

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

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Inside this week



Britain's racist police

Centre pages

Saving the public sector

Page 5

Union-bashing in Australia

Page 4

Truth behind crime panic

Tory



The Tories and their yelping tabloids — aided by the official Labour Party — are whipping up an enormous outcry against “crime” and “criminals”. They exaggerate wildly. Though Britain does have a problem of proliferating crime, that is not the Tories’ main concern.

In this campaign, their targets are the millions of young people condemned to unemployment, hopelessness and poverty in the Brave New Britain Mrs Thatcher and her vandal Tory friends have made for them.

Continued on page 2

hypocrites bash youth

Tory hypocrites bash youth

From front page

The Tories want to cow them, intimidate them and build up an authoritarian atmosphere so that they can stamp down hard on youth if the galloping decay of Britain produces new eruptions in the slums, such as we saw a decade ago.

Yes, in Britain today millions of people live in fear of violent crime. Many, especially women and elderly people, will not now walk through large parts of our cities after dark for fear of robbery, casual violence and rape. Many old people are afraid to open their own front doors. Their fears are exaggerated but nevertheless well grounded in everyday fact.

There is a real problem of crime, mainly crime against 'ordinary' working class people. Many will say that something should be done about it, even if it has to be done by the Tories.

In the last fifteen or so years burglaries and muggings — mainly crimes against working class people — have become commonplace. As a rule the police fail to catch the burglars and muggers.

Crime is therefore everybody's concern, and a big political issue. The kidnapping and slaughter of a two year old, of which two young children have been accused, has focussed this concern, evoking waves of public horror not seen since the Brady-Hindley Moors Murders of 1965.

Of course socialists share the

general concern at the rise in crime! We share and understand the feelings of those who go in daily fear of violence and robbery.

We know that individuals have to be held responsible for what they do. We believe that when you have pointed out the social conditions that turn young men into callous and brutal robbers of their own kind, you have not thereby excused or exculpated them. We condemn crime.

But, despite what John Major says — "condemn more, understand less" — it is necessary to think about the issues and to resist the hysteria of the Tories and their press.

In fact Major's comment is the comment of a man who does understand.

Major does understand that the crime rate is determined by the general state of society. He knows perfectly well that the comparative breakdown of respect for the law in Britain has been produced by what the Tories and the capitalists they serve have done to British society in the last 14 years.

Unemployment may not automatically produce crime, but this is unemployment combined with conspicuous consumption by the rich in a society whose government exhorts people to "get on" at any cost, which penalises those who do not "get on", and which proclaims "dog eat dog" as the highest human morality.

This government run on behalf of the rich by the rich. Mass youth unemployment in those conditions does produce crime. It is the Tories who have produced the conditions that have inevitably produced this rise in crime.

Major understands. Major doesn't give a damn.

Major's answer is to step up repression against the youth and, in preparation for that, to step up the political offensive against the young poor.

Make no mistake about it. For Major and his friends, and the upper and middle classes they represent and speak to, whole layers of the working class are now considered a criminal class. They have driven them out of employment and blocked their hopes of ever "getting on".

And now they appeal demagogically to the victims of crime and those terrorised by it to back them against the working class youth.

They want thus to demonise and dehumanise large sections of working class youth, especially black youth.

They are mounting a general authoritarian offensive. Into this "campaign against crime", they have already clawed all sorts of issues from education to the upbringing of toddlers.

This is a stage in the further Americanisation of British society — the creation of an official and semi-official ideology that baits, excludes and dehumanises sections of the population at the same time as it condemns them to live ghettoised and hopeless.

Today in American cities like

Los Angeles the upper classes live a science fiction style existence in luxurious enclaves cut off, protected, guarded, fed by private access roads through the almost Third World ghettos in which a large part of the cities' populations live. We are not there yet in Britain, but the logic is clearly there, and you can already see something of that pattern emerging in, for example, the luxurious enclaves of the rich set up in the former London Docklands.

With such polarisations in society the ruling class must demonise and dehumanise the "underclass" to secure social consent for the way they are treated. You see this dehumanisation on TV, in video games and in video style movies where "terrorists", criminals and drug addicts are treated as so many bugs to be "stamped out".

All this has little to do with fighting crime, and it has still less with to do with protecting working class people from crime. Crime is endemic in these conditions. It is created, recreated and perpetuated by the chief crusaders against crime.

Repression against the 'criminals' and 'criminal classes' solves little or nothing, and — short of Nazi-style terror in the ghettos of the very poor — never can solve anything so long as the conditions which breed mass crime continue. It is vengeance and culling work, not fighting crime.

Crime cannot be fought without fighting the conditions which breed it.

But working class people need answers and they need protection? Yes they do. But these demagogic political campaigns against crime offer neither answers nor protection.

Certainly they have not done

so in America, where politicians campaigned recently for re-election as governors by appearing on TV with blown up pictures of criminals they had had officially killed by the state.

The last thing on offer from the present official hysteria against crime is protection. I repeat: this is not what it is about.

Some will say that socialists who identify crime as a problem for working class people must be able to offer answers if we are to have any credibility against the Tory and the copy-cat Labour hysteria. That is like asking for a cure for the spots on the skin while the disease is still raging in the body! We do have a solution: a campaigning labour movement, fighting for a radical socialist transformation, opposing the dog-eat-dog theory and practice of the Tories.

On the level of crude law and order and "get tough policing", such as the Tories talk of, there is no solution. Certainly there is no solution socialists can endorse and advocate.

The rabid rule of red in tooth and claw Toryism has bred this increase of crime. It is an organic part of the Tory "free market revolution". That is the central truth.

The labour movement needs to proclaim this truth and fight to make working class people understand it.

The best way the labour movement can fight crime is to fight to reverse the "Tory revolution". We must proclaim and fight for our morality of solidarity and social concern against their dog-eat-dog ruling spirit.

This Tory campaign against crime is no more than the big dogs, who have made their killing, growling and snarling at the smaller dogs.

FE students fight "Incorporation" of colleges

Dog-eat-dog in education

By Jenni Bailey
National Union of Students Executive (personal capacity)

IT'S THE biggest restructuring in Further Education since the war.

It gives hundreds of college governors the power to introduce voluntary membership of student unions.

It is forcing every Further Education student union to renegotiate their rights and even their very existence.

But because it only affects 66% of NUS's membership, in underfunded unions with no bars or large commercial operations NUS's leadership do not see "Incorporation" as a priority.

In April this year every Further Education college in England Wales will become a corporation, split off from any local control and pushed into competing against other colleges for funding. Already there is a dash for the better funded courses by college administrations. Less well funded courses like BTecs are being pushed out. The planning of resources by local education authorities is being replaced by the anarchy of col-

leges scrambling for the better funded courses and trying to pack in as many students as possible regardless of the already impoverished educational resources in Further Education.

Brilliant tacticians that they are, NUS President Lorna Fitzsimmons and her friends have refused to be goaded into running any campaigns this year. You see, that's just what the Tories expect! Instead, Fitzsimmons has been 'bombarding' the Tories with charters, getting millimetres of copy in the *Times Higher Educational Supplement* on the issue of voluntary membership and herself. God! The Tories must be quaking in their boots!

Back in the real world FE students are not only facing the effects of Incorporation. They fear increasing poverty while local authorities cut remaining non-mandatory grants to shreds in a climate of mass unemployment.

There is a huge potential for a campaign. Further Education colleges are part of their local community. Thousands of working class people have been to or are at FE colleges. Broad based local campaigns using demos and occupations

could link up college and school education cuts with other issues like council cuts and unemployment.

Such campaigns could build up to national action. We need a national demonstration and lobby of Parliament as part of our crusade against the crimes of the Tories against education!

FE activists should start building campaigns and link up with other FEs using NUS Area structures and fighting for NUS to take some action.

The NUS conference in late March is set to debate Further Education and every FE in the country should turn up and force the NUS leaders to come out of hiding and take on the Tories.

FE students have already started to organise.

Last month's activist conference in Manchester launched the FE Activists' Network, an organisation linking up FE activists who want action. Fed up with NUS ignoring the 66% of its membership in Further Education, the FE Network is building from the grass roots.

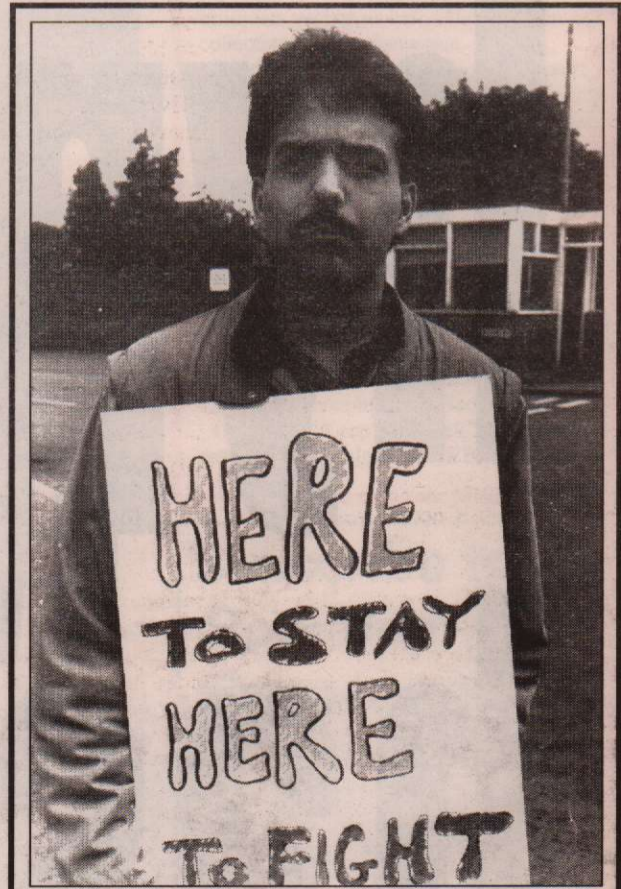
Contact the Further Education Activist Network coordinator Tracy Maguire on 061 275 2973.



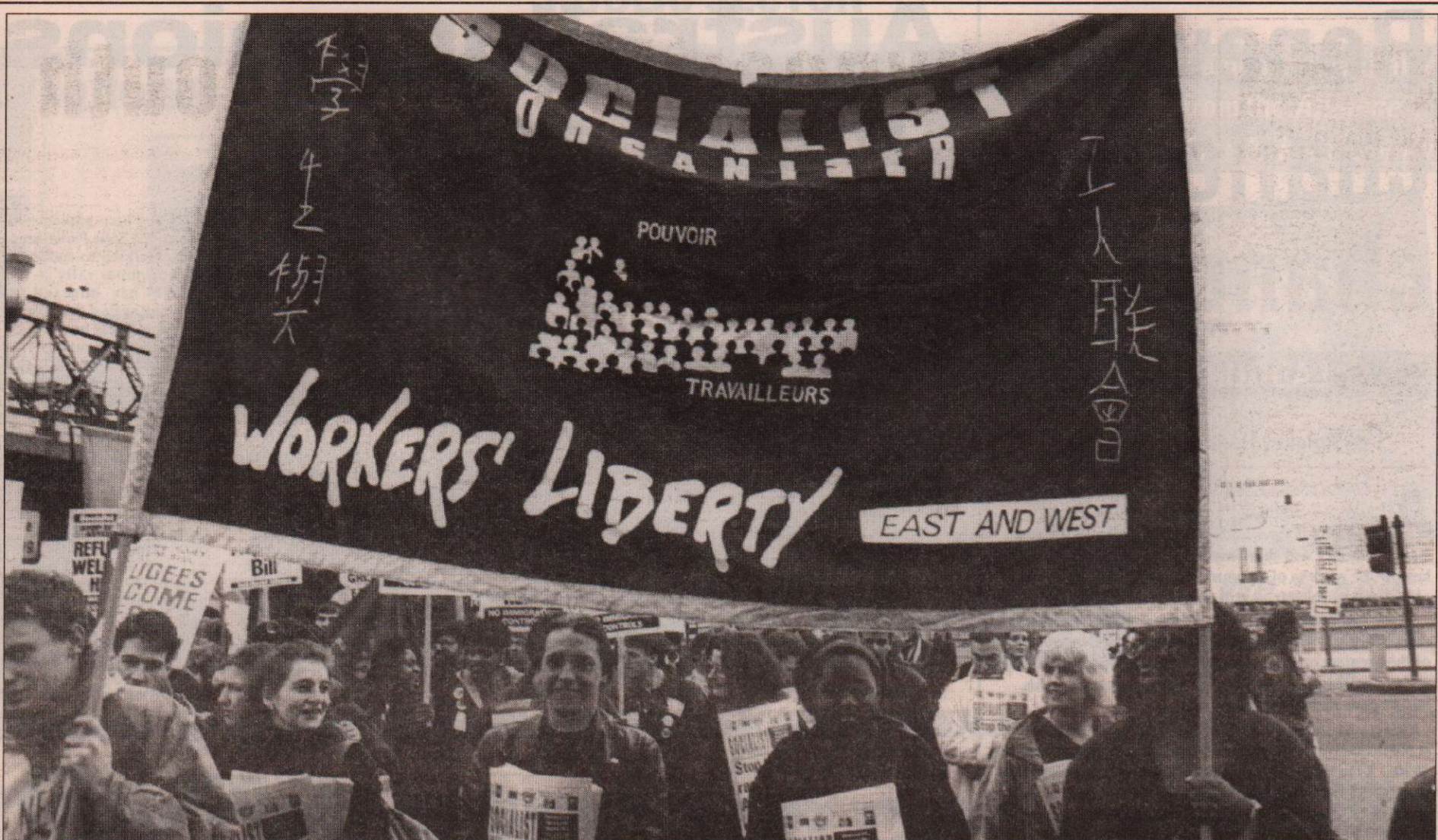
The poisoned well

Having sorted out the royals, the "populist" tabloids are now conducting a campaign for "law and order" in typical tabloid style.

This time they are riding with the established gang, part of John Major's "get tough" posse. But they remain themselves, wild, unbalanced, unscrupulous, indecent.



Vinesh Chudasama, pictured above, is fighting against deportation. He has been threatened with deportation simply because his marriage broke down within 12 months. For more information contact: Muhammed Idrish of the West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign. Telephone 021-551 4518. Photo: Mark Salmon.



