of Maxwell investment companies are claiming £850 million from them.

They have hired the most expensive lawyers, and they can almost certainly delay any final verdicts in these court cases for several years. At the end of it, they may go to jail — like Alan Bond, Ivan Boesky, Michael Millken, Ernest Saunders, and other capitalist heroes of the 1980s — but probably only for a short spell.

They may well be able to pull a trick like Roger Seelig, who had his court case in the Guinness scandal stopped because the judge reckoned that the stress and strain might make Seelig suicidal. (No magistrate stops a poll tax prosecution because of the strain on the non-payer,

even though a number of people have killed themselves because of poll tax problems!)

Or like former Guinness boss Ernest Saunders, who won early release from jail on the grounds that he had the irreversible and devastating Alzheimer's disease, then once free magically "recovered" and has now been awarded a £70,000-a-year pension from Guinness.

Or like Ivan Boesky, who "bought" a deal with US prosecutors by shopping Michael Millken and others, and emerged from a short spell in a "country club" jail still a multi-millionaire.

The workers who lost their jobs in Maxwell's feverish manipulations, or are losing them now as the Maxwell business empire crumbles, will have a much harder time. So, probably, will the Maxwell company pensioners, reliant now on short-term and uncertain handouts from the government to make good their pensions.

As the Financial Times put it in a big series last week on the Maxwell affair: "No-one stopped [Maxwell] committing one of the biggest business frauds of the century. One after the other, the lines of defence failed: directors, banks, trustees, pension regulators, and the Bank of England".

They could have added: financial journalists; and the Government itself. According to a former secret service official, Robin Robison, Maxwell was "bugged" by the secret service, and the tapes and transcripts provided adequate evidence of his scams.

Maxwell — and, it seems, his sons — got away with it because in capitalist boom times like the 1980s sufficiently bold and well-connected swindlers almost always get away with it.

The "discipline" of the market, which bears down so heavily on the jobless, the worker who does exhausting overtime to raise a living wage, or the desperate family juggling bills and debts in order to stay fed and clothed and avoid eviction from their home, is much lighter for the rich.

***"Their power in the market-place depends on their credit, which in turn depends on their power in the market-place. As long as they can keep up a show of great wealth and big profits, they can keep extending their credit"***

Their power in the market-place depends on their credit, which in turn depends on their power in the market-place. As long as they can keep up a show of great wealth and big profits, they can keep extending their credit. Maxwell's companies could borrow tens of millions of pounds from the banks casually, with a phone call — the banks sometimes not

bothering to collect the assets serving as security for the loan — while a worker, or even a small business, would have to sweat and haggle to raise a thousand pounds.

Bankers are not all stupid. Many of them must have suspected that Maxwell's finances were shady or crooked. But as long as the spiral of credit kept turning — as long as they got their repayments — why should they complain? A complaint would cut off lucrative business, and, by pushing down the price of the shares which the banks held as security for their loans, it would make it harder for them to get their money back.

In the sphere of high finance, the market does not enforce efficiency, cost-cutting, and straight dealing. Just the opposite: it encourages bluff, display, excess, swindling.

And yet the governments of Western Europe, in the Maastricht Treaty, are now committing themselves to making their central banks, and a future European Central Bank, independent of all political control.

Any government, they argue, will be inclined to manipulate the money supply and interest rates for electoral advantage, with bad economic results. Only "denationalisation under bankers' control" can create a properly disciplined economy.

The Maxwell affair gives us a measure of the worth of that discipline. Public ownership, with workers' and democratic control, is still the only way to stop the rich ripping off the poor!

## The best of all possible worlds?

LES HEARN'S



SCIENCE COLUMN

Continuing an occasional series on genetics inspired by the 1991 Reith Lectures given by Professor Steve Jones.

Steve Jones' third lecture had as its theme, natural selection, not as the supreme artist of physical perfection but as a sort of bodger, fixing up a problem today with no thought to the consequences tomorrow.

He started with an intriguing coincidence: that both human and sparrow populations living in the cold North tend to have short squat bodies and limbs while those in the hot South are more slender with longer limbs. Thus the Inuit are more stocky than the Masai. Similarly with the sparrows of northern and southern Europe and North America.

Creationists believe that this reflects the thoughtfulness of God in conserving heat in the cold or for losing it in the hot.

18th century theologian, William Paley, saw the human body as exquisitely designed for its purpose. He argued that, just as the discovery of a well-designed watch would imply the existence of a watchmaker, the existence of a perfectly adapted human body implied the existence of a Supreme Designer.

The problem for this view, at least in the case of the sparrow, is that sparrows were only introduced into America about 100 years ago from England. Since then they have spread throughout the continent and acquired the differences in shape already seen in Europe. How has this happened?

The answer is natural selection acting on the natural variation in the population of birds from England. Those with longer, slimmer bodies survived and bred better in the South and vice versa in the North. The need for a conscious designer has been dispensed with.

A sort of mirror image to the creationists' argument is the view that all species

are well, even perfectly, adapted to their environment. But selection works on what is there. It cannot invent a whole new organ or molecule for a particular purpose, no matter how advantageous it would be. It has to modify one already existing.

Jones looks at the greatest selection pressure on humans since agriculture started and populations grew to sizeable proportions — disease — and shows how the blind machinery of selection can solve one problem while creating another.

With the arrival of farming in Africa, came malaria, which needs a large reservoir of infection to keep going. The malarial parasite breeds inside red blood cells, bursting out simultaneously in their thousands to infect more. This leads to worse and worse crises and is often fatal. Even now, malaria is one of the greatest killers of children, killing millions.

A chance mutation in the gene for haemoglobin gave rise to red blood cells that collapsed into a sickle shape when invaded by a malaria parasite. This slowed down the growth of the parasites so much so that a child with one copy of the mutated gene had 90% protection from malaria.

Unfortunately, a child with two copies of the gene was very seriously disabled as its red blood cells would collapse all the time, leading to blockages of the capillaries, weakness and extreme pain.

Jones likens this response of natural selection to a challenge to clutching at a straw. Rather than superbly designed, the bodies of humans are rather Heath Robinson affairs. Other responses to diseases have led to problems like cystic fibrosis (the CF gene protects against death from dysentery) and Tay-Sachs Disease (the TS gene protects against tuberculosis).

Jones believes that human civilisation has significantly reduced the effect of natural selection on humans as infectious diseases have been largely limited as causes of death. He speculates that different patterns of fertility (smaller families, later parenthood, survival of premature babies) may have some effect on human evolution. The impact of AIDS in some parts of the world may lead to the survival and spread of mutations resistant to the virus. Perhaps they will have drawbacks similar to those of the genes for sickle cell disease or cystic fibrosis.

## "Red Ken": the Pope's biggest fan

### GRAFFITI

**T**he Pope has never been afraid to speak out against the wrongs of this world." Who could this be? The Vatican press office? The Archbishop of Canterbury making another ecumenical pass to JP II?

Actually it's would-be Labour leader Ken Livingstone in his *Sun* column (£750 a week into Ken's coffers), who elsewhere — in fact *Sunday's Independent* magazine — has come out as a big fan of Pope John XXIII. He "clearly stood head and shoulders above all my scientist hero figures in terms of his intelligence and... his love."

Ken Livingstone's morals are somewhat more earthly than God's earthly representative. The man who — according to Lynn Barber in the *Independent on Sunday* — was described as "a shameless carpetbagger" and "an obsessive manipulator" by Neal Ascherson, is adept at spreading the dirt.

At a recent Livingstone meeting to promote his joke candidature for Labour leader, *Socialist Organiser* supporters were giving out leaflets explaining why Livingstone should not be supported. At the end of the meeting some reporters asked who these people giving out the anti-Livingstone leaflets were. "Some splinter of the Workers' Revolutionary Party who get money from Libya and have links with the Iraqi Communist Party" replied Saint Ken. Very imaginative Ken; exactly how many years have you been politically allied to the WRP and splinters thereof who take money from Libya? Who paid your bills on *Labour Herald*?

In the told-you so department the latest issue of *Socialist Outlook* has been widely welcomed. *Outlook* are now complaining, like a latter day inverted Dr. Frankenstein that the creature they helped to create has got no teeth.

The *Socialist*, they complain, is "too bland and has needed a sharper cutting edge" — this from the people who more than anyone else engineered the soggy *Socialist* house style. Worst



Gaddafi: also one of Ken's favourite people

of all "*Socialist* failed to give up-front support to Labour during the election campaign". Could this be the same *Socialist* *Outlook* who succeeded in voting three different ways at the *Socialist* Movement AGM last year when *Socialist Organiser* supporters tried to insist that the *Socialist* should have a clear and campaigning line, advocating a Labour vote in every constituency? One thing is for sure, *Outlook* have succeeded in shaping a paper after their own image.

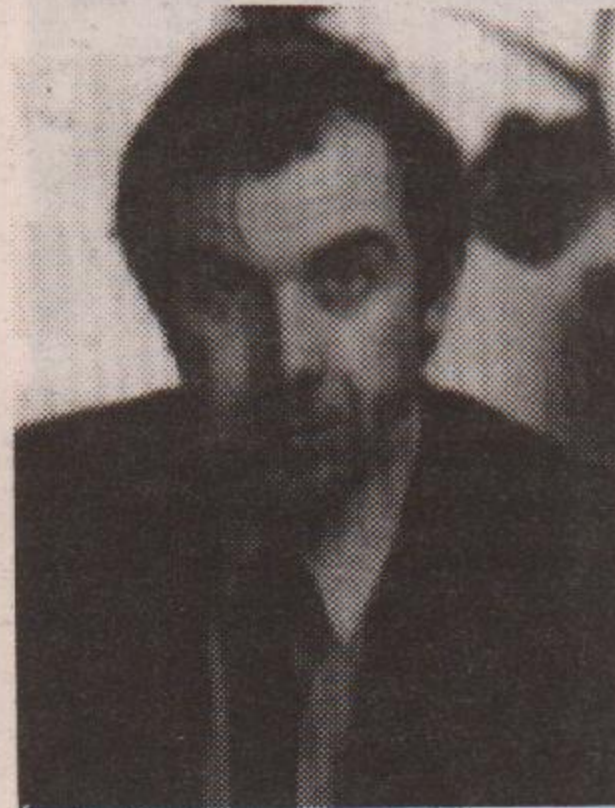
**D**enmark Shows the Way" proclaims the banner headline of what? No, not the *Daily Telegraph*. This isn't little Englandism, but little Irish Republicanism. The headline is on the front page of Sinn Fein's mouthpiece, *An Phoblacht*. Maastricht must be opposed, argue the exponents of the armalite and the no-vote, because it will ruin the Irish rural economy (actually the Eurofunds from the CAP is the only thing which keeps it prosperous). More bizarre still, *An Phoblacht* claims that it will stand in the way of women's rights (at the same time the Catholics were arguing it would allow free choice for abortion so they also argued for a no-vote).

