

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

*Unite the left!*

Inside this week



Where racism comes from

centre pages

Polish trade unions revive

pages 10-11

"Falling Down": Ceausescu-vision?

page 13

## Stop Tories wrecking schools!

# Teach



# Patten a

# lesson!

By Liam Conway

**M**ONDAY 7 June saw the start of the tests that won't be done. More than £35 million has been spent producing test papers that lie unopened in school stock cupboards all over the country.

Even the headteachers' conference gave John Patten a roasting, and booed and hissed him as he left the conference hall.

Continued page 4



# Slaves to the bosses, epitomes of liberty!

By Rhodri Evans

**F**OUR MILLION British workers work more than 48 hours a week. The average for those four million is 60 hours a week. After travelling to and from work, eating, sleeping, and housework, many of them must have no time or energy left to live. Their efforts and talents

produce profits for the bosses, but nothing for themselves beyond a bare livelihood, enough to keep them producing more profits. They are slaves to the bosses. Yet for the Tories these slaves are epitomes of liberty! The Tory Government is going to the European Court of Justice to challenge a Euro-directive which would introduce a 48 hour maximum

working week to Britain. The 48 hours maximum would not come in until the year 2003, and even then would have lots of exceptions, including all transport workers — but it is too much for the Tories! The Tory government has scrapped British laws limiting work hours, but now EC law will give British workers a right to:

- \* A minimum daily rest of 11 hours;
  - \* Breaks after six hours' work;
  - \* At least 1 day off a week;
  - \* No more than eight hours on night shifts;
  - \* Three weeks' annual paid holiday 4 weeks after 1999).
- It should shame the British labour movement that these conditions are imposed by Euro-capitalists anxious not

to be undercut by sweatshop work in Britain, and not by our own efforts. We should be combining with other labour movements to win a standard 35 hour work week across Europe. That shorter work week would both open the way for the unemployed to get decent jobs, and enable those in jobs to have time and energy for activities outside work.

To get going on such a campaign, we will have to junk the nationalist Europhobia which infects so much of the left. Arguments that the welfare state can and should be defended by fending off foreign bankers and keeping economic barriers round Britain are as diversionary and damaging as passive reliance on the Brussels bureaucrats to bring us reforms.

## No to student fees!

# Education should be a right, not a privilege

By Kevin Sexton (NUS Vice-President Welfare elect)

**S**TUDENTS AT Higher Education colleges could soon face top-up fees.

The *Guardian* reported on 7 June "The London School of Economics is considering charging top-up fees for tuition, possibly up to £1000 a year".

Two years ago LSE and University College London proposed charging fees. Faced with student protest, they withdrew the plans. But this attempt looks more serious.

The Tories have long since cleared the way for colleges to charge fees to students. Tim Boswell, the current Higher Education Minister, responded to the latest plans by saying LSE was "perfectly at liberty to charge undergradu-

ates". In fact Tim Boswell and the rest of the Tories would clearly like it if colleges did start to charge for higher education.

Back in 1984, the then Education Secretary Keith Joseph proposed to introduce fees but retreated in the face of student demonstrations and the danger of opening a second front during the miners' strike. Now the Tories have found a back door route to charging fees by cutting funding to colleges and giving colleges the power to charge fees.

At LSE, for example, state-supported fees in social sciences have fallen by £585 for next year. Nationally the government have cut all fees for arts and social science courses, supposedly to encourage students to do science and technology courses.

The Tories say that students who don't come from rich families can honour the cash

for their college fees. This will, say the Tories, force students to do courses that are "economically useful", i.e. courses that lead to a fat pay cheque.

Especially in a society where the well-paid jobs are on the stock exchange or in management, whilst those who produce the wealth or carry out socially important jobs like health workers are poorly paid, this is a recipe for most students being pushed into "Business Studies" or the like, while the arts, humanities and social sciences are reserved for the rich few.

Increasingly the academic establishment is pushing for the introduction of a graduate tax. The leadership of the Labour Party have long supported this, and Labour Higher Education spokesman Jeff Rooker even told the *Guardian* that he supported tuition fees.

