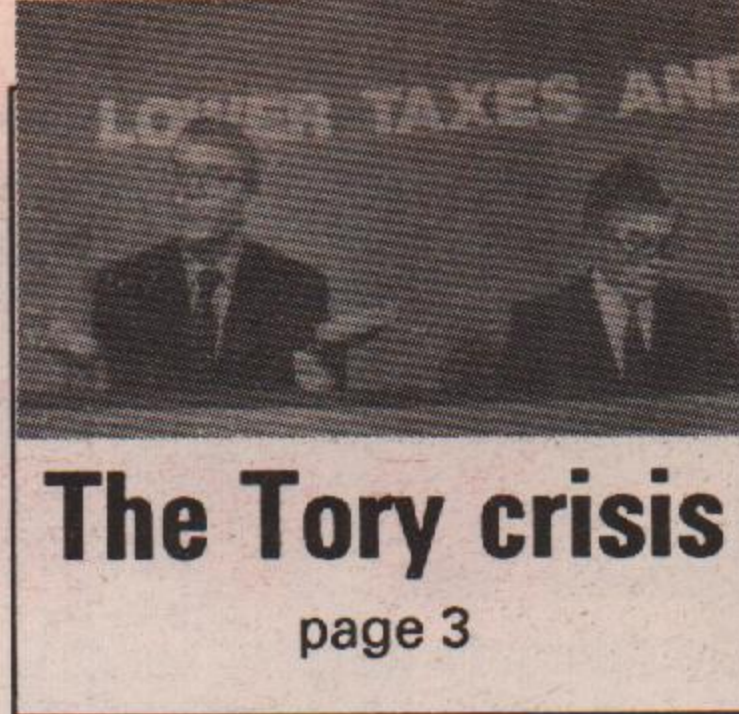




The Tory education fraud
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SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

As crisis sweeps Europe

Italian workers start the fightback!



Hundreds of thousands of Italian workers have taken to the streets in protest of the cuts programme at 'socialist' Prime Minister Giuliano Amato. The biggest union federation now says a general strike is inevitable. As the worst economic crisis deepens the Italian workers have set an example that British workers should follow

More on Italy page 7

Labour at a loss

Gail Cameron, who was the delegate from Wallasey Constituency Labour Party, sums up the mood at the Labour Party conference in Blackpool last week.

There was real confusion and uncertainty among the delegates from the constituencies and the trade unions. Arguments from the left were given a hearing this year, unlike in 1991, when dissenting speeches were considered to be divisive.

Composites on "Labour's values" and on a Workers' Charter of trade union rights struck a chord. In the GMB and T&G delegation meetings, support for

the Workers' Charter was lost by only a couple of votes. Delegates appeared to accept our arguments, but were reluctant to stand against the leadership.

In the debate on Europe, the call for a referendum was overwhelmingly defeated - not because delegates were in favour of Maastricht, but because they did not want to be seen as anti-European, and the arguments of the Right (and the majority of the Left) for a referendum were tainted with nationalism.

In a way, the conference seemed to want real answers, but to be reluctant to look too far. On Thursday morning conference was genuinely moved to give Dennis Skinner a standing ovation, when only two days earlier it had voted him off the National Executive.



With Skinner off the NEC will Smith go for Benn next? Photo: Paul Herrmann

The lie machine



Tories in panic

According to the "Daily Mail", John Major was ordering: "Don't panic!"

If the captain is giving orders not to panic, then you know the team is in trouble!

The pound has lost 20 per cent of value from its ERM level, shares have crashed, prospects in industry are grim, and the Tory Party is deeply split.

The "Sun" last Friday (2nd) carried as its front page lead a call for Thatcher to come back, in the jokey form of a supposed prediction by Nostradamus.

The evil backdrop to all this was reported by the "Mail" as "Norman's hit-list". In a desperate attempt to get a grip on the economy, Major and Lamont will put a scythe through public services.

"Health, housing, and defence programmes - as well as public sector pay - are under mounting pressure".

But not even that will save Major and Lamont from the wrath of the newly confident Thatcherites. The "Mail" also reports Lord Tebbit calling for "an actual reduction of planned public spending" - a cut in cash allocations, that is, regardless of the price rises now on the way following the pound's devaluation.

Kuwait is still unfree

A small minority of Kuwait's 600,000 citizens voted in parliamentary elections held on Monday 5 October. It is the first poll since 1985.

Only 81,400 Kuwaitis are entitled to vote. Those eligible must be male, aged over 21 and be able to trace family roots in Kuwait back to before 1920.

None of the large number of migrant workers were

able to vote. Women demonstrated outside polling booths for the rights to vote and stand as candidates.

This is the "democracy" which the US-led armies killed over 100,000 Iraqi civilians to defend. Major and Bush justified the slaughter, saying freedom must be protected from Saddam.

True, Saddam Hussein is a mass murderer and despot, but Western intervention solved nothing. Bush did not even manage to kill Saddam and overthrow the Iraqi Ba'athist regime. The West wanted freedom for the Kuwaiti oil exporters but not for the Kurds or the Shi'ites in Southern Iraq. Nor for many of the people of Kuwait.

Students fight the Tories

By Kevin Sexton

John Patten, the Secretary of State for Education, is expected to announce a major attack on student unionism at Tory Party conference this week.

Patten is thought to have made detailed plans which will make membership of college student unions voluntary.

Local unions fund the National Union, so voluntary membership will destroy NUS.

The right-wing Labour - Liberal alliance at the top of NUS have taken a formal decision not to call or back any demonstrations "annoy" the government.

It has been left to the socialists in the National Union, Left Unity, and centrally, Socialist Organiser, to organise resistance to the Tories.

Socialist Organiser supporter Garry Meyer has organised a demonstration outside the Tory Conference on Wednesday 7 October, in his capacity as Sussex Area NUS Convenor.

On Wednesday 4 November students in Manchester will demonstrate against student poverty. The Manchester demonstration has been called by Manchester Area NUS, MANUS Convenor and Alliance for Workers Liberty member Paul Williams told Socialist Organiser: "Students are skint. They want to demonstrate. They want action. National NUS has not given a lead, so we have taken the initiative."

The NUS leadership, under

President Lorna Fitzsimmons, have argued, quite successfully amongst a layer of right wing student union sabbatical officers, against demonstrations, occupations and demands for bringing the government down. Instead, Fitzsimmons says, we must highlight "our community work".

The Tory plans look likely to give responsibility for welfare and other services to the colleges themselves. Paying a properly qualified and experienced welfare officer will prove to be a lot more expensive than the SU running these services. Many services will be put out to tender.

Inevitably this will mean job losses and a third class service. Student activists should contact trade unions on campus. We need joint trade union-student action against these attacks.

The NUS leadership's project this year is not to fight student debt or voluntary membership but to smash the left in the student movement. That specifically

means supporters of the AWL and Left Unity. This project - along with Fitzsimmons's personal crusade to change the stereotypical image of student women by wearing £300 designer suits - is particularly foul given the dire situation facing students.

With 1.5 million members, NUS has the potential to organise a serious campaign against the government attacks. A wave of occupations, called for and supported by the leadership, would guarantee the participation of thousands of students.

The NUS leadership could play a vital role in organising the campaign for benefits and a living grant for all students.

But as the Sussex Area Convenor, Garry Meyer, told Socialist Organiser "The NUS leadership have not only refused to back our demonstration they have actively opposed efforts to build it."

Nevertheless, we are organising the fightback. The NUS left needs unity in action against the Tories and against the NUS right - this is the way to win!"

The courage to disobey

William Douglas-Home, who died recently, was the son of an Earl and the brother of a Tory prime minister. Yet he did something for which socialists should honour him.

As an officer in the British Army in 1944, he refused to

take part in an attack on Le Havre because civilians would be killed. More than 2000 were killed, although the German commander had offered to evacuate the French civilians if given three days to do so.

Douglas-Home was court-martialled and sentenced to

Government falls in Brazil "The burden must be lessened for the workers"

Tilden Santiago, a member of the Brazilian federal parliament, spoke to Socialist

Organiser about the impeachment of Brazil's President Collor. Tilden Santiago is a member of the Workers' Party, a socialist party which grew out of the big trade union struggles of the late 1970s but has become more parliamentary-oriented in recent years.

Our party thinks that recent months have been a great political education.

There have been three main elements: the economic crisis itself, the impeachment of President Collor, and the municipal elections.

The economic crisis is very deep. The minimum wage is about 40 dollars a month, while a family needs about 500 to 600 dollars to live decently.

In Sao Paulo alone there are over a million unemployed.

This economic crisis has led to a big political crisis, around the corruption of the Collor government.

There has been the start of a solution to this political crisis with the removal of Collor. The impeachment was approved in the Chamber of Deputies by 441 votes out of 503. The vice-president, Itamar Franco, has taken Collor's place. It will be very difficult for Collor to return to office.

It is very important that central government power has changed hands without the military intervening.

Previously, when democracy began to function, the generals, the bourgeoisie, and the ruling classes would intervene with

force and violence. But now we have a democratic advance without the ruling classes intervening through the army.

Before the Workers' Party, the traditional, orthodox left had never worked in democratic institutions. They always thought of winning power by armed struggle and introducing democracy only afterwards. Now the left is beginning to use democratic means for the liberation of the workers.

We have not joined the new government. But we chose to support the new government in Congress. We have 36 deputies and one senator.

We have presented to the new president a demand that the central axis of the new government's policy should be measures to reduce the burden of the recession for our people, for the workers. Development should be boosted, because we have too many people unemployed, and workers' purchasing power should be increased. The struggle against inflation should be continued, but not at the expense of the people.

Privatisations should be carried through only under the control of Congress, not decided by the president alone.



The impeachment of Collor is the focus for a bigger political crisis

thousands of civilians in Dresden and other cities.

Many terrible things were done in the war by people who were "only following orders", British, French, and American as well as German. The courage to refuse to follow those orders was rare.

a year's hard labour. In 1988, and again last year, he tried to get his name cleared, but was refused.

Last year the Queen Mother unveiled a statue to honour "Bomber" Harris, the man who commanded the air attacks at the end of the war which killed hundreds of



Their credibility in tatters, the Tories would be vulnerable to a Labour assault

Major and Lamont flounder: the Left should start a fightback!

Get the Tories out!

What do the capitalists think of the Tories? They think that the Tory Government is a gang of bunglers and incompetents!

Listen to the comments of the *Financial Times*, the daily paper of big business and the City of London.

"The UK is still without any semblance of an economic policy... a catastrophic failure of government". "Norman Lamont's singing in the bath is likely to change to sobbing in the sink". "Mr Lamont must go. What he is saying... is 'trust me'. But why should the country trust him?"

"The prime minister has lost much of his authority. His credibility is near to zero". "For the time being we can forget about new directions for Britain. We will be lucky if we get any direction at

all. The objective of both the organ-grinder and the marmoset who goes round with the tin cup is clear. They want to keep their jobs. If they manage to achieve that they will try to rebuild their reputations... Five months after Mr Major's election triumph his government is rudderless, driverless, lost".

"A depressing feature of the economic prospects before the UK is that both the people and the institutions responsible for the ERM debacle are apparently to remain in charge... Who now believes that this government will either choose or stick to the right policy?"

The economic fiasco has given the Thatcherite "Euro-sceptic" faction new vigour, authority, and support, and thus triggered a war in the Tories' ranks which will be serious and long-lived: the "pro-European" faction is solidly based, too, and will fight tooth and nail against British capitalism being put into the outer circle of a "two-speed Europe".

The Tories are now split and floundering. Their authority as competent managers of their own capitalist system has been destroyed. Their economic difficulties will probably get worse.

Lamont's small cut in interest rates will not end the slump. Ford, British Aerospace, Vickers-Rolls Royce, and British Coal continue to sack workers by the hundreds and thousands. Yet Lamont's interest-rate cut has already sent the pound sliding further, which means more inflation and worse balance-of-payments problems.

Vicious attacks on public services — including the closure of some of Britain's biggest and best hospitals — are on the agenda, as the Government struggles to get a grip on the economy.

Capitalism is in its worst crisis

for two generations — and what are Labour's leaders doing? Nothing! They have not even put down a motion of no confidence in Parliament! Organise demonstrations and mass protests? Don't be irresponsible, comrade! Gordon Brown did not get round to calling for Norman Lamont to resign until it was the common coin of the Tory press!

"The Tories are now split and floundering. Their authority as competent managers of their own capitalist system has been destroyed. Their economic difficulties will probably get worse."

This performance by Labour's leaders would brand them as hopelessly feeble even as ordinary bourgeois opposition politicians — people concerned for nothing but winning Parliamentary games. Judged as leaders of the labour movement, it brands them as grotesquely irresponsible.

Smith is continuing Neil Kinnock's strategy: sit tight, act respectable and moderate, do as little as possible to force the Tories to close ranks, and hope that the Tories will discredit themselves.

The April General Election has already given us a damning verdict on that do-nothing approach. But in Kinnock's time capitalism was not being shaken by earthquakes as it is now. To continue the do-nothing policy now is to go a long

way beyond Kinnock. You could say it was a case of fiddling while Rome burned, except that fiddling is a lot more energetic an activity than anything the Labour leaders are doing now!

"Do nothing and wait" does not, and it can not, mobilise and inspire people to fight back. Unless working-class people are mobilised and inspired, the Tories, being the chosen party of the ruling class and capitalism's "natural party of government", will always have the advantage. Right now, they have the advantage Neil Kinnock's do-nothing policy gave them: they are in power, and can sit tight — unless we drive them out — for five years.

The do-nothing approach can lead to worse than Tory victories. It leaves the racist and fascist Right as the loudest voice of radical — or radical-sounding — opposition. As unemployment rises and economic ruin spreads, if Labour has no alternatives to offer, groups like the British National Party and the National Front will win the wide support that the French National Front and the German neo-Nazis have already gained. They will do it all the more easily when wide sections of the mainstream Right, and of the Left too, are blaming foreigners — in "Europe" or "Brussels" — for the economic crisis.

Labour and the TUC should now launch a vigorous campaign to get the Tories out — a campaign of demonstrations, rallies, mass protests, non-cooperation, and parliamentary obstruction, to force the Tory Government to resign and call a new general election.

Yes, the labour movement is depressed right now. The need to respond to the unfolding crisis will shake it out of that depression.

Yes, the Tories gained a big par-

liamentary majority only six months ago, and look safe for another four and a half years. In 1974 Edward Heath had a majority, and a year and a half left to his government: it did not do him any good when workers took to the street to challenge his right to continue in office.

Yes, the Labour and TUC conferences showed clearly that the Labour and trade union leaders have no intention at all of fighting the Tories. Yes, the Labour Party conference also showed that the Labour Left was in no state to push the Labour leaders into a fight. But the left can be revived.

Governments with safe parliamentary majorities can be beaten. The Tories were forced to back down on the poll tax, despite a parliamentary majority. But for Kinnock's do-nothing policy, they could have been routed then. We can win more victories like we did on the poll tax. If we notch up a string of victories — against hospital closures, for example, against

Continued on page 4

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

Karl Marx

Socialist Organiser

PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

Newsdesk: 071-639 7965

Latest date for reports: Monday

Editor: John O'Mahony

Published by: WL Publications Ltd,

PO Box 823 London SE15 4NA

Printed by Tridant Press,

Edenbridge

Registered as a newspaper at the

Post Office

Articles do not necessarily reflect

the views of Socialist Organiser

and are in a personal capacity

unless otherwise stated.