On the topic of Maastricht how do all the professional "anti-imperialists" of the left square up to the two referenda?

*Socialist Outlook*, *Socialist Action* and the like call for opposition to the "imperialist" Maastricht treaty. So why did the thoroughly "imperialist" Danes vote against it while the "anti-imperialist" Irish voted in favour? If you ask, you will surely be told that the process of permanent revolution moves in mysterious ways, its ultimate wonders to perform.

# Andrew Neil: Republican campaigner?

### PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

**T**he most interesting (some would say, the only interesting) aspect of the continuing Diana/Charles/Royal marriage/suicide bid row is the mounting speculation about motives. Specifically, the motives of the *Sunday Times* and its publicity-hungry editor, Mr Andrew Neil.

Simple folk like me naturally assumed that Mr Neil had only one motive when he decided to shell out between £250,000 and £275,000 on exclusive serialisation rights to the Andrew Morton book: boosting the circulation and profits of his newspaper. We barked with knowing, derisive laughter as the oleaginous Mr Neil appeared on our TV screens in, variously, concerned mode (expressing sympathy for the plight of the poor, tormented Princess) and self-righteous mode (this is a

matter of Public Interest, the Right to Know etc). Mr Neil is not a convincing performer and — it has to be said — the camera is not kind to him at the best of times.

But perhaps we underestimated this canny son of the Manse. For some time, the more bufferish sections of the Tory press (notably *The Spectator* and *The Sunday Telegraph*) have been making a point of referring to the alleged 'republican sympathies' of Mr Neil and his boss, Mr Murdoch. The *Independent* magazine's 'Weasel' (the high-Tory Alexander Chancellor — very much part of the bufferish tendency), spelled it out this Saturday: "As time goes on, Mr Neil's denials that he is leading a republican campaign become more and more difficult to believe. The way he talks, and the way his paper has presented Mr Morton's revelations about the Princess of Wales, seem designed to diminish as much as possible the esteem in which the monarchy is held. It is high time he admitted it."

Now, this kind of outburst can, in part, be put down to a continuation by other means, of the splendid "Neil and Times Newspapers vs. Worsthorne and the *Sunday Telegraph*" case of 1990.

This highly-entertaining farce was sparked by a *Sunday Telegraph* editorial attacking Andrew Neil for his association with Ms Pamella Bordes, including the accusation that Neil



inhabited "a sleazy demi-monde". Neil, in reply, accused Peregrine Worsthorne (the author of the attack) of being part of a "Garrick Club Mafia" made up of gin-sodden reactionaries and snobs, out of tune with the thrusting, dynamic spirit of Mrs Thatcher's meritocratic Britain.

**"The question of the monarchy probably encapsulates this dispute within contemporary Conservatism..."**

It was an inter-Tory conflict that (in Neil's words) boiled down to "New Britain vs. the Snobbery". Neil won his case, but received only derisory damages.

The sniping has continued ever since, with Neil using his "Atticus" column in the *Sunday Times* for regular attacks and the Garrick Club Mafia returning the fire from the *Sunday Telegraph* and *Spectator*.

The question of the monar-

chy probably encapsulates this dispute within contemporary Conservatism, but the idea that meritocrat Neil is on a conscious, deliberate republican campaign seemed a little far-fetched to me until this week's *Sunday Times* appeared. In it, the political commentator Robert Harris (admittedly, a maverick Labour supporter) condemns the Labour leadership for being "supine" on the monarchy and suggests that such threat to the future of the House of Windsor as exists comes not from the left but from the right".

He goes on to confess to "rather enjoying the discomfiture of the *Spectator/Sunday Telegraph* crowd as they bewail what is happening to the monarchy. At last something they love is being gnawed at by the beasts they helped unleash in 1979. For 13 years they found the right wing, rotweiler tabloids harmless enough, because they shared their prejudices about socialism and helped return Tory governments. Now they want them muzzled". Harris is his own man, and a good socialist. But that was the voice of Andrew Neil; for once in my life I agree with him.

## The unbearable unendingness of housework



### WOMEN'S EYE

By Rebecca Van Homan

**E**ver since Louis Pasteur discovered micro-organisms in 1857, products have been invented to get rid of them. Or rather there is a huge market in cleaning products to exploit.

I have just watched an advert for "Lifeguard", which claims not only to kill all known germs, but goes on killing them for up to 24 hours (thus making use of this product a daily necessity).

Countless adverts show germs breeding the second after you have wiped the floor, table, cooker, bath, etc etc. Like painting the Forth Bridge, germ killing is a never-ending job. Or rather a never-ending guilt trip for women. This unyielding propaganda not only makes massive profits for Unilever, but also keeps women toiling at unpaid labour in the home.

Ann Oakley's study of housework found the unendingness of the task was the worst aspect. Ironing came top of the "dislike" list — being most like assembly-line factory work — and cooking, a potentially creative act, is the best liked or "least disliked" chore.

The unending propaganda of adverts not only sells us gallons of unnecessary cleaning products, but also portrays a powerful image of virtuous womanhood.

The virtuous housewife exists in a surgically clean house and performs duties with a calm manner, scarcely

a hair out of place and a permanently unruffled, cosmetically enriched grin.

**"Despite countless labour-saving devices, pre-packaged foods and superstores selling everything under one roof, time spent doing housework has actually increased..."**

Compare this to the reality where housewives run the highest risk of developing physical ailments — from high blood pressure to colitis and are prescribed buckets full of anti-depressants to ease the pain.

One advertisement in an Australian medical journal shows a typical "before" and "after" situation in which a lethargic, sedentary housewife nursing an inactive Hoover is transformed into a bright, cheerful, Hoover-pus-

ing housewife via the medical administration of a magical psychotropic drug.

Despite countless labour-saving devices, pre-packaged foods and superstores selling everything under one roof, time spent doing housework has actually increased (and of course housework destroys a higher proportion of working class women's lives than middle class women).

The presence of a man in the "Jif" advert dreamily cleaning his bathroom while thinking of a Greek holiday demonstrates that it is not a patriarchal conspiracy to keep women in their place, but capitalism's desire to plunder new markets. New Man means new opportunities for profit, built-in obsolescence ensures that a new gadget is needed annually.

Yes, housework does enslave women, but it is market expansion and profits which capitalism is most interested in.

**Tony Benn analyses Labour's defeat:**

# Why we lost and how to win

Tony Benn MP has written a memorandum to Labour's National Executive, challenging the conventional explanations of Labour's General Election defeat. The text has been abridged.

## INTRODUCTION

This memorandum examines the political strategy which has been adopted since 1983 by an overwhelming majority of the NEC, the Shadow Cabinet, the PLP, major trade union leaders and endorsed by most political commentators.

## WHY WE LOST — AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW

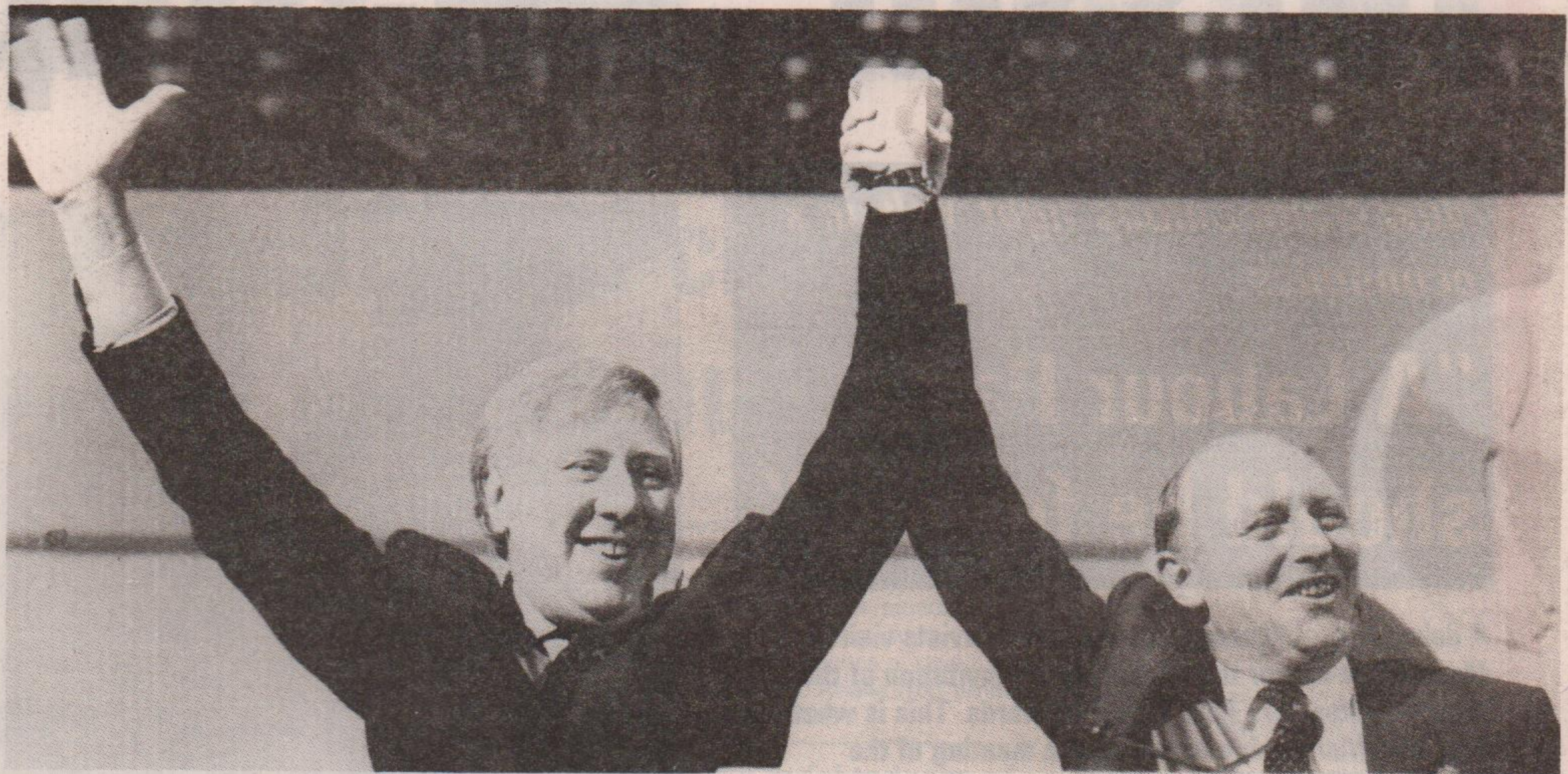
If the NEC is to make sense of its examination of the most recent defeat we shall have to re-examine the basic thinking which led us to adopt the strategy which we have adopted.