Without serious argument and explanation, campaigning is just an exercise in shouting at the half-convinced

New sales drive for Socialist Organiser

Spreading the word

"LIKE *Socialist Organiser*. It makes you think", a postal worker told one of our sellers last week.

We hope so. A lot of thinking needs to be done these days.

With the recent speeches by Labour leaders Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, the whole of official politics is constructing a mind-numbing consensus in which conservative principles are as unchallengeable as "two times two makes four".

Market economics — producing to sell for private profit — is, they assert, the only workable and efficient basis for society. Mass unemployment is a sad fact of life: it can be eased a bit, but not ended. Young people who get in trouble with the police are evil, a menace and should be shut up.

Yet market economics are producing squalor, chaos, and growing inequality all across the world. Millions of people are forced into idleness on the dole while the politicians assert that "we can't afford" what those millions might produce if they had jobs — decent housing, health care, schools, nurseries, public transport.

Case after case — the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six, the Tottenham Three and many others — has shown that the police frame people for crimes they did not commit.

Millions of people are disgusted and repelled by this official consensus. But disgust and resentment are not enough to change things.

JUST SAYING "no" to the official consensus is not enough, and may even lead into blind alleys. For many years, most of the best working class activists in Western Europe believed, or half-believed, that the Soviet Union was a model of progress — because the official consensus said the opposite. That was a terrible blind alley.

In Karl Marx's day, many socialists and working-class activists used to turn the official formula of "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work" upside down, to say that wages were *unfair* and that workers should instead get a truly fair wage, equal to the full amount of the value they produced. Marx's economic research revealed that this apparently radical answer was a snare. It limited socialists to demanding a modification of the wages system — and an impossible modification at that — instead of the replacement of the wages system by free cooperation.

It is not enough to reject; it is necessary also to think positively. Socialists today have to do the same work of analysis, on each new question that arises, that Marx did on the issue of wages.

And even the best positive analysis is no use unless it becomes a guide to *action*.

In the move from thought and analysis to action, the first step, the first bit of action, must be to *spread the thought*, to convince other people to share the analysis.

In the spring and summer of 1917, when he was helping to

organise the Russian workers for the great mass action of the October 1917 revolution, Lenin's slogan was "patiently explain". And every serious action starts with that — patient explanation.

Without it, campaigning and agitation is just an exercise in shouting slogans at the half-convinced. It ends in exasperation, demoralisation, or resort to bureaucratic manipulation. *Socialist Worker* and the organisation behind it, the SWP, are an awful warning here.

"We must cut a way for ourselves through all the forces and pressures that make people not want to read the socialist press."

TO MAKE PEOPLE think, to mobilise reason against prejudice, to educate ourselves and others — that is the first task of socialists. All the meetings, committees and demonstrations follow on from the basic battle of ideas, and are hollow rituals without it.

That is why the Alliance for Workers' Liberty makes producing and selling *Socialist Organiser* central to our activity. It is why we try to make it a paper that does more than jeer at the Tories and cheer on militancy. We aim for a paper that *makes people think*. We produce a paper which

allows people who *think differently* to have their say and which provides them with a forum from which to *argue* with us.

If the paper is to make people think, two things are necessary. First, the paper must be thoughtful, serious and democratic in its conduct. Second, the paper must be circulated! It must be sold. It must be got to the people who are willing to read in the hope of learning something new.

To do that, we must cut a way for ourselves through all the forces and pressures that make most people *not* want to read the socialist press.

Newspapers, television and radio channels, with vast advertising budgets and the best techniques, vast amounts of bought and paid for talent, compete for people's limited time, energy and attention.

We have to fight against the odds to establish our claim to notice — and "we" are the readers of this paper who are already convinced of our socialist ideas about what can and should replace the madness of capitalism.

THERE ARE MILLIONS of people disgusted, resentful and hostile to the Tories. There always have been millions, and there are even more now, after the ERM crisis, the pit closures and the latest cuts. Either we can convince enough of those people that this paper has a claim on their attention — because it offers a positive way to under-

stand the chaos around us and see alternatives — or the paper is only an exercise in more or less intelligent but futile commentary.

For that reason the Alliance for Workers' Liberty is launching a new drive to boost the sales of *Socialist Organiser*.

We will be promoting sales of the paper in workplaces, colleges, trade union branches, Labour Party wards, campaign meetings; door-to-door, on the streets, in pubs, on demonstrations. Our energy, commitment, sense of urgency, our willingness to argue and the strength of our arguments, are our only weapons against the great resources of inertia which favour the status quo, the established media, the forces of ignorance and passivity.

We appeal to all readers to join this effort. If you are willing to help, contact us at PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

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

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Renew, challenge, change!

LABOUR TODAY

By Ramsey Hugh Kinnock-Smith

AS ONE OF those who are modernising the Labour Party, it is a pleasure to respond to your invitation to pick up my pen and explain my role. In an occasional column I will share my thoughts with you, and bestow the wisdom of Labour's senior statesman on my old friends of the left — still stupid after all these years.

At the beginning of the week I gave a young speech writer in Walworth Road the benefit of my experience as one of the greatest orators in the history of the party. Casting my eye quickly over the draft of a speech he held in his hand I gave him a few simple rules.

Firstly, use the word "renew" as often as possible. This is particularly useful when recycling an old policy from the 1930s. As in "renewing the spirit of self reliance shown by those seeking work in the 1930s".

Secondly, when stealing a Tory policy just use the word "new". As in "we must adopt new values toward unemployment — by lowering benefits we will offer an incentive to get Britain working".

Thirdly, use the word "challenge" for anything you know we will not be able to do. As in "meeting the challenge of offering quality education for the 1990s".

Fourthly, use the word "change" as often as possible, but especially when change is the last thing we want. As in "we must make the change from the Tories and their iniquitous housing policy".

I could see the excitement in the eyes of the young man as he rushed down the corridor clutching the text to his chest. He was so eager to test his new skills that he even forgot to thank me; but I understood. I was like that myself once, though you'd never know it now.

The high point of last week was surely the NEC. There I see the fruits of my relentless labours when I was leader of the party. So many of the young people I once took under my wing have now blossomed as fully fledged politicians! It does my heart good, I'll tell you that.

Tony Blair gave his apologies for arriving late — he had been putting a lock on a wardrobe so he could punish one of his children, who, feeling hungry, had stolen a slice of bread from the bread bin in his study. "But we must also be hard on causes of crime", said Blair, who then talked wistfully about having the sizes of his children's stomachs surgically reduced, thus removing the danger of hunger leading to further miscreant behaviour. At this point Blair looked like a true visionary. Very photogenic too. Shame I didn't have my camera. Benn had his, but he refused to lend it to me.

Dave Blunkett, dressed in smart army fatigues, chipped in that a spell of national community service would soon sort them out, from the age of 7 upwards.

Jack Straw pointed out that we had to regenerate inner cities, and reclaim them from the dregs of our society. Why, he said, there was a drunken helot of a wino shouting outside our Walworth Road offices. But I'm no fool. I saw his mistake and sent him to let John Prescott in.

THE NEC has finally faced the challenge of our system of electing the party leader. The new system will combine the best features of One man One vote (OMOV), and One person one vote (OPOV). We are now moving towards the radical renewal of democracy in the party with OMPOV, one MP one vote.

Earlier in the week I gave a long briefing to several trade union leaders on how to take Labour's decision-making out of the clutches of a handful of self important bureaucrats. Now, only small details need to be sorted out — how to smuggle the decision through trade union conferences without a mandating vote, how to massage it through Labour Party conference without the delegates mouthing off in front of the TV cameras, little things like that. The solution? Put it on during *Playschool*, and get the press to whip up a witchhunt against the backward looking ideas of the romantic left.

That is how we'll recreate the party as it was in the great days of Hugh Gaitskell and Ramsey MacDonald.

Australian unions under attack

Richard Lane, in Melbourne, reports on the campaign against Jeff Kennett, who is pioneering in Victoria what Liberal leader John Hewson plans to do all across Australia.

UP TO 90,000 workers, students, unemployed and pensioners turned out in Melbourne on 1 March for a work-time protest at the sweeping attacks on workers' conditions and trade union rights by the new Victoria state government under Jeff Kennett. This was double what trade officials and activists expected.

Union leaders proposed sit-ins, more marches, rolling strikes and Labor votes in the federal (all-Australian) election as the way forward — anything except concerted industrial action.

Yet Kennett could have been defeated by now if the trade union leaders had followed up on the first demonstrations, in November.

150,000 marched in Melbourne on 10 November. 800,000 workers struck around Victoria. In Geelong, 20,000 of a population of 200,000 marched. Even small country towns that have not seen a workers' demonstration since the '30s had marches of several thousand.

In the weeks that followed there were rolling strikes on an industry basis and numerous small demonstrations.

Essentially, Kennett has rolled together all of Thatcher's anti-union laws, the 1891 Masters and Servants Act, and New Zealand style individual contracts in one fell swoop. Legislation was rammed through parliament with minimal

debate and all night sittings.

Workers' compensation has been slashed. Laws against "unfair dismissal" have been virtually abolished, as has the 8 hour day (first won in 1856!) Penalty rates, holiday bonuses, sick leave — all are attacked. Salary deductions of union dues have been stopped in all state departments and authorities. The new industrial legislation came into force on 1 March.

There are massive redundancies in the public sector — teachers, clerks, transport. A \$100 tax per property, often called a poll tax, has been levied. Public transport, gas and electricity charges have increased 10% — with more to come.

Laws exist now that enable the government to sell off anything they want without further legislation. The intention is to sell off gas, electricity, water, bus lines, car insurance — anything that moves.

But the resistance was frittered away by the inaction and over-caution of the union leaderships. A "truce" was called over the Christmas and New Year summer holiday period.

In January the tram and bus workers' union cut a separate deal with the government — calculating that by being first to do a deal they could negotiate better terms of surrender. This same union fought the Labor government to a standstill to keep conductors on the trams. They have now given way without a fight.

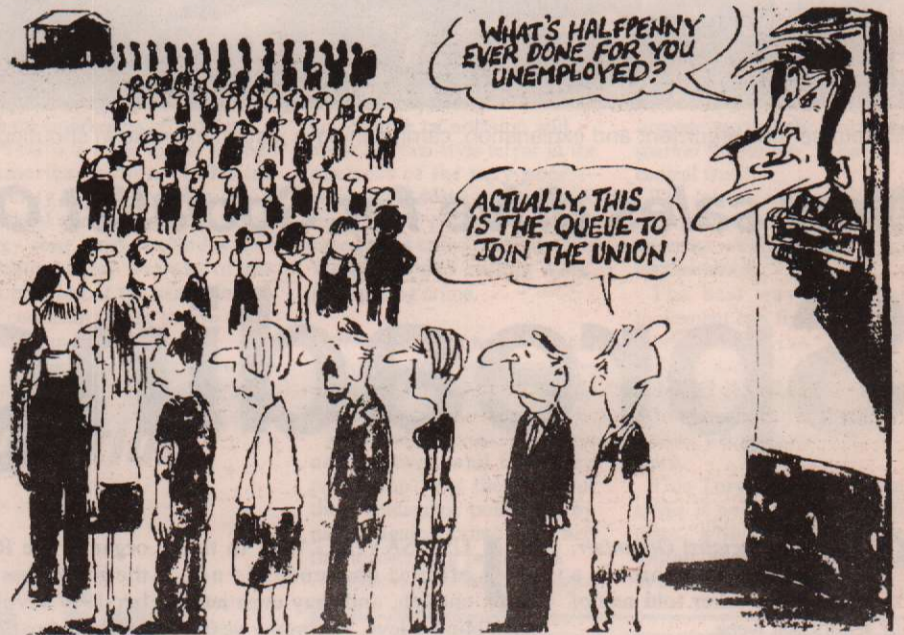
The whole approach of the union officialdom has been to direct the anger of the working class into votes for the Labor Party in the Federal election. Even electorally this has backfired, as workers have "got used" to Kennett and are adjusting their attitudes to the new reality rather than trying to fight.

The response of the Labor

Party has been pathetic. Joan Kirner, the State Parliamentary leader, refused to endorse the 10 November rally — even though her husband was marching against the closure of the school where he worked.

As a Communications Workers' Union delegate to Labor's State Conference the following weekend, I was sharply critical of her role. But there was almost no reaction. The conference passed formally OK motions of support for the union campaign, but there was no feeling of excitement or inspiration at the huge display of working class solidarity. It was as though the political wing of the labour movement had no link to the mood of the rank and file at all.

Electoral considerations were not the first priority, they were the only priority. Labor is now considering policy that would retain much of the new industrial relations framework if re-elected.



On the right of the cartoon, Jeff Kennett. Halfpenny is the leader of Victoria's TUC.

Liberals plan to smash union rights and labour laws

Labor might still win

Tony Brown reports from Sydney

WITH LESS than two weeks to go to polling day in Australia, it appears that Labor will be defeated after 10 years in office. The conservative coalition needs to win only 5 seats.

Yet Labor still has a chance of winning. Despite an unemployment rate of 11% and 1 million people on the dole, the worst recession since the 1930s, a national debt of \$160 billion and declining living standards for all but the well off, Labor could still pull off victory and is consolidating its support among workers.

The cornerstone of the conservatives' programme is the introduction of a 15% Goods and Services Tax (GST) on everything except basic foodstuffs; the abolition of seven business taxes; cuts to the public sector of \$10 billion; massive privatisation; slashing the national Medicare system and forcing people to take up private health insur-

ance; and giving open slather to the mining industry, even to the extent of abolishing recently bestowed Aboriginal control of land containing valuable minerals.

While the GST has become the focus of the campaign, the biggest threat to organised labour is the conservative plan to abolish the centralised arbitration system which has operated since 1904, and in so doing to abolish legal protection for wages and conditions.

They propose to replace industry awards with individual enterprise contracts under common law. Conditions covering leave, penalty and overtime rates, and hours of work, will be subject to renegotiation without any of the existing protective mechanisms of the arbitration system and with unions denied many of their existing rights to representation.

Already the new Liberal government in Victoria has introduced similar provisions.