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Bad news, but it could be WIRS

The publication of the latest Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (WIRS) — a semi-official statistical dossier on trade union organisation — has been greeted with wild enthusiasm in the bosses' press.

For instance, the *Financial Times* announced: 'The shop steward could soon be consigned, like the strike, to the museum of industrial relations history'.

Now, as often proves to be the case with these statistically-based 'studies' into industrial relations, the actual picture is a great deal more complex and contradictory than the press headlines would have you believe.

Of course, the survey does paint a picture of substantial loss of union power. The number of workplaces with stewards has declined from 54% to 38%. This is merely an amplification of the decline in overall union density — the percentage of the workforce in trade unions — in the period between 1984 (the time of the last survey) and 1990.

The survey also reports that shop stewards posts are more likely to remain unfilled, but this, again, is no more than a statement of the obvious: these days, a stewards' card is widely regarded as something akin to a one-way ticket to the dole queue, whereas in the '70s it could be a highly-prized entrée to a world of time off the job, company freebies etc.

What is much more interesting is that the report also points out the limits of the Tories' anti-union offensive:

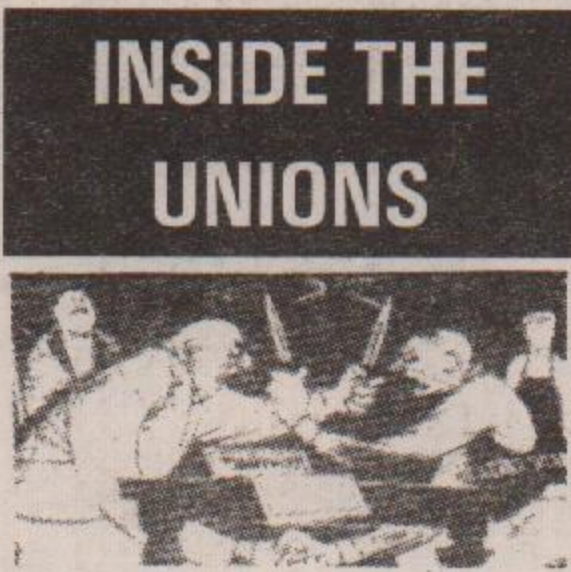
- The newest plants show a slight increase in union density over the early '80s, suggesting that the drive to ensure non-unionisation in 'greenfield sites' is losing its effect;
- One part of the survey says that only 3 per cent of workplaces de-recognised unions in the late '80s. So much for the unstoppable tide of de-recognition;
- Despite a considerable drop in the number of strikes between 1984 and 1990, the number of "active disputes" — i.e. industrial action short of striking — actually increased;
- The public sector is now the main bastion of trade unionism. Such workplaces are more likely to be unionised, covered by national bargaining, and to be involved in strike action.

Perhaps the most significant development is the growth in influence of fulltime officials: workplaces where the union is represented directly through a fulltime official have increased from 8 to 14 per cent. The authors say: "In 1990 three-quarters of senior manual representatives reported meeting a paid official in the 12 months prior to interview and for non-manuals these kind of meetings had increased from 57 to 69 per cent between 1984 and 1990.

Against, this hardly comes as a great surprise: rank and file activity independent of the officials (or "do-it-yourself reformism" as Tony Cliff used to call it) depends upon a high level of self-confidence and militancy — commodities that are in rather short supply just at the moment.

Overall, the picture painted by the WIRS is grim. But it is not as grim as a lot of people — on both right and left — paint it.

Trade unions may be down but they are still far from out. They remain a barrier to rampant exploitation. Even the *FT* has to admit that "employees in unionised workplaces are two and a half times less likely (than non-unionised) to be dismissed. They are also less likely to be low-paid". Yet another statement of the obvious, I suppose.



INSIDE THE UNIONS

By Sleeper

Press smear signals renewed Labour purge

Fake votes in Labour poll

EXTREMIST groups are being blamed for unsuccessful attempts to rig two constituency ballots for the Labour Party's National Executive Committee. Photocopied voting papers were discovered in Sheffield Brightside, represented by David Blunkett, the party's health spokesman, and Bassetlaw, whose MP is Joe Ashton. The ballots were counted by Labour officials in London who disqualified papers which were described as "obvious fakes".

By Stephen Castle
Political Correspondent

ing the acrimonious expulsion of Militant Tendency supporters in the Kinnock years.

Mr Blunkett said last week: "I am saddened that particular groups in the Labour Party should use these disgraceful, undemocratic and unconstitutional methods. They do not seem to accept that they have lost the ballot."

The *Independent on Sunday* (4 October) published a smear article suggesting — without evidence — that *Socialist Organiser* supporters and other leftists tried to rig the ballot for Labour's National Executive. Meanwhile, expulsions are underway in Sheffield and Brighton, and 127 people have been suspended from the Labour Party in Coventry.

The reply printed below has been sent to the *Independent on Sunday* as a letter.

Frame-ups in place of arguments

By John O'Mahony

Last week's piece by Stephen Castle, "Fake votes in Labour poll" (*Independent on Sunday*, 4 October 1992), defied all the rules of journalistic fair dealing.

Citing the unsubstantiated opinion of unnamed "Labour Party workers in Sheffield", that David Blunkett has been "targetted" by *Socialist Organiser* (Alliance for Workers' Liberty), Castle implies that *Socialist Organiser* is responsible for the "faked ballot papers" Labour Party officials claim they found when counting the votes in this year's Labour Party National Executive Committee elections.

David Blunkett is then quoted sounding off about "particular groups" — though only one group is mentioned — who use "these disgraceful, unconstitutional and undemo-

cratic methods".

No evidence is cited, except the opinion of unnamed partisans accusing their political enemies. Since charges like this tend to stick, all ideas about "innocent until proven guilty" are thus stood on their head. And all this is done — *Socialist Organiser* is charged, convicted, and subjected to Blunkett's pseudo-magisterial pontification in the pages of the *Independent on Sunday* — without us having been invited even to offer a straight "guilty" or "not guilty" plea to the charges! Neither Castle nor anyone else connected with the *Independent on Sunday* contacted *Socialist Organiser* to find out what we had to say about it.

We have not rigged any ballots. We have not "targetted" David Blunkett: to us he is just one — and not the most obnoxious — of the ex-socialists on Labour's NEC.

We are completely opposed to ballot-rigging on principle.

Apart from that, the story, as Castle tells it, simply does not add up. We make socialist propaganda and help to organise the left in the trade unions and the Labour Party. Ballot-rigging to oust Blunkett and others — aside from the democratic rights and wrongs of it — could not serve our goals. We would have to be naive to think it would speed up the revival of the left, idiots not to know it might lead to scandal and hinder that revival, and fools to think enough ballots could be faked to unseat Blunkett, who came second in the poll.

Even more absurd is the motive attributed to us. We backed the Campaign Group NEC slate, but in terms of the ideas we exist to promote we are scarcely less at odds with the Campaign Group than with Blunkett, on Europe for instance. Yet we rig ballots to help the Campaign Group NEC slate?

When "obvious fakes" are

discovered, the question arises, and serious reporters ask it: who benefits? The answer in this case is: those in Sheffield who are attempting to expel ten alleged *Socialist Organiser* supporters there. Did Castle see the fake ballots?

Finally, David Blunkett's idea that *Socialist Organiser* rigs ballots because we can't win the argument with ex-socialists like himself is as daft as the rest of the concoction. Overawed by Thatcher, Labour's leaders have, in pursuit of office, spent a decade purging and cudgelling the Labour Party into the chilled blue understudy of 1980s Toryism we saw at Blackpool. And what has happened? All the old capitalist lunacies — world slump, economic catastrophe in Britain, nightmare growth of European fascism, the re-emergence of sharp national antagonisms within Europe — start to erupt again!

Three lost elections, and now a half-dead party unfitted by its leaders to face the conditions of the 1990s! Arguments? Witch-hunts, expulsions and frame-ups are the arguments these disappointed political insolvents must rely on against their socialist critics. Stephen Castle's article was a good example of the "arguments" of David Blunkett and his friends! Watching Kinnock, Beckett, Blunkett and others under the TV lights at Blackpool — ex-socialists who betrayed their own convictions, politically gutting themselves, in pursuit of office, yet failed to win it — I was reminded of an old Irish proverb: "Woe to him who does evil, and is poor after it".

Get the Tories out!

From page 3

contracting-out, and against the freeze they are likely to put on public-sector pay — then we can so cripple the government that either it loses its parliamentary majority through splits or its ruling-class masters tell it that it should call an election to restore credible authority.

That all seems a long way off now. It is a long way off. But the battles on hospital closures, contracting-out, and public-sector pay are immediate! The only alternative to fighting back is abject surrender. The labour movement has to fight those battles, and we should fight to win. To think that victory is certain would be idiotic; to fear even to envisage and aim for victory is to admit defeat in advance.

The whole Tory gang should go! The labour movement should demand of the Labour and trade union leaders that they raise that cry now, and campaign for it. Sometimes "radical" demands

on the Labour leaders are nonsense. To demand "a Labour government with a socialist programme", as much of the left does, is like demanding that a budgie lay duck eggs. Socialism — working-class self-liberation, the abolition of wage-slavery and state tyranny — cannot be introduced by parliamentary reform, not even by a Labour Party much more radical and militant than it is today (or ever could be without a fundamental making-over by the serious left).

However, even a right-wing social-democratic Labour Party can campaign against the Tories, just as right-wing union leaders can call strikes.

Britain's right-wing Labour leaders are an exceptionally feeble and crawling example of the species. John Smith chooses not to campaign; but even he could be forced into different choices. And, probably, rousing the Labour Party for active campaigning even on its miserable current policies will be the first step towards reviving its membership

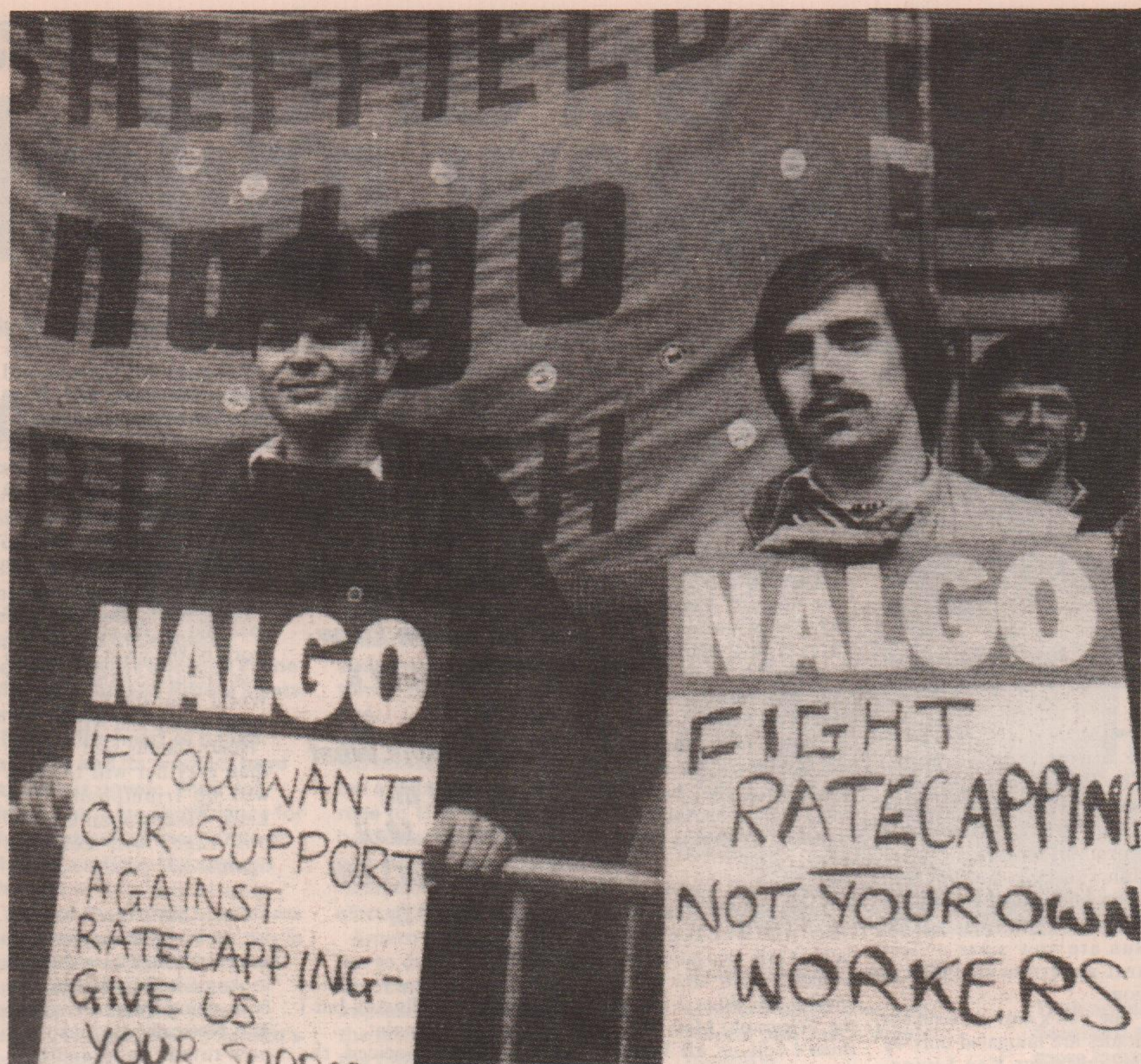
and its policies.

That means the Left will have to start the campaign against the Tories. The Left is not in its best condition right now. But even at the Blackpool Labour Party conference, it was strong enough to inflict important defeats on the platform — on keeping Labour's trade union link, on cutting military spending, and on other issues. The Leeds Conference this June, and the newly-formed Socialist Network linked to the Campaign Group of MPs, signal some revival of the Labour Left.

Every big campaign starts with an "unrealistic" minority boldly spelling out what needs to be done and launching the idea. By launching the idea, the minority gathers round it the people who want to fight and transforms them from scattered, frustrated individuals into a force for change. It becomes a bigger minority, and makes the idea more than just an idea. Now is the time to start.

Labour must fight! Get the Tories out!

Contacted by *Socialist Organiser* on the telephone on 6 October, David Blunkett said he had no evidence that *Socialist Organiser* supporters were connected with any ballot-rigging.



Sheffield NALGO workers lobby 1984 Labour Party conference. The AWL has consistently sided with the workers against "their" council. Photo: John Smith

Sheffield

Councillors' backlash central to witch-hunt

Wendy Robson, a Sheffield activist expelled from the Labour Party for association with *Socialist Organiser*, spoke at the Campaign Against the Witch-hunt meeting at Labour Party conference.

The Sheffield witch-hunt is setting important precedents. I am the first person in the country to be expelled from the Labour Party for association with *Socialist Organiser*.