For socialists, a graduate tax system is unacceptable. Education should be a right, not a costly privilege.

The graduate tax opens the way for full-cost fees, and ex-students paying off their 'debt to society' over decades. If that becomes acceptable in higher education why not in further education? Why not charge parents fees for school education? The answer is not to charge students but, to fund education properly and give a living grant of at least £70 a week to all students.

Any attempt by LSE, or any college to introduce student top up must be met by action uniting students from local colleges, workers in education and the rest of the labour movement.

With the Tories threatening to gut student unions, the best way for activists to defend our unions is to show their value in action.

# Labour left in Hackney must get organised!

By Maxine Vincent

**T**HE HACKNEY Labour Party Annual Borough Conference held recently, did not reflect or do anything to stem the growing unpopularity of the Labour Party in Hackney. As accusations of corruption and mismanagement abound, inevitably the worsening state of housing and the bad service ordinary people receive from the council has become identified with the Labour Party.

The conference did pass some good policy about improving housing services

also policy on funding a HIV helpline and improving consultation with the Jewish community. But by and large the conference was dominated by elections.

Here the weakness of the left — which is still fairly numerous in Hackney — was clearly shown. No-one bothered to oppose the right wing incumbents or even vote against them on the grounds that a split might lose Labour control of the council to the Liberals in the local elections next year. Wrong — it is incompetence and lack of accountability that will lose Labour control.

How will the left help to fight off this threat? What we could start by doing is arguing for our wards to campaign on the streets and estates, force the Labour group to actively fight the government on many issues such as community care and education.

This is what will build and secure working class support for Labour. The left needs to unite around key issues — accountability of councillors and MPs, recruiting more local people, particularly from the black communities, and fighting central government.

# March for Jobs!

By Ginny Hall

**S**Ocialists, activists, the unemployed and workers under threat are coming together on 17-20 June for the "North West People's March Against Unemployment and Pit Closures".

Contingents will start from Manchester, Lancaster, Merseyside and Burnley and will finally converge on Parkside pit, where 500 mineworkers are still refusing to take voluntary redundancy.

A railworker marching from Lancaster said: "This march demonstrates the demands of ordinary people for the basic right to work and to have a decent standard of living. We feel that only by uniting the various struggles going on at the moment, will we be able to stop

this government."

A teacher involved in the organisation of the march said: "We have railworkers, Timex representatives, teachers, nurses, students and housewives joining in. It's not just about the pits, it's not just about jobs, it's about rights".

Marchers and sponsors are still

needed.

For more information contact your local miners support group, Trades Council or student union.

The march is being organised by the North West Miners' Support Groups, Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures, North West TUC and Lancashire NUM.

## Aldgate Press attacked

An arson attack on the east London based print co-op Aldgate Press destroyed stocks of paper and severely damaged two printing presses and other equipment on the evening of Friday 4 June.

Although there is no direct evidence to link the fire to fascists, Aldgate Press is associated with the anarchist bookshop, Freedom Books, which was attacked by so-called "C18" Nazis two months ago.

## Unite against racism!

By Tom Robin

**T**HIS Saturday (12 June) around 10,000 people will be gathering to watch the Shamen and other big name bands who are supporting UNITY, an anti-racist carnival organised by Tyne and Wear Association.

The carnival is being held in the west end of the city which has recently been the scene of a racist murder. The carnival provides a vital opportunity for people to demonstrate their active opposition to harassment, abuse and attacks carried out by racists and fascists.



Carve-up in ex-Yugoslavia

"Not even at the standard of a refugee camp", said one UN official about the supposed Muslim "safe area" of Srebrenica, in Bosnia. But substandard refugee camps is all the Bosnian Muslims will get from the big powers. The US, Europe, and Russia have ended their quarrels, for now at least, by agreeing to let Serbia and Croatia carve up Bosnia and let the Muslims go to the wall.

## Why Yugoslavia Collapsed

75p plus 32 pp post and package from WL Publications, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

75p

An Alliance for Workers' Liberty pamphlet

## Justice for Trevor Henry

### INJUSTICE

**T**REVOR HENRY a South London man serving a ten year sentence in Maidstone prison, has launched a campaign to clear his name. Henry, 36, was jailed in January last year for conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm on a former girlfriend who was attacked in the street.