THIS IS the most polarised election campaign since Labor won

government in 1983. Class has become a central issue. Fifteen months ago, when Paul Keating ousted Bob Hawke to become Prime Minister, Labor had no chance of winning an election. The only question then was how big a defeat they would suffer. Since then Keating has managed to turn this position around.

"Keating has revived traditional Labor policies, including increasing government spending"

To do this he has deliberately set out to appeal to workers. He has revived traditional Labor policies, including increasing government spending to create jobs through public programmes in rail, education and urban development, legislating to

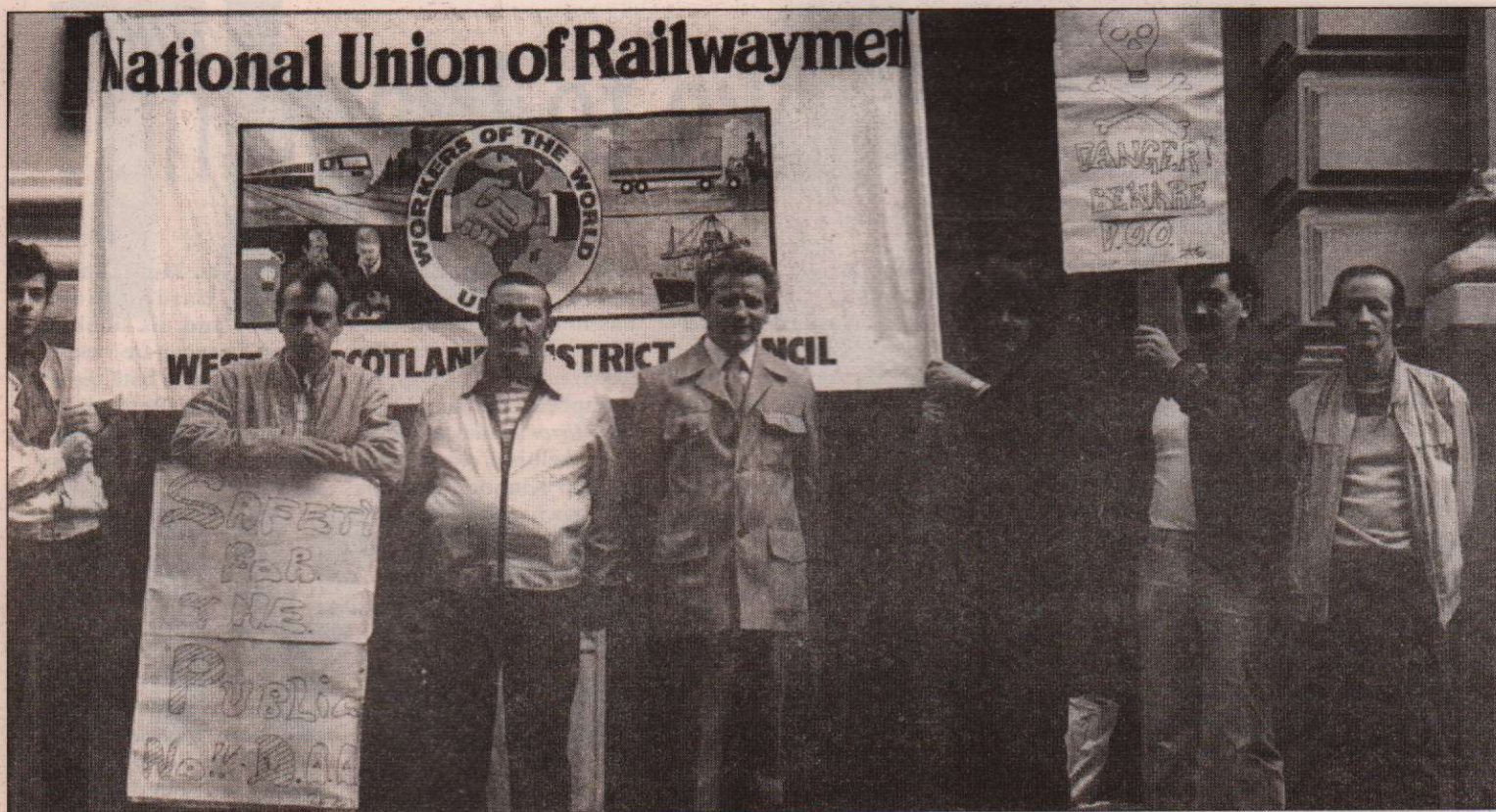
remove remaining discrimination against women in awards, increasing funding for childcare, formally recognising the part played by European settlement in the oppression of Aborigines and raising the call for Australia to become a Republic. He has carried out an unrelenting attack on the conservatives as the party of the establishment, the rich and the elite.

How has the left campaigned? The Democratic Socialist Party's slogan is "Neither Labor nor Liberal". The International Socialists (linked to the SWP in Britain) demand "Stop Hewson — but don't let Labor off the hook". The New Left Party (the remnants of the CP) with its paper *Broadside* advocates voting for "an alternative" which is left unnamed.

The IS slogan means vote Labor, but they can't bring themselves to say it.

Labor is now focused solely on attacking the GST, and the latest polls show that they are making up some ground.

They just might pull off the seemingly impossible.



Railworkers have to organise to make their union democratic and get it to fight. Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)

Miners and railworkers ballot for strike

Only united action can save public sector

THE TORIES HAVE DECLARED war on public sector workers. They face hundreds of thousands of job losses, worsening conditions, 1.5% pay limit, privatisation and the mass contracting-out of their jobs to private profiteers. They need a co-ordinated official fight back; yet with the exception of the NUM, the national officials are not providing it. Public sector workers talked to *SO* about the issues.

"THE CUTS are national, so the fightback needs to be national. Local government workers need a clear lead from the national unions. That's got to mean national strike action. The cuts are a result of national government decisions. Our fightback has to be national. A stand from the national union would also encourage people at a local level. Just giving a nod and a wink is not enough. We need more from our national leaders.

Of course, we should not allow individual Labour councils to avoid their own responsibility for carrying out the cuts. We need to take the battle into the Labour Party and push for the affiliation of all of UNISON (the new merger of NALGO, CoHSE and NUPE) to the party.

We should also keep a sense of perspective. Very few local authorities have yet managed to push through large scale compulsory redundancies. The battle for jobs is only just beginning."

Tony Dale — Convenor, shop stewards committee, Manchester City Council Housing Department

"THE RMT right wing are blaming Scargill for campaigning too much!

With less than a week to go until the ballot for a joint one-day strike alongside the miners a lot of union activists are asking 'where's the campaign?'

The leaders of the RMT have just not

been doing their job. All they've put out is a single letter to every individual member recommending a vote for action. They haven't been doing the sort of sustained campaigning that is needed.

One right wing executive member even told our branch that Scargill was campaigning too much and stealing the limelight from the railworkers. We gave this character a roasting and pointed out that it's RMT General Secretary Jimmy Knapp's fault that the railworkers' case is not being properly put.

Far too much is being left to the branches and districts who've been putting out their own leaflets and organising their own meetings.

This type of activity should be a supplement to the official campaign not the substitute for a non-existent one. The officials at Unity House are just hoping people vote for action on the basis of loyalty to the union.

Despite this we can still win the strike ballot. Ordinary railworkers can see the links between issues like privatisation, pit closures and job losses."

BR track worker — RMT Sheffield

"IT'S A DISGRACE that ASLEF isn't supporting the miners. The behaviour of the leadership of the train drivers' union ASLEF has been an absolute disgrace. They've been all over the place since the pit closures were announced last October.

First Derek Fullick, our General Secretary said that 'No more Alamos' — apparently ruling out joint action to save jobs alongside the miners. Then he called for a series of public sector one-day general strikes. And then when the miners called his bluff and proposed a joint strike ballot, he went all quiet.

It now looks like ASLEF are going to ballot — on attacks on the BR pension scheme — but they are not going to co-ordinate action with RMT and the miners.

When you consider that the pit closures could mean the end of the train freight sector and with it thousands of drivers' jobs, Fullick's response is unbelievable."

Trainee driver ASLEF West of Scotland

"NINETY PER CENT of civil service jobs are on the line. In the next few years 90% of civil service jobs face 'Market Testing', i.e. the contracting-out of their jobs to the private sector.

This year 44,000 jobs are targeted. We face massive job losses. Pension rights are up for grabs. Our lives will be blighted by permanent job insecurity.

But despite all this we are not getting a clear lead from the officials in any of the unions.

Link up with the miners and railworkers

THIS WEEK'S ballot amongst miners and railworkers offers a wonderful opportunity to the movement.

Activists across the public sector should be pushing for the unions to bring disputes forward over cuts, closures and the pay freeze. They should be approaching the NUM and the RMT at all levels and preparing to strike alongside the miners and railworkers.

An attack of this scale cannot be defeated branch by branch or by unofficial action alone. We need to win CPSA, NUCPS and IRSF to a policy of organising official co-ordinated national strike action to stop Market Testing. Everything else should be subordinated to this end."

Trudy Saunders CPSA DHSS Section Executive Committee

Tubeworkers: no compulsory redundancies

By a Central Line guard

UNDER THE London Underground Company plan which came in at the end of last year 5,000 tubeworkers are due to lose their jobs by the end of 1993.

It is not yet known how many people have opted for voluntary redundancy but there's no chance the figure adds up to 5,000!

So compulsory redundancies are inevitable. Any talk from management about "no compulsory redundancies" is just that: talk. They will continue to deny the possibility of compulsory redundancies until they announce them. Already they are saying that 300 more engineering jobs must go.

Right now we have to build the broadest possible united campaign involving both the rank and file and the leadership of ASLEF, RMT and TSSA on the basis of no compulsory redundancies. We can't afford the disastrous inter-union rivalry and outright sabotage from the ASLEF leadership which wrecked the possibility of a united fight to stop the introduction of the plan.

London busworkers must strike

AS WE GO TO PRESS delegates from every garage in London are meeting to discuss what to do next after busworkers across the capital voted for a series of strikes in protest at attacks on wages and conditions.

It is vital that the TGWU gives a clear lead. The strikes should

start at the earliest possible opportunity. That is this week. Unfortunately many rank and file activists sense that the officials are prevaricating. As one put it last week "What's the point of having a meeting to interpret a ballot result? We've voted for strikes, the officials should call them!"

Pamphlets available from the Alliance for Workers' Liberty



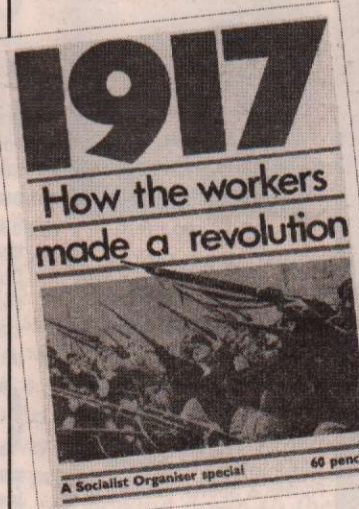
"We Stand for Workers' Liberty"

£1.50 + 34p postage



"Magnificent Miners"

75p + 34p postage



"1917 - How the workers made a revolution"

£1.50 + 34p postage

All available from; AWL, PO Box 823 London SE15 4NA

GRAFFITI

The very model of a modern Labour cutter

GRAFFITI

The Labour Group controlling Sedgfield District Council in Durham is a shining example of thoroughly modernised politicians. So successful have they been at implementing the Tories' Poll Tax and curbing spending on wasteful, socialist foibles — education and social services and the like — that they now have £2.5 million surplus. So they are zero rating this year's Council Tax. Head hunters from the Tory flagship Wandsworth are heading north at this very moment.

In the '60s the CIA put a powder in Fidel Castro's boots to make his beard fall out. Learning from this the Democrats set up a "counter-events" (read "dirty tricks") team during the US election. Full details are just emerging.

The team embarked on a campaign of psychological warfare against George Bush. They released chickens at his public appearances (the chickens are coming home to roost). Then they arranged for long-nosed Pinocchios to pop up at his rallies (read my lips...). Finally, they smuggled 50 witches into a Bush Halloween night rally.

In order to do this they had to infiltrate spies into the ranks of Republican campaigners. They even had a mole in the White House. The total cost of all this is rumoured to have been around \$120,000.



George Bush

He'll be back? Let's hope not. Bill Clinton has decided to terminate the services of Arnold

Schwarzenegger, appointed under the Republican administration as the chair of the President's Council on Physical Fitness & Sports, because of his well-known, right-wing leanings.

Part of his job was touring schools and colleges and, in his inimitable style reminiscent of nothing so much as a muscle-bound plank of wood, telling American youth that a healthy body produces a healthy mind. When not expounding the moral qualities of physical jerks Mr. Schwarzenegger earns his living by pretending to kill people.

One of the world's foremost gun makers, Mikhail Kalashnikov, has found God. The inventor of the AK-47 assault rifle, who at 73 still works at the Russian factory that produces his guns, put out a heartfelt plea to the producers of armaments around the world: "Lask all

designers and constructors of weapons to create peaceful weapons".

Swords may be beaten into plowshares, but any reader who can think of a peaceful use for an AK-47, which can fire 600 rounds a minute, is invited to write directly to Kalashnikov.

John Major quote of the week: "The best way to help unemployed people back to work is to have confidence in our nation and have confidence in ourselves".

Next week John Major announces the introduction of faith healing on the NHS.

A recent analysis of leading politicians' use of words in the *Economist* furnished some interesting results. Analysing the use of words traditionally associated with the right, such as "individual", and with the left, such as "community" and "socialism", in recent speeches made by John Major, John Smith and Gordon Brown, the *Economist* got the following results: Smith used the word "individual" every 1,430 words, Major every 550, but Brown a staggering once every 250 words.

When it comes to socialism it is a different story: while John Major manages to slip in a dig every 1,250 words you'd have to listen to over 5,000 words of either Smith or Brown to hear it. That's a wait of some two hours just to hear the word. You'll wait much longer to see Smith do anything about it.

Selling British Rail may be posing a few problems for the government, but they are making sure they can sell the idea of selling it.

The Department of Transport plans to pay more than £12 million to public relations firms over the next 12 months to pacify public disquiet. Some of the £9.5 million to be spent in the next year internally by the DoT will also be for PR, as will some of the £12 million being spent by BR preparing for transfer.