For there is an alternative analysis which may explain our successive defeats more accurately, and that analysis merits our consideration.

1. The Labour Cabinet had, quite unnecessarily, capitulated to the IMF in 1976, and had to make damaging cuts in the public services which hit the wages and conditions of those who were our natural supporters, at a time when the Oil Revenues were beginning to appear in huge quantities that would have protected the currency without IMF support.

2. The then Prime Minister had threatened to resign as leader of the party during the discussions about the 1979 election manifesto a few weeks before polling day, thus claiming a personal veto over Conference policies he did not like, which made the pressure for greater party democracy necessary.

3. The failure to accept the immense damage to the party [which] was done by those Labour MPs, representing 10%



The old leadership based their strategy on capitulation to Tory policies. That is why Labour lost the General Election

of the entire PLP who formed the SDP and devoted the next few years to the destruction of the Labour Party, enjoying the full support of the media throughout.

4. The decision of the leader to resign, and of the PLP to go ahead and elect his successor was a matter of weeks before the electoral college was established which was deliberately designed to prevent the party membership from having any say in the election of his successor.

5. The decision of some powerful trade union leaders, at about the same time, to back the electoral college on the understanding that it would not be used, a decision which was never made public.

6. The support given by the PLP to the Falklands War.

7. The denunciation of Labour's Manifesto policies on defence by its two previous Labour Prime Ministers, and other leading figures in the party, during the 1983 election campaign.

8. The failure to give proper support to the miners, the printworkers, the Lambeth and Liverpool councillors and others who were genuinely defending the interests of those they represented.

9. The incessant attacks upon socialists in the party which gave the impression to the public that the party leadership believed that the party was absolutely riddled with extremists.

10. The abandonment of Labour's conference resolution calling for reductions in Defence expenditure, a policy which was highly relevant following the end of the Cold War, and which denied us the right to argue that our social expenditure could, in part, be paid for from a Peace Dividend.

11. The adoption of a full commitment to a European Union, and a common currency, combined with a determined opposition to a Referendum to allow the electors to have any say in the matter.

12. The acceptance of some Tory anti-trade union laws in the policy reviews and the refusal to permit a

recorded vote on the matter, when the NEC voted on the Policy Reviews.

13. The undue reliance upon expensive polling and press campaigns to the virtual exclusion of any public demonstrations or meetings.

***"[There must be] ...acceptance that there are many schools of socialist thought and they must all be accepted as legitimate within the party."***

14. The impression given that the Party would say anything to get into office, which greatly discouraged those who had joined the party out of a moral commitment to socialist transformation.

15. The negative campaign fought in 1992, which seemed to concentrate upon attacking Tory ministers personally, lacking any serious socialist analysis to explain that the recession was, in fact, an international capitalist phenomenon.

It is important that these points should be put on record since they were all made, at the time, by the Left minority on the NEC.

## THE ATTACKS NOW BEING MADE UPON THE LABOUR PARTY

The Tory and Liberal press, who are no friends of ours, are now engaged in trying to persuade us that:

a. Socialism is dead — at the very moment when unemployment is at all-time levels and Britain, and the capitalist world, is in the middle of a huge slump.

b. The trade union connection is a handicap when, in fact, it is our main link with our natural political constituency, and the party without the unions would go the way of the SDP.

c. We should continue with the strategy we have followed so far which has signally failed to gain us the victory, by marginalising the Left instead of trying to work with it.

## LABOUR'S AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

If Labour is to win public support for the next election it must give serious consideration to the following strategy:

Build itself up by campaigning, locally and nationally, for:

a. Full employment

b. A big house-building programme

c. A free Health Service and better care for the disabled

d. Life-long and equal education for everyone

h [sic]. Higher pensions and dignity for all retired men and women

i. A Minimum Wage, better benefits and a fair tax system

j. Democratic reform, Civil Liberties and trade union rights

k. Freedom for all local authorities to provide essential services

l. An end to all forms of discrimination

m. World peace, disarmament and development

n. The protection of the planet and its wild-life from destruction

o. The maintenance of the supremacy of the electors in choosing those who make the laws under which we live

p. Socialist ideas and their relevance.

## PARTY ORGANISATION

There must be a re-organisation of the party and its work to achieve the following:

1. Greater devolution of power from headquarters to the constituencies.

2. The maintenance of the central role of Conference.

3. Stronger co-operation between the party and the trade unions building upon local links as well as national ones.

4. The acceptance that there are many schools of socialist thought and they must all be accepted as legitimate within the party.

5. Attempts to widen affiliations to the party so as to link us to other progressive organisations.

6. The development of genuine political education.

7. The re-establishment of Labour as a campaigning party and not just its leaders as an alternative management team for the status quo.

8. The acceptance, by the new leadership, of the importance of the Left within the party, an end to the efforts that have been made to isolate and marginalise it, and serious attempts to harness its abilities in campaigning for victory, since Labour cannot be effective unless Left and Right can work together in mutual respect.

## CONCLUSION

*This memorandum has been written to allow wider discussion about the future, within the movement, as we build up our strength, and start working for the election of a majority Labour Government which we all hope to see in office soon.*

**Tony Benn**  
June 1992

Why Labour lost

A pamphlet from AWL

80p

## Why Labour lost

The reasons for Labour's election defeat on April 9 and what socialists must do now:

articles from *Socialist Organiser* by John O'Mahony, Tony Benn and others

80p plus 32p postage from: SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

# Russia: the capitalis

*New trade unions fight Yeltsin's economics:*

## "A Labour Party should be formed"

**A delegation of Moscow trade union activists visited Merseyside earlier this month on the invitation of the Vauxhall Ellesmere Port TGWU stewards. This is what they told Merseyside activists at a meeting of the Liverpool TGWU offices on Wednesday 10 June.**

Sergei is the organiser of the independent car workers union at the Azkl plant in Moscow, which has a workforce of 20,000 — of whom 11,000 work on the car assembly line; 9,000 are white collar workers, builders, doctors and other ancillary workers.

I was at the White House in Moscow after the August coup, defending the so-called "democratic" party: we thought that Yeltsin would think of our people when he had come to power.

His first decrees seemed hopeful for change: I liked the decree saying that the workers would be entitled to decide what part of the profits they made would be used for our social needs; and the decision that the property was to be taken from state control, allowing workers to own and run their own enterprises.

All these decrees have come to nothing: the rights of workers have been cut not extended. All we hear now is that capitalism is the panacea; workers will live well only under capitalism; the free market is all we need.

Yeltsin and Co refer to the

West's abundance of goods — but say nothing of unemployment. They are trying to split Russian society into different classes.

Instead of the old party committed and executives, we now have new bodies (holding societies, consortia, etc). It seems as if different people are in control — but in reality it is the same CP functionaries trying to present a different face.

For example, at the Azkl plant the official union (ex-state union) to which most workers belong, works with management and the new government. Its collective agreement proposed cutting workers' rights and conditions.

We had to face the official union to allow us to negotiate the collective agreement jointly with us.

We demanded that wages should be raised in line with prices; and that workers should be paid wages in cars. Workers haven't been paid for weeks as there is no money in the banks; and the rouble's value is plummeting.

We have only 300 members, while the official trade union has almost 20,000. But when we issued a petition with our demands in the assembly-shop of 4,500 workers we got 1,500 signatures in a few days.



Russian miners make their voices heard

We forced the official to let us in on negotiations, and told the enterprise manager to sign the agreement. We decide what part of the profits should be spent on social needs of the workers.

We need an alternative strategy to Yeltsin and the official unions but independent unions are only just developing: our fight is just beginning.

**"We need an alternative strategy to Yeltsin and the official unions but independent unions are only just developing: our fight is just beginning."**

Workers now distrust any political party, so the question of an independent labour party hasn't yet much support. I think we are at the beginning of a long and nasty battle. A labour party should be formed as it was in Britain — from below. And we need to build international links.

## "A dictatorship in the i

Galina is an economist working in Moscow

In 1987 Gorbachev started reforming from the top, and a gradual revolution started in Russia. After the August putsch the Soviet empire was ruined and new opportunities to have a real democratic movement in Russia opened up.

But the people who then came to power in Russia didn't take the democratic route: the Yeltsin government in Russia started to establish a dictatorship in the interests of the former nomenklatura, who together with the incoming new capitalists began to turn themselves into a new class of owners.

This was the policy executed by Yeltsin and Gaidar and their government. But this was done with the agreement of Parliament: in fact, parliament delegated them to carry out this policy.

Yeltsin wants to go further than this mandate. Now there is a campaign against parliament

throughout the country — people are prepared to get rid of parliament.

Parliament conducts a policy of accommodating to capitalism. All the measures taken by Parliament — the liberalisation of prices, and privatisation — are directed to concentrate capital in the hands of 5-10% of the population. There is a conscious drive to create a new class of poor people in Russia.

Since 2 January — when they introduced liberalisation of prices — the rouble's value has fallen to almost nothing. In the past four months prices have risen 11 times, wages only 3 times.

Prices continue to rise — but not wages. In fact, many workers aren't paid the wages they've earned — both government and managers say there is no cash in the bank. (By this tactic the government has saved 14 billion roubles. Had they paid wages in full, they would not be 130 billion roubles in debt).

So workers are now going on strike to get the money due to them. The government does pay





# st road to the abyss



## 96% of children sick or malnourished

Stan Crooke reports on the economic crisis

Most Russian families spend most of their money on food. With rocketing prices under Boris Yeltsin's free market economic programme, average calorie-intake has fallen by nearly 20% from 2,600 calories per day to 2,100, less than the necessary intake for an eleven year old child.

Only 4% of children in Russia are fully healthy. Russia now ranks 50th in the world table of child mortality, behind Barbados and amongst a cluster of African countries.