Militant were dismissed as a special case, but the witch-hunt is no longer simply about *Militant*. Many socialists are being vilified and smeared.

Two years ago the Labour Party National Executive banned *Socialist Organiser* after a phoney investigation during which the editorial team were never informed of the charges against the newspaper or given a chance to defend themselves.

The first signs of a witch-hunt in Sheffield came early last year, in Brightside con-

stituency. Nof Ttofias was prevented from transferring into Brightside from Sheffield Central because of his alleged association with *Socialist Organiser*. The initiative came from Sheffield council leader Clive Betts: Nof was prevented from attending ward meetings, although he was not formally suspended and had no chance to speak in his own defence.

"A backlash from Sheffield Labour councillors against opposition from the left has been central to the witch-hunt."

A few months later, in June 1991, a meeting of Sheffield Central constituency voted to launch an investigation into "the activities of *Socialist Organiser*". A backlash from Sheffield Labour councillors against opposition from the left — over the poll tax, the World Student Games and cuts — has been central to the witch-hunt.

The witch-hunt does not have the support of Labour Party activists in Central

constituency, or in other Sheffield constituencies, nearly all of which have passed motions against it.

All the members of Central constituency were invited to give evidence against *Socialist Organiser*. Just four did. The vast bulk of the evidence was provided by one person, Richard Baker, from student politics. Richard Baker began his political career by being elected as an official of Sheffield University Student Union on an "independent" slate. On the Labour slate against which he ran was Ruth Cockroft, one of the people whom he is now trying to expel!

15 people were named as associated with *Socialist Organiser*. The main charges were writing for and selling *Socialist Organiser*, but other "crimes" included:

- Being a delegate to the GC from a particular ward;
- Sitting next to certain people in ward meetings, or voting for the same resolutions, or living in the same house;
- Standing in student union elections as *Labour candidate* four years ago!
- Being seen with a known *Socialist Organiser* supporter canvassing for the official

Labour candidate in the Walton by-election!

Five cases were withdrawn before getting to the NCC. Five cases have been heard to date. One person has been acquitted, and two more cases have been withdrawn, but Chris Croome and I have been expelled from the Party, solely on the basis that we have sold *Socialist Organiser*.

"Those expelled aim to convince others who are appalled by what's going on to stay in the Labour Party, and fight."

We are continuing the campaign for the five people whose cases have yet to be heard, and against the witch-hunt more generally. It is difficult to fight the witch-hunt in the current climate in the Labour Party, but we have to resist demoralisation and defeatism. Those of us who have been expelled will be arguing to convince others who are appalled by what's going on to stay in, or to join the Labour Party, and fight.

Organising the left

CONFERENCE OF THE LEFT

By Tony Benn

The Socialist Conference that meets again in Chesterfield on 17 October will be the most important that has ever been held.

For that day socialists — from inside and outside the Labour Party — will be able to discuss the actual situation that confronts us here in Britain, in Europe and worldwide. And we shall be doing so at a time when the political debate in this country has gone completely dead.

The two front-benches — and the Liberals — are now virtually united in their support for NATO; for nuclear weapons and a huge arms budget; for a federal Europe; for market forces; for the war in Ireland; for further military action against Iraq; and for legal restraints on trade unionism.

Anyone who disagrees with any of this hard centre-right analysis has been denounced, marginalised and isolated by the media over the last decade in the hope that all opposition can be silenced, and many good socialists have been expelled from the party.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist regimes in

Europe, the end of the cold war and the emergence of a 'New World Order' run from Washington, have been used to justify the burial of all forms of socialism and of a politically active trade-union movement.

But at the moment when capitalism has apparently achieved its greatest victory, the prospects for working people are far worse than they have been since the slump in the 'thirties. There is mass unemployment, homelessness and poverty, civil liberties and democratic rights have been trampled on, right-wing nationalism, racism and fascism are on the increase and the future of the planet itself is in question.

It is against this background that socialists of all kinds must gather to decide how best to work together, free of all sectarianism and in a positive spirit.

The audience for what we have to say is probably greater than at any time since 1945 just when the 'official instruments' of the labour and socialist movement seem — at least temporarily — to have given up the struggle. This is why we must meet now to share our experiences and plan our campaigns over the next months and years.

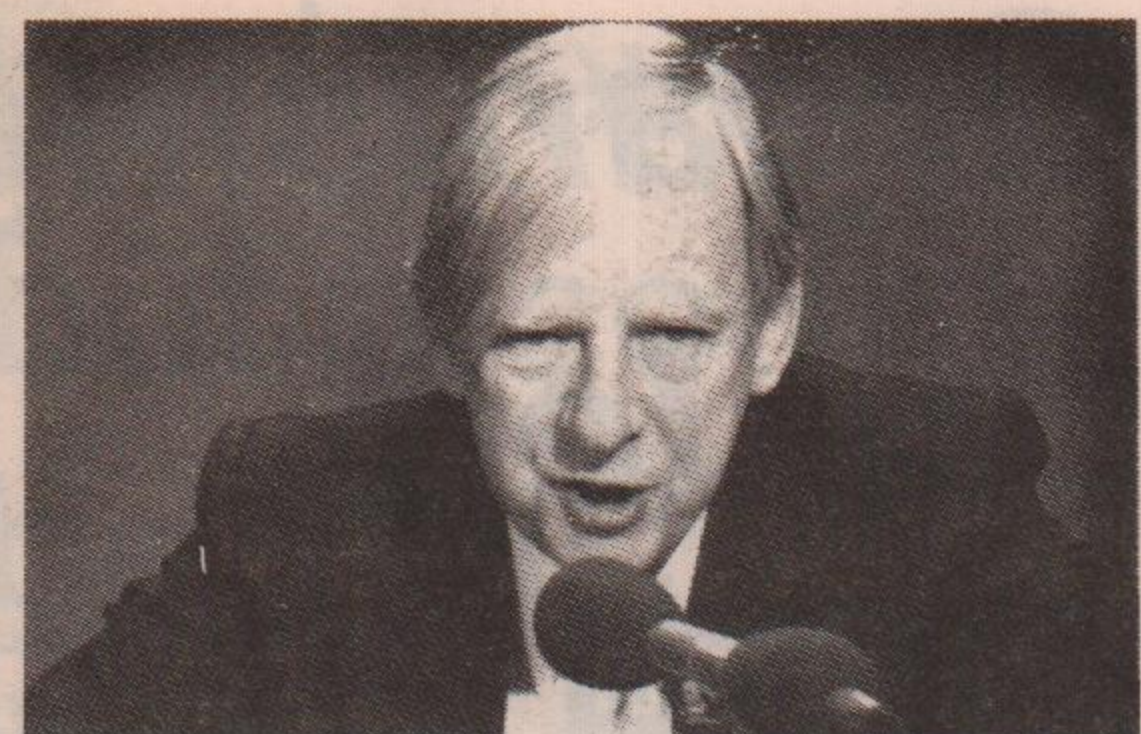
Conference of the Left

Winding Wheel,
Chesterfield, Derbyshire
Saturday 17 October
10am - 5.30pm

Registration fee £2 unwaged; £6 low/average waged; £12 high waged; £20 organisations/delegates

For further details/to register contact:
Conference of the Left, c/o Coventry Trades Council, Unit 15, The Arches, Spon End, Coventry CV1 3JQ.

GRAFFITI



It's okay Peter, it's not a left campaign

Grey suits with holes in the pockets

GRAFFITI

Tales from this year's national convention for grey suits and power dressing, formerly known as Labour Party conference.

Following Tuesday's debate on the Party's financial crisis, a closer reading of the accounts yields some interesting information. The Sheffield pre-poll victory rally cost £100,000. That is trifling compared to the cost of implementing the national membership scheme between 1988 and 1991: remember, the one that was going to open the floodgates of new members and contributed to the Party losing a third of its members. That cost £1,338,000. Never mind, surely Labour's fund raising efforts must have covered this - all those adverts in the Guardian with Neil Kinnock threatening to go on TV unless you give 25 quid, and £500 a head dinners for rich and socially responsible celebs. Well, fundraising did make £2,401,000 between 1986 and 1991. The only problem is it cost £1,533,000. If it weren't for the Tories these people might look incompetent.

If you wanted to know that the ghost of socialism still stalks in even the murkiest corners of conference, you could have to go to the LCC fringe meeting, where golden boy Tony Blair was speaking about his vision for the nineties - greed is good as long as you are part of the community, self interest is the true path. This was a little to much even for the hardened careerists of the LCC, who booed Blair down.

Seeing as Europe was the issue of the week, it was all off to the "No to Maastricht" meeting. In the chair was Redmond O'Neill, of Socialist Action. At the back were some Campaign Group people putting up their banner. Sorry, says Redmond, you can't put that up in here, this isn't a left wing meeting. The Campaign Groupies duly obliged and took their banner down, leaving Redmond free to call Peter Shore to speak, an old hard line right-winger and the only Labour Party member to be in the Bruges Group. Redmond was seen clapping enthusiastically at the end of Shore's speech.

Elsewhere in the world the last volume of Tony Benn's dairies were published this

week, and contain this interesting little interchange between Benn and Joe Slovo, the long time leader of the South African Communist Party, renowned for its slavish adherence to the Stalin line. Stalin and Mao have done a disservice to socialism said one, but the other found this a rather harsh judgement. Who was defending Stalin, the leader of the SACP or Benn? Answers on a postcard to the "Tony Benn has a big problem with Stalinism" competition - first prize a signed copy of Benn's 1986 letter to Gorbachev asking him to bring world peace. Second prize, two copies...

Panic has hit the offices of *Socialist Outlook*, where a computer virus has infected their desk top publishing system. "It's terrible" said a spokesperson, "the way the paper looks has completely changed. We've tried to change it back but we just can't find the source of the problem. The effect of the virus is to introduce really bad jokes and terrible journalistic cliches into the paper. Look at the front page It's got a picture of Lamont with a bubble coming out of his mouth saying 'thank God there's no opposition'. It's like *Private Eye* on a bad day. Weird articles are cropping up all through the paper: I know we've always had this problem but it's getting worse. And the captions under the photographs - it's like public school boy humour, like under Rodney Bickerstaffe it says 'Buddy Holly look alike'. We've spent years getting the paper really non-descript. Now this happens. It's tragic. I think I might well quit politics and set up a vegetarian catering co-operative." The virus, which has been christened "Osler", is believed to have originate on a discarded floppy disc found in the *socialist* office. Our environmental health advisers say not to worry if you see a copy of *Outlook*, it's almost certainly harmless.

You'll wish that you'd given that 25 quid to Labour Party and canvassed that little bit harder - now that he has more free time on his hands Neil Kinnock has taken to jobbing around. He is to present the Jimmy Young show for a week in November, but if John Smith receives enough money in donations to ease Labour's financial crisis he'll call Kinnock off. Meanwhile Jimmy Young will see how many socialist principles he can sell out in a week.

How strange the change...

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

How strange the change... Surely, the world is turned upside down. The *Financial Times*, the *Sunday Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* are calling for Norman Lamont's resignation and even hinting that John Major ought to follow him. The *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* are now more or less anti-government publications.

The *Sun's* anti-government tirades are mitigated only by the egregious Ken Livingstone, who steadfastly refuses to use his column to attack the Tories, preferring instead to target John Smith and the Labour leadership.

The *Sun's* opportunism has always made it, a somewhat fickle friend of the Tories, ready to jump on any populist bandwagon (even the SNP's north of the border). The *Daily Telegraph's* hostility

must be more worrying for Messrs Major and Lamont. Last week, this semi-official organ of Home Counties Conservatism thundered: "The antics of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his efforts to cling to office have provided one of the most distasteful spectacles of the past fortnight", adding that Lamont was plausible only "as a Vicar of Bray". *Telegraph* Deputy Editor Charles Moore suggested that Mr Major is "what American psychologists call 'in denial'. He has not admitted to himself the extent of the disaster that has taken place and so he blames foreigners and shoots messengers".

So now we know: we're ruled by a bunch of incompetents who would probably fail GCSE Economics and wouldn't know how to run a whelk stall. What a pity that the *Telegraph*, *Mail*, *Sun* etc didn't tell us all back in April.

It seems to be generally accepted the "quality" broadsheets are now out to "get" poor old Lamont in a sort of up-market re-run of the tabloids' campaign against David Mellor. As Simon Hoggart noted in the *Observer*, this may, paradoxically, save Lamont for the time being: "He (Major) has no wish to see Lamont

become the broadsheet version of Mellor, a victim of Max Hastings instead of Kelvin MacKenzie, and may well wish to cling onto him if only to prove that the Cabinet is chosen in Downing Street, not at Brook's Club or the Beefsteak". To be honest, I'm not entirely sure what Brook's Club or the

"So now we know: we're ruled by a bunch of incompetents. What a pity that the Telegraph, Mail, Sun etc didn't tell us all back in April."

Beefsteak actually are, but I take the general point.

Have you noticed the remarkable physical resemblance between Norman Lamont and TV's Grandpa Munster? I'm sure I saw a postcard featuring the two side by side, pointing out that both "suck your blood". This was some time ago and the comparison doesn't seem to have caught the popular imagination. Yet. I offer it to Kelvin MacKenzie, free of charge.

On the subject of Mr MacKenzie and his esteemed publication, you may have missed the astonishing prediction featured on the front page of last Friday's edition: apparently, the "uncannily accurate 16th century astrologer Nostradamus" predicted the return to power of Margaret Thatcher.

Tad Mann, 48, found the forecast as he studied the work of the great seer, who also predicted the Second World War, the rise of Saddam Hussein and AIDS.

Nostradamus said: "More than ever her will to reign will be triumphant. The Lady, furious in an adulterous rage, will conspire against her prince but not speak to him."

Well, that is pretty clear, isn't it? Major may as well pack his bags now by the looks of it. Mind you, I've been doing my own research into Nostradamus and I can now reveal another little-known passage that might suggest a somewhat different turn of events: "man in a suit of grey, wearing eye-pieces, will become greatly unpopular and the people shall turn upon him. In a trial of strength, he will be defeated by another man in grey, from the North. But the people will not notice any great change". What can it possibly mean?

Sex, lies and ticker-tape

WOMEN'S EYE

By Rebecca Van Homen

This month's *Vanity Fair* has some preview pictures of Madonna's new book, "Sex". They show Madonna in baby doll nighties, cuddling teddy bears, and shots of her with pigtailed, frolicking in a playground. The latest image of her as a child makes me feel uncomfortable. She is pandering to the worst male fantasy and the fact that she is in control of producing the images makes no difference. She has also come out with some stupid one-liners such as, "I love my pussy. I think it's a complete summation of my life."

However, Madonna deals with self-promotion not politics, she has to change her image to keep in the public eye.

I like Madonna. I think she

is a powerful image of a woman in control of her sexuality - well the image is at least. But feminist she isn't.

The latest statements in her book about her, being "out to open the (peoples') minds and get them to see sexuality in another way, their own and others..." is drivel.

The hype surrounding "Sex" is enormous. The book cover is to be made of aluminum and covered in a Mylar bag because, "We wanted there to be an act of entering" according to her hype manager.

Madonna has to keep maintaining her image to keep coining in the dollars.

She is not driven by the desire to liberate people but to make money.