There was no evidence tying Henry to the assault but the prosecution said that he had the means and the motive to mastermind a conspiracy.

Trevor's MP, Joan Ruddock, is supporting his campaign for justice. "Trevor seems to have been convicted without what I would regard as substantial evidence", she says.

"There is no actual proof, to my mind, that he committed this crime. There was no forensic evidence brought against them and there were other people described to the police who could have been the culprits, who weren't actually investigated. So in all ways I find this case very troubling."

Trevor Henry says: "I am innocent. This is a nightmare. I tell you, it's the worst thing that can happen to someone; being in prison knowing you're innocent".

Justice for Trevor Henry Campaign c/o Lewisham Action on Policing, 192 Evelyn Street, London SE8 5DB. Tel: 081 692 1308.

Picket of Trevor's Appeal Court Hearing, 10.00 Monday 14 June on The Strand, London WC2.



**Just out!**  
The history of the Labour Party's youth movement £1.50 plus 32p p&p from WL Publications, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA



# Education, capitalist and socialist

**W**E LIVE IN A society which is geared to profit-making and divided into rigid social classes.

At the top, 3% of the population of this country own 85% of the wealth. A large middle class oils the wheels of capitalism, whilst the working class delivers the profits to the top.

In order for the capitalists to continue this kind of society they need an education system which reproduces these classes for the labour market. The market is the single greatest influence on the education system.

At the bottom are the workers who will feed the factories and offices and create the profits. All they need is the ability to read, write and perform simple arithmetic.

At the top are those who supposedly do the thinking. They need a high level of skills and training for command, and in Britain they have their own perfect mini-world for this — private education.

The present Government is ideologically committed to private education. Private schools are classed as charities and gifts to make them qualify as tax relief. The educated elite in these schools do not have to suffer over-crowded classrooms. They have extensive facilities and are not subject to the National Curriculum. When Conservative politicians talk about changing education, they do not mean private education.

The relationship of social classes is basically antagonistic, and consists above all in extracting surplus value from the direct producers for the minority ruling class. As human labour is infinitely flexible and vastly productive, the 'surplus product' can be continuously enlarged. In this way the capitalist comes increasingly to dominate the labour process, to remove it from the hands of the worker into his or her own.

A good example of this is the post-war boom which created great opportunities for British capitalists to make huge profits. Technology was constantly changing. Old skills were dying as new ones were created — and to create the new technicians and equip the workforce for fresh and ever changing tasks, the old failed and highly discriminatory state schooling had to be cast aside.

With so much emphasis on 'falling standards' and the countless educational reforms, why are working class children still 'failing' at school? If we look at state schools we can see how this happens.

1. Throughout this century,

state schools have been constantly underfunded. Whereas large classes do not exist in the private sector, they are a constant feature in state schools. From a teaching point of view this is where the problem begins. It is impossible to do educational justice to a class of thirty children. And Tory ideas about discipline and tests just make matters worse.

2. The schools themselves and the subjects taught often bear no relation to children's lives. To learn a language simply by repeating words and phrases or listening to tapes is not that useful unless it can be supplemented by some first hand experience of the language and its spoken environment. But working class children are often taught in environments which are alien to them.

In general they quickly lose faith in education and end up hating the system and having little or no self-confidence or faith in their own abilities.

3. Present government policies are making these problems worse. Committed right-wingers have come to dominate curriculum input and justify increasing intervention in every aspect of school life with the cry of falling standards. They hark back to a 'golden era' of education which only ever existed for a very small number of people.

The word 'standards' suggests that very clear criteria exist by

*"We live in a society divided into rigid social classes... In order to continue this kind of society the capitalists need an education system which reproduces these classes for the labour market."*

which school practices can be judged an assessed. No such criteria exist in reality. But the right have jumped on the idea of qualifications in order to judge whether or not a child has succeeded or failed.