Between 1986 and 1990 the death rate increased from 10.4 per thousand to 11.4 per thousand. In November of last year, for the first time since 1945, the death rate exceeded the birth rate. Four million abortions are now carried out in Russia each year.

81% of Russians are dissatisfied with life. With predictions of up to 12 million unemployed and hyper-inflation of 1000% it is hardly surprising that only 6% of Russians expect any improvement in their situation before the end of 1992.

As the crisis deepens, the growing sense of social despair is creating the ground for the emergence of an authoritarian government freed from the last vestiges of parliamentary accountability, and basing its appeal on strident Russian nationalism.

Hardly a day passes by without the release of another set of statistics revealing the economic and

social crisis into which Russia has been plunged by the pro-market policies of the Yeltsin-Gaidar government.

In the first three months of this year alone, industrial output fell by 15%. Production of steel tubing fell by 29%. Rolled iron production fell by 23%

**"The indebtedness of Russian enterprises has spiralled out of control, increasing 23-fold in the first three months of the year. From a capitalist point of view, 90% of enterprises in Russia are insolvent."**

The output of televisions fell by 28%, shoes by 21%, fridges by 15% and fabrics by 11%. In the same three months the gross national income in Russia was 18% lower than in the opening months of 1991.

By way of comparison, in 1941 — when the invading German armies had occupied Byelorussia, Ukraine, and the Baltic states, and were besieging Leningrad — the Soviet national income was 8% lower than it had been the previous year.

The indebtedness of Russian enterprises has spiralled out of control, increasing 23-fold in the first three months of the year.

Banks are now owed 300 billion roubles by Russian enterprises.

The overall debts of the enterprises are estimated at a trillion roubles. From a capitalist point of view, 90% of enterprises in Russia are insolvent.

The transport network is also collapsing, as costs rise due to increasing fuel costs, whilst income falls due to less freight being carried.

On the railways, prices for passengers have doubled, whilst rates for carrying freight have trebled. In spite of this, Russian railways expect to make a loss this year of 66 billion roubles on passenger transport alone.

It is a similar story in agriculture. Last year's harvest brought in 93 million tons of grain, with 22 million tons being put into storage. But this year Russia will have to import an estimated 29 million tons of grain. Even the traditionally pampered military sector has been badly hit by the escalation economic crisis.

For the first time in 60 years not a single new ship is to be built for the Russian (formerly Soviet) navy. Cutbacks in spending on the refitting of ships over the past four years have resulted in as many ships being scrapped as were lost in two years at the height of the Second World War.

51% of families of members of the Russian armed forces have no savings at all. 41% are in constant debt. 24% have savings of less than 500 roubles. Cuts in the armed forces have created new problems: 264 families of soldiers released from active service are homeless.

## interests of capital"

those who go on strike — eventually. And, slowly, strikers are winning wage rises.

But wages are still inadequate to live on. Starvation level is put at 500 roubles a month — which is what workers in education, science and culture earn. The minimum basic standard of living is calculated at 3,000 roubles a month: workers in co-ops earn this; power workers earn 4,500 roubles a month and even workers in private enterprises only earn 6,000 roubles a month.

This spring, for the first time, doctors, nurses and teachers struck for higher wages.

There are two groups of opposition to Yeltsin.

Firstly, the reactionaries: their slogan is "restoration of the Soviet Union". They are totally opposed to the market.

There is the democratic left, whose slogan is "social protection in the transition to the market". They are for the defence of workers' living standards for a social market, but they warn that

people can't expect anything good from Yeltsin's government and should organised to defend themselves.

They support free trade unions, and have a strategy of trying to turn the official unions into independent unions. They believe in organising from below.

Banning the CPSU may not technically have been legal, but it was justified in revolutionary terms: the CPSU was a fascist party.

Boris Kagarlitsky's group [the Party of Labour: see previous issues of SO] is a sect. He is trying to create a party from above. That is why it is a sect. You can't create a Labour Party from above: it must be built from below.

There are two dangers in Russia: firstly a social revolt which could turn into a civil war; or more frightening, no revolt, and the lumpenisation of the people, with accompanying hostility to democracy, openness, and different ideas — the perfect breeding ground for fascism.



Russia: 12 million unemployed, 1000% inflation

# Ideas for Freedom

**"Ideas for Freedom" is three days of socialist discussion.**

**"Ideas for Freedom" is designed to provide a forum for socialists to debate out today's pressing issues. All are welcome.**



Debate for Friday: Did Lenin lead to Stalin?

## FRIDAY 3 JULY

**Starting 3.15:** Did Lenin lead to Stalin? Robert Service debates Tom Rigby ● Three part series – lessons from the rise of fascism in the 1930s – John O'Mahony ● Four part series introducing Marxist economics – Martin Thomas

**5.45 - 6.45:** Backlash against feminism? Jill Mountford ● Fighting British racism – a discussion

with Marc Wadsworth and Dion D'Silva

**7.00-8.00:** Socialists and pornography ● How to fight student poverty and voluntary membership of NUS

**8.00-9.30:** Ireland – what solution? Tony Dale discusses with Naomi Wayne

## SATURDAY 4 JULY

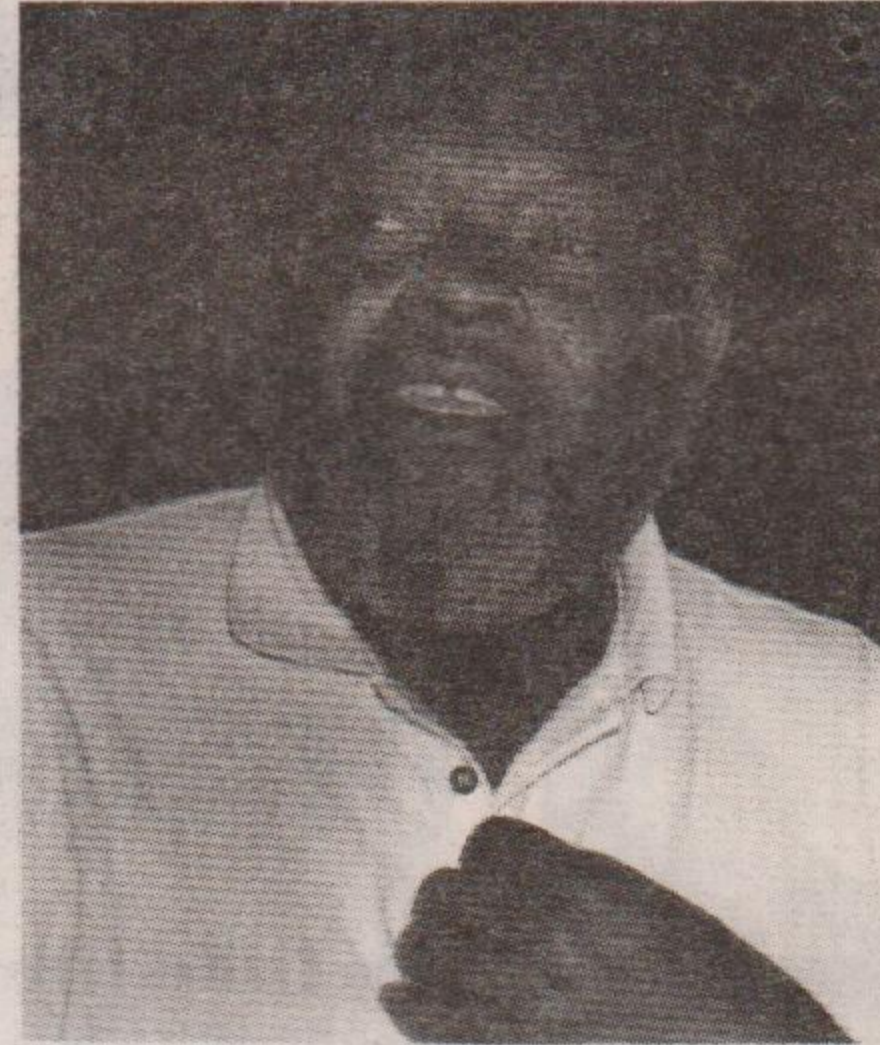
**10.30-12.30:** After the election, the prospects for socialism – John O'Mahony

**1.30-2.45:** Where now for Labour? Bernie Grant ● Slavery and anti-racism – Robin Blackburn ● Does God exist? Martin Thomas

**Starting 1.30:** Should Scotland be independent? Katrina Faccenda debates Stewart Hosie from the Scottish National Party

**3.00-4.15:** Should Harold Wilson be rehabilitated? Austen Morgan ● The roots of anti-semitism – Nic Brereton ● Is this the end of history? Jim Denham ● The Tories, sex and the family – Martin Durham

**5.00-6.15:** Can Le Pen take power? Gail Cameron ● Was Keynes right? Peter Kenway ● Their morals and ours –



Bernie Grant discusses "Where now for Labour", Saturday

Pat Murphy ● Should we save the *Morning Star*? Al Richardson

**Starting 5.00:** What is the nature of Stalinism? debate with Martin Thomas, Tom Rigby and Hillel Ticktin

**6.30-7.30:** The legacy of Malcolm X – Sab Sanghera ● Fighting contracting out – Trudy Saunders ● Where do ideas come from? Ruth Cockcroft ● Ennis, an Irish town – John O'Mahony

## SUNDAY 5 JULY

**Starting 10.00:** The history of International Socialists – John O'Mahony

**10.00-11.45:** South Africa in crisis – Tom Rigby ● The Communist Manifesto – John Moloney ● Hollywood's view of history