I think she could have an enormous impact on issues such as lesbian and gay rights if she had come out with some political statements about lesbian and gay oppression; instead she toys with the bisexual image to develop her image as being a bit risqué.

The motive behind the book is clear; "Sex" will be the biggest international launch

of a book ever. On 21 October, 750,000 copies will go on sale simultaneously in Japan, Great Britain, France, Germany and the US.

The book retails for \$50 a copy, so the profit from the first printing alone could run up to \$20 million.

2 million copies of her album "Erotica" will be released at the same time (which you're supposed to lis-

ten to while looking at the book).

When the book was being printed, instead of the standard 5000 an hour a new press was built to print 25,000 an hour. As a result, instead of 6 months the book took just 15 days to produce. Madonna is super rich and is set to become even richer. Need I say more?



Just a load of hype

Strikers and demonstrators against cuts programme

Italian workers fight back

By Katrina Faccenda

After 10 years, mass strikes are back in the industrial factories in the north of Italy!

After 10 years of virtual silence the FIAT workers of Turin have taken to the streets. The workers of the hundreds of factories of the industrial area of Mirafiori have joined the national protest against Socialist Prime Minister Giuliano Amato's cuts programme.

FIAT is the heart of Italian industry and its workers have enormous power. Their solidarity has huge significance for the hundreds of thousands of striking workers throughout the rest of Italy.

Tens of thousands of workers are demonstrating every day in Italy's cities. 200,000 pensioners marched in Rome to protest against the cuts in state pensions, one of Amato's target areas.

Last Friday, 2 October, there were general strikes in eight regions, including Lazio. The strike in Lazio centred on a demonstration of 400,000 in Rome which ended in workers

confronting the riot police.

Another week of action has been planned, involving workers from all sectors, but concentrating particularly on workers in the transport sector. Bruno Trentin, leader of the union federation CGIL, admitted last week that a general strike was inevitable. CGIL is now calling for a general strike. Trentin is feeling the heat. He was pelted with eggs, tomatoes and coins when he addressed 100,000 demonstrators in Florence two weeks ago.

The backdrop to the Amato-led attacks is the crisis of Italian capitalism. Interest rates rose to 15% early in September. Later in the month the lira was devalued in the first major realignment inside the ERM since 1987.

Amato called for special powers to deal with the crisis. But the markets were not impressed. On 17 September the lira was suspended from the ERM. That day Amato announced the cuts package.

Italy's three main union federations responded with a series of regional general strikes. The workers' action is putting Amato's coalition gov-



Strikers confront scabs in Rome

ernment under pressure. Amato only has a slender majority.

However, not only the union militants and the left are mobilising. The reactionary Northern Leagues, led by Senator Umberto Bossi, are also opposing the government.

Their appeal rests on anti-Southern sentiment in the more industrialised north. Bossi has promised a tax strike against the government's economic policy.

The workers have shown their willingness to take action to stop Amato from pushing

through his cuts and the leaders are having to move with them. Italian workers are setting an example for workers throughout the rest of Europe of how to deal with a government when it tries to make the workers pay for its own mistakes.

Defend the Piccadilly Four!

Sacked guards speak out

In August four rail guards at Manchester Piccadilly were sacked for standing up against a management that continuously broke agreements. Immediately the guards staged a 24 hour stoppage. A ballot in favour of strike action was held but a judge ruled that it would now be illegal for the guards union, the RMT, to take any action, in defence of the four, or even ballot for it.

Paul Walker and Tony Crowther, two of the sacked four, spoke to Socialist Organiser.

We are trying for a Special General Meeting of the union to discuss the sackings and the new machinery of negotiation that has just been signed by the union. All four

of us are travelling around to meetings arguing for it.

We want the machinery changed, and we also want to look at the question of breaking the law. We believe

the union should be prepared to defy the law because the courts have made it clear that we can't be re-instated within the law. After taking such a decision the union would have to have a campaign, leading up to a ballot. In the present climate with the anti-trade union laws, resistance is the only way forward.

We are going to hold a rally in Manchester, as part of the campaign.

There are lots of things that other branches don't know about. For example in Nottingham, Train Inspectors boarding trains to check up on the guards. In Network South East, a computer set up to issue rosters rather than letting the LDC (stewards' committee) deal with them as usual. In Ashford, Kent, the guards told that if they didn't agree they would follow the Manchester four. In Sheffield, part time cleaners' jobs have replaced four full time jobs.

We see the rally as railworkers at ground floor level being able to meet, get to know each other and start a system of regular contact, so that nobody ever feels isolated as we did at Piccadilly during our three week strike in 1990.

And the leadership? Where is it? They are tied up by the laws. For example, the Executive Committee decided not to circulate branches about our situation.

This was based on an argument that to do so could leave the union open to legal action. This is 1992 not 1892, but still the union can't tell branches what is going on! If we comply with the law we don't have a chance. If we don't break the law we have no future as a union, as an Insurance Club with benefits. The law has now taken away the

right to strike.

In our case we called the action off and went through the process of complying with the law to hold a ballot which we won two to one only for the law courts to step in again to rule the strike illegal.

Legally the union cannot take action to defend representatives. And if you can't defend the reps then what is the point of having a union? Strike action is fundamental to a trade union, without it you're just a knitting club.

We were sacked because of a long

"Privatisation is the major problem. The Tories want to make BR an attractive buy, and it won't be until the unions are made ineffective. The unions have accepted privatisation to all intents and purposes."

history of being a well organised workplace. We had come out for GCHQ and the miners. We had balloted and struck on local and national agreements and for re-instatements on unfair dismissals. In the 1990 strike management had imposed new rosters. We refused them for two days until they sent a guard home and so we all walked out.

After another two days the union balloted us, while we were still out.

Management eventually made a one-off payment to each individual to help alleviate hardship suffered while on strike as part of the settlement.

To us the sacking is clearly an

attempt to weaken the union in the run up to privatisation. Already in a number of places stewards have been told that if they don't comply they will get the same treatment as Manchester Piccadilly. Management are trying to create an atmosphere of fear where workers are too frightened to take any form of action to defend agreements.

This can't be seen in isolation and has to be linked with the imposition of the new Machinery of Negotiation. Yes, we know the union agreed and signed it. But BR gave a final date for acceptance and the union rolled over. You could call it imposition by agreement if you want.

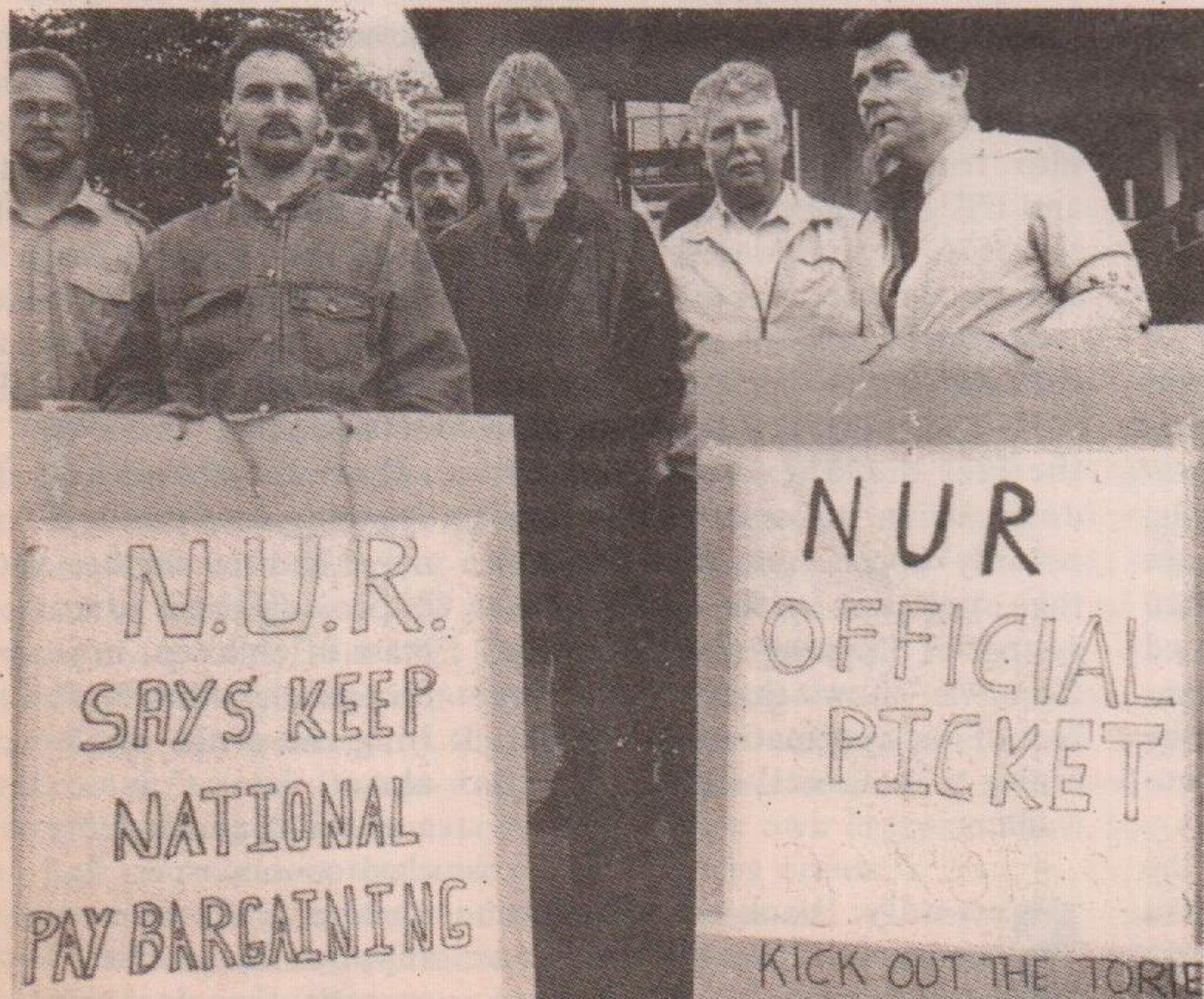
We have found that all grades of the union, and members of other unions are horrified at what has happened to the Manchester Four, and feel that the unions should be encouraging action on a national basis to protect reps in the future.

Privatisation is the major problem. The Tories want to make BR an attractive buy, and it won't be until the unions are made ineffective. The unions have accepted privatisation to all intents and purposes. There is no campaign. They are diverting attention into a Better Rail Campaign to win public opinion, but that won't stop privatisation.

The union is concerned with protecting the funds from sequestrates rather than protecting the members who give the funds.

The union should use us as the focal point of a campaign to:

1. get our jobs back;
2. defend all conditions of service under threat from the imposition of the new Machinery;
3. go on to fight privatisation.



Last time, 1989, the strike to defend the machinery of negotiation which the union leadership has just given up

Left must fight for access to ba

The Tories' edu

**By Colin Waugh, Secretary
NATFHE General Education
Section**

The Tory government elected in 1979 took over an education system whose progressive aspects had already been under attack for three years by their Labour predecessors. Both by measures aimed directly at that system, and through their general assault on public services, they have kept up and sharpened that attack. At the same time they have tried, more or less consistently, to build up a new sort of system within the ruins of the old. Their particular methods of attack, and the shape of that new system, reflect the relation of the leading group of Tories to different sections of their class and to others whose support they want.

The Tory party has been led for the whole period by a group which normally acts on behalf of large-scale finance capital — the City, if you like — and which therefore acts sometimes against the immediate interests of other sections of their class, for example industrial employers. To win elections and more generally to mobilise 'public opinion' behind it, this group has also built a mass base, in particular amongst small capitalists in the ser-

"Their strategy is to use the full powers of the state bureaucracy to disrupt and then forcibly deregulate the state system — all, of course, in the cause of initiative, 'free' competition and choice — while also giving still more handouts to the private sector"

vice sector, people who've recently become self-employed, and some better-off skilled workers — that is, again, amongst groups who don't always want the same thing as big capital.

To use education policy as a weapon on behalf of finance capital, then, the leading group of Tories have had to manoeuvre between these different constituencies. They have done this by weaving their policy from three distinct strands — modernisation, back to basics, and consumer choice — each of which they can push to the front when it's needed. These are sets of ideas, worked out by think-tanks, tested by Public Relations Consultants and pushed by the media; but they are also real changes imposed on the education system by Act of Parliament and/or by control of the purse



The Tories want to build a new education system on the ruins of the old

strings. (We shall see that, in terms of such real changes, one strand is stronger than the others.)

First, 'modernisation'. Throughout the period, people speaking for UK-based industrial capital have urged the Government to make the education system turn out keener, more technically qualified workers. Sometimes it has responded, for example by setting up the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative in secondary schools and FE colleges, by launching City Technology Colleges, or by saying that information technology must be part of a common core of learning for 16-19 year olds.

But actually the Tories haven't done much about this. It's true that since 1979 teaching methods derived from industrial training (the so called 'skills ethos') have spread through the education system, and that the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (set up in 1986) may eventually be used to align the whole qualifications system (ie in schools and universities as well as Further Education) with what

'industry' wants. But these developments are not direct results of government policy; and in some ways that policy has gone in the opposite direction, for example, the scrapping of the Industrial Training Boards or the recent reorganisation of the Department for Education so that different ministers deal with A levels and 'vocational' qualifications.

In fact, although the Tories' rhetoric about linking education to 'the world of work' is a partly tokenistic concession to 'industry', it has also been aimed at other targets altogether. First, it helped soften up 'public opinion' for attacks on progressivist aspects of school curricula, by suggesting that children were being turned against going into industrial jobs. Secondly, it formed part of a broader strategy for managing the mass unemployment the Tories themselves had brought into being.

They needed to (a) camouflage the causes of unemployment; (b) help to hide the real numbers out of work; (c) reassure their supporters, especially after the 1981 riots, that

unemployed people's anger was being diverted into safe channels; and (d) intimidate the unemployed themselves. The strategy they chose was to blame unemployment on a lack of skills in the workforce, due partly to the wrong sort of education, and then to build the MSC into a huge agency, accountable only to them, for forcing unemployed people into 'training' schemes such as TS and ET. It's true that in the process the MSC was empowered to intervene in education, for example when it was given control of 25% of the funding for Work Related Non Advanced Further Education. But the fact that they could wind it down when unemployment temporarily dipped in the mid-'80s, and then replace it by the cash-starved system of Training and Enterprise Councils, shows that it was never part of any systematic drive to modernise 'vocational' education and training.

Secondly, 'back to basics' or 'standards'. Here too there is a big discrepancy between what the Tories' claim to be doing and

what they've actually done. Ever since the gutter press announces the progressive teaching methods of politically motivated teachers, Labour councils' anti-discrimination policies, are depriving children of the "Three Rs", the Tories government promise to restore traditional 'standards'; and in fact much of the 1986 Education Act was about outlawing 'political influence in the classroom', while Standard Assessment Tests for seven year olds, especially if linked to performance-related pay, may well 'encourage' schools to drill children in basic skills.