Of course, as we are constantly told, privatisation of BR is the only way to bring about the capital investment necessary to have a modern railway system for the twenty-first century. The problem is that few entrepreneurs are stepping forward.

Never fear. One group has taken up the challenge: steam railway enthusiasts, one step up the evolutionary ladder from train spotters. Roger Freeman, the Tory Transport Minister, has given a clear signal for the age of steam brigade to buy up commuter lines and run their own steam trains on them. At least one north London commuter line is in their sights, as well as the entire rail network of the Isle of Wight.

Forward to the new millennium in the white heat of technological revolution!

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

ROY Hattersley seemed more than usually ebullient when I ran into him last Tuesday. That day's *Times* had carried an important Hattersley exclusive: his exciting proposals for a new Labour Party constitution, freed from the dead hand of the unions and the anachronistic Clause Four.

And that was not all: the next day's *Times* would contain the Hattersley view of recent developments at the *Mirror*. We were promised a blistering attack on David Montgomery and all his works. Hattersley seemed particularly chuffed to have got this into a Murdoch publication: "I'm plugging the *Times* everywhere I go. News International should be paying me a commission for boosting sales!" he cried.

All this was in remarkable contrast to the days, not so long ago, when senior Labour figures wouldn't have been seen dead reading a Murdoch paper, let alone

writing for one. But times have changed at both Fortress Wapping and Walworth Road. The *Sun* has been saying nice things about Labour, praising Tony Blair's crime policies and comparing Gordon Brown favourably with the hapless Norman Lamont. Kelvin MacKenzie has even invited Messrs. Blair and Brown to a jolly dinner to smooth out unfortunate 'misunderstandings' — like his paper's post-election claim "It's The Sun Wot Won It".

News International's recent chumminess towards the Labour leadership may or may not be coincidental to the ructions at the *Mirror* Group. But the advent of the Montgomery regime at the *Mirror* has ensured that the Digger's overtures have not been snubbed. Walworth Road is convinced that it was the overwhelming hostility of the British press (together with the union link and redistributive tax policies) that cost Labour the last election. Now that the *Mirror* is no longer 'sound', they are desperate to make new friends in the press.

Of course, the *Mirror* is not going to stop supporting Labour; the bankers wouldn't allow it, even if David Montgomery wanted to. What has happened is that the almost incestuous relationship that used to exist between some mem-

bers of the *Mirror's* editorial staff and Walworth Road has now come to an end. The crucial break was the departure of Alastair Campbell from his job as the *Mirror's* political editor. Campbell is a close friend of Neil Kinnock and was very much part of the clique that Kinnock built up around himself.

"It isn't necessary to join in Kinnock's hand-wringing to be concerned about the long-term future of the Mirror as a Labour paper."

Campbell has now joined former *Mirror* editor Richard Stott over at *Today*. In fact, there seems to be something approaching a wholesale personnel swap taking place between the two papers as Montgomery hires more and more of his old *Today* cronies (or "Toadies" as they are known) while Stott picks up many of the *Mirror* hacks sacked by Montgomery.

So does all this mean that we should be indifferent to the fate of the *Mirror*? Or even with George Galloway and a few other Labour MPs in wel-

coming the Montgomery regime? Hardly: Montgomery and his sidekick David Seymour are viciously anti-union in both theory and practice. Both played prominent roles in the Wapping union-busting operation and the systematic union derecognition at *Today*.

Seymour now claims to be a Labour "supporter" but while at *Today* he wrote anti-Labour editorials and articles whose savagery was notable even by Wapping standards. The sudden conversion of Seymour and Montgomery into enthusiastic Labour supporters must rank as one of the most bare-faced examples of political and journalistic hypocrisy in recent years. While the bankers hold sway on the *Mirror* Group board the paper (and its sisters the *Sunday Mirror*, the *People* and the Scottish *Daily Record*) will stay loyal to Labour. But once the bankers have recouped their losses and pulled out — what then? Would you trust the likes of Montgomery and Seymour?

It isn't necessary to join in with Neil Kinnock's hand-wringing and Roy Hattersley's spluttering over Alastair Campbell in order to be very concerned about the long-term future of the *Mirror* as a 'Labour paper'.

Meanwhile, the prospect of further Hattersley articles in the *Times* is one more reason for avoiding that particular publication.

Real women don't sell

WOMEN'S EYE



By Jean Lane

AN AWARD given annually for the advert that most accurately depicts women's real lives has been scrapped because, this year, there are no suitable candidates.

Quelle surprise! I thought the Scottish Widows one with the woman dressed in a black cloak and sexy stockings walking like her hips were attached to rotary blades through the dining club of a sixteenth century

mansion with the two high powered business men looking admiringly on, was close. I mean, we all like to impress the blokes, don't we?

And, let's face it, you're not going to sell insurance by showing someone who lives on a council estate that's had a run on break-ins by local youths who can't get near rich people's homes for the state-of-the-art security equipment, and who has bought an Alsatian they can't afford to feed so it runs in a pack with all the other working class anti-theft devices of the neighbourhood attacking the post, the milk, the bread and everyone else but the bloody bailiff, are you?

Hold on, though, what about the one for the fax machine? "We're very busy, Mr. Mellish", says the secretary in the incredibly tight skirt with the time to worry about whether one of her nails has broken or not, but not about whether the fax came today or yesterday, to

the consternation of her poor, over-worked, frustrated boss. Oh well, perhaps it's not that realistic.

But, let's face it, you don't sell office accessories by showing the secretaries who know the business better than their bosses who spend half the day on the golf course do you? Especially when the only thanks they get is repeated sexual harassment and a card at Christmas to say thanks for getting the wife's prezzy in your lunch-break.

Hang on a minute. There is one which shows the secretary who has all the ingenuity, only to be exploited by the boss. The one for Canon Photocopiers. The boss is a woman. All those years of male boss-dom, and they choose to make that one now.

Mind you, it is true that there are no black women who fall out of aeroplanes whilst on their periods to test their Always panty-pads, or who would want to wear the

same sanitary towel all day long for that matter. Nor are there any whose entire love lives revolve around the desire for a particular cup of coffee.

And they wouldn't be seen dead driving their cars around in the middle of a bull fight, dressed up as a Joan Collins look-alike. It's nice to know they got that right. You couldn't accuse them of being racist, could you?

Real women's lives are reflected in the statistics for low pay, for part time work and for unemployment. They are affected by the smashing up of the so-called welfare state and of the public sector.

Real women are victims of sexist and racist abuse, of rape and of domestic violence. Real women's lives don't sell products. To expect them to do so is like expecting a boxing promoter to put 'extent of brain damage' down in his fighters' biographical details.

The lives



Malcolm X as a Black Muslim, with other members of the Nation of Islam.

of Malcolm X

By Dion D'Silva

YOU'VE BOUGHT the rap records, the tee-shirt, the hat, even the car freshener. You're going to see the film — but are you going to read the books and the speeches? I hope so.

Everyone is claiming the legacy of Malcolm X, and not a few are making a packet out of the merchandise. As the Public Enemy song goes, "Don't Believe the Hype".

Spike Lee may have had to struggle to get Hollywood to cough up the \$35 million for his film, but he is sure not to suffer personally. The hype has struck a chord with young people and with black young people in particular.

"Malcolm's life and thoughts echo what's happening to inner-city blacks today"

More surprising, and sickening, are the likes of Clarence Thomas, Bill Clinton and black Tories who claim the legacy. These people all support the racist system that Malcolm fought against with all his strength.

They are not the only ones to claim Malcolm as their own — others include Muslims, socialists and black nationalists. In short, there were many Malcolms.

How come? And which is the 'real' Malcolm X? Let us look



Malcolm: more than a rebel — a revolutionary

at the successive Malcolms.

First, Malcolm Little, the young boy whose family were terrorised by racists.

Second, the hustler "Detroit Red" strutting around in his zoot suit (today the equivalent would be a Malcolm X hat!) in the northern cities.

Third, Malcolm X, which he became in recognition of the lost history of black people in the USA and his understanding of their suffering.

Fourth and last, the orthodox Muslim, El Hajj Malik El Shabazz.

Along the way, and most importantly, Malcolm developed an understanding of the

cause of oppression and the strategy needed to fight it.

Malcolm X was a brilliant orator. Even watching his speeches on television now, you can sense the feeling of excitement shoot through the crowd. He said things that black people had so far only dared to say or think in private. Unfortunately, Malcolm X was murdered just as he was trying to get to grips with building an organisation that reflected his changing ideas on political tactics and strategy.

The real reason for the rise of interest is that Malcolm's life and thoughts echo what's happening to inner-city blacks today.

Malcolm X said "why should we do the dirtiest jobs for the lowest pay? Why should we do the hardest work for the lowest pay? Why should we pay the most money for the worst kind of food and the most money for the worst kind of place to live in? I'm telling you we do it because we live in one of the rottenest countries that has ever existed on this earth. It's the system that is rotten... It's a rotten system of exploitation, a political and economic system of exploitation, of outright humiliation, degradation and discrimination".

The same is true today. In fact, after the era of Reagan and Bush in American and Thatcher and Major in Britain, the gap between black and white, rich and poor has widened.

Black people are more likely

to be put in jail, twice as likely to be unemployed, and more likely to be housed in ghettos. The full, naked, racist brutality of the state was clearly shown in the Rodney King case in Los Angeles.

Malcolm X was more than a rebel. He was a revolutionary. One of the first sentiments a socialist recognises is summed up in the word "no". "No" to oppression and discrimination and "no" to the way the system is run! Malcolm X was against capitalism.

It is easy to pick out a speech or an episode in Malcolm X's life and to draw from it whatever conclusions you wanted to draw. It is rather like looking at a still frame from a moving picture film. But it does not take into account the development and change in Malcolm X's life.

"We must take up where the revolutionary Malcolm left off. We must bury the whole system of oppression"

Malcolm himself was the first to admit his mistakes. He dismissed his Detroit Red days as one of 'political darkness'. He was also very scathing

about the 'Nation of Islam' — he had tried to steer the Nation to get involved in the civil rights movement, without success. Apparently Malcolm went to see the great 1963 march on Washington — organised by Martin Luther King — as a lonely bystander on the pavement.

Yet ironically, Louis Farrakhan, the present leader of the Nation of Islam, claims that "Malcolm is ours". The same Farrakhan welcomed the shooting of Malcolm X in 1965.

Every so often a person comes along whose history seems to mirror that of a nation or people. Lech Walesa was and is such a person. He personified the changes in Polish society — the combativity of a rising workers' movement, the challenge to the Soviet Union and its Polish puppet Jaruzelski, and eventually the bowing down to the capitalist system.

Malcolm X was also such a person. As a young boy his family was wrecked by the actions of racists. He then escaped to the northern cities and grew in confidence. Later he was to give his life, and the lives of millions of other black people, a political edge with his talk of *black pride, self-determination and self-defence*.

We must take up where the revolutionary Malcolm left off. We must bury the whole system of oppression and build a society based on need not profit. See the film, read the books — join us!

Britain's ra

Police should be made accountable

LAST MONDAY (1 March) Paul Condon, the new Metropolitan Police Commissioner, made a publicity stunt of a speech against racism. Condon said the police must be "totally intolerant" of racism.

Condon showed concern in front of the cameras, but London's top policeman is a hypocrite. He knows very well that the British police are brutal, arbitrary and racist.

He knows that racists exist at every level of the police force. He knows that Leslie Sharpe, Chief Constable of Strathclyde, who was caught making a racist "joke" at a recent dinner party, is fairly typical.

This week's *Socialist Organiser* carries ample evidence: Gill Smith, beaten up and then charged with assault; Orville Blackwood, repeatedly harassed and battered; Yusef Abdullahi, absurdly hounded and then railroaded into jail.

There are thousands of others —

Campaign against police violence

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty's youth paper *Youth Fightback* is campaigning against police brutality.

Youth Fightback's Youth For Justice campaign demands:

- An end to police harassment.
- An end to prosecutions based solely on confessions.
- An independent, elected police complaints authority.
- Elected bodies to have control over police operational policy and budgets.
- Abolition of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.
- Disbanding of the Special Branch and special immigration police.

Get involved with the campaign. Phone Mark on 071-639 7965 for details.

black and white — working class people whose cases against the police have not received the publicity of the Cardiff Three.

Yusef Abdullahi says that he used to believe that only the guilty were in jail. Once inside he found many innocent prisoners.

But the truth is emerging. A series of well-publicised cases where innocent people have been released have shaken confidence in the British "justice" system. Clara Buckley, Orville Blackwood's mother, says "The police were people we used to trust. But now I am frightened, they behave so badly".

So what is to be done about the police?

The police — like the monarchy — are coming under pressure from the value-for-money 1980s-brand Tories. Kenneth Clarke wants more action and higher clean-up rates for taxpayers' money. The police are clearly on the defensive when Paul Condon makes the absurd claim that the police have subjected themselves to "vigorous self-examination".

But why self-examination? The police are supposed to serve the local communities. It's time we had direct control over the way we are policed. The Alliance for Workers' Liberty stands for:

- elected bodies to have direct control over police operations and budgets;
- an elected, independent police complaints authority.

These are relatively small democratic changes. They would give us more power over the police and more defence from them.

Our eventual goal must be an end to the situation where police are imposed by a class state standing above society.

We need law and policing regulated by ordinary people.



Photo: Andrew Moore

The case of the

Yusef Abdullahi spoke to a meeting in Brixton about his conviction for a murder he did not commit.

I WAS RELEASED a few weeks ago after serving nearly five years in jail for murder. In February 1988 a young woman had been killed in Cardiff. I had been picked up by the police and asked to help

with their enquiries. After three weeks the police had a positive identification of a white man, seen outside the woman's flat, his arm covered in blood. The television programme *Crimewatch* said that the police were looking for a white man.

But ten months later the police arrested eight black men from the Tiger Bay area of Cardiff.

Black women fight back

A victory for Gill Smith!

On 9 October 1992, Gill Smith was arrested by Forest Gate police in East London. There was no reason for the arrest.

Gill was racially and physically abused. She was subjected to an intimate body search in front of male police officers.

Gill was then charged with assaulting a police officer.