It is also abundantly clear that the right has no intention of bringing in a classless society. Many more young people than ever before obtained GCSE passes last summer, but this good news was denounced by John Patten as a clear sign that exam syllabuses were less rigid than



"An education system which reproduces the classes for the labour market"

before. It could not possibly be that these young people had been working harder or that standards were actually improving. The system of testing introduced by the 1988 Act demands individual competitiveness rather than collective effort. If testing at all key stages goes ahead, then we will undoubtedly see a return to streaming. League tables of schools will see the reintroduction of selection, and class distinctions will be more rigid than ever before.

For socialists, it is not enough to analyse Tory policy and to identify its weakest links. One of the left's own weaknesses has been a reluctance to think in fundamental terms about the nature of 'socialist education'.

If schools are to serve a collective socialist society, the whole function of the education system must be overturned. We must look to a more 'polytechnical' education, where practical work is linked more closely with the

theory and principles which guide the practice. Education needs to be more pupil-centred, with children working more col-

*"The right has no intention of bringing in a classless society. More people than ever obtained GCSE passes last summer, but this news was denounced as a sign that exam syllabuses were less rigid than before."*

lectively on socially useful tasks.

Should children attend institutions we call schools throughout their early years? Should we allow them to combine work with

school at an early age? Should full-time education have an age limit?

We need to ask such questions and open up the whole debate around our own vision of education.

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

Karl Marx

Socialist Organiser

PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA  
Newsdesk: 071-639 7965

Latest date for reports: Monday

Editor: John O'Mahony

Sales Organiser: Jill Mountford

Published by: WL Publications Ltd,  
PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

Printed by Eastway Offset (TU),  
London E9

Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office

Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of Socialist Organiser and are in a personal capacity unless otherwise stated.



## The transformation of John Edmonds

WHAT CAN possibly have come over John

Edmonds? Just a year ago the GMB leader seemed a mild-mannered, bespectacled epitome of 'New Realism'. He was Neil Kinnock's closest co-thinker in the union bureaucracy, and when Neil Kinnock resigned it was Edmonds who master-minded the smooth succession of GMB member John Smith.

### INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

Edmonds was also considered a 'moderniser' within both the TUC and the Labour Party. He read *Marxism Today* and advocated One Member One Vote. In short, he was the kind of enlightened, forward-thinking union leader that today's modern Labour Party dreams about.

Now the dream has turned into a nightmare. Edmonds' speech to the GMB's conference, lambasting the Labour leadership's "lethargic" performance against the Tories, is the most damaging attack that Smith has so far suffered. The fact that it comes from an erstwhile ally makes it all the more effective.

In fact, Edmonds' Portsmouth speech is merely the culmination of a process that began almost as soon as Smith was installed as Labour leader. Edmonds supported the abolition of the union block vote at Labour conference and advocated a system whereby all union political levy-payers would be given a vote in local parliamentary selections and Labour leadership elections. He confidently expected Smith to embrace this proposal as the ideal compromise between the *status quo* and 'pure' OMOV, with no trade union input.

Edmonds was mortified when Smith dismissed his plan in favour of the idea of asking levy-payers to top-up their subscriptions to become "registered supporters" of the party, entitled to vote. According to some accounts, it was Edmonds' 'pique' at this rebuff that set him on his path of increasing hostility towards the Labour leadership.

There is also another, equally powerful, motivation for Edmonds' about-turn: the forthcoming merger between the GMB and the TGWU. Much has been made of the T&G's financial difficulties, but it is less well-known that the GMB is scarcely more solvent at the moment. Edmonds is determined that *nothing* should stand in the way of a merger that would be financially beneficial to both unions (allowing considerable administrative 'rationalisation' and economies of scale) as well as putting them ahead of the AEEU and UNISON in terms of political influence.

The only problem is that the T&G is firmly committed to collective union input into the Labour Party at every level. Edmonds toyed with the idea of pushing his version of OMOV (including levy-payers) against the T&G's position, but was soon made aware that Bill Morris and his deputy Jack Adams were prepared to call off the merger over this issue.

The end result of all this has been Edmonds putting himself at the head of the union opposition to OMOV. Privately, he still stands by his original proposal for votes for all union levy-payers: but that is something he will only raise again once the GMB/T&G merger is consummated.