However, it's obvious from the spending cuts that the Tories have never had the slightest intention of improving basic education for the mass of children, in its traditional form or any other. In fact the underlying aim of the whole moral panic about 'basics' is to latch on to authoritarian elements in working class consciousness and build them up to a point where they eat up support for teachers and Labour councils, thus weakening any struggle they might try to lead against

Basic skills for all

Education fraud

We need to develop working class self-education

The left's alternative to the Tories must deal with their themes of "modernisation", "basics" and "choice".

First, on 'modernisation': we must recognise that technological education is something which many working class people want and need as individuals under capitalism, and also something which the class as a whole must acquire if it's to take and hold power. Therefore we should demand valid technological education, linked to employment, for all who require it (including women, denied it at present); but also, an end to the creeping compulsion by which, for example, adults are currently forced into 'training' schemes and unemployed school leavers into 'vocational' education; and an end also to the public school/Oxbridge stranglehold over humanistic learning exercised via A levels, which is the real factor that stops it being combined with technical education.

Secondly, on 'back to basics', we should recognise that the progressivist methods used during the '60s and '70s, though valid in some ways, were also both utopian and authoritarian; utopian because they were often just lifted out of experimental schools in the private sector (for example Summerhill), and authoritarian in that they were often imposed on working class pupils in state schools without parents being asked what they thought. We should then recognise also that there are certain 'basic skills' — for example, not only literacy and numeracy but also

of logical reasoning, of using your memory and of the ability to organise democratically for group decision-making and action — which are either not taught, or are taught in a distorted form in isolation from one another and/or from cultural, economic, political and social issues. Working people need these 'skills', not just as individuals but also as a

"We should demand an end to the public school/Oxbridge stranglehold over humanistic learning exercised via A levels, which is the real factor that stops it being combined with technical education."

class. We should therefore demand that these 'skills' be made available to all, and should build amongst rank and file teachers an organisation which works within the system, for example via the 'curriculum development' sessions which teachers have to go to now, and via the quality circles which will certainly be set up, to impose these elements across curricula in all the main fields of education.

Thirdly, in relation to 'consumer choice', we need to recognise that many working people's

experience of state education is of an alienating, authoritarian system which has humiliated them, classed them as failures, punished them and so on, and that the Tories' rhetoric of consumer choice and parent power can seem to offer something better. And it's no good telling them that this offer is bogus unless we can come forward with a positive alternative of our own which looks achievable enough to be worth fighting for. Clearly this alternative needs to be centred round democratic, collective control, counterposed to alienating bureaucracy on the one hand and individual consumerism on the other.

Given the narrowing of any space for radical experiments within the system itself, is there any way, beyond the normal processes of propaganda, patient persuasion etc, for us to get this alternative across?

The only way appears to be to develop on the Left some form of collective working class self education which is systematic and outward-looking enough to become a model for changes in the state system once we can recover the strength to impose them. Obviously there are countless problems with such a project, but at least our history provides lots of examples which we could learn from. A step in the right direction could be to work towards establishing an organisation which is concerned with ideological struggle (including, therefore, all aspects of education) in roughly the same way Labour Party Socialists and the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee are concerned with political and economic struggle respectively.



Scheme). Thus the 1988 Act imposed the complicated, bureaucratic, time-consuming and expensive National Curriculum on every state school, ostensibly to ensure that every child gets an equally broad and balanced education. But the actual effect must be to demoralise teachers still further and soften them up to accept some of its other provisions, such as 'open enrolment' (ie increasing the concentration of better-off children in 'successful' schools), Local Management of Schools, and the right of both secondary and primary schools to 'opt out' of LEA control and become 'grant maintained' — all measures guaranteed to maximise inequality.

Similarly, the FE Act deregulates FE, tertiary and 6th form colleges by taking them out of Local Education Authority control. At the same time, polytechnics, already turned into 'corporations', can now call themselves universities and award their own degrees. These two measures create a free market right across the whole field of education beyond the legal school leaving age, leading inevitably to takeovers, asset stripping, loss of opportunity for

working class students, deteriorating conditions of service and compulsory redundancies for lecturers, plus an élite of vice chancellors, management consultants and advertising agents laughing all the way to the bank.

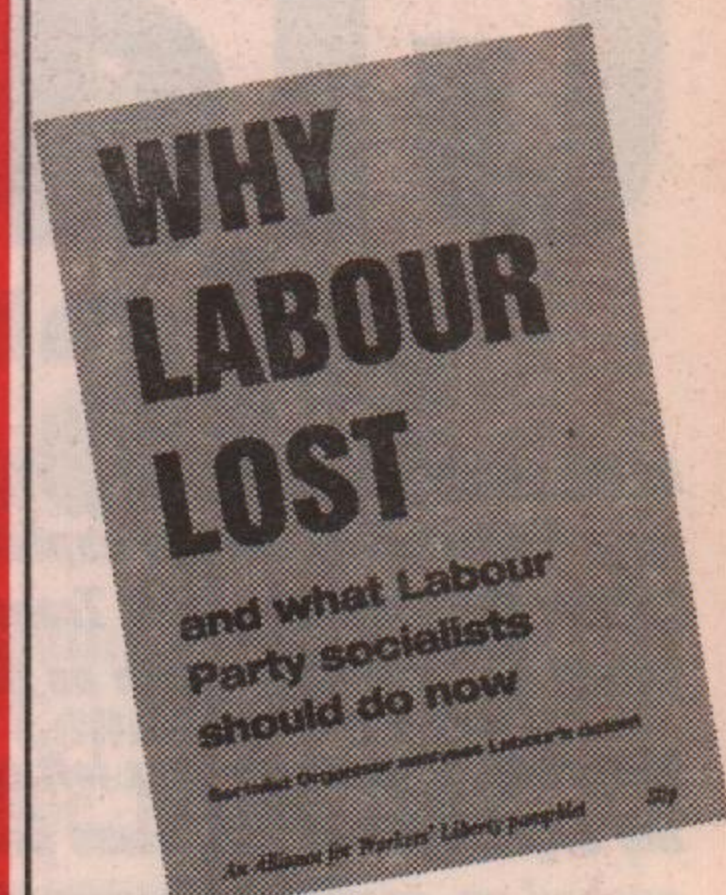
This strand of Tory policy has produced far more real change than the other two, because it relates more directly to the leadership's two main constituencies. It strengthens their mass base by offering those who are still doing alright the chance to buy 'quality' education for themselves or their children. And it meets the requirements of finance capital because an enlarged market in education, especially once there is free competition across the EC, will open up new areas both for financial services and for direct investment (for example by media conglomerates in textbook publishing and video production).

Although the Tories' approach to education has been aggressive and quite consistent, they have often had to play off one set of interests against another and have sometimes come close to alienating

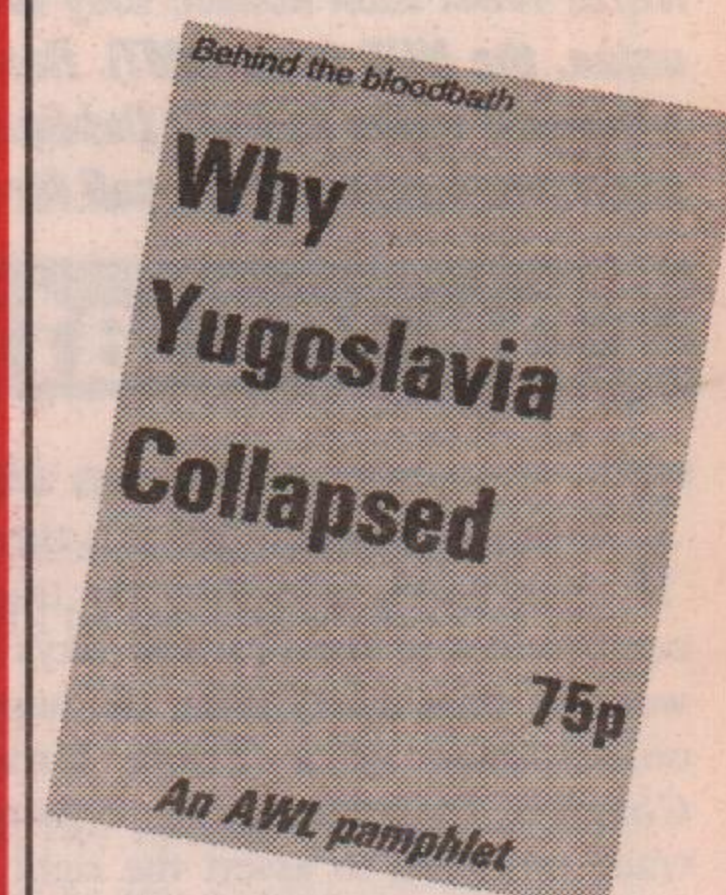
crucial areas of their support. So there must have been many points when we could have beaten them if our so-called leaders had, for example, supported teachers' action on pay, the HE student occupations last year, or young people's informal resistance to YTS. However, it's not good enough to blame the likes of Straw, McAvoy etc for acting like the class traitors we know them to be, when the Left has not worked out a conception of what's at stake in education which is coherent enough to be a guide to even its own actions.

Such a conception must at the very least engage with each of the three strands of Tory policy. More specifically, because each strand starts from something which broad sections of people really want and need, we have to disentangle these real needs from the distorted form in which the Tories have given them voice, and make those wants the basis for a set of demands. This would allow us to start holding the Tories to their own rhetoric, thereby exposing both their failure to deliver and their real motives, and building support for a valid alternative.

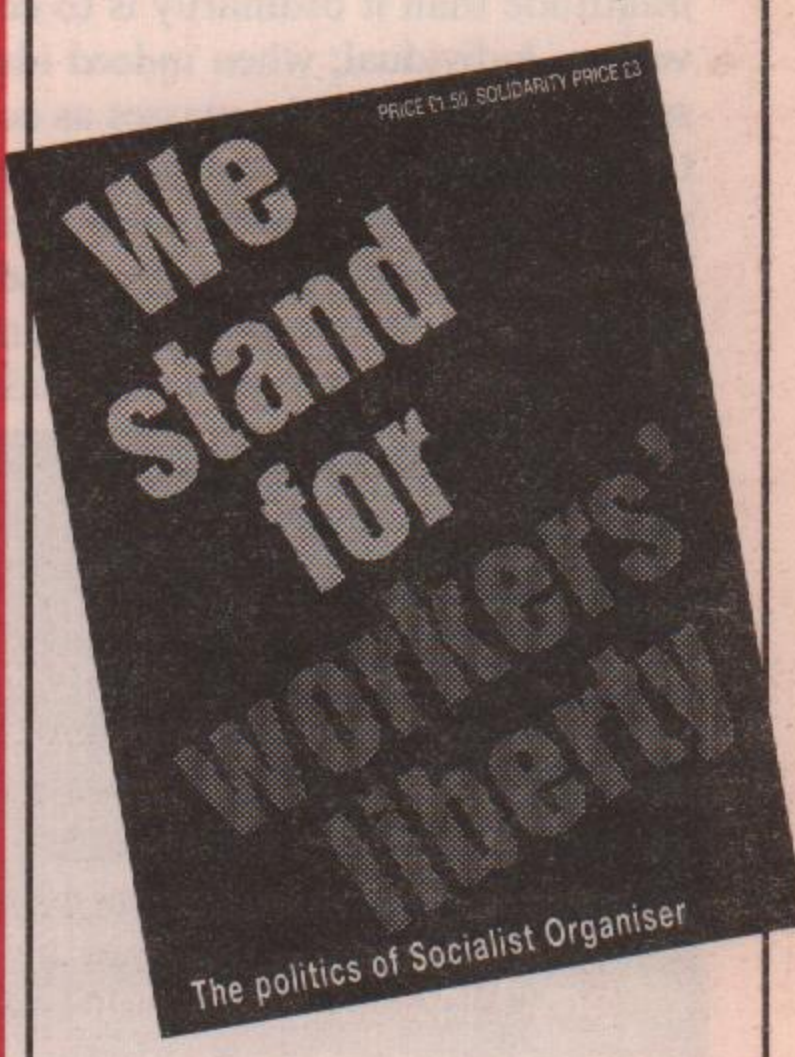
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"The whole force of organised labour should **Class against class**

In the years before the First World War, the working class of Dublin, long degraded by savage exploitation, rose in revolt. Led by Jim Larkin, they built the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, taking the solidarity strike as their weapon.

No group of workers was left to fight in isolation. The full strength of the organised working class backed every single section. Wages were pushed up, conditions improved; working-class self-respect and assertiveness rose so high that the whole ruling class decided on all-out war against "Larkinism".

They locked out the workers, relying on the weapon of starvation to break the ITGWU and gangs of police thugs to break working-class heads. The workers, T&G members and members of other unions alike, stood by "Larkin". The war dragged on for months.

When Dublin asked for industrial action in solidarity, the British labour movement sent money and good. Though rail workers in the North West took action, they were sold out by the leaders of their union, the NUR (now RMT). Rank and file militants in Britain called for a general strike to back Dublin. In December 1913 a special TUC conference rejected the call for solidarity action. Dublin was isolated.

The isolation of Dublin

The dramatic suddenness with which the Dublin fight was thrust upon public attention, the tragic occurrences of the first few days — working class martyrdom, the happy coincidence of a Trade Union Congress, the intervention of British trade unionists to assert the right of public meeting for Irish workers — filling the gap in the ranks caused by the jailing of Irish Trade Union leaders — the brilliant inspiration of a food ship, and last but not least the splendid heroism of the Dublin men and women showing out against the background of the squalor and misery of their houses.

There are times in history when we realise that it is easier to convert a multitude than it ordinarily is to convert an individual; when indeed ideas seem to seize upon the masses as contra-distinguished by ordinary times when individuals slowly seize ideas. The propagandist toils on for decades in seeming failure and ignominy, when suddenly some great event takes

The Dublin fighters received their defeat, met their Waterloo, at the London Conference of 9 December. At that Conference the representatives of organised labour declared that they would not counsel the use of any kind of economic force or industrial action in support of the Dublin workers, and immediately this was known, the fight was virtually lost. At the next Peace Conference in Dublin the employers would not even look at the joint proposals unanimously agreed to by the representatives of the British and Irish Trade Unions. They knew that they had nothing to fear, as their opponents in the labour camp had solemnly promised not to hurt them.

place in accord with the principles he has been advocating, and immediately he finds that the seed he has been sowing is springing up in plants that are covering the earth. To the idea of working class unity, to the seed of industrial solidarity, Dublin was the great event that enabled it to seize the minds of the masses, the germinating force that gave power to the seed to fructify and cover these islands.

I say in all solemnity and seriousness that in its attitude towards Dublin the working class movement of Great Britain reached its highest point of moral grandeur — attained for a moment to a realisation of that sublime unity towards which the best in us must continually aspire. Could that feeling but have been crystallised into organic expression, could we but have had real statesmen amongst us who, recognising the wonderful leap forward of our class, would have hastened to burn behind us the boats that might make easy a retreat to the old ground of isolation and division, could we have found labour leaders capable enough to declare that now that the working class had found its collective soul it should hasten to express itself as befitted that soul and not be fettered by the rules, regulations and codes of organisations conceived in the olden outworn spirit of sectional jealousies; could these things have but been vouchsafed to us, what a new world could now be opening delightfully, upon the vision of labour? Consider what Dublin meant to you all! It meant that the whole force of organised labour should stand behind each unit of organisation in each and all of its battles, that no company, battalion or brigade should henceforth be allowed to face the enemy alone, and that the capitalist would be taught that when he fought a union anywhere he must be prepared to fight all unions everywhere.