The case came up at Newham Magistrates Court on 2 February and it took just two minutes for the charge to be thrown out.

One hundred of Gill's supporters packed the court room.

Gill Smith is now taking civil action against the police.

The Justice for Gill Smith Campaign which was set up to defend Gill's rights has shown that determined protests can work. Police brutality, frame-ups and racism can be exposed and beaten.

Now campaigners in East London are turning their attention to a similar case. Claire Spencer, a nurse at a local hospital, was beaten up at Plaistow Police Station and then charged with assaulting a police officer.

For more details phone the Newham Monitoring Project 081-555 8151.

cist police



e Cardiff Three

The police hounded us despite the fact that there was no forensic evidence to connect us to the murder.

Our trial was held out towards Swansea. We had a show trial. The trial lasted seven months, the longest murder trial in legal history.

They spent £22 million to convict us. Now, after our release, they say they have not got enough money to reopen the case!

We were racially attacked. When witnesses were caught out lying they effectively ended up saying: lock these black murderers up!

I was alleged to run 27 prostitutes and control the South Wales drug scene! We were stereotyped in front of an all-white jury as pushers and pimps.

Now I am from an inner-city community and I am not an angel. But I am not what they portrayed me to be. I am not a monster or an animal.

The police thought that I would be thrown into jail and that within two weeks the community would forget me. But in fact there was real community solidarity. The community believed we were innocent and they marched and campaigned for us.

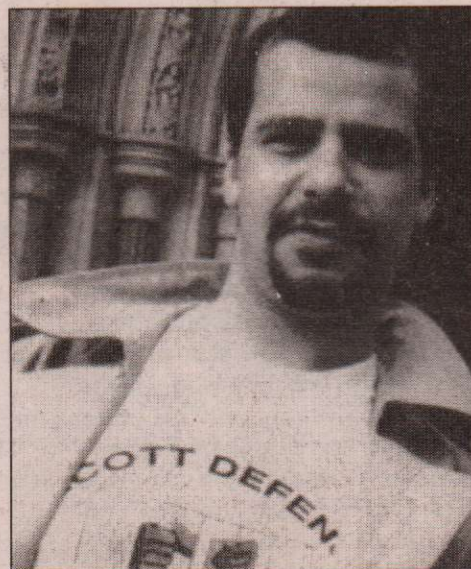
I always said that the person who committed the murder would kill again. 21 days after we were convicted another murder took place two miles from the first and

in a similar manner.

Before I got to prison I believed that I was the only innocent person in jail. Then I discovered many other innocent prisoners.

When, eventually, I was released I was just thrown out onto the street. No compensation.

The only support and help I have had is from people like you. Without you I would be still in jail.



Yusef Abdullahi

The mental health system

Orville Blackwood

In January 1986 Orville Blackwood went into a betting shop equipped with a toy pistol. He told the staff his name and took £24 from the full cash till. He was sentenced to four years in jail.

While Orville was in prison it was discovered that he suffered from depression and he was transferred to hospital.

In October 1987 there was an incident in the hospital after Orville was refused a drink. It was alleged that he hit a nurse. Fourteen policemen with riot shields and helmets came to the hospital and took him to Broadmoor.

By April 1990, Orville had completed his sentence but continued to be held in Broadmoor under the Mental Health Act. He was expecting to be discharged by a tribunal on 10 September 1991.

But on 28 August Orville was killed by two drug injections. He was the third black man to be killed in similar circumstances at Broadmoor in eight years.

His mother, Clara Buckley, spoke about Orville at an Alliance for Workers' Liberty Forum in Brixton last week.

him he was badly bruised. He told me that the police had stamped on him and manhandled him.

They gave him four years — for £24.

He went to prison and then was taken to Broadmoor. They used fourteen riot police to take him. The handcuffs had sunk into his wrists so badly that he was marked for months.

The way he died in Broadmoor was not right — he was held down by nine prison officers and a doctor and given fatal injections. The coroner called it "accidental death"; but that can not be right.

And since Orville died my other son has been picked up many times by the police. My brother has been charged with assaulting a police officer and with inciting a riot.

The police were people we used to trust. But now I am frightened; they behave so badly.

I do not know if there is any justice for us in the British system — but this is my fight now — to get justice for my child.

Contact the Orville Blackwood Community Campaign c/o Brixton Community Sanctuary, St Vincent's Centre, Talma Road, London SW2.

Orville

This poem was written after Orville's death in October 1991 by one of his friends in Broadmoor.

Big and strong
I thought for you life would be long
You are my friend in life, in death, it
would never end.
A character, a lover of life, all my troubles
washed over you, there was no
strife
Deep down you were in pain
Inside like me, you would never be the
same
You made the cross that hangs on my
wall
You held out your hands, you pulled
me up tall
I cried no tears, I want to be as good as
you
Few people could give me cheer, only
you
Now you are gone
Life wasn't long
Stretch out your fingers when you are
in the slow marching band
Reach out to me I will take your hand
You are out of this place
Walking towards a distant grace
I'll always remember the light of your
smile
Orville you are such style.

Eye-witness account of Zimbabwe

Poverty, corruption and

Lawrence Welch visited Zimbabwe last year as a side-trip from his return to his homeland, South Africa, which he left 23 years ago at the age of 16.

He reports on the poverty and corruption in Zimbabwe, and the difficulties of the trade unions there; and concludes his report from South Africa.

My sense of dislocation was heightened by the bureaucracy surrounding entry, including a form with questions about criminal convictions and another demanding to know exactly how much money I was bringing in.

The immigration official sat in a dark cubicle behind opaque glass with a hole cut in the middle and another just above the ledge to push papers through. My nose found its place exactly halfway between the two holes forcing me either to stand on tiptoe and squint down onto his head or to bend sideways through the lower hole to see his forehead. He however, did not seem to share any concern about my face!

The difference between Zimbabwe and South Africa was very clear in reading the highly boring newspaper, where, apart from reports on the travels of Comrade Mugabe, the main items seemed to be about crime. In South Africa the principal crime reports concern violence; in Zimbabwe the issue is corruption — though no doubt the corruption has very violent spin offs in a population living in grinding poverty.

One report on food relief to the 'vulnerable' living on Z\$200 or less a month (£20) listed 7 different documents that were required as proof before this relief would be available. My first taste of Zimbabwean TV news consisted mainly of a presentation to graduates of a teacher training college who were exhorted to be patriotic and not leave Zimbabwe.

The lighter side of the bureaucracy revealed itself in the form of the census that a Mr Ndoro, a teacher taking on extra duties to supplement his meagre income, came to fill in with my friends. An unusual man for Zimbabwe: he has six daughters as the result of familial pressure to produce a son. Rather than settling for marriage as their more normal 'career' he has sent three to England for further education.

The sign outside his house boasts "The — 16 — Ndoros" in the hope that the street number will be mistaken by criminals for the size of his family and will frighten them away.

Lotte and John's names were the



After leading a guerrilla struggle against the old white minority regime, Robert Mugabe (right) has established a corrupt and bureaucratic government. Rival guerrilla leader Joshua Nkomo (left) was co-opted into Mugabe's machine

simple part. "Who is the head of the household" he asked politely, for when they both replied "Lotte" he insisted that the keepers of the records could not cope with a female head. The alternatives for skin colour are disguised into African, European and Asian, but while John was born and bred in Africa he is coded as European — perhaps not so different from the contradictions in Britain. While they have both electricity and gas in the household, only one form of energy was permitted on the form.

I went in search of trade unions, and came across the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions on the first floor of a rather dingy building, situated immediately below the Ministry of Education, and displaying little of the wealth of the large South African trade unions. I was given a friendly welcome by the administrator who had studied at Kent University, and was taken to see the beleaguered legal advisor.

Noah spoke openly about conditions, underscoring his criticism of the legal restrictions by showing me the repressive statutes limiting the work of the unions. Workers in essential services are not allowed to strike, and 'essential services' cover 80% of the workforce.

On average 30% of the workforce is unionised. The ZCTU is beginning to move into a more militant stance, risking its cordial relationship with

the Government. While there is much that separates South Africa and Zimbabwe, the danger of South Africa following a similar road has not gone unnoticed inside South African trade unions.

A desperate drought is driving the country to the brink of catastrophe — all hinges on the rainy season.

The last night of my stay was darkened by a power cut affecting the whole of Zimbabwe as engineers struggled to cope with critical water levels at the hydro-electric plant at Kariba Dam. A more gruesome consequence of the drought, as the search for water forces people down disused mineshafts,

is the discovery of mass graves where opponents of ZANU-PF were spirited away during the early '80s.

Back in South Africa, my last few days included a visit to the Project for the Study of Violence where I met a very vivacious and lively black woman called Nthabiseng Mogale who led the counselling service for victims of violence. The boundaries between victims and perpetrators was often not that clear as some found themselves into killing others in defence of their family: one man who sought help was a cop who naively believing that his role was about peacekeeping, and who was deeply shocked when he found himself shooting and killing a suspect.

The lawlessness of South Africa

was brought home to me by three stories from Nthabiseng's life. An 11-year old nephew warned her father that a man he was friendly with had been targeted. Two days later the man was dead.

A woman outside her house screamed that she was about to be raped. Nthabiseng's mother phoned the police who said they had no cars and recommended throwing stones at the man.

A friend reported her stolen car to the police, giving an accurate description of the thieves: the police on recognising the gang responsible refused to do anything as the gang were stronger than they.

Children talk glibly of giving the presents of a necklace, guava juice and 3 cents: a tyre, petrol and a few matches. At the same time, Nthabiseng valued the education she had gained on township streets.

On my last day the simmering violence of South Africa took on an unnervingly tangible form. As I walked back home from the city centre, I found myself wandering into the area where the minibus taxis congregate. A young, tall, wiry, black man apologised as he pushed in front of me and I felt someone behind take hold of my arms. My attention locked onto the short, stubby knife in the hand of the man confronting me, and as I squirmed to release the grip of the one behind, I found myself bellowing "No, fuck off, leave me alone!" (an instinctive response not usually to be recommended in such circumstances!)

This had little impact on the pedestrians about their business, but for reasons unknown to me, my assailants disappeared as quickly as they had arrived, leaving me with

"Workers in essential services are not allowed to strike, and 'essential services' cover 80% of the workforce."

d drought

health and money and a small memento — a cut on my thumb, drawing my attention five minutes later when I became aware my hand was wet.

Someone on the minibus back home pulled out a bundle of toilet roll to mop up the blood. A large Southern Comfort drunk with a friend that evening during the interval of a compelling play helped soften the edges of the flashbacks I experienced.

The play itself, *Death and the Maiden* by Ariel Dorfman, was not

without relevance to the wider situation in South Africa, telling the tale of a Chilean woman, tortured 15

years ago, confronting her torturer. She regretted not shouting when the police first dragged her into their car. It felt very easy to sympathise with her as she wreaked her revenge on her former assailant, now victim, hard to

hear the pleas of her barrister husband for reliance on the due process of law and of reason.

"People living on less than £20 a month need seven different documents to get food aid."



Zimbabwe's economy: still dependent on staple crop production

Socialist Worker at its very best

LEFT PRESS

By Martin Thomas

In many ways last week's *Socialist Worker*, focused on the Tory crime panic, showed that paper at its best.

It was punchy, readable, well-presented and full of snappy facts and figures. Yet the coverage also showed *Socialist Worker's* weaknesses.

"It's the Tories tearing up society" was the lead headline, but the coverage made four main points.

- The Tories and the tabloids are exaggerating in order to whip up fear and hysteria. Youth crime has decreased; "Britain has one of the lowest murder rates in the world"; "the odds are that the average person will suffer an assault once in 100 years".
- "Exaggerating crime... provides an excuse for strengthening the police and 'the law'."
- That means more frame-ups, and more people stuffed into miserable prisons — which do not stop crime.
- The rise in crime is caused by poverty and unemployment. "The real criminals are those who condemn young people to lives of poverty and no hope".

"SW's 'socialist answer' is no more than a militant rephrasing of what archbishops and more enlightened police chiefs have said!"

All this is true — but after almost five full pages in *SW* a lot is missing.

Whatever about the Tories' exaggerations, crime is increasing. A lot of working-class people, especially older people in the inner cities, are frightened and bewildered. Reeling off figures won't show them a way out of their bewilderment — especially since, disconcertingly, *SW* takes as gospel Government figures which fit its argument while rubbishing those which contradict it.

In *Socialist Organiser* we wrote: "To attack the social roots of crime is not to make an 'excuse' or to evade the immediate problem. No explanation of... social conditions can eradicate individual responsibility. Individuals... can make decisions, rise above their circumstances..."

To say that is *not* to pander to the Tories' blustering demand: "Condemn the criminals!" It is an essential step in the argument if socialists are to convince ordinary people, dismayed and disheartened by the way they see society around them descending into dog-eat-dog, that we are on the same

planet.

The social decay is not just a matter of unemployment and poverty, but also of individual grab-as-you-can replacing social provision. Yet *SW* misses that dimension — the "moral" dimension, or, to put it another way, the political dimension as distinct from the narrowly economic — and it also says *nothing* about social alternatives.

It advocates no immediate measures to win new jobs, or to improve conditions in the worst-hit working-class communities. It says nothing about the duty of the mass labour movement to organise, mobilise, and offer hope to youth. It explains nothing about how the world could be reorganised, on the basis of social provision rather than grab-as-you-can, to cut the roots of crime.

"The socialist answer is clear", declares *SW*: but its "socialist answer" — "the real criminals are those who condemn young people to lives of poverty and hope" — while true, is no more than a militant rephrasing of what archbishops and the more enlightened police chiefs have said!

Here as elsewhere, *SW's* version of socialist politics consists of denouncing the Tories and bosses, applauding defiance and militancy, and *assuming* that somehow, some day, rising militancy will boil over into a cataclysm which abolishes existing society and produces something different.

Yet the whole of working-class history argues against that assumption. To remake society we have to understand the world as it is now, expose its most tenacious and insidious illusions, and see where and how the organisation and mobilisations of today create the basis for a new society. We have to *think* about the questions that *SW* skates over.



But *SW* can't say who will put society back together again, or how.