For now, Edmonds is happy to direct his fire against Labour's most blatant 'modernisers' — Tony Blair and Gordon Brown — in the hope that Smith can be forced to climb down in favour of some unspecified "compromise" or further "consultation".

One other factor accounts for Edmonds' dramatic transformation: the unexpectedly vigorous and bitter reaction of rank-and-file trade unionists to moves to break the Labour Party link. Edmonds is shrewd enough to know that his own position depends upon both the support of his membership and the influence of his union within the Labour Party.

For now, that puts Edmonds on our side: but things could change very quickly.

# No compromise

By Liam Conway  
(continued from front page)

BUT PATTEN and the Tories have learned nothing from any of this. Patten is planning another crackpot scheme for the training of primary teachers.

He says that primary teacher trainees, who already spend well over 60% of their time in schools, need more 'on the job training' and fewer academic qualifications. Patten says virtually anyone can teach primary school kids, and they need not know anything about child development and child psychology.



The Tories won't give up SATs without a serious fight

*"Success over performance-related pay and opting out could depend on the outcome of the battle over tests".*

Maybe this new teacher training scheme is part of John Major's drive to get

back to basics. Major told the Tory Women's Conference that his vision of education could be summed up in a few words: 'standards', 'results', 'spelling', 'grammar', 'British history', 'Shakespeare', 'tests', 'marks'. My, what a dull boy he is! No wonder he didn't do very well at school!

Yet there is method in this seeming Tory stupidity. They won't give up on the Standards Assessment Tests (SATs) with-

out a serious fight. John Major told the Tory women that there would be no retreat on SATs. Instead the Tories aim for simpler tests, that can be easily administered by cheaper, untrained teachers.

Unfortunately, it looks like the bulk of the teaching unions are going along with it. With the exception of the NUT, most of them have concentrated on the workload issue, rather than the educational issue.

The NASUWT General Secretary, Nigel de Gruchy, has now sent a letter to all NASUWT school reps (marked 'private and confidential') telling them that the battle against the tests is over and the NUT's educational opposition is illegal posturing which threatens to "snatch defeat from the jaws of victory".

This attitude is in stark contrast to the views of most classroom teachers, who see the tests as fatal-

## Lecturers fight to defend Further Education

By a college lecturer

THE FURTHER Education lecturers' union NATFHE are in the midst of a battle with college managements throughout the country.

In April this year, the government took Further Education (FE) colleges out of Local Authority control and privatised them as independent corporations.

Colleges are now represented by the College Employers' Forum (CEF).

Their first act was to attempt to impose new contracts which would have: added 7 hours to the working week; cut holiday entitlement by 50%; and allowed managements to impose unlimited teaching timetables.

This is very much in line with the government's own agenda — a 25% increase in student numbers with no real increase in resources, which as we all know means larger classes and less

actual class contact time.

Originally, the CEF, under pressure from NATFHE, agreed to national negotiations but then made it clear that if new contracts were not agreed, and talks broke down, they would encourage colleges to impose them anyway.

In a national ballot lecturers voted 2:1 for strike action and 8:1 for other forms of action, to include withholding statistical data from management, refusing to mark registers, and refusing to work during the holidays.

A national strike on 20 May closed most colleges. In one FE college in Leeds only four NATFHE members "took the money" and scabbed on other members. In the North West and Merseyside, out of 24 colleges, 22 were described as having either 'virtually total' or vast majority support for the strike.

This turnout was achieved despite the fact that many NATFHE mem-

bers suffered harsh financial penalties. Some part-timers lost their entire income for the week.

The CEF have been demoralised and depressed by the firmness of our resolve. College principals in Leeds have sent out letters to teachers' home addresses. One principal presents "staff and management... as pawns in a conflict that is taking place between two fairly incompatible national bodies".

Another principal states he gained no satisfaction from stopping salary for "even one day" and now wants suggestions from his staff as to how "we could use the money saved in a supportive and creative way for the benefit of the college".

Other letters warn staff that if they are not willing to work normally (i.e. refusing to participate in the industrial action) they will not be required to work at all and will be paid no salary.

It is vital that we stand firm.