For the first days and weeks of the struggle, the working classes of Great Britain attained to the height of moral grandeur expressed in that idea, all labour stood behind Dublin, and Dublin rejoiced. Dublin suffered



The Dublin strikers were part of a movement of working class revolt all over Europe including Britain: in 1911 there was a national strike of transport workers. Here in Liverpool the army and police march to their strike breaking duties

and agonised, but rejoiced that even in its suffering it was the medium for the apostolate of a rejuvenating idea. How often have I heard the responsive cheers to the question whether they would be prepared to stand by

"The whole force of organised labour should stand behind each unit alone, and that the capitalist would be taught that when he fought a union anywhere he must be prepared to fight all unions everywhere."

others as these others had stood by them!

And now? Dublin is isolated. We asked our friends of the transport trade unions to isolate the capitalist class of Dublin, and we asked the other unions to back them up. But no, they said we would rather help you by giving you funds. We argued that a strike is an attempt to stop the capitalist from carrying on his business, that the success or failure of the strike depends entirely upon the success or non-success of the capitalist to

do without the strikers. If the capitalist is able to carry on his business without the strikers, then the strike is lost, even if the strikers receive more in strike pay than they formerly did in wages. We said that if scabs are working a ship and union men discharged in another port the boat so loaded, then those union men are strike breakers, since they help the capitalist in question to carry on his business. That if union seamen man a boat discharged by scabs, these union seamen or firemen are by the same reason strike-breakers, as also are the railwaymen or carters who assist in transporting the goods handled by the scabs for the capitalist who is fighting his men or women. In other words, we appealed to the collective soul of the workers against the collective hatred of the capitalist.

We asked for no more than the logical development of that idea of working class unity, that the working class of Britain should help us to prevent the Dublin capitalists carrying on their business without us. We asked for the isolation of the capitalists of Dublin, and for answer the leaders of the British labour movement proceeded calmly to isolate the working class of Dublin. As an answer to those who supported our request for the isolation of Dublin we were told that a much better plan would be to increase the subsidies to enable us to increase strike pay. As soon as this argument had served its purpose, the subsidies fell off, and the "Dublin Fund" grew smaller and smaller as if by a prear-

anged plan. We had rejected the last terms offered by the employers on the strength of this talk of increased supplies, and as soon as that last attempt at settlement thus fell through, the supplies gradually froze up instead of

"The propagandist toils on for decades in seeming failure and ignominy, when suddenly some great event takes place and he finds that the seed he has been sowing is springing up in plants that are covering the earth"

being increased as we had been promised.

In addition to this the National Union of Railwaymen, whilst in attendance at the Special Conference in London on 9th December, had actually in their pockets the arrangements for the re-starting of work on the London and North-Western boat at the North Wall of Dublin, and in the train returning to Dublin the day after the Conference, we read of the line being reopened. No vote was taken of the men on strike; they were simply ordered back to work by their

stand behind each unit" in Dublin

For the sympathetic strike

Some time ago I reprinted in *Forward* an extract from an article I had contributed to the *Irish Review* defending and expounding the idea of the sympathetic strike. That was at the beginning of the Dublin struggle. Now, the members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union who have returned to work in Dublin have done so after signing an agreement to handle all classes of goods, that is to say, to renounce for the time the idea and practice of the sympathetic strike.

This, by the way, is the only agreement yet signed by members of that union. In those firms which still insist upon the former Employers' Agreement banning the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union the strike or lock-out is still in active operation.

But the question arises: what reason is to be derived from our experience of the sympathetic strike in Dublin? What lesson can be learned from a cool and reasoned study of our struggle?

Let me repeat the essence of the article alluded to as an explanation of the nature of the sympathetic strike. It pointed out that we in Dublin had realised that the capitalist cannot be successfully fought upon the industrial field unless we recognise that all classes of workers should recognise their common interests, that such recognition implied that any employer engaged in a struggle with his workpeople should be made taboo or tainted, that no other workers should co-operate in helping to keep his business growing, that no goods coming from his works should be handled by organised workers, and no goods going to his works should be conveyed by organised workers. That he should, in effect, be put outside the pale of civilisation, and communication with him should be regarded as being as deadly a crime as correspondence with an enemy in war time. I tried to illustrate this by citing examples of social warfare conducted on similar lines in the past by various societies and classes.

It may then be asked: how far has the Dublin experience justified or failed to justify those who, like myself, contended for the practicability of this policy? We have been forced in Dublin to abandon the policy temporarily because other unions whose co-operation was necessary had not adopted a similar policy. It was not practicable to enforce the policy of tainted goods in Dublin whilst the goods so held up could be transported from other ports and handled across channel by other unions. The executives of other unions failing to sanction the co-operation of their members, the enforcement of this policy became an impossibility. Hence I submit that the main difficulty in the way of the success of this policy is in the multiplicity of unions and executives. Every union not immediately engaged in the conflict is a union whose material interests — looked at from a narrowly selfish point of view — are opposed to being drawn into the struggle. Therefore, every execu-

tive naturally aligns itself in opposition to the policy of a sympathetic strike, except when it is its own union that is immediately concerned. When it is one of the principals in the fight then each union becomes as enthusiastically in favour of the sympathetic strike as it formerly was against it. We have seen this exemplified recently in London in the cases of the Coalmen's strike and the London Builders' lock-out. In fact every union that nowadays becomes involved in a strike appeals to sympathetic action immediately, even after condemning its theory when at peace. It is no use pointing out the inconsistency of such action; it is merely a case of following the immediate material interests of their union, instead of the broader material and moral welfare of their class. But when we recognise this ugly fact, what lesson ought we to derive from it?

We ought, I think, to learn that the first duty of the militant worker today is to work for industrial unionism in some form. To work for the abolition or merging of all these unions that now divide our energies instead of concentrating them — and for the abolition of all those executives whose measure of success is the balance sheet of their union, instead of the power of their class. The doctrine of "tainted goods" is vitally necessary for the salvation of labour upon the industrial field, but its enforcement is not possible as long as labour is split up by unions whose executives look upon fellow workers in conflict with dread as possible sources of depletion of their treasuries. Be it remembered that it is scarcely humanly possible that these executives should act otherwise if the consciousness of class solidarity has not entered into the minds and hearts of their membership; but if and when it has so entered, then a bigoted conservatism based upon old traditional methods of action becomes a crime against the progress of the species.

This is to my mind the lesson of Dublin. Industrial unionism, the amalgamation of all forces of labour into one union, capable of concentrating all forces upon any one issue or in any one fight, can alone fight industrially as the present development and organisation of capital requires that labour should fight. This will not be accomplished in a day, nor in a year, but should be definitely aimed at, no matter how long may be the period of its accomplishment.

The organisation of all workers in any one industry into a union covering that entire industry, and the linking up of all such unions under one head is a different thing from the mere amalgamation of certain unions. But whilst not necessarily antagonistic, it is certainly more in the line of industrial development, and more effective in the day of conflict. The same also helps to retrieve the workers' movement from the unnatural alliance with mere anti-politicalism so unfortunately and unnecessarily introduced as a fresh dividing issue at this juncture when all our minds ought to be set upon Unity.

Forward, February 2, 1914.

The bigot and the moderate

The following paragraphs, leading up to a joke and a verse, are from James Connolly's editorial column in the *Workers Republic*, March 1903. They are typical of Connolly's journalism, mixing humour and great earnestness.

"The socialist party which does not believe in itself, which does not cherish as its dearest belief the doctrine that it and it alone is destined to carry the banner of socialism to a triumphant issue, is bound sooner or later to die of dry rot, or become a prey to the machinations of intriguers or the doubts of weaklings.

What holds good of the individual in this case holds good of the party.

The individual only succeeds to the degree in which he believes in himself: the party likewise which believes in itself and whose members have the moral fibre to act up to that belief will win, and adverse stars but serve to strengthen its determination and stiffen its resolve.

Hence my admiration for the bigot, the man of no compromise, the good hater, the relentless fighter whoever or wherever he may be - the man who wars to the knife, and the knife to the hilt.

Stand back, will yez, till I strike the liar; no, I mean the lyre. I dedicate this doggerel without permission to the moderate(?) men.

Be Moderate!

Some men, faint-hearted, ever seek
Our programme to retouch,
And will insist whene'er they speak,
That we demand too much.

'Tis passing strange, yet I declare
Such statements cause me mirth,
For our demands most moderate are,
We only want THE EARTH

Our masters all a godly crew,
Whose hearts bleed for the poor
Their sympathies assure us, too,
If our demands were fewer.
Most generous souls! But please observe,
What they enjoy from birth
Is all we ever had the nerve
To ask, that is, THE EARTH

The Labour Fakir, full of guile,
Such doctrine ever preaches,
And whilst he bleeds the rank and file,
Tame moderation teaches.
Yet, in his despite, we'll see the day
When, with sword in its girth,
Labour shall march in war array
To seize its own, THE EARTH

For Labour long with groans and tears
To its opponents knelt,
But never yet to aught save fears
Did heart of tyrant melt.
We need not kneel, our cause is high,
Of true men there's no dearth,
And our victorious rallying cry
Shall be, WE WANT THE EARTH!

Smacking children is wrong

Belinda Weaver takes up a debate

I disagree with Sigrid Fisher (Women's Eye, SO 536) that women only smack their children because of intolerable pressure, or out of desperation.

Far from it. Many women smack their children regularly. A smack on the bottom for this, a slap for that, a clip round the ear for something else — it's all part of the daily routine in many families, often the *first* resort, not the last.

Sigrid feels compassion for the mothers, but expresses very little for the children who've been hit. Yes, some mothers have a very rough time, but they are not powerless creatures with their children; on the contrary, they're all-powerful, and many women regularly vent their rage and frustration on their children.

Anyone who claims otherwise must have averted their eyes in supermarkets and playgrounds and doctors' waiting rooms. They must have closed their ears to the sounds of blows and cries.

Violence against children is *everywhere*. People may tut-tut about it when they see some frazzled mother lashing out, or if they see battered children on the news, but for the most part mild, continuing violence against children is *condoned*, not condemned. Society is more likely to tut-tut if you *don't* smack your kids.

"Violence against children is everywhere. People may tut-tut about it when they see some frazzled mother lashing out, or if they see battered children on the news, but for the most part mild, continuing violence against children is condoned, not condemned."

Sigrid says tut-tutting is not what these mothers need, but we need to teach women (and men) that it's wrong to slap kids, whatever the circumstances. Children are small, defenceless, and totally dependent on their parents. To punish them physically simply for being children (that is, curious and determined) is terrible.

"Circumstances" are no excuse. The man who beats his wife, the racist who beats up a black person, the scab who breaks a strike, can all claim they were desperate, that circumstances drove them to it. It doesn't make their actions right.

And hitting children is worse than any of those — because the person hit is so small and defenceless and dependent, and they have no-one to go to for comfort or support. The person who should



Small children do not understand why they are being hit

comfort them — the parent — is the attacker. Children can't reason as well as adults. If you've been the victim of a racist attack, you blame your attacker. Small children blame themselves.

Of course, parents get angry. I don't deny that. But getting angry doesn't mean you have to hit out. You can separate the feeling (anger) from the act (slapping). When I feel angry with my child, I either leave the room for a moment to yell, or I thump the bed, or I try to make a joke of it. It is hard not to lash out, but I never want to do it.

Many people say a slap here and there doesn't hurt, or that children easily forget. That isn't true. Small children don't understand *why* they've been hit. Their minds and memories aren't developed enough to link what they did with the punishment they get. And why should children be less horrified than adults by a sudden slap? How would you feel if a loving partner suddenly thumped you without warning?

Children may suppress memories, but they don't forget. Many children grow up feeling bad or shamed by beatings. Why? Because if someone you love hits you, you feel fury, surprise, disappointment, resentment, outrage. At first you can't believe it. But because children love their parents and are so dependent on them, they believe (unless they are

very strong, or are given other support) that they must have deserved it, that their parents must have been right to hit them.

"'Circumstances' are no excuse. The man who beats his wife, the racist who beats up a black person can all claim they were desperate, that circumstances drove them to it. It doesn't make their actions right. And hitting children is worse than any of those."

If children are often hit, they soon learn to find excuses for their tormentors by blaming themselves. They grow up fearful, lacking confidence and self-esteem. They either continue to behave like victims, and get tangled up with people who abuse them, or they become

abusers themselves. Many go on to beat their own children.

Parents who don't hit their children were either not hit themselves or have faced up to how much the beatings hurt them, and have resolved not to do it to their own kids. The ones who feel angry are the lucky ones; they can break the cycle.

If, as Sigrid says, it's wrong for teachers and nursery workers to hit kids, how can it ever be "right" for mothers? Isn't it *worse* if they do it? A child can get away from a teacher, but not from a parent. Parents who slap their kids usually feel they own them, that children are theirs to do with as they will. This is wrong. Children are human beings, and belong only to themselves.

Because the family is seen as private, people are reluctant to intervene when kids get slapped, just as they avoid getting between husband and wife in violent rows. Yet the attitude "They're my children, and I can do what I like with them" is terribly wrong, and can be a cover for all sorts of abuse. Children should not always be forced to do what the parent wants.

As a child, I was regularly hit because I was a poor eater. I hated cauliflower, but was forced to eat it. The beatings didn't make me like cauliflower, so what were they for? To ensure my parents' will prevailed — nothing else. They showed me who was boss. But I never doubted that. And if I had, what good would it have done? There were no other parents for me, no other home to go to. They already had absolute power over me, so why go on proving it?

Yet parents do it time after time. Power corrupts.