How Marx solved the riddle of the labour theory of value

In this introduction to the 1891 edition of Marx's pamphlet *Wage Labour and Capital*, his lifelong collaborator Frederick Engels spells out how in the course of his scientific investigation Marx discovered that workers sell not their labour but their labour power to the capitalist.

Labour power is a unique commodity. Its use value to the capitalist consists in the fact that it creates new value in excess of its own exchange value (the amount of labour time needed on average in a given society to reproduce the necessities of life for the workers and their dependents).

This week we print the first part of Engels' introduction. In it he shows that the assumption by the great economists of the 18th and early 19th century that workers sold their labour and not labour power led them into all kinds of riddles and contradictions.

Next week we will print the second part where Engels spells out how Marx's understanding of labour power allows us to transcend the limitations of the previous theories and to explain the realities of exploitation under the system of wage labour and capitalist production.

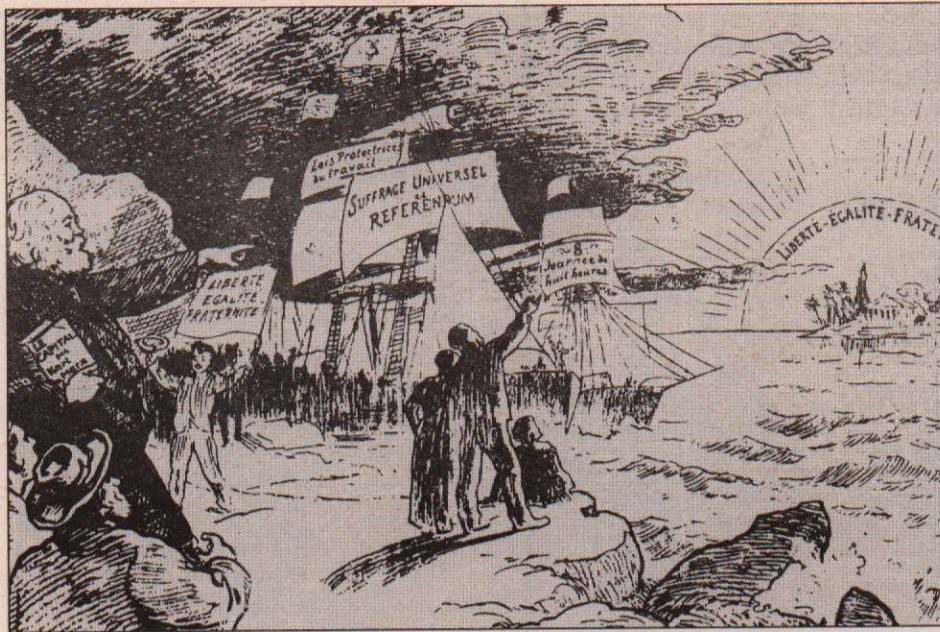
IN THE [eighteen]-forties, Marx had not yet finished his critique of political economy. This took place only towards the end of the fifties. Consequently, his works which appeared before the first part of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) differ in some points from those written after 1859, and contain expressions and whole sentences which, from the point of view of the later works, appear unfortunate and even incorrect. Now, it is self-evident that in ordinary editions intended for the general public this earlier point of view also has its place, as a part of the intellectual development of the author, and that both author and public have an indisputable right to the unaltered reproduction of these older works. And I should not have dreamed of altering a word of them.

It is another thing when the new edition is intended practically exclusively for propaganda among workers. In such a case Marx would certainly have brought the old presentation dating from 1849 into harmony with his new point of view. And I feel certain of acting as he would have done in undertaking for this edition the few alterations and additions which are required in order to attain this object in all essential points. I therefore tell the reader beforehand: this is not the pamphlet as Marx wrote it in 1849 but approximately as he would have written it in 1891. The actual text, moreover, is circulated in so many copies that this will suffice until I am able to reprint it again, unaltered, in a later complete edition.

Labour and labour power

MY ALTERATIONS all turn on one point. According to the original, the worker sells his labour to the capitalist for wages; according to the present text he sells his labour power. And for this alteration I owe an explanation. I owe it to the workers in order that they may see it is not a case here of mere juggling with words, but rather of one of the most important points in the whole of political economy. I owe it to the bourgeois, so that they can convince themselves how vastly superior the uneducated workers, for whom one can easily make comprehensible the most difficult economic analyses, are to our supercilious "educated people" to whom such intricate questions remain insoluble their whole life long.

Classical political economy* took over from industrial practice the current conception of the manufacturer, that he buys and pays for the labour of his workers. This conception had been quite adequate for the business needs, the book-keeping and price calculations of the manufacturer. But, naively transferred to political economy,



Marx shows the way towards making a reality of the ideals proclaimed by the French Revolution of 1789

it produced there really wondrous errors and confusions.

Economics observes the fact that the prices of all commodities, among them also the price of the commodity that it calls "labour," are continually changing; that they rise and fall as the result of the most varied circumstances, which often bear no relation whatever to the production of the commodities themselves, so that prices seem, as a rule, to be determined by pure chance. As soon, then, as political economy made its appearance as a science, one of its first tasks was to seek the law which was concealed behind this chance apparently governing the prices of commodities, and which, in reality, governed this very chance. Within the prices of commodities, continually fluctuating and oscillating, now upwards and now downwards, political economy sought for the firm central point around which these fluctuations and oscillations turned. In a word, it started from the prices of commodities in order to look for the value of the commodities as the law controlling prices, the value by which all fluctuations in price are to be explained and to which finally they are all to be ascribed.

Classical economics then found that the value of a commodity is determined by the labour contained in it, requisite for its production. With this explanation it contented itself. And we also can pause here for the time being. I will only remind the reader, in order to avoid misunderstandings, that this explanation has nowadays become totally inadequate. Marx was the first thoroughly to investigate the value-creating quality of labour and he discovered in so doing that not all labour apparently, or even really, necessary for the production of a commodity adds to it under all circumstances a magnitude of value which corresponds to the quantity of labour expended. If therefore today we say offhandedly with economists like Ricardo that the value of a commodity is determined by the labour necessary for its production, we always in so doing imply the reservations made by Marx. This suffices here; more is to be found in Marx's *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1859, and the first volume of *Capital*.

The contradictions of classical economics

BUT AS SOON as the economists applied this determination of value by labour to the commodity "labour," they fell into one contradiction after another. How is the value of

"labour" determined? By the necessary labour contained in it. But how much labour is contained in the labour of a worker for a day, a week, a month, a year? The labour of a day, a week, a month, a year. If labour is the measure of all values, then indeed we can express the "value of labour" only in labour. But we know absolutely nothing about the value of an hour of labour, if we only know that it is equal to an hour of labour. This brings us not a hair's breadth nearer the goal; we keep on moving in a circle.

Classical economics, therefore, tried another tack. It said: The value of a commodity is equal to its cost of production. But what is the cost of production of labour? In order to answer this question, the economists have to tamper a little with logic. Instead of investigating the cost of production of labour itself, which unfortunately cannot be ascertained, they proceed to investigate the cost of production of the worker. And this can be ascertained. It varies with time and circumstance, but for a given state of society, a given locality and a given branch of production, it too is given, at least within fairly narrow limits. We live today under the domination of capitalist production, in which a large, ever increasing class of the population can live only if it works for the owners of the means of production — the tools, machines,

raw materials and means of subsistence — in return for wages. On the basis of this mode of production, the cost of production of the worker consists of that quantity of the means of subsistence — or their price in money — which, on the average, is necessary to make him capable of working, keep him capable of working, and to replace him, after his departure by reason of old age, sickness or death, with a new worker — that is to say, to propagate the working class in the necessary numbers. Let us assume that the money price of these means of subsistence averages three marks a day.

Our worker, therefore, receives a wage of three marks a day from the capitalist who employs him. For this, the capitalist makes him work, say, twelve hours a day, calculating roughly as follows:

Let us assume that our worker — a machinist — has to make a part of a machine which he can complete in one day. The raw material — iron and brass in the necessary previously prepared form — costs twenty marks. The consumption of coal by the steam engine, and the wear and tear of this same engine, of the lathe and the other tools which our worker uses represent for one day,

and reckoned by his share of their use, a value of one mark. The wage for one day, according to our assumption, is three marks. This makes twenty-four marks in all for our machine part. But the capitalist calculates that he will obtain, on an average, twenty-seven marks from his customers in return, or three marks more than his outlay.

The origin of the capitalists' profits

WHENCE CAME the three marks pocketed by the capitalist? According to the assertion of classical economics, commodities are, on the average, sold at their values, that is, at prices corresponding to the amount of necessary labour contained in them. The average price of our machine part — twenty-seven marks — would thus be equal to its value, that is, equal to the labour embodied in it. But of these twenty-seven marks, twenty-one marks were values already present before our machinist began work. Twenty marks were contained in the raw materials, one mark in the coal consumed during the work, or in the machines and tools which were used in the process and which were diminished in their efficiency by the value of this sum. There remain six marks which have been added to the value of the raw material. But according to the assumption of our economists themselves, these six marks can only arise from the labour added to the raw material by our worker. His twelve hours' labour has thus created a new value of six marks. The value of his twelve hours' labour would, therefore, be equal to six marks. And thus we would at last have discovered what the "value of labour" is.

"Hold on there!" cries our machinist. "Six marks? But I have received only three marks! My capitalist swears by all that is holy that the value of my twelve hours' labour is only three marks, and if I demand six he laughs at me. How do you make that out?"

If previously we got into a vicious circle with our value of labour, we are now properly caught in an insoluble contradiction. We looked for the value of labour and we have found more than we can use. For the worker, the value of the twelve hours' labour is three marks, for the capitalist it is six marks, of which he pays three to the worker as wages and pockets three for himself. Thus labour would have not one but two values and very different values into the bargain!

How can labour have two different values?

THE CONTRADICTION becomes still more absurd as soon as we reduce to labour time the values expressed in money. During the twelve hours' labour a new value of six marks is created. Hence, in six hours three marks — the sum which the worker receives for twelve hours' labour. For twelve hours' labour the worker receives as an equivalent value the product of six hours' labour. Either, therefore, labour has two values, of which one is double the size of the other, or twelve equals six! In both cases we get pure nonsense.

Turn and twist as we will, we cannot get out of this contradiction, as long as we speak of the purchase and sale of labour and of the value of labour. And this also happened to the economists. The last offshoot of classical economics, the Ricardian school, was wrecked mainly by the insolubility of this contradiction. Classical economics had got into a blind alley. The man who found the way out of this blind alley was Karl Marx.

Glossary

* "By classical political economy I understand that economy which since the time of W. Petty has investigated the real relations of production in bourgeois society". K. Marx, *Capital* Vol I.

The two most prominent classical political economists were Adam Smith (1723-90) and David Ricardo (1772-1823).



To portray Nazi skinheads as real people is not racist

Neighbours is racist. Romper Stomper is not

Cinema

Janet Burstall reviews
Romper Stomper

ROMPER STOMPER should not be banned or boycotted. It is a film about a gang of Nazi skinheads in Melbourne with an appetite for beating up Asian immigrants. It opens with a sickening, horrific scene of the gang in action.

The family and friends of the young Vietnamese victims run a restaurant.

When the skinheads discover that their favourite pub is being bought by a Vietnamese man (who happens to be associated with the restaurant) the skinheads decide to launch an attack on the pub. When word gets back to the restaurant of the attack in progress, the young Vietnamese rapidly organise a defensive counter-attack. The skinheads are routed and driven away.

Meanwhile Hando, the leader of the gang, has become involved with a young woman who has a lost, naive quality about her.

We see the gang through her eyes. She seems to have no ideas about poli-

tics or social issues. She is motivated by a need to escape from an older man who is placing sexual pressure on her, and to find social contact, love, security. Not surprisingly, this doesn't come easily in a gang of Nazi skinheads.

The gang is racked with internal conflict, particularly as a result of the defeat by the Vietnamese youth. Hando becomes more and more unpleasant as he loses his grip and things go wrong. We find out about the difficult backgrounds of the young woman and of Hando's one time best mate.

What makes the individuals pull away from Hando and his gang is not that any of them question racist politics but that they find it too unpleasant. The gang's initial appeal to people who were lost and brutalised soon wears off, and leaves them in a worse mess than when they had joined.

The three main characters are all credible human beings, even Hando. Hando, although vile, is not a cardboard cut-out Nazi.

The film pays little attention to broader social, political and economic conditions, such as unemployment and the failures of the labour movement, which help Nazis recruit. It seems to see lack of love and security in childhood as the spur to individuals turning to the gang.

But *Romper Stomper* raises real issues which are worth discussing in trying to understand the appeal of fascism to some young people. It is not a political morality tale which gets across a straightforward message. And it is obviously open to a wide variety of interpretations (as is real life, after all).

The main arguments for banning the film are that it is violent, that it is racist, and that it will encourage people to join Nazi groups.

Romper Stomper is violent. I watched at least two scenes with my hand over my eyes, peeking through my fingers. The violence is not Hollywood style adrenalin pumping entertainment.

A Vietnamese social worker in Sydney is reported as complaining that the violence was "not like Hollywood vio-

lence — the way it's made it looks very terrible". An Anglo man interviewed on TV after seeing the film also complained that he "couldn't see the point of showing violence without any fun in it."

I think it is positive that violence should be portrayed as terrible and not fun at all.

As for racism, as *Sydney Morning Herald* film critic Lynden Barber noted, "far more dangerous than *Romper* is that supposedly innocuous Australian institution *Neighbours*, whose Aryan cast reinforces in dangerously insidious ways the notion that real Australians are all white people". I think it is positive that the Vietnamese people in *Romper Stomper* organised to defend themselves against the skinheads.

I suppose *Romper Stomper* may make immigrant people feel more at risk of being attacked than they really are, in the same way that sexual violence in films can increase fear. But that is not enough to suggest banning the film.

Anti-Nazi League spokesperson Rahul Patel is quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as predicting that the film will be included on the mail-order merchandise for groups like the National Front. However, I cannot see how Nazis would find any solace in *Romper Stomper*. *Romper Stomper* was number one at Sydney cinema box offices for a couple of weeks last November. No outbreak of fascist attacks, and no upsurge in the Australian fascist group National Action, followed.

Perhaps for some of the would-be censors, it is too difficult to admit that real people become fascists. They are looking for cardboard cut-out enemies and slogans.