# with the Tory 'vision'!

ly damaging to children's education. If the NASUWT mentality prevails, it is the Tories — with their preferred reactionary pencil and paper tests — who will be snatching victory from the jaws of defeat.

The right-wing NUT leaders could be encouraged by the NASUWT position to do a deal with the Tories based on Ron Dearing's review of the tests. They are already

proposing a compromise that would keep the tests but reduce their significance in assessment weighting from the current 80% to 40%. This is totally unacceptable.

The Left must oppose this. It is now possible, and urgent, to defeat for good all nationally imposed tests, especially pencil and paper tests. Teachers are confident after defeating this year's tests. We must do all we

can to stop any dirty deals with the Tories.

Success over issues like performance-related pay and opting out could depend a great deal on the outcome of the battle over tests. The Left in the NUT could gain a lot of credibility by resisting any sell-out and building on the current mood of defiance in the classroom.

What better way to start the campaign for the forthcoming National Officer and National Executive election! The Left now has a real chance to replace those who were shoved into the SATs fight by real fighters. Every effort should go into making those elections a success.

## Victory in Wandsworth

By Mark Osborn

**T**HE TORY flagship council in Wandsworth, South West London, has been soundly defeated in the first round of the battle to stop scab teachers supervising the Tory tests in local schools.

On Monday 7 June parents and teachers demonstrated outside Ernest Bevin school, but no scabs dared to show their faces.

There was also a large protest organised outside the School Teachers Pro-

fessional Development Centre where it was originally proposed to train the scabs.

There was BBC and press coverage.

The council originally planned that SATs would take place in all of Wandsworth's schools, but it is unlikely any tests took place on Monday.

The next round in the struggle will take place on Friday 11 June when the next tests are due to take place. A protest demonstration is planned at Chestnut Grove School in Balham, before school

starts.

This action highlights the necessity of continuing the unity of teachers, across the different unions, to force the government to withdraw these tests. The tests are useless and provide an opportunity to create school league tables.

The teachers and teaching unions must be prepared to continue the battle into next year. The SATs must go!

[Thanks to Christine Blower for information in this article.]

## After the tests, fight the cuts!

By Liam Conway

**A** VICTORY ON the tests would be a great boost for teachers, but the biggest threat to education and the whole public sector comes from job cuts.

Government cuts are threatening over 90,000 local government jobs within the next year. Privatisation threatens many more in British Rail and the Post Office as well as local government. Needless to say, conditions for those remaining will become much worse.

A Nottinghamshire Division survey into conditions of service confirms all our worst fears regarding the intentions of the current government. Class sizes are rising and workload is becoming intolerable.

Yet we face the loss of another 110 teaching jobs from the Nottinghamshire County Council workforce, and the following two years look likely to see many more as the local authority is forced to comply with ever tighter government regulations.

One would think that the country could not afford a decent education service. The reverse is true. There is plenty of wealth in the country. The record numbers of millionaires and billionaires should be made to pay for the Tory crisis, not the likes of the Sheffield local government workers who, thanks to their union leaders and the Labour Council, recently accepted a 3.5% pay cut across the board.

Will that stop the Tories from looking for more cuts, from raising the stakes? No,

it will encourage them to finish us off!

Local government workers are the big Tory targets of the 1990s. This is not accidental. As well as being workers who provide 'expensive' services, local government workers now represent the most heavily trade unionised sector of the economy. Potentially we are a very powerful adversary to the Tory government.

The government knows this, hence local government reform, new trade union laws and cuts — all designed to smash up local government trade unions and the services they provide. Such measures show the Tories as they really are: ruthless predators, fighting in the interests of the wealthy classes.

What a pity we are not led by people with a parallel determination. The NUT leaders are like poodles who do tricks to the tune of the Tories. Instead of fighting alongside the miners and others to defend jobs, our leaders make up the law as they go along in order to avoid a fight.

National action should be based on the defense of jobs against government financial restrictions — the root and only cause of the current massive wave of job losses.

National action is especially vital because the local strategy for defeating job cuts has been a disaster. At best, where local leaders have been determined to resist, it has staved off compulsory redundancy but not job cuts.