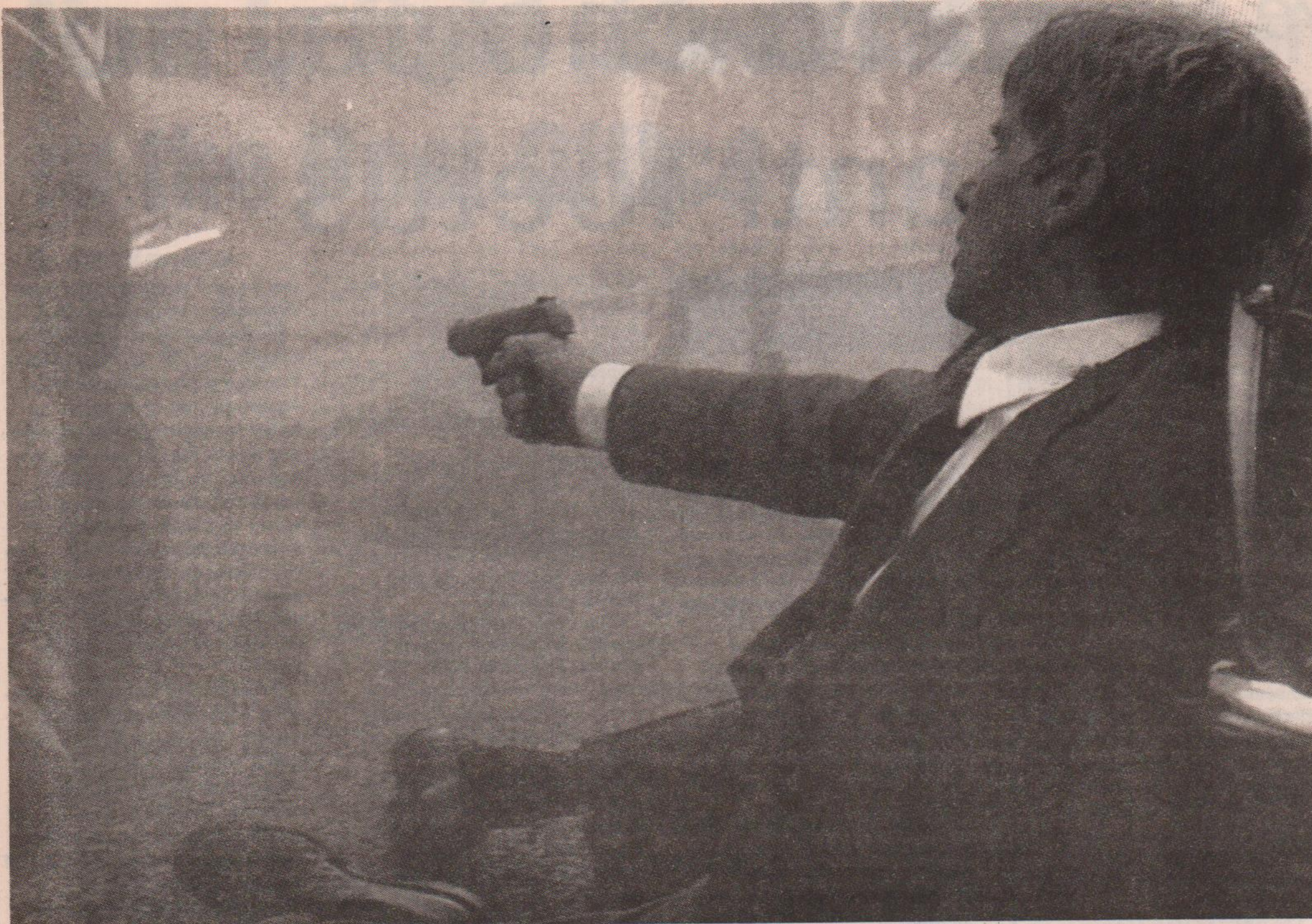
Too often, parents make it hard for a child to be "good". They leave expensive videos or stereos near little fingers, which then get slapped for exploring. Is a curious child "naughty" for trying to find out about things, or is the parent wrong for leaving precious things in the child's reach? I think the parent is wrong.

Many parents refuse their children any autonomy. The parent is always there correcting, interfering, controlling. When the child does something the parent disagrees with or finds inconvenient, a row or a slap follows.

If children are not doing something life-threatening or dangerous, but are merely playing safely (though not as the parent might wish), why not let them get on with it without interference? That way parents and children would have less stress in their lives.

Removing the stress mothers face would help a lot in reducing violence against children. But it is also important to teach people that it's wrong.

If it does happen, the parent should apologise, not for getting angry (which often can't be prevented) but for taking out the anger on the child. The myth of mother love hides the violence that often forms part of the mother/child relationship. Until we face it, and defend the rights of children to live free from violence and fear, we are failing the weak and defenceless.



Harrison Ford deploys massive fire power to make the world safe for middle-class paranoiacs

Zapping the have-nots

Cinema

Belinda Weaver reviews *Patriot Games*

Were it not for the subtext, *Patriot Games* would be a fairly ordinary thriller. It has the usual ingredients — a clean-cut hero, shootings and chases, death-dealing, seemingly invulnerable baddies, a cute kid in peril, and technological thrills. It's well done; the film doesn't feel overblown, or too familiar.

Harrison Ford plays ex-CIA analyst Jack Ryan, who foils an assassination attempt by an Irish gang on an imaginary Northern Ireland minister, Lord Holmes, who just happens to be the Queen's cousin.

The Irish gang are not amused,

particularly as Jack has shot the young brother of one of them. Sean, the surviving brother, swears he'll get even.

So it's personal, not political. The politics are there to start things off; from then on, it's all stalking and vengeance.

The gang aren't IRA. They're renegades, hoping to push the IRA and the British into an all-out war, so that they can reap the benefits. Just what these benefits might be is never spelled out, and there's no telling where the group get its money from.

They're formidably armed, and they globe-trot a lot. They also kill lots of people. In short, they're tabloid terrorists, the creation of paranoia and vivid imaginations. They're meant to make us quake in our shoes (and cheer Jack on when he goes after them).

So much for the plot. When Jack

and his storybook wife and daughter get back home to their incredibly sumptuous American home, the film marks time till the bad guys show up.

"With the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War, middle class America should feel safe, but it doesn't. It feels anxious and insecure and threatened by the huge mass of American have-nots."

And that's what the film is about — the terror of the middle classes in their comfortable homes, the terror caused by the people *out there*, the have-nots, who might one day invade their cosy sanctuaries, and send them out into the cold.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the ending of the Cold War, middle class America should feel safe, but it doesn't. It still feels anxious and insecure and threatened. Not by Ireland — that's ridiculous — but by tough, ruthless men with guns, which is what Sean Miller and his gang are.

Obviously they don't represent what middle class America sees as its real "enemy" — the huge mass of American have-nots, the workers and unemployed, among whom are the doubly oppressed and downtrodden black and Hispanic Americans.

But they'll do as a stand-in. At

the start, Sean Miller, who has seen his brother shot before his eyes, and whose father was killed by the RUC, has real grievances, but he goes too far in revenge and loses whatever audience sympathy he's earned. His righteous anger turns into something sour and crazy. We're meant to hate him, so that Jack can be right. For Jack to triumph, we must want Sean dead.

But killing him isn't easy. Like vampires who need a stake through the heart, true baddies can only be killed by the hero. Even when their corpses have been positively identified, we know they're not dead. The hero needs that final showdown.

In his search for Miller, Jack unleashes the immeasurable resources of the CIA, and shows to what lengths of time and expense the Agency will go to "neutralise" troublemakers.

It's quite a show. Thousands, possibly millions, are spent "taking out" a handful of people — all so one guy can sleep well at night. The technology on display is a warning of the power the US has to survey and harass the people it fears, and to strike too, when the time is right.

As a thriller, *Patriot Games* is adequate. As an unconscious display of American middle class paranoia, it's fascinating. The film is not for anyone who knows or cares about Irish politics. They're just an excuse for mayhem in the old battle between good and evil. Jack Ryan never questions whether Lord Holmes is worth saving, or whether the Irish Troubles justify violence against the British ruling class. He just wants to live safely and securely in his big cosy house, and if he has to kill people to do it, he will.

Low morals in high places

Book

Stan Crooke reviews *Defeat From the Jaws of Victory* by Mike Marqusee and Richard Heffernan (Verso, forthcoming)

Defeat From the Jaws of Victory is a tale of people of no principles, no scruples and no integrity. Its characters inspire neither pity nor sympathy in the reader. They are schemers, plotters and shysters who baulk at nothing in their crazed pursuit of the trappings of power.

As a work of fiction, the book is less than convincing. Its leading characters are simply too loathsome, too contemptible and too devoid of any individuality to be accepted by the reader as real people.

Far too contrived, for example, is the episode in which a politician has thousands of mugs manufactured — ornamented with his face against a background of the national flag — in preparation for his election as the country's leader.

Equally unconvincing is the book's sub-plot about a bunch of gormless students who worm and wheedle their way into the nerve centre of a political party, promptly plunging the party into wrack and ruin.

Just as far-fetched is the character who poses as a media 'expert' and lives in a fantasy world of make-believe political campaigns, squandering hundreds of thousands of pounds on launching these fictitious campaigns in an attempt to con the media into believing that they actually exist.

And then there is the 'liberal' journalist — the kind of journalist you might expect to find employed by the *Guardian* — who writes contrived, not to say untruthful, articles for his paper in order to maliciously denigrate critics of a prominent national politician.

Sadly, however, *Defeat From the Jaws of Victory* is not a work of fiction. Written by Richard Heffernan and Mike Marqusee, it is the history of the Labour Party in recent years.

The book begins at the Labour Party conference in 1980, when Patricia Hewitt still advocated confrontation with the Tories, and Neil Kinnock preached class struggle. It concludes with the 1992 General Election, fought by a party whose membership figures had collapsed, whose internal democracy had been crushed, and whose politics had become virtually indistinguishable from those of the Tories.

The central figure is Kinnock himself — cowardly, bullying, devious, verbose and arrogant. Around Kinnock there are his clones and acolytes in the Labour Co-ordinating Committee and its youth wing in the National Organisation of Labour Students.

Along with exposing the (lack of) calibre and moral fibre of those who staffed the Kinnock machine in these years, the book also covers in detail specific incidents: the ditching of unilateralism, the Gulf War, the Party purge, the farce of the national membership scheme and the débacle of the 1992 General Election.

Despite the authors' associations with the magazine *Labour Briefing* (recently described by the *Guardian* as "the hardest of all hard-left journals" — one thing you learn from this book is never to trust the *Guardian!*), the book has much to commend it.

It shows the left the high cost of subordinating political clarity to attempts to curry favour with MPs. It's a lesson that *Labour Briefing* — Ken Livingstone's one-time fan-club — learned (if it has learned it) — very late in the game. Let's hope no-one on the left makes such a mistake in their dealings with the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs and its recently established Supporters' Network.

Periscope

"The Kennedys",
ITV, Tuesday 13 October.

The modern US republic is a political democracy. Citizens remain equal under the law in their formal rights, even when one owns and enjoys hundreds of millions of dollars and the other is slowly starving to death.

Most citizens spend their whole working lives under the direct control of a few of their millionaire fellow-citizens. This social inequality — the rule of economic kings, and occasionally queens, within the narrowly political democracy — nullifies formal, political and legal equality, turning it on its head. The economic royalty uses its wealth to make itself a sort of "republican" political royalty.

No political privileges can be inherited even by the richest, only a common citizenship; but the rich inherit the wealth

which buys political privileges. Families transmit their privileges over generations, using their wealth to steal or cancel out the political rights of millions of their fellow citizens. The majority of Americans, knowing this, do not vote!

The Kennedy clan exemplifies all this. They have held the presidency only once (1960-63). But one-time bootlegger Joseph Kennedy *did* succeed in his desire to create an American political aristocracy. His son John, for whom he virtually bought the presidency in 1960, was assassinated; so was son Robert, trying to be president; scandal destroyed the prospects of his younger son Edward, who is nonetheless one of the most powerful senators in Washington — but there is a very large and immensely rich new generation of his grandchildren now moving to political centre stage.

This four-part documentary tells the story of this clan of democratic aristocrats and would-be republican kings.

Where we stand

We 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 decrees 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.

From 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; twice 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.

Against 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.

ORGANISING

Pro-choice, not anti-foetus

PLATFORM

By David Ball

Mary Cooper's article defending free speech for anti-abortionists (*SO* 535) was absolutely right. To treat anti-abortionists as if they are fascists, as the SWP and *Socialist Outlook* do, is dangerous and counter-productive.

It is also to have a very poor understanding of what motivates "pro-life" campaigners, and how they can be won away from anti-abortionism. It indicates the warped thinking of some on the left when it comes to campaigning for abortion rights.

Socialists give unequivocal support to a woman's right to choose an abortion. We are in favour of a woman's right to control her body. The right to abortion follows from this. Much of the left expresses its support for abortion rights — and opposition to groups such as SPUC and Life — far more negatively.

The issue is sometimes presented as being far more about a complete disregard and contempt for the foetus than about positive support for women's autonomy.

This anti-foetus approach is perhaps best exemplified by the Revolutionary Communist Party. At Workers' Liberty '92, last July,

an RCP member, contributing to a session 'political correctness', argued that campaigns for 'reproductive rights' were causing unnecessary confusion, since 'reproductive rights' is just a more complicated way of saying 'abortion rights'.

The RCP'er was reminded by a *Socialist Organiser* supporter, Janine Booth, that reproductive rights were about more than abortion, that a woman's right to control her body goes beyond the right to choose an abortion.

Some on the left talk as though the struggle for women's rights is a vendetta against the foetus! This does nothing for women and only serves to outrage anti-abortionists and make it impossible to reason with them.

Serious socialists reject such bigotry. We should also reject the idea that the only way to relate to anti-abortionists is to 'no platform' them. Many 'pro-life' activists have good left-wing instincts. Some are in the peace movement, or the labour movement. They are motivated by concern for human life and a belief in equality which they seek to apply to the unborn. They are, however, politically misguided into believing that what they see as the abortion problem can be solved effectively through legal restrictions and bans.

A socialist response to this should not be simply to shout "bigot!" We should welcome their concern for human life. We share it! One of the reasons we oppose the capitalist sys-

tem is that it treats human lives as dispensable commodities.

We should welcome their belief in equality, but seek to persuade them that there is no equality between women and men when women are forced to continue with pregnancies they do not want, something which men will never have to endure.

Above all, we should not say that we are "in favour of abortion". We do not rub our hands with glee when government statistics show an increase in the total number of abortions. It is not abortion per se that we support but the freest possible choice.

The way to win over anti-abortionists to a pro-choice position is to convince them that restrictions and bans lead mainly to dangerous illegal abortions rather than fewer abortions. The way to achieve fewer abortions is through social policies which help to eliminate the causes of unwanted pregnancies.

This means that the left should campaign for: higher levels of child benefit, especially for single mothers; wider availability of free contraception; publicly provided free childcare; policies to end the stigmatisation of single-parenthood and 'illegitimacy'.

It is with policies such as these, not with 'no platform' tactics that the left can win people away from the dangerous dead-end of 'anti-abortionism' and towards the struggle for socialism.

AWL public forums

Thursday 8 October

"Drugs — is legalisation the answer?" Brighton AWL meeting. 7.30, Unemployed Centre.

"How to fight the power" Lewisham College AWL meeting. 12.30, Student Union.

Monday 12 October

"The legacy of Malcolm X" Sheffield AWL meeting. 7.30 Mount Pleasant Community Centre.

Tuesday 13 October

"The legacy of Malcolm X" Sheffield Poly AWL meeting. 12.00, Collegiate Crescent Site. "Why is half the world starving?" Liverpool University

Fighting the right, selling the paper!

80 copies of *Socialist Organiser* were sold at Labour Party Conference.

College sales of *Socialist Organiser* increased last week.

55 papers were sold at Sheffield University, 24 at Northumbria University, 15 at Liverpool University, 12 at Westminster University, 55 in Manchester and 33 in Brighton colleges.

If you want to sell the paper 'phone Jill on 071-639 7965.

AWL meeting. 1.00, Meeting Room 6, Student Union.

Wednesday 14 October

"How to Save the World" Sheffield AWL debate the Green Party. 1.00, Octagon Centre.

"Lessons from America — the Teamsters" Hamilton AWL meeting. 7.30, Town Hall.

"The legacy of Malcolm X" East London AWL meeting. 7.30, Davenant Centre, Whitechapel Road.