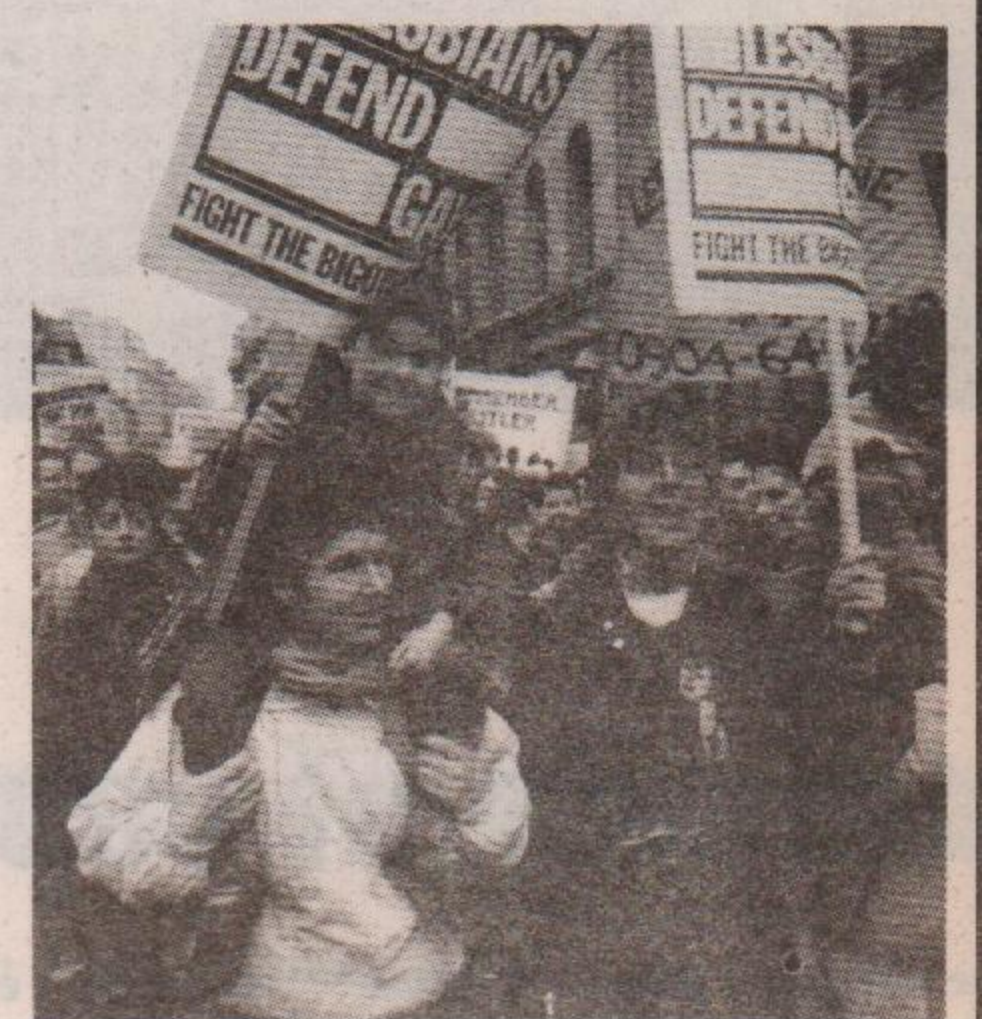
– Dan Judelson

**12.00-1.00:** A defence of dialectics – John Pike ● Is Politically Correct, correct? Martin Thomas ● The State and Revolution – Caroline Henry

**1.45-2.45:** The left and Europe – the debate ● Cuba: socialism on one island? Cathy Nugent ● Lessons of October – Mary Cooper ● Queer politics – Janine Booth

**Starting 1.45:** Forum on Zionism – speakers include John O'Mahony

**3.00-4.00:** How do we deal with union bureaucrats? Jim Denham ● A history of AIDS – Kev Sexton ● Stalinism and Bolshevism – Jim Kearns



The politics of the lesbian and gay movement will be discussed on Sunday at the session "Queer Politics"

### Facilities

There will be a professionally staffed creche at Workers' Liberty '92. Accommodation can be provided.

There may be transport from your area (tel. 071-639 7967 for details). Food, drink and entertainment are available.

### Tickets

Before the end of June tickets are cheaper.

For the 3 days, £7 (unwaged)/£11 (students and low-waged)/£16 (waged). Subtract £1 (unwaged) or £2 (others) from these ticket prices for Saturday-Sunday only tickets.

### More details

For all enquiries phone Mark 071-639 7967.

## How to get there

Ideas for Freedom is held at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, London N19.

The nearest tube is Archway on the Northern Line.

## Times and dates

Ideas for Freedom is from Friday 3 to Sunday 5 July

Friday 3.00 – 8.00

Saturday 10.30 – 7.30

Sunday 10.00 – 4.30

Entertainment will be provided on Friday and Saturday evening.

# Can Scotland United get a result?

By Harry Tuttle

The Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) has endorsed Scotland United, the group set up after the election by George Galloway and his supporters to campaign for a "multi-option referendum" on the constitutional future of Scotland. But the campaign faces enormous problems.

In the wake of Labour's defeat, the democratic demand for a Scottish Assembly has been flatly refused by a newly confident John Major. In fact, the Tories gained seats in Scotland, reversing their decline against all expectations.

Scotland United now looks set to push for an unofficial referendum, perhaps organised by the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

Socialists must say clearly that this is the road to disaster. It is fuelled by myths and illusions fostered by the nationalists and their allies in the Labour Party.

Myth one: "75% of our people voted against the Tories" (STUC)

No, plenty of Scottish voters voted tactically against Labour and for the Nationalists or the Liberal-Democrats — both bourgeois parties. It's true that 75% of Scotland voted for parties other than the Tories, but if that was a simple tactical vote against the Tories, they would not have gained seats! Wishful thinking about the existence of an anti-Tory bloc in Scotland ignores the huge bedrock strength of Labour in the Scottish working class.

Myth two: "75% of our people voted for some form of Scottish Parliament" (STUC)

No, in opinion polls constitutional change came well down on the list after unemployment, the Health Service, education and taxation. There are plenty of unionists in the ranks of the Liberal-Democrats and

the Labour Party, and a few Tories who favour an assembly. In the housing schemes of the central belt, and the leafy suburbs of Edinburgh, it was the class issues that were decisive.

Myth three: "The politicians must put people before party — our Scottish Parliament would be about co-operation, compromise and consensus, not the moth-eaten Westminster variety" (STUC).

Co-operation, compromise and consensus with whom? Over what?

There is no unifying "national interest" in Scotland, especially after the democratic demand for an assembly has been satisfied. All this can mean is co-operation with bourgeois parties, with 'patriotic' Scottish bosses. It means compromise and sell-out in the class struggle. And what is the contrast with Westminster here?

If Westminster lacks consensus and compromise (which comes as news to me) it's only because the two big parties represent the interests of the bosses on the one hand, and of the labour movement, with all its faults, on the other.

Do we really want a Parliament that is more passive against capitalism than Westminster? There are two other ideas here — first, that 'our people' (whose people?) are innately more 'reasonable' or 'progressive' than the English electors — a deeply chauvinist argument. And, second, there is an implied grovelling to the Tory government: "Please, please give us a Scottish Parliament, secure us our careers, and we promise not to misbehave or to cause any trouble for your capitalist rule."

Myth four: On the level of strategy, Scotland United argue that 'parliamentary disruption' and an unofficial referendum are the way forward. In this they are backed by Scottish Militant Labour who call for a 'Socialist Scottish Assembly' as if it



The democratic demand for a Scottish Assembly has been refused by the Tory Government

were on offer, and a COSLA referendum.

Parliamentary disruption, yes — but not the slightly comical sight of John McAllion crying out "I spy strangers", and a couple of bemused Canadian tourists being escorted out of the visitors' gallery.

Indeed we must argue for generalised and serious disruption in Parliament. But an unofficial COSLA referendum is a disaster waiting to happen.

Look at the facts: the District election turnout was thirty per cent. Labour voters who failed to turn out in May will not bother to vote on an issue whose result makes little or no difference anyway.

Scotland United would be lucky to

get a ten per cent turnout in a COSLA referendum. And, at that level, they would be lucky to win, since Tory unionists would seize the chance to deal a death blow to the demand for an assembly. It's a funny sort of publicity stunt that offers a big chance of victory to your opponents and a huge risk of making yourselves look idiots.

The antics of Scotland United are fuelled by an understandable wish to do something in the wake of the general election. One of its organisers told me that he had kept his head down for long enough, Labour couldn't win again, and that the Scottish question is the 'only show in town'. But it isn't.

Privatisation of the railways,

hospital opt-outs, the threats to jobs from the new round of local authority cutbacks — all these and more give us opportunities to fight back against the Tories. They should not be counterposed to the demand for a referendum as the SWP imagine, but neither should Scotland United kid anyone that it can displace Labour in Scotland — for the subtext of all this is another attempt at the ill fated Jim Sillars' Scottish Labour Party minus Jim Sillars this time, Sillars having fled politics for his fat, Middle Eastern business consultancy.

Scottish socialists need now, more than ever, to keep politically sober. Scotland United contributes nothing to that task.

# Sinn Fein drifts into a blind alley

## THE POLITICAL FRONT

By Pat Murphy

As Northern Ireland politics have settled into a rigid stalemate yet again after the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985, Sinn Fein has become more decisively a narrow Catholic sectarian party. It hasn't been a conscious process, indeed Gerry Adams is often at pains to stress the need to be aware of the fears of the Protestants. But Sinn Fein have come to represent not the historic republican goal of a united Irish people ('Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter') but instead the immediate consciousness of the Catholics of the most depressed parts of the North

Two years ago I happened to be in the Newry area during the local coun-

cil elections and made a point of collecting all the party political material. The Sinn Fein material chose to dwell on one particular local issue. The bus services to nationalist areas was poor, especially when compared to the services available in Protestant areas, they claimed; Sinn Fein, if elected, would do something about that.

The local council being attacked was not dominated by Unionists but by Sinn Fein's nationalist rivals the SDLP. In the heat of an election battle amongst nationalist voters, Sinn Fein was accusing the SDLP of betraying nationalists, giving preferential treatment to Protestants. This is straightforward sectarian Catholic politics — it appeals to peoples' loyalty to their own 'religious' community; it presents politics as a way of advancing the interests of a particular community. There is no attempt to address the concerns of working people in general, as a class, Catholic and Protestant.

For Sinn Fein, political action is not about creating an alliance of Protestants and Catholic workers in favour of a democratic alternative to partition. It is, instead, a competition between solely nationalist parties to create a majority amongst nationalists for a policy of armed struggle to force Britain to leave and the Protestants to 'see sense'.

The West Belfast result at the General Election — when Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams was defeated by the SDLP — and Sinn Fein's reaction to it, give a graphic demonstration of the same problem.

The SDLP victory was seen as illegitimate because while they won the largest number of votes they didn't win the only important battle in the eyes of Sinn Fein — the battle for the nationalist vote. The SDLP's great sin was that Protestant voters from the Shankill voted for them to defeat Sinn Fein.

That shift in itself is worth considering for a

moment. There is no question of this Protestant SDLP vote being positive support. It was overwhelmingly a bid to remove Adams. But it is not something that has happened on this scale before.

**"Sinn Fein was accusing the SDLP of betraying nationalists, giving preferential treatment to Protestants. This is straightforward sectarian Catholic politics"**

The SDLP support a united Ireland. Their minimum interim settlement would involve power-sharing. They were central to the Power-sharing Assembly of 1974. They are the chief backers of the Anglo-Irish Agreement which brings

Dublin involvement in the north.