This is to say effectively that any realistic depiction of antisocial behaviour is dangerous because it could inspire others to copy. If so then the only art or fiction allowed would be dull, Politically Correct or socialist-realist rubbish.

Don't boycott this film: see it.

The pill: prescription for revolution

Periscope

Timewatch, BBC2, 8.10, Wednesday 10 March

SOMEONE WHO is 50 now grew up in a world where sexual mores and moralities were as different from those of today — despite AIDS — as Oxford Street is from a Stone Age village street, or Buckingham Palace from an old 19th century backstreet working class slum dwelling. You can get some idea of it from old movies, the Doris Day-Rock Hudson sex comedies of the '50s and early '60s for example.

The plot usually revolved around the enthralling question of whether the heroine had, might, did, could or ever would screw the hero. The difference between the assumptions and everyday reali-

ties enshrined in such films and the realities of today is immense.

It was 'the pill' which ushered in this great revolution in sexual morality. Cheap, safe, convenient birth control allowed separation of sex from procreation, and thus opened up wonderful new vistas of human personal freedom. The sort of sexual freedom heretofore enjoyed only by movie stars, the very rich and the ideologically liberated, was now there for everyone.

The old morality crumbled in a short few years.

In a way it was an unanswerable vindication of one of the key ideas of Marxism, which had always insisted that such things as morality were produced and sustained — and transformed — by material conditions, options, consequences, and not by some innate sense of right behaviour reflecting God's, or anyone else's, timeless laws.

Having kittens

Television

By Liz Millward

AFTER ROSEANNE (C4), *Casualty* is my all-time favourite programme. It's a nice mixture of soap and drama, with plenty of politics in the shape of NHS cuts. But sometimes the writers get a touch of moon-sickness. A couple of weeks ago it was radioactive isotopes escaping all over the department. This week it was rioters.

Not content with setting fire to their own estate, the rioters brought their grievances to *Holby Casualty*. What the grievances were wasn't clear, but the upshot was a variable number of 30 year-old actors playing disaffected 'youth', breaking into the hospital, setting fire in the lift shaft, then blowing up an ambulance.

As *Holby* appears to be the only hospital ever built without a fire exit, all the doctors and nurses were forced to run screaming through blazing corridors, pushing patients on trolleys whilst carrying out open heart surgery. You get the picture.

While you watched it, it was gripping enough, but it did throw up some odd questions. Like, how did 20 youths arrive in one Ford Escort? (The same Ford Escort left turned over and blazing a few minutes earlier). Where did they get all the petrol from? I can't believe cans of petrol are standard hospital equipment. Where were the fire exits?

Why did the sprinklers not work in the corridors? Why did Duffy have hysterics, having coped with every other emergency known to TV?

Most important of all — why is everyone making such a fuss? The programme was shown later than usual (after the 9pm 'watershed') yet the tabloids are full of outrage at all the violence.

This episode was no more violent than past episodes, and it was shown on the same evening as *The Big Fight — Live* (LWT) where real people beat each other up for money. If the tabloids were afraid of the corrupting influence of this programme on young people, what about the quite positive picture of the drug culture on *Inspector Morse* (LWT)?

Saturday's television was full of sex, violence and drugs. Put in context *Casualty* was by no means the worst. It was certainly not the most believable!

The real drama was over on BBC2, in *Birthright*, which rather oddly concluded with a showing of the film *Rosemary's Baby*.

This was a series of programmes focusing on childbirth, clearly designed to increase the take-up of contraception. The most interesting shots were filmed on a single night at Homerton Hospital, London, where a number of parents-to-be oddly consented to share these precious hours with the film crew and, thus, the world.

There was hardly any screaming. There was a lot of obvious exhaustion, and the difference between 'natural' childbirth and medical intervention was made startlingly clear.

The two mothers who chose natural childbirth seemed calm and in control. The midwives and doctors in attendance seemed equally calm. By contrast other mothers were so drugged that they had to have orders shouted at them by beings in green suits.

I am sure a lot of the talk about natural childbirth is silly, hippy nonsense. But for all the singing through contractions, the woman who had a completely natural birth at home was able to drink champagne with the midwife afterwards. Some of the hospital mothers looked as if they would have trouble lifting the glass.

The left and the London Underground dispute

The class struggle breaks out in Socialist Outlook

Tom Rigby takes a look at how one left paper has been forced to confront the issues raised by the defeat of potentially one of the most powerful groups of workers in Britain.

At last a discussion has started in the pages of *Socialist Outlook* on the lessons of last November's defeat of the RMT on the London Underground.

Well, perhaps discussion is too strong a word for it.

There seems to be no dialogue and no genuine exchange of views taking place. One side of the argument — those who support 100% the actions of the London Transport District Council — don't want to see any proper examination of their actions.

You can tell this simply from their tone: "An ill-informed and sectarian letter appeared in the last issue... its author who doesn't even work on the Underground... [represents] a crude left wing school", etc., etc.

The worst sort of defeat

So what is the background to this dispute? This is how a Central Line guard explained it in *SO* at the time:

"On 26 November 1991, London Underground bosses announced their Company Plan. It promised a 'new dawn for the heart of London' — and 5,000 job losses and the destruction of working conditions and job security for 21,000 Tube workers.

On 23 November 1992, the rail union RMT called off their planned strike against the Plan, effectively conceding that the Plan would be introduced in its entirety, exactly as the bosses wanted it.

How could we suffer such a defeat — the worst sort of defeat, a defeat without a fight — in an industry which in 1989 saw a powerful unofficial movement bring London to a halt and inflict humiliating defeats on both the Tube management and the Tories?

RMT had a ballot majority for a strike earlier this year, but called off the strike (in May) when the bosses agreed to negotiations.

The management clearly never had any intention of negotiating seriously. Eventually they walked out of the government conciliation service ACAS announcing that they would impose the Plan, and that was that.

RMT responded by calling a second strike ballot. The second major union on the Tube, ASLEF, which mainly organises train drivers, decided to organise a postal referendum on whether or not its members wanted the Plan, thus wasting two weeks as the date for the Plan to be imposed on train staff — 7 December — drew nearer.

RMT got a three to one majority for a strike, and ASLEF a three to one rejection of the Plan. ASLEF then started a strike ballot. The RMT's

National Executive decided to call an all-out strike from Tuesday 24th, despite the ASLEF ballot result not being out until the 30th.

RMT could have postponed action until after the ASLEF result, thus winning a chance for a united strike while still moving before the crucial date of 7 December.

As we came closer to the strike date of 24 November, it became clearer and clearer that the bosses' threat to sack strikers, combined with uncertainty about whether ASLEF members would cross RMT picket lines, meant that any strike would have been patchy, leaving workers wide open to victimisation.

By Monday 23rd, when the strike was called off, little else could have been done. To go ahead with a strike in those circumstances could have been disastrous.

However, the circumstances need not have arisen, and that is the crux of the matter."

The discussion in the pages of *Outlook* is about precisely how these circumstances arose, and what could have been done to avoid them.

The issues in dispute

The view of the majority of *Outlook* supporters — and apparently of the majority of their leadership — was expressed not by any member of the leadership, but by Greg Tucker, an RMT activist who has only recently returned to the *Outlook* fold:

"The conditions to win did exist, despite fear of management intimidation.

Why was morale lost? First, one has to ask why the strike was called by RMT in advance of the ASLEF ballot? This made it inevitable that ASLEF would then repudiate any action by their own members.

Either the decision was a cynical manoeuvre, or caused by over-confidence among the 'class fighters' of the LT District Council, prepared to gamble on morale to expose ASLEF.

By calling for a strike before the ASLEF ballot, the ASLEF leadership were let off the hook.

Second, one has to ask why, on the Friday before the strike, when it was becoming clear that morale was fading because of the lack of ASLEF back-up, no attempt was made to delay the RMT strike? Even up to the eve of the strike it would have been possible to postpone it, rather than just cancel it. The talks at ACAS were a perfect excuse for such action.

Complete capitulation was not called for. A delay in the strike, to wait for the ASLEF decision, could have prepared the basis for joint action and a firming-up of morale. Of course the ASLEF leadership would have tried to duck the fight, just like the RMT leadership, but a second successful ballot would have made this difficult."

Greg is right. His views almost exactly mirror those put forward in *SO* last November.

No answers from Outlook's tubeworkers

So what have the *Socialist Outlook* minority got to say in self-defence? Nothing. They have



Was Knapp alone to blame?

not even attempted to provide an accurate account of events. To do so would be to put their own actions under a very unwelcome spotlight.

Instead, they resort to literally meaningless and nonsensical platitudes like this:

"There is a crude left wing school of thought which holds that all industrial defeats are simply due to bureaucratic sell-outs. This is of course true in a very general way, but it doesn't help us understand particular events."

But some of us want answers. We want to know why, with four days to go until the strike was due, *Outlook* supporters on the London Transport District Council of the RMT opposed a proposal to postpone the strike and wait for the outcome of the ASLEF ballot?

You simply will not find any explanation for this from the *Outlook* minority.

Instead you get a classic example of how to lie by omission: "The RMT bureaucracy totally failed the membership... in the end they refused to allow the strike to be postponed rather than called off".

This is not exactly the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

On the Friday before the strike (20 November) an open meeting of the District Council Executive was told by a prominent *Outlook* supporter that it was impossible to postpone the strike, because that would "break the union's constitution".

Then on the Monday (23 November) the RMT NEC, not the District Council, called off the strike. The NEC met in the morning, the announcement of the cancellation was made at lunchtime, and the District Council met in the evening.

So the strike was not called off at the 'behest' of the District Council as the *Outlook* minority have suggested.

On the contrary. That evening an open meeting of the DC Executive was told by the DC leadership that postponing action was not even an option for discussion. One of the conditions of the agreement come to in the secret talks between Knapp and LUL management had been that the strike was to be cancelled not postponed.

The *Outlook* supporters in the DC did not object to this at the time.

After a little investigation we can see that it was the *Outlook* minority themselves who opposed postponement when it was really an option. The denunciations of Knapp simply serve as an alibi.

A question of leadership

What we have unearthed here is a group of *Socialist Outlook* supporters who make up trade union policy as they go along without any reference to their other comrades. They then cover-up their own actions by lying by omission.

This is not a very pleasant sight.

But it's arguably less unpleasant than the role played by *Outlook*'s central political leadership in this dispute.

Firstly, they have not come off the fence open-

ly and argued for their own views on the tube debacle; they have been content to let Greg Tucker do it for them.

Secondly, they have not done the things that necessarily follow from accepting the criticism of the London Transport District Council [LTDC] "Class Struggle leadership" which were first raised in the pages of this newspaper.

Phil Hearse, Alan Thornett *et al* should apologise to our tubeworker comrade who writes most of our articles about the London Underground.

They accused him of a "fingering operation" for naming a member of the LTDC as a supporter of *Socialist Outlook*; his articles in this newspaper were "tantamount to denouncing this person to management." They then demanded that we publicly repudiate him.

Well, everyone can now see this ridiculous charge for what it was: a smokescreen to cover up indefensible behaviour.

The *Outlook* comrade involved, who is not exactly renowned for his modesty or his desire to stay out of the limelight, has not been victimised. He remains a prominent RMT official and has a relatively stable future to look forward to as a negotiator on full facility time.

Meanwhile, our comrade, who told the truth about the issues, faces the same fate as many of the younger generation of rank and file tubeworker activists: his job is on the line. He is one of hundreds who face the threat of the sack by the end of the year.

Comrades Thornett and Hearse, you owe our comrade and our paper a public apology. All we did was point out the obvious — the emperor has no clothes!

Alliance for Workers' Liberty public meetings

Thurs 4 March

"Labour Must Fight". Leeds AWL meeting. 7.30, Adelphi.

Weds 10 March

"Race and Class — which way for the black communities?" London AWL Forum. 7.30, Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road.

"Socialism and Democracy" University of Northumbria AWL meeting. 2pm, student union.

"Labour Must Fight" Edinburgh AWL meeting. 7.30, Trades Council.

Thurs 11 March

"Labour Must Fight" Sheffield AWL meeting. 7.30 SCCAU, West Street.

"The legacy of Malcolm X" Canterbury AWL meeting. 7.30, Sidney Cooper Centre. "Malcolm X and black politics" Goldsmiths College AWL meeting. 2.30, student union.

Public Sector

Sat 6 March

Public Sector Alliance Conference. Burslem Town Hall, Stoke.

Miners

Sat 6 March

March and rally. Assemble 10.15, Silverdale, Newcastle-under-Lyme. Speakers include Arthur Scargill.

Demonstration. Assemble 10 am, Pinners Brow, Warrington. Speakers from NUM and WAPC.

Anti-deportation

Saturday 3 April

Defend the Rahman family demonstration. Assemble 12.30, Sunninghill school, Bolton. Details: 16 Wood Street, Bolton BL1 1DY.

calling the decision not to go ahead 'inevitable'. That article argued that the base of support did not exist for resistance to management's threats to suspend and eventually sack strikers. This view is contested below by two of our supporters.

Who called off the LUL strike?

By Alan Nettles
The aims of

fortunately the calling off of
the strike three weeks ago

But who decides the mood
has changed? There was only
one mandate from the rank and

In 1991 Alan Thornett, ingeniously disguised as Alan Nettles, criticised the RMT's climbdown on the London Underground. 12 months later, when this newspaper criticised a

carbon copy of that collapse, we were accused of 'red baiting', despite the fact that the majority of *Outlook* supporters, including Thornett, actually agreed with us on the matter of substance.

CPSA left campaign gains support

ALTHOUGH branch AGMs have only just begun in the civil service union CPSA, Mark Serwotka — the only left candidate in the union's presidential election — is already picking up branch nominations.

Significantly, his first nominations came from the Lord Chancellor's Department (LCD) — the home of *Militant* backed "Demo-

cratic Alliance" candidate Albert Astbury.

Astbury is a candidate with no clear programme, whose only defining characteristic is that he earns £15,000 more than most CPSA members and is a senior boss equivalent to a DSS District Manager.

Within the Broad Left only the *Militant* and a few others are backing Astbury. Mark stands on a pro-

gramme of fighting the Tory attacks and beating Market Testing through national industrial action. He is drawing support from many areas of the union.