"Is Socialism possible?" Westminster University AWL meeting. 1.00, Room 2.6, Student Union.

Thursday 15 October

"Why is the slump happening?" Nottingham AWL meeting. 7.30, Unemployed Centre.

"Ireland — what solution" Nottingham AWL debate Troops Out Movement. 8.00, ICC, Mansfield Road.

"Sack the Queen!" Glasgow AWL meeting. 7.30, Partick Burgh Halls.

Marxist schools

Saturday 24 October. Nottingham AWL dayschool. 10.30, ICC, Mansfield Road.

Saturday 7 - Sunday 8 November. "Socialism or barbarism" AWL student weekend school. Manchester Town Hall.

Alliance for Workers' Liberty Conference

Saturday 28 - Sunday 29 November. Conference details from: The National Secretary, AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Also coming up...

Fighting racism

March and rally against fascism. Assemble 12.30, King Georges Park, Bloxwich. March to Walsall Town Hall. More details: 0922-22586.

Inside the unions

The *Trade Union News* conference will be held at the Mechanics Institute in Manchester on Saturday 10 October, 11.00 - 5.00.

Conference of the Left

Saturday 17 October, Winding Wheel, Chesterfield. Organised by Chesterfield Labour Party and the Socialist Movement.

Lesbian and gay

The Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition is demonstrating for equality. Saturday 31 October, assemble 12.00, Hyde Park, London.

Students

Fight student debt! March in Manchester on Wednesday 4 November. Details from Manchester Area NUS, 061-275 2973.

How to fight privatisation in the Post Office

By a UCW member

We all know what privatisation means. For our members it means fewer jobs, lower wages and worse conditions. It means breaking the national agreements. It means an attack on our Union. For the public it means higher prices and a worse service. The only ones to gain are the gangsters in the boardrooms, and the gamblers in the City into whose pockets the profits will go. That's why today's demonstration is a welcome first step in the campaign to prevent the privatisation of Parcelforce.

That's only a first step. Demonstrations, protests, leaflets are all well and good. On their own, though, they won't stop privatisation. BT, Girobank etc. It wasn't for lack of leaflets and protest that we failed to stop them going private.

Many of our members wonder if it's possible to stop

privatisation at all. They have a point. At the same time as protesting against it, the UCW has gone along with all the measures that made privatisation possible. We didn't oppose the splitting away of BT, and then the splitting up of the Post Office. Recently, we've accepted the splitting up of the letters business. In the name of increasing profits, we've accepted deals that have worsened our conditions and weakened our position as a Union. We've watched as the bosses have fattened up the contenders for privatisation, like turkeys, and then complained when they've been eaten for Christmas.

The way to fight privatisation is to make the task as unattractive as possible. Anyone thinking of trying will think again faced with a strong union determined to defend its members. Arthur McGuinness has already met with Parcelforce to discuss the possible effects of privatisation.

He should now declare that any attempt to worsen existing conditions will be met with industrial action — with full support from UCW members in the other businesses. In fact, we should go further and say that any incoming owner will be faced with a long list of demands, including wages and working conditions and a UCW technology agreement.

"The way to fight privatisation is to make the task as unattractive as possible."

We must also fight to get a commitment from the Labour Party that in a return

to office, they will return any part of the present Post Office that has been privatised, back to public ownership with the minimum of compensation. It's a scandal that at the moment the asset-strippers and the greedy can still hope to hold onto their ill-gotten gains.

Does this mean a return to old-style nationalisation? Rule by bureaucrats with the workforce and the public which it serves. How could a campaign for this fail to win support compared to the disgraceful money-grubbing antics of privatised BT, water, gas, electricity etc.?

We don't have to accept defeat. Privatisation can be stopped. Stop it at Parcelforce and we stop in the rest of the Post Office. Fail and who will be next?

Sheffield Council: vote no to pay cuts!

By a Sheffield Council worker

All the main, Sheffield Council, manual and craft and APT&C unions are balloting their members this week with the question:

"Do you agree to take three days unpaid leave to:

1. avoid 800 council workers being made redundant,
2. help provide an enhanced voluntary early retirement scheme."

The idea is that in accepting the pay cut there will be no redundancies before 31st March 1993. However, there is nothing in writing to this effect and the majority of shop stewards in NALGO do not believe that it will postpone redundancies for that long.

The idea for a pay cut originated from officials in NALGO, who then convinced the officials of the other unions that it was the only way forward. Some of the unions have held members meetings before the ballot, others have not.

At NALGO's SGM there was an acrimonious debate, but the vote was overwhelming in favour. The true colours of the officials began to show up, more than before, clearly in the debate. A motion was moved

calling for the reinstatement of cuts in services. The reply from Paul Hudson, was along the lines of: "These are the people (the ones moving the motion) who want all-out strike. All-out strike damages the services more than unpaid leave. Both have the same result of saving the Council money". This view of the Council's budget "problems" as all of our problems and of strike action as a way of saving the council money owes nothing to trade unionism and everything to the bosses.

Another even more unbelievable statement was made last week by Paul Hudson, when speaking to two left-wing shop stewards from one department faced with very large numbers of threatened redundancies: "I hope the ballot goes down, because you will be some of the first to go down the road." With leaders like this who needs enemies!

A campaign has been set up for a "No" vote in the pay cut ballot, by a broad spectrum of NALGO activists, the slogan being "Vote No — prepare to fight". Whatever the outcome of the ballot there will be redundancies in the next few months and it is clear that a lot of work needs to be done on the ground to build for action to defend jobs and services.

Bury NALGO strike ballot

By Maxine Jordan, Manchester NALGO

Bury NALGO have voted to ballot on a programme of industrial action including one day branch wide strikes and selective action by key workers. The rolling programme of strike is in response to the sacking of Branch Secretary Rob McLaughlin.

About 300 members attended the Special NALGO meeting last Tuesday and voted unanimously to back the campaign of action. Rob McLaughlin was sacked following a four month suspension over leading an

anti-cuts campaign.

At the time of meeting, Bury Council had just announced a further round of £10 million cuts with no guarantees jobs would not disappear. In addition basic terms and conditions of employment are threatened.

As Rob McLaughlin said at the meeting, there will be no second chance to fight these cuts. NALGO members in Bury must fight for reinstatement of their Branch Secretary and lead a campaign against the cuts. This would give an effective lead to the growing number of council workers facing cuts and the threat of job losses up and down the country.

"All out November 4!" says NALGO Broad Left

NALGO Broad Left, meeting in Sheffield on 3 October, agreed to make the 4 November a national day of action over cuts and redundancies.

The SWP, dominant group in the BL, proposed that the BL "call on the National Executive to make the 4th of November into a nationwide day of protest".

This is fine as far as it goes, but it lacks any independent strategy if the NEC refuse. Socialist Organiser supporters won amendments which called for:

- other NALGO districts to join the Met District in the day of action;
- the day of action to be a day of strike action;
- a recall NALGO conference to hammer out an anti-cuts strategy based on a rolling programme of national strikes and

demonstrations.

The SWP's weak and inadequate proposals were outdone by the Militant who felt it premature to turn the 4 November into a national day of action.

The turnout was poor — about 100 NALGO members attended of whom the vast majority were SWP members.

The Broad Left, yet again, has failed to attract the many activists who see themselves as left-wing but who are left cold by the SWP's rigid control.

Newham wants recall conference

Newham NALGO are still re-balloting for strike action to win a return-to-work agreement guaranteeing no compulsory redundancies, no victimisations. They want a special conference to censor the NEC over its handling of the dispute.

Sweat shop conditions in Tory Britain

"They treat us like machines"

"They treat us like machines not like people"

That's how Marie a young worker described conditions in a non-union, sweat shop in the North West where she was employed packing chocolate bars.

Marie's story is typical of hundreds of thousands of rightless, low-paid young workers in Tory Britain:

"Pay and hours were dreadful: we got £2.30 per hour while the employment agency received £4 per hour for providing the labour i.e. us!

"The working day started at 8am and ended at 5.50pm. We got just two breaks of 5 minutes each and just 45 minutes for lunch. If that wasn't bad

enough I had to travel over 30 miles from home to work so I had to get up at 5.00 and didn't get home until 7.30pm in the evening."

The managers and supervisors do everything they can to squeeze every last drop of profits out of the workers. According to Marie: "We were stuck on the conveyor belt all day, it goes at a tremendous speed, the work appears never-ending, the only time we get a break is when the machine breaks down. By the end of the day I used to have terrible shoulder ache".

The supervisors are also determined to teach the young workers their place in the order of things.

"We have to put up our hands if we want to go to the toilet and wait for the supervisor to say it's okay. The production managers shout and scream at people all the time. They don't like to see people talking and they sack people who refuse to do their bidding. For instance, one pregnant woman was sacked who refused to do 'tipping' (picking up boxes of chocolates to empty the contents).

"I got my final warning — you don't get the first — because I sat down, even though the job is easier to do sitting down. Then they sacked me for talking".

The Labour Party and the TUC should be listening to

people like Marie and fighting for their rights. But instead, last week's Labour conference voted down a proposal to give workers a statutory legal right to join a union and take strike action without fear of dismissal.

If that wasn't bad enough the full time regional organiser of one of Britain's biggest unions for the area in which Marie worked didn't even know of the existence on his own doorstep of a non-union workplace employing hundreds of people.

With well over half the workforce not in a union it's time to make "organise the unorganised" one of the central slogans of the labour movement.

British Telecom: fewer jobs equals more work!

By a BT engineer, National Communications Union, Westminster

50,000 jobs will go at BT over the next four years. The cuts have been planned for years and so far have taken place voluntarily under various schemes negotiated with the NCU.

With the current publicity over redundancies the NCU has issued statements saying cuts will leave BT unable to do its job. They are making public the fact that the voluntary redundancy terms deal for the estimated 15,000 leaving in 1993 will be less favourable than the terms of Release in '92.

It is rather hypocritical of the Union to complain about the consequences of deals they themselves have agreed. It was

the leadership and the right-wing factions who pushed for a voluntary redundancy deal in 1991. To complain now shows the flaws in their argument for accepting "reality": BT was determined to reduce staff; the union had no choice but to go along with staff reductions. They have followed the logic of capitalism — only to discover it makes no sense!

It is crazy — at a time of rising unemployment workers are being forced to work harder because of staff shortages in one of the most profitable companies in Europe!

The increased productivity that results from staff cuts is not being translated into increased wages and the national union has no strategy to deal with this.

Instead we got a miserly pay rise (4.3%) overwhelmingly accepted by the majority of BT

workers. People were more concerned about their job security than asserting their rights. This is an unfortunate result of the present political climate and lack of socialist leadership in the union.

It is a sad tale: thousands of permanent jobs, with fixed terms and conditions, and full-time rights, have been squandered for uneasy job security. The union, by colluding with management's staff reduction, seems powerless and irrelevant to most workers. It should be demanding more recruitment and retention and a shorter working week.

What is the NCU doing? Negotiating agreements for contract labour! The leadership's priority seems to be internal union finance and politics rather than defending the interests of all members.

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Help our fund drive!



The Blackpool conference voted to keep the collective trade union input into Labour Party decision-making. Photo: John Harris.

Labour Conference votes to keep union input

Keep the Link!

Activists campaigning to "Keep the Link" between the trade unions and the Labour Party won a very significant victory at last week's conference in Blackpool.

By a margin of over one million

(3,193,000 to 2,118,000) conference voted for a clear-cut resolution inspired by the Keep the Link campaign that reaffirmed Labour Party support for trade union involvement in the election of Party leadership and NEC and

the selection of parliamentary candidates, as well as the role of trade unions in conference itself and in local parties.

The right wing were not happy. According to Bill Jordan of the AEEU the vote had "snapped a

pair of handcuffs" onto the review group that the Party has set up to look into the link with the unions.

The vote certainly does show the extent of opposition to those in the party who want to cut the link with the unions and transform Labour into a Liberal-Democrats Mark II.

However, not all the support for keeping the link is as solid as it may seem.

Some prominent trade union leaders would welcome a massive cut in the block vote to 50% or even less, while others like Tom Sawyer of NUPE and John Edmonds of the GMB will be pushing for a somewhat dubious alternative to direct trade union representation — a ballot of all political levy-paying trade unionists.

This latter option could well prove to be nothing other than an unworkable transitional step towards the ending of the trade union link.

It is vital that the broadest possible coalition is now constructed around the position passed at this year's conference.

If you would like to support the Keep the Link campaign please write to:
120 Northcote Road, London E17 7EB.

Constituency Labour Parties should submit comments to Labour's review group supporting the links between party and unions.

A model submission is available from Bob Tennant on 081-520 5386 or Tom Rigby on 071-277 7217.

What conference voted for

This is the text of the successful resolution.

This conference is concerned at the suggestion that trade union input into the party's decision making procedures should be reduced.

Conference rejects proposals which undermine the historic and essential link between the industrial and political wings of the party. Conference is determined to strengthen and deepen this relationship and rejects interference by press, media, government and others, aimed at weakening the Labour Party by disenfranchising millions of affiliated trade union members. We must not allow our general election defeat and the dubious advice of those who are not friends of the Party to panic us into ill-considered upheavals.

Conference calls upon the Labour Party and the National Executive Committee to reaffirm the strong links forged over many years with trade unions. The relationship between the Party and the trade unions is a positive

strength and any weakening of the link will damage Labour's activities. Unless it is maintained, the Party will not be able to represent the interests of the organised labour movement, the reason for which it was originally created.

Conference therefore rejects misguided proposals which would, if implemented, weaken the relationship between the Party and the unions and thus damage the organised labour movement.

Conference affirms its support for:

1. Continued substantial union representation at the Labour Party Conference whilst welcoming the introduction of a fairer distribution of votes between constituency parties and unions.

2. Representation of trade union branches, co-operative parties and other affiliates at every stage in the selection of parliamentary candidates by Constituency Labour Parties.

3. Participation of national trade unions in the election of the Party leadership and

the NEC.

4. Representation of local trade union branches, co-operative parties and other affiliates in the regular business of Constituency Labour Parties through delegates to General Committees.

Conference recognises that procedures can be improved and recognises that the election result necessitates a period of reflection and debate, but is opposed to changes which reduce the ability of the Party to represent the organised labour movement.

Conference instructs the NEC's new working party on the relationship between Labour and the unions to concentrate its efforts on how to strengthen the traditional links between Labour's industrial and political wings at all levels of the Party.

This was proposed by Hendon South CLP and seconded by the General Union of Associations of Loom Overlookers.

Socialist Organiser and the Alliance for Workers' Liberty are raising extra funds to help our expansion plans.

We want to build a stronger organisation, fighting for socialism, in the working-class movement.

We aim to raise £5,000 by the end of January 1993. So far we have received £1,006 in donations and fundraising from our supporters.

Thanks this week for £230 from Sheffield AWL.

Please send donations (cheques payable to "Socialist Organiser") to AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

200 Club

Our 200 Club is a monthly draw for £100. Entries are made by paying £1, £2, £5 or £10 into the 200 Club. For each extra £1, you stand an extra chance of winning the £100 prize. Entry forms from: 200 Club, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA, or from your Socialist Organiser seller.

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