Every one of these policies has been militantly, often violently, opposed by the Protestants of West Belfast, above all in the general strike that destroyed powersharing in 1974. That such Protestants decided to vote in the numbers they did, so that West Belfast will have an MP who will take up and use his seat, speaks volumes for the standing of Sinn Fein amongst Protestants.

Sinn Fein's verbal guarantees mean nothing when combined with a campaign which can appear to have only one aim — the physical coercion of an entire community into a state to which they don't want to belong.

It's no good taking comfort from the idea that Protestants have always had this attitude to Sinn Fein, and it's all to be expected. The sizable Protestant vote for the SDLP is a shift.

Sinn Fein's strategy

stands condemned as a failure not by some external British left standard but by the standards of any democratic Republicanism. It is daily making the likelihood of a united Irish Republic much more distant.

Any criticism of course raises more questions than can be briefly, glibly answered, but one conclusion, which Sinn Fein and their supporters on the British left need to heed, stands out.

The questions of what type of united Ireland could gain cross-communal support, what compromises are necessary between the Six County communities, are not questions for another day, later, after withdrawal. They are the most urgent questions for any movement which aims to win British withdrawal and a democratic settlement.

If the West Belfast result could drive any of that home it would be a victory for those who want a united Ireland and a united Irish working class.

# When General Motors planned a fascist coup in the USA

By Jim Fraser

**I**rene Du Pont was the most powerful member of the Du Pont family, which controlled the giant General Motors corporation in the USA.

Du Pont was a ferocious anti-semitic obsessed with Adolf Hitler, whose career he avidly followed. In 1926 Du Pont advocated creating a new race of supermen by the injection of special drugs throughout childhood, insisting these supermen must be physically equal to a US marine and have blood as pure as the vikings.

Throughout the thirties, the bosses of General Motors invested tens of millions of dollars into I. G. Farben, one of the largest and most powerful corporations of Nazi Germany and, through I. G. Farben, General Motors was able to make direct financial contributions to the German Nazi Party itself.

In 1933 a meeting took place between Hermann Goering and William S. Knudsen, President of General Motors, who stated on his return to New York that Nazi Germany was "the miracle of the twentieth century".

Throughout the thirties, General Motors contributed most substantially to what would clearly be the forthcoming German war effort, with General Motors' total commitment to the full-scale production inside Nazi Germany of armoured fighting vehicles, armoured cars and army trucks.

Alfred P. Sloan, Chairman of General Motors, regularly visited Berlin, where he was feted by Hitler and Goering. Another regular visitor was James D. Mooney, head of production. In 1938 Hitler awarded him the "Order of the Golden Eagle".

On 23rd November, 1937, a secret meeting took place in Boston between representatives of General Motors and the Barons Von Tippleskirch and Manfred Von Killinger. Von Tippleskirch was Nazi Germany's consul general in Boston, but, more importantly, the head of Gestapo operations there. Von Killinger was in charge of Germany's espionage network throughout the USA West Coast Area.

The upshot of the meeting was a signed agreement showing an absolute and indefinite commitment to the cause of Nazism. Part of the agreement was an all-out effort to defeat Roosevelt at the next election, and to wipe out Jewish influence in the USA. There was to be a heavily subsidised smear campaign against both Jews and the government in the press and radio, and they planned to create a Fuhrer for the USA.

Despite the absolute secrecy surrounding the meeting and the agreement, the liberal journalist, George Seldes, was about to publish information about it in his newsletter and, in August 1942, Washington state representative John M. Coffee produced the full agreement and placed it in the Congressional Record, demand-



Roosevelt set up a House Committee to investigate the Du Ponts but the US bosses closed ranks

ing that the Du Ponts and the heads of General Motors be brought to justice.

Nothing was ever done.

**"General Motors financed the "Black Legion" which had as its purpose the prevention of car workers unionising and which had close links with the Ku Klux Klan. They fire-bombed union meetings, murdered Union organisers and dedicated their lives to killing Jews and Communists. Within months, they had murdered more than fifty people as they swept through General Motors' car plants."**

Simultaneously with working hand in glove with the Nazis in Germany, the instant Hitler came to power, the Du Ponts developed and began financing fascist organisations in the USA including the virulently anti-semitic and anti-black Liberty League, donating nearly \$500,000 dollars in the first year alone. The Liberty League had lavish offices in New York, branches in twenty six colleges, and more than a dozen subsidiary organisations which distributed over fifty million copies of its

Nazi pamphlets.

In 1936, the Du Ponts poured vast finances into the election of Roosevelt's opponent, Republican Alf Landon, whose campaign included the active support of the American Liberty League, the American Nazi Party and the German-American Bund.

The same year, General Motors financed the "Black Legion" which had as its purpose the prevention of car workers unionising and which had close links with the Ku Klux Klan. They fire-bombed union meetings, murdered Union organisers and dedicated their lives to killing Jews and Communists. Within months, they had murdered more than fifty people as they swept through General Motors' car plants.

Earlier, in 1934, along with friends of the Morgan Bank and strongly supported by Hermann Schmitz of I. G. Farben, the Du Ponts financed a coup planned to overthrow the President with the aid of an army of terrorists modelled on the French fascist movement known as the Croix de Feu, which they funded to the tune of \$3 million and for which all arms and munitions necessary would be supplied by Remington, a subsidiary of Du Pont.

The man chosen by the conspirators to lead the coup, and who they planned to make into the fascist dictator of the USA was General Smedley Butler, a legendary national hero twice awarded the Congressional Medal of Honour

and Commander General of the US Marine Corps.

On the conspirators' behalf, Gerald MacGuire, a smooth attorney with known fascist sympathies, approached Butler, who feigned agreement. However, they seriously misjudged Butler who was one of those rare creatures, a member of the American ruling class who actually believed in "patriotism, the constitution and democracy".

What the heads of General Motors planned was "high treason". Butler considered it his "patriotic duty" to stop them. He told Roosevelt the entire plan.

Roosevelt was fully aware of the power of the forces determined to make the USA a fascist dictatorship barely one year after the rise of Hitler. He also knew that to arrest the conspirators would create a national crisis and possibly another Wall Street Crash. It was painful to realise that the power of big business was far mightier than the actual power of the United States government itself.

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But the coup had to be stopped and he leaked it to the press who ran it on their front pages, destroying it with ridicule.

Roosevelt then set up a special House Committee to investigate the coup. The Committee was urged to summon the Du Ponts, but refused, nor would it call anyone from the House of Morgan, and the hearings were a farce.

It was not until four years later that the Committee published its report, in a white paper marked for "restricted circulation".

The committee was able to verify all the statements made by General Butler and was able to prove the intention of the big business magnates to overthrow the elected government of the USA by armed insurrection and install a fascist dictatorship.

Nothing was ever done to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice.

**This article is based on a section of the book "Trading with the Enemy" by Charles Higham.**



She wants a German baby for the Fuhrer: he's afraid she will notice he is circumcised

# A Jew in the age of Hitler and Stalin

## Cinema

Belinda Weaver reviews *Europa Europa*

If Solomon Perel's life story had been written as fiction, it would be unbelievable. Yet it's true.

As a teenager, this German Jewish boy avoided the concentration camps first by fleeing eastwards, where he spent some time in a Russian orphanage, being trained as a

Komsomol member. Then, after being captured by the Germans, he posed as a non-Jew.

After some adventures at the front line, where his Nazi commanding officer wanted to adopt him, he ended up in an elite training school for Hitler Youth, from where he was sent back to fight his former comrades, the Russians.

Perel lived in constant fear of exposure. As a circumcised Jew, he risked discovery every time he used one of the school's communal bathrooms.

When a young Nazi girl wanted him to have sex, so that she could conceive a child for the Fuhrer, he had to refuse.

The strain on a young boy, separated from his family, and forced to be constantly on the alert, must have been horrendous. After his capture by the Germans, he didn't hear from his family again. They had fled from Germany to Poland. He didn't know if they were alive or dead.

Yet "Europa Europa" has comedy as well as tragedy. Some of Solomon's adventures

are farcical, and he clowns for the camera. As his incredible streak of luck holds, against all odds, you laugh as he simultaneously registers relief and disbelief.

At times, the film stays light, deliberately downplaying things, pulling back from emotions that might be overwhelming.

Then it delivers a wallop. When Solomon rides a streetcar through the Lodz ghetto, hoping desperately for a glimpse of his family, the images are frightful, and all the more terrible for being silent. Later, when Solomon meets his brother Isaac, who's been in a concentration camp, the feeling is overwhelmingly sad.

Apart from being anti-Nazi, the film is not particularly ideological. Unlike Hollywood films, it's not black and white. Solomon meets good Germans, good Russians, even some Nazis who treat him kindly. All the people he meets — even the minor characters — register; they're not cardboard, not stereotypes.

War is the problem, Nazism the problem. Solomon's answer is to fight, then after the war, to leave for Palestine, where he will reaffirm his Jewishness.

At the beginning, though brought up in the orthodox tradition, Solomon can take or leave his Jewishness. By the end, he has not only chosen it for himself, but also, without a mental struggle, for the children born to him later.

## Further left, more right?

### Periscope

Mick Ackersley looks at the re-run of GBH

Channel 4 is rerunning "GBH" (Saturday 9pm). Alan Bleasdale's odd but riveting drama uses people, situations and circumstantial detail from 'Militant's' tenure as "the leadership" of Liverpool Council to tell a convoluted tale about the activities of the British state's political dirty tricks department.

State agents are eventually shown to be in control of the 'Militant'-style political organisation. Using it, they manipulate the Derek Hatton-like council leader, Michael Murray. Their goal? To use the hard left to... discredit the

Labour Party!

I don't like GBH. Ultimately, despite how things look in the first episodes, the bourgeois state, not the left or the pathetic emotional cripple, Michael Murray is the villain. But there is an awful lot of incoherent right wing Labour politics along the way.

The earlier episodes, before the full picture is established and you know who is who and what is going on, recycle in vivid, brilliant forceful drama the worst tabloid press propaganda against the left.

Inescapably, part of GBH's message is that it is the left's own real nature that renders it liable to be used like this by the enemies of the labour movement.

Put together with great talent and wonderful cast, GBH is politically no more than

hackneyed old right wing CP sneers at those of us who tried to take Bolshevism seriously:

"The further you go, the nearer you get to the right, you know. Criticise the USSR? So do the Right!; attack the Labour leaders? So do the Tories and the state. You see?"