His campaign is backed and supported by the CPSA Socialist Caucus and many rank and file Broad Left members (including, since they changed their line, the SWP). Most importantly, his campaign

reaches out beyond the organised CPSA factions to the many non-aligned members who want to defeat the Tories Market Testing plans.

The *Militant* and their candidate Astbury are looking increasingly desperate.

Mark has faced threats lies and intimidation. Now the *Militant* are saying that Mark will be "deemed to

have resigned" from the Broad Left if he continues to stand for President.

Obviously, *Militant* don't believe in giving people a chance to defend themselves. Nor do they have any standards.

Mark has defended *Militant's* right to remain in the Labour Party even after they stood candidates against Labour in the general election. *Militant* want

to drive Mark out of the Broad Left for standing against a candidate who is not even in the Broad Left and who doesn't agree with Broad Left policies.

Mark won't even get the "privilege" of defending himself in front of a kangaroo court — a right he got before being expelled from the Labour Party.

A case of their morals and ours, as they say.

Wigan's Labour council attacks its workers

AS WE go to press, youth service workers employed by Wigan Metropolitan Council are due to begin an all-out indefinite strike in defence of their jobs.

Up to 500 jobs could be axed by this "progressive borough". This includes half the workforce in the youth service, as a result of slashing £500,000 from its annual £1.4 million budget.

Messages of support/donations/requests for speakers: NALGO office, Gerard Winstanley House, Wigan. Full report next week.

Short sharp shock

THE WANDSWORTH council strikers returned to work this week after winning their fight against compulsory redundancies.

Managers withdrew their threat to sack two graphic designers although one may be taking voluntary redundancy later. And performance related pay is not going to be introduced.

The strikers, all of whom were on the picket line, feel they have shown that fighting back can get results. However one post has been lost and the council are still planning redundancies in other sections. The branch may be balloting on strike action for 18 March. This can be won especially after the terrific mood generated by the strike.

Yarrows strikers stand firm

AT YARROWS SHIPYARD IN Glasgow the 1,300 strikers are standing firm in demanding a decent wage rise. It is vital that both the Yarrows and Timex disputes are not allowed to remain isolated and to stagnate.

The strikers need to reach out for solidarity. Other labour movement activists must do everything they can to help them.

Timex pickets still solid

The mass pickets are continuing outside the Timex factory in Dundee after 300 workers were sacked. The strike is in opposition to management's attempt to push through a pay freeze and selective lay-offs.

"We have rejected Hoover-style conditions" is the clear message from the Timex strikers. They need the STUC to organise a huge demonstration in their support.

Send donations to: AEEU, 2 Union St, Dundee. Phone 0382 22406 for speakers.

Manchester Housing dispute

MANCHESTER City Council are disciplining Housing Department workers for taking part in a half day strike in support of two workers facing gross misconduct charges.

On 4 February as workers

were returning to work at lunchtime they found themselves locked out for the rest of the day.

The disciplinary hearings have been a farce and a sham. They are a thinly veiled anti-union witchhunt.

The two suspended workers at the centre of the dispute are still waiting for hearing dates and also the full details of the gross misconduct charges. In the meantime a big 'yes' vote in the one day strike ballot is needed.

Unify the struggles conference

AROUND 150 activists attended a conference in Manchester last Saturday (27 February) organised by the North West Miners Support Group Network and supported by the Parkside Women's Pit Camp.

That the conference took place at all was an achievement, given the hostility it had provoked amongst more bureaucratic elements in the labour movement.

Some of the resolutions passed proposed concrete activities (eg organising speaking tours for Timex and Burnsall strikers), but others merely expressed general aspirations (eg calling on the TUC to call

a one-day general strike).

There was a gap between the contents of some of the resolutions and the forces represented at the conference. Many people attending did so as individuals not as representatives of working class organisations.

The success or failure of the conference should not be judged so much on the basis of resolutions passed or defeated, but on the basis of the extent to which it helped activists intervene in the continuing fight against job losses.

Support the UCH workers

WORKERS AT University College Hospital in London began a work-in on 10 February. Management are planning to close the main building by the end of July.

The workers need your support.

• Get a speaker to your Labour Party or trade union meeting. Phone 071-387 9300 x 5479.

• Send a donation (Cheques payable to "UCH strike fund") to the UCH unions, UCH, Gower Street, London W1.

Science, non-science and anti-science

LES HEARN'S

SCIENCE COLUMN

Continuing the review of Lewis Wolpert's book *The unnatural nature of science**

LAST TIME I looked at Wolpert's view of science as something profoundly at odds with a "common sense" interpretation of nature. It is, in his view, a matter of chance that a scientific outlook ever became established. But how can this be, when all human societies have an encyclopaedic knowledge of their environments and have developed ingenious technologies to help them exploit these? Is not technology equivalent to science?

Wolpert gives an emphatic "No!" to this. Agriculture, metal-working, architecture, navigation, guns and steam engines were all developed without a scientific understanding of the seasons, the behaviour of chemicals, forces in structures, the rotation of the Earth and so on. In fact, many of these technologies were associated with various magical and religious

ceremonies. Wolpert gives the example of a 7th century BC Mesopotamian glass furnace. This had to be built at an auspicious time, with no strangers allowed to enter the building. The appropriate libations had to be offered to the gods. Even now, due gratitude has to be shown to God for the year's harvest, at least in British primary schools.

Wolpert sees in the philosopher Thales of Miletos the first scientist. Instead of "explaining" the world in terms of a myth, he asked the question "What was the world made of?" and came up with the answer "water", since water could exist in solid, liquid and gaseous forms. This was an attempt at finding a unifying principle in nature and one which could lead to other ideas, such as Anaximander's counter-claim that the world was made of air. In contrast, myths such as the Egyptian one that the movement of the sun is due to the god Ra rowing a boat across the sky could not lead to any fruitful discussion. Aristotle's theories of the shape, position and movement of the Earth, though wrong (and later turned into myth-like articles of faith by the Christian church) could be investigated and tested and, most importantly, disproved. That they were not was due to the late arrival of that pillar of modern science, the experimental method.

It was to be some 1,800 years before

the next flowering of science, with Galileo, and Wolpert spends some time on the contradictory effects of Christianity on the development of science. But far from science conquering pre-scientific modes of thought, Wolpert sees it having very little effect on the progress of technology, still less on everyday life, except perhaps in the last 50 years. For thousands of years, he says, human societies have entertained neither "a critical tradition nor a curiosity about nature".

Next, Wolpert spends some time on the nature of scientific thought and the role of creativity and imagination. Rather than the dry formula of "observation, hypothesis, experiment" now laid down in the National Curriculum, scientists have frequently come up with ideas that are "beautiful", that "seem" right. These must always be tested in some ways but often prove right despite initial opposing evidence. This imaginative element is not the same as that found in artists, though. After all, someone else would have come up with relativity if Einstein had been run over by a train, but no-one else could have written *Macbeth* if Shakespeare hadn't.

Wolpert gives some consideration to the differences between science and ideas such as those of astrology, the paranormal and psychoanalysis. On the one hand, there are theories which

are capable of disproof. These may be scientific (though Wolpert wishes to rule out statements such as that "Mars is made of red cheese" — though capable of disproof, it is clearly ridiculous). On the other hand, the claims of astrology are, though ridiculous, not capable of disproof. Wolpert gives the example of the 16th century astrologer Hieronymus Wolf, who predicted the date of his own death. After giving away his possessions, he found that he did not die on the appointed date. He excused this by saying that he had not given the position of Mars sufficient consideration!

Psychoanalysis Wolpert regards as a "pre-science" since the requisite prior knowledge of the operation of the brain did not (and does not) exist. Concepts such as the unconscious, the libido, the Oedipus complex, trauma and repression are not capable of disproof. Everything, on the contrary, seems to support these ideas, and it is impossible to make predictions precise enough to be tested.

This is not to say that good scientific theories have to be based on fully understood premisses. Newton's Theory of Universal Gravitation was based on mysterious attractive forces acting at a distance that even now are not fully understood. Wolpert also tackles the question of religious belief, something that is incompatible with scientific understanding and yet is felt by

about 50% of scientists. He regards this moral view of the world, in which "wicked deeds are punished", as being a more natural, though magical, view of the world.

Finally, he looks at the question of the misuse of scientific discoveries, coming down on the side of its being society's responsibility to decide whether and how to use these. In the most celebrated case of the atomic bomb, it was the US government that decided to use it on civilian targets in Japan, not the scientists who had worked on it. Many of these had urged the US President not to use it since the war was virtually over. Against those who argue that the nuclear scientists should have kept quiet about their discoveries, it should be pointed out that discoveries, if capable of being made by one person, can also be made by another. The fear that Hitler might develop nuclear weapons was a very real one.

The problem with society deciding what to do with science's discoveries is that very few people have any degree of scientific literacy. Wolpert does not have much in the way of useful advice here but overall his book is a thought-provoking one, and one from which the adherents of scientific socialism might profit by reading. Borrow it from your local library or buy it in paperback.

* Faber & Faber, £14.99

SOCIALIST

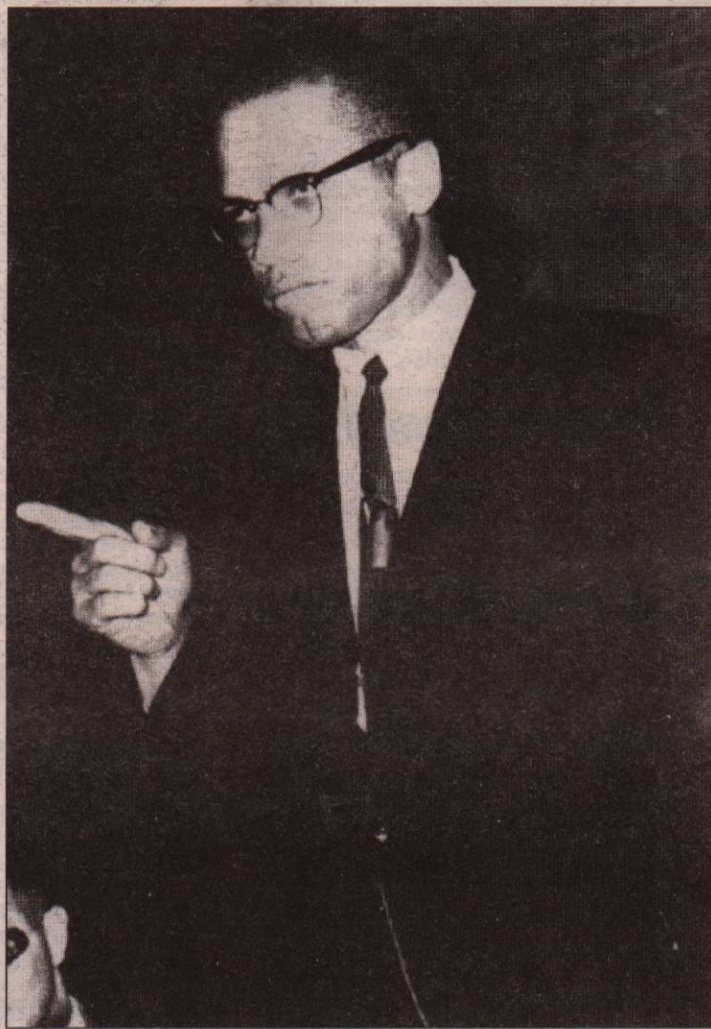
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REVOLUTIONARY, ANTI-CAPITALIST

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REAL



MALCOLM

XTOWARDS THE END of his life, Malcolm X spoke at public forums organised by *The Militant*, an American socialist newspaper (no relation to the British *Militant*). Malcolm, the revolutionary black leader killed in 1965 who is now commemorated in Spike Lee's massively-advertised film and on a million tee-shirts and posters, kept a distance from *The Militant's* socialism; he would probably have been even more wary of the strand of socialist ideas represented by *Socialist Organiser*.

But he was thinking, listening, arguing, ready to grapple with the ideas of those who said that unity of black and white workers for socialism was the way to change America's racist system.

He was looking at new ideas, as he had done all his life. All his life, Malcolm had been thinking the unthinkable, saying what no-one else dared say. He had been defying prejudices - both the racist prejudices of American society, which pigeonholed him into a life of petty crime, and then the narrow prejudices of the

Black Muslims, sidelining his struggle into separatist black self-improvement.

Like many other revolutionaries - Robespierre, Marx, Lenin, James Connolly - Malcolm, since his death, has been adopted by people who have nothing in common with his spirit and his life.

We can learn from Malcolm; and what we should learn, is to defy orthodoxies and look for new answers to the rotten racist system we live under.

• More on Malcolm X: see page 7

THE STAGE IS SET for a big battle in the Labour Party and the trade unions in the run-up to Labour's conference in October, over plans to weaken and limit Labour's trade union link.

Last year's Labour Party conference reaffirmed the trade union link in precise detail.

1. Continued substantial union representation at the Labour Party conference...
2. Representation of trade union branches... at every stage in the selection of parliamentary candidates...
3. Participation of national trade unions in the election of the Party leadership and the National Executive Committee.
4. Representation of local trade union branches... in the regular business of Constituency Labour Parties through delegates to General Committees."

The conference instructed the National Executive's working party "to concentrate its efforts on how to strengthen the traditional links".

The report leaves trade union representation at Labour Party conference more or less intact. But for parliamentary and leadership selections - which the Labour bigwigs evidently consider more sensitive, for now - it does not even mention trade union delegate votes as an option.

For parliamentary selections, the report gives the nod to ballots of individual members, with no trade union participation. For leadership elections, it favours 50% of votes for constituencies, and 50% for MPs (or "one MP, one thousand votes").

The report offers alternative options, but they are all based on affiliated trade unionists voting *as individuals*, not on any collective trade union voice.

Ideologically, this means replacing organisation by mailing lists - replacing collective discussion and some possibility of collective control by a semi-democracy of postal ballots.

Practically, all these alternative options are probably straw men, inserted only to discredit the idea of any say for trade unionists at all. They would all mean such great costs, in postage and in keeping mailing lists up-to-date, as to be unworkable.

A rapid and strong defence of last year's Labour Party conference decision is vital.

Contact: "Keep the Link", 120 Northcote Road, London E17 7EB.

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