To this you might reasonably say, borrowing from George Saunders in "All about Eve" — "You have a point. It is an idiotic point, but it is a point!"

In GBH this "point" is illustrated at great length and with great dramatic ability by a philistine Kinnockite of the late '80's who is also an old fashioned — albeit shame-faced — lower middle-class snob.

## Corny cliches and talent

Casablanca, perhaps the most popular Hollywood movie ever, is 50 years old, and still going strong.

A fresh new print is being issued to mark the anniversary. The cast is wonderful, of course — Bogart, Bergman, Lorre, Greenstreet, Veidt. It includes a number of German refugees from Hitler. For example, the nasty Nazi colonel was Conrad Veidt.

In Britain, in the mid '30s, he had made one of the rare movies of the period which exposed anti-semitism, "Jew Suss", based on the historical novel of the same name by Lion Feuchtwanger, who also wrote a book, "Moscow 1937", justifying the Moscow Trials. In 1940 the Nazis made a notorious anti-semitic film of the same name.

By contrast with the anti-fascists, the Swede Ingrid Bergman had eagerly gone to work in Nazi Germany, and had tried, even after the war started, to keep open the option of going back.

A clause in her contract with Warners guaranteed that she would not have to work on any film likely to offend Germany or the Nazi Party. She was thinking of her career.

But still it is perhaps right that one of the sharply jarring notes in the movie comes out of Bergman's mouth. She does not say "play it again Sam", but she does refer to the black pianist Dooly Wilson, who would not see 40 again, as "the Boy". That was how Americans referred to blacks of all ages then. The US army, the great champion of democracy, was not desegregated until 2 years after "Casablanca" in 1944.

Yet, after all, the film is a bale of old B-movie cliches, given life only by the wonderful cast and by competent direction and editing. The mystery is why it still "works".

Perhaps the explanation lies in this: within its romantic conventions, it is a committed film. The villains really are villains, the good guy reluctant but all the more convincing when he gets going.

There is something in it greater than the individual lives of the characters, compared to which their affairs are "not worth a hill of beans", as Rick/Bogart says.

And there is an invocation of a possible better world to be had for the fighting.

In short, the film shows the world of official "Allied" World War 2 propaganda, hardened and made to gleam magnetically by a tremendously talented team. It is the same "official" anti-fascist world which the British people took seriously enough in 1945 to pursue it by dismissing the respected Tory war leader Winston Churchill and electing, by a landslide, a Labour government pledged to radical change.

Maybe it is the film's power still to evoke that mood and take its audience into it for a while, away from our own commercial capitalist civilisation, grubby and soulless but unashamed — that explains Casablanca's continuing appeal.

The collection of corny cliches transmuted by talent — as heat transmutes carbon into synthetic diamonds — into a prism for the ideas of an age still conveys to us some glimmer of the as yet unrealised hopes of that age.

Mick Ackersley

**ORGANISING**

# We need £8,000

**W**e need another £5064.90 before, or at, our Worker's Liberty 92 summer school in order to reach our fund target.

The total stands at 2935.10, thanks to contributions in the last week including £40.71 from Sheffield supporters.

The extra money will:

- Help meet payments on the new equipment bought earlier in the year.
- Enable us to increase our

international circulation and coverage. We need money to pay for posting the paper to Eastern Europe and elsewhere, and for overseas phone calls which bring us international coverage.

- Enable us to produce more pamphlets and magazines, supplementing the paper.
- Enable us to take on paid organisers building the circulation of the paper and the campaigns it promotes.

**HELP US NOW!** Make your cheque or PO payable to *Workers Liberty*, and send it to SO, PO Box 823, London SE15

**Join our 200 Club**  
Every month Socialist Organiser holds a draw for £100. Entry to the 200 Club costs as little as £1 per month.  
Details from SO sellers or from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

## ALLIANCE FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY MEETINGS

### PUBLIC FORUMS

**Thursday 25 June**  
**"The tabloids and royalty"**  
Brighton AWL meeting. 7.30, Unemployed Centre.

**Monday 29 June**  
**"The politics of Malcolm X"**  
Canterbury AWL meeting. 7.30, Sydney Cooper Centre, High Street.

**Wednesday 1 July**  
**"Aboriginal Rights"**  
South West London AWL meeting. 7.30, Lambeth Town Hall, Speaker: Vassili Manikakis.

**Thursday 8 July**  
**"Does socialism have a future?"**  
Leeds AWL meeting. 7.30, Swarthmore Centre.

### LABOUR PARTY

**26-27 June**  
**Tribune/LCC Conference**  
Central Hall, Westminster.

**Tuesday 30 June**  
**Luton Keep the Link meeting**  
7.30, Socialist Club, Union Street. Speakers include Jeremy Corbyn MP.

**Friday 10 July**  
**Tony Benn speaks on the relevance of socialism**  
7.30, Banbury Town Hall.

### TRADE UNIONS

**18-19 July**  
**Socialist Movement Trade Union conference**  
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London.

**19-20 September**  
**AWL Civil Service fraction**  
International Community Centre, Nottingham.

### ECONOMICS

**10-12 July**  
**The Conference of Socialist Economists**  
meets at the Poly of Central London from . Details from: CSE, 25 Horsell Road, London N5.

### FIGHTING RACISM

**Thursday 25 June:**  
**Defend the Deane Family! Picket of Stratford Magistrates Court**  
Great Eastern Road, London E15. 9.30 (Police brutally attacked two members of a local black family and then charged them with assault).

**Saturday 4 July**  
**Picket to stop fascist "intellectual" David Irving addressing a Nazi seminar.**  
Meet at 11.00 outside his London home: 80 Duke Street, W1.

**Saturday 15 August.**  
**500 years of resistance Festival and rally.**  
Speakers include Daniel Ortega, Jean Bertrand Aristeide and Manning Marable. Liverpool University.

### STUDENTS

**Friday 26 June**  
**Demonstrate against the cuts at North London College!**  
Assemble 12:30 outside the college. 2:00pm rally Islington Town Hall, speakers include Jeremy Corbyn.

## What's behind the Euro rows?



## Turn and turn again

### EYE ON THE LEFT

By Mick Duncan

**T**he question of Europe is back in the headlines, and with each return Socialist Worker seems to reverse its line on Europe.

In the 1960s the SWP (then called the International Socialist Group) held a line that socialists should not focus on opposition to the EEC.

In Spring 1963, for example, John Palmer (then a SWP leader) argued, "In or out of the Common Market, the problems facing the British labour movement are likely to be much the same. Indeed the point is that the issues facing us are more similar to those facing European and American workers than at any time in the past 40 years".

This principled position degenerated as the tide of opinion against "Europe" grew among the labour and union bureaucrats, the Communist Party and much of the rank and file working class left.

In June 1971 SW switched to a nationalist position that effectively put British workers above foreign workers. (They also expelled the Workers Fight tendency, a forerunner of the AWL, because it organised against the policy switch). They opted for the "little England" position of "No to the EEC".

In the 1975 referendum they campaigned frantically for "Britain Out!" The slogan of a Socialist United Europe appeared here and there but they never explained how trying to break up or slow down the capitalist integration of Europe would help achieve that.

Last November, the SWP changed its mind once more, without explanation. After discussing what further European unity meant, Alex Callinicos declared: "But the alternative preached by that strange alliance

of Tory right wingers and Labour left wingers has equally little to offer."

Last week's SW (20 June) switches back again. It adopts a line rather similar to that of Tony Benn and much of the Labour left in opposing the EC. "The EC is not in the interest of workers in Britain, Europe or the rest of the world. We are against it".

But an isolated capitalist Britain is no better than an integrated capitalist Europe! Capitalists in London are the same as capitalists in Brussels - indeed they jet between one city and another all the time.

Capital will forge international links, whatever we or the SWP say. The answer is to forge international links ourselves. Europe-wide workers' solidarity would have won the miners' strike.

Far more useful than demanding "No to a bosses' Europe" is to demand "Yes to a workers' Europe!" We should respond by fighting for a levelling up of workers' rights across Europe, for a shorter working week, for a minimum wage. We should strengthen union links across Europe, and spread Europe-wide working class action in the face of Europe-wide attacks from the bosses.

SW knew all this before June 1971; and it rediscovered it just a few months ago! Evidently SW's editors can forget what they know at a moment's notice!

In 1971 SW's switch of policy provoked a major row. Not only Workers' Fight but also probably 40% of the SWP (IS) membership complained.

Today, however, SW can apparently change policy from week to week - on the EC now, as on the poll tax, the Iran-Iraq war, Ireland, and much else - with little or no comment, argument or explanation.

A revolutionary party is supposed to be "the memory of the class". What use is a "revolutionary party" which can't even remember its own policies and arguments of a few months ago?

# The politics of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty

**W**e live in a capitalist world. Production is social; ownership of the social means of production is private.

Ownership by a state which serves those who own most of the means of production is also essentially "private". Those who own the means of production buy the labour power of those who own nothing but their labour-power and set them to work. At work they produce more than the equivalent of their wages. The difference (today in Britain it may be more than £20,000 a year per worker) is taken by the capitalist. This is exploitation of wage-labour by capital, and it is the basic cell of capitalist society, its very heart-beat.

Everything else flows from that. The relentless drive for profit and accumulation decreases the judgment of all things in existence by their relationship of productivity and profitability.

From that come such things as the savage exploitation of Brazilian goldminers, whose life expectancy is now less than 40

years; the working to death - it is officially admitted by the government! - of its employees by advanced Japanese capitalism; and also the economic neglect and virtual abandonment to ruin and starvation of "unprofitable" areas like Bangladesh and parts of Africa.

**F**rom that comes the cultural blight and barbarism of a society force-fed on profitable pap.

From it come products with "built-in obsolescence" and a society orientated to the grossly wasteful production and reproduction of shoddy goods, not to the development of leisure and culture.

From it come mass unemployment, the development of a vast and growing underclass, living in ghettos and the recreation in some American cities of the worst Third World conditions.

From it comes the unfolding ecological disaster of a world crying out for planning and the rational use of resources, but which is, tragically, organised by the ruling classes around the

principles of anarchy and the barbarous worship of blind and humanly irrational market forces.

From it come wars and genocides; two times this century capitalist gangs possessing worldwide power have fallen on each other in quarrels over the division of the spoils, and wrecked the world economy, killing many tens of millions. From it come racism, imperialism, and fascism.

The capitalist cult of icy egotism and the "cash nexus" as the decisive social tie produces societies like Britain now where vast numbers of young people are condemned to live in the streets, and societies like that of Brazil, where homeless children are hunted and killed on the streets like rodents.

From the exploitation of wage-labour comes our society in which the rich, who with their servants and agents hold state power, fight a relentless class struggle to maintain the people in a condition to accept their own exploitation and abuse, and to prevent real democratic self-control developing with the forms of what they call democracy. They use tabloid

propaganda or - as in the 1984-85 miners' strike - savage and illegal police violence, as they need to. They have used fascist gangs when they need to, and will use them again, if necessary.

**A**gainst this system we seek to convince the working class - the wage slaves of the capitalist system - to fight for socialism.

Socialism means the abolition of wage slavery, the taking of the social economy out of private ownership into common cooperative ownership. It means the realisation of the old demands for liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Under socialism the economy will be run and planned deliberately and democratically: market mechanisms will cease to be our master, and will be cut down and re-shaped to serve broadly sketched-out and planned, rational social goals.

We want public ownership of the major enterprises and a planned economy under workers' control.

The working class can win reforms within capitalism, but we can only win socialism by overthrowing capitalism and by

breaking the state power - that is, the monopoly of violence and reserve violence - now held by the capitalist class. We want a 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 struggles of workers and oppressed nationalities in the ex-Stalinist states of Eastern Europe and in still-Stalinist China.

What are the alternatives now? We may face new wars as European and Japanese capitalism confronts the US. Fascism is rising. Poverty, inequality and misery are growing.

Face the bitter truth: either we build a new, decent, sane, democratic world or, finally, the capitalists will ruin us all - we will

be dragged down by the fascist barbarians or new massive wars. Civilisation will be eclipsed by a new dark age. The choice is socialism or barbarism.

Socialists work in the trade unions and the Labour Party to win the existing labour movement to socialism. We work with presently unorganised workers and youth.

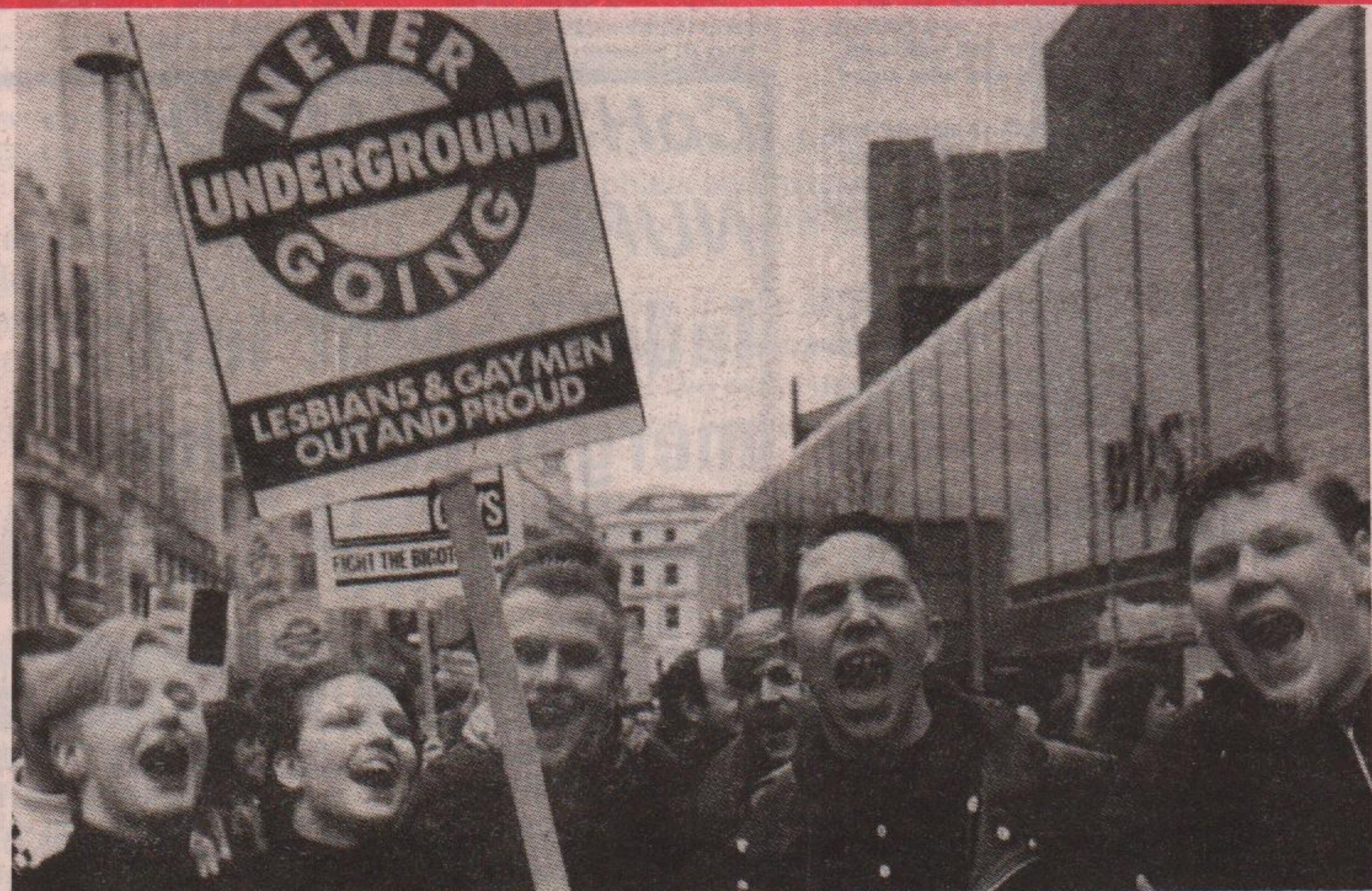
To do that work the Marxists organise themselves in a democratic association, the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

**To join the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, write to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.**



# South Africa:

# drive out De Klerk!



# Not just out and proud, but fighting

This Saturday is Pride '92 — a march and festival, tens of thousands strong, of lesbians and gay men, bisexuals and our allies, asserting our pride in our sexuality and our objection to the oppression we suffer. If the last thirteen years are anything to go by, a fourth Tory term is a frightening prospect for lesbians and gay men and bisexuals. Pride '92 should be a launch of a renewed, determined fight-back.

This year's event is entitled 'Europride' — better than 'Britpride', I suppose, but not the internationalist move that it could be. As capitalism goes European, the lesbian and gay movement must respond. Euro-oppression demands Euro-resistance. It also demands tackling the problems of the new Europe, especially the rise of racism and fascism. The lesbian and gay movement has a lot to gain from fighting alongside black and refugee groups.

The annual Pride demonstration was established after the Stonewall riots in America in 1969. A police raid on New York's Stonewall bar was fought off by the local lesbian and gay community in all its diversity —

black and white, dykes and drag queens. Seen by many as the birth of the modern lesbian and gay movement, that is the tradition that we need to recapture. Pride should not be allowed to

***"Pride should not be allowed to become simply a commercial festival, or a depoliticised event with an attitude that we can parade around the streets of London for one day a year"***

become simply a commercial festival, or a depoliticised event with an attitude that if we can parade around the streets of London for one day a year, then we do not need to fight back for the other 365.

The labour movement needs to be made to rally to the cause of all those groups that its leadership has betrayed in the past — including lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.

Labour's lack of commitment and action is so embarrassing,

that there is a serious danger of the Liberal Democrats and even of the likes of Edwina Currie running off with the banner of lesbian and gay rights. But the labour movement is about much more than its leadership, and the lesbian and gay movement can find its strongest allies amongst rank and file labour movement activists.

Labour's election defeat showed that being apologetic, reasonable and moderate gets you nowhere. The lesbian and gay movement needs to learn that lesson as well.

"Queer" politics is an assertive response to oppression that was developed first in America.

"We're here, we're queer — get used to it" sums up an attitude of uncompromising pride. But Queer politics has its limitations too — a tendency to target its anger at straight people rather than the oppressive political system we live under; and a failure to relate its struggles to those of working class people.

Tackling issues such as these is part of the political renewal that the lesbian and gay movement desperately needs. Not just out and proud — but angry and fighting too.

By Ann Mack

"We are not going to abide by any state of emergency". That was Nelson Mandela's challenge to the government of FW De Klerk as the African National Congress leadership voted this week to break off all negotiations with the Pretoria regime.

The ANC is to pull out completely from the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) and all the sub-committees associated with it. Deadlock was reached between the government and the mass movement when De Klerk insisted that only 25% of the popular vote should be enough to provide a veto on change.

The ANC leaders seemed to be prepared to accept a veto level of 30%

***"What is vital, however, is that genuine broad and democratic unity is forge around a demand that can really capture the imagination of the great majority of the people. That demand will surely have to be the ... [constituent Assembly]"***

but De Klerk would not budge, understanding as he does that the National Party and its immediate allies are unlikely to win that much of the popular vote in any democratic election.

A white veto is something that De Klerk has promised his own supporters, so he can't back down.

Meanwhile, last week's massacre in Biopatong in which 38 people died — mainly women and children — at the hands of Inkatha vigilantes served to stiffen resistance among the black majority. People are sickened by the township violence, but instead of dropping into apathy

appear to be turning to the mass movements.

This was seen most clearly on Saturday when residents of Biopatong — young and old alike — chased De Klerk out of town.

Another indicator of the mood in the townships was the massed ranks of youth at the ANC rally in Evaton last weekend (20 June). The youth held up their arms with their first finger curled over, imitating the action of pulling a trigger.

Home-made placards bore slogans like "Mandela: give us arms".

The ANC has called for a "summit" of all anti-apartheid organisations to discuss what to do now. This initiative will be very welcome.

What is vital, however, is that genuine broad and democratic unity is forge around a demand that can really capture the imagination of the great majority of the people. That demand will surely have to be the one stressed by former Robben Island prisoner Neville Alexander in last week's SO: "the convening of a constituent assembly based on one-person, one-vote to draw up a new constitution".

It is vital that the broad liberation movement does not sink into the superficial radicalism of some on its "left" flank. In particular, COSATU and the ANC's commitment to a democratic and tolerant non-racial South Africa should not be abandoned for one moment. The idiotic slogan supported by many on the "left" of "No to minority rights" can only help drive vacillating whites (as well as some Indians, "coloureds" and Zulus) into the hands of De Klerk.

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