We need a national response to fight job cuts and defend class size.

## German left fights anti-Turkish racism



**A member of the VSP (United Socialist Party) reports from Cologne**

**O**N 29 MAY, FIVE TURKISH people were killed in a Nazi firebomb attack in Solingen, a steel town near Cologne.

There has been an escalation of fascist violence since then. Each day there are two or three or four attacks.

There are also many demonstrations against these attacks, but involving relatively few people. We estimate that only 150,000 people in total have taken part in the various anti-fascist mobilisations.

The socialist left have organised a number of demonstrations, including a protest in Solingen last Saturday, 5 June. The problem on this march was that it was just the left, with very few members of the local population.

The attention of the left has also fallen on the

very small numbers of anti-Turkish fascists in Germany rather forgetting that the real issue is German racism.

On 26 May the parliament restricted the rights of asylum seekers. The following weekend there were a series of attacks — not on asylum seekers, but on immigrants.

The far right are saying that they have won the battle over asylum rights and are now turning their attention towards immigrants.

There are over six million immigrant workers here, most of whom are long-time residents but are denied citizenship. The left must fight hard for these people's rights.

Winfried Wolf, a member of the VSP, will be speaking on the German neo-Nazi threat on Saturday 3 July at Workers' Liberty '93.

(See page 11 for details)



## Green fingers in the till

### GRAFFITI

**S**URELY ALL THIS privatisation has gone quite far enough. Chunks of heavy industry and public utilities like gas, water, and electricity are one thing, but this is too much. BBC radio has decided to privatise Gardener's Question Time, putting it out to competitive tender.

What results can we expect from the introduction of market mechanisms into the world of gardening? Bigger, better customer-friendly marrows and new consumer responsive designs for alpine rockeries? Or just a good load of manure for the roses?

**I**T'S GOOD TO SEE at least one trigger-happy squad die has been jailed for gunning down unarmed people in Northern Ireland. Privates Lee Clegg and Barry Aindow were jailed for life and seven years respectively for firing 36 shots at a Vauxhall Astra that failed to stop at a road block. The car had been stolen by young joyriders; two were killed in the hail of fire.

Before you get carried away by a belief that there is some justice after all, bear in mind that a further ten members of the soldiers' regiment were acquitted of attempting to cover up the shooting. This is only the second time that a British soldier has been found guilty of murder while serving in Northern Ireland, despite twenty prosecutions since 1969.

The "life" sentence is not as stiff as you might think. The only previous murder conviction was for the shooting of Thomas Reilly, the pop group Bananarama's road manager. The then Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, released the convicted murderer on life licence after just two years. But where could a convicted murderer find a job? Back in the army, naturally.

**K**ENNETH CLARKE has responded well to being promoted to one of the top government jobs. At last Wednesday's Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development summit you could have found every member state's top finance minister. Except Britain's. The government sent junior Economic Secretary Anthony Nelson.

Clarke obviously understands the importance of delegating and



concentrating on the top priorities. So last Wednesday you'd have found him at the Derby as guests of Rothschilds, the bankers.

**T**HE GREATER Manchester Police have found themselves a nice little earner. When Peter Topping, a former detective who led the investigation into the Moors murders, published a book in 1989, the police authority were onto it like a flash. This was clearly a breach of confidentiality.

So what did the authority do? Seek action to ensure the book would not be distributed and sold? No, much more subtly the authority allowed the book to be sold for four years and demanded all the profits. They have promised to spend the money on "policing initiatives that will benefit the public", which will be something of a first for Manchester Police.

The wider issues could prove an importance source of revenue for the police. Anyone wanting to make a film of the Birmingham 6, for example, should have to pay royalties and give credit for "original story" to the coppers who wrote the confessions.

**I**F YOU THOUGHT that Red Pepper was something you chopped up and put in your chilli con carne, you had better stay away from your local left-wing bookshop. Red Pepper will be the new organ of the Socialist Movement. Although cooking it with mince, tomatoes, onions etc. will create a rather unpleasant and inedible dish, eating it is vastly preferable to reading it.

This is not the Socialist Movement's first attempt at publishing. Those of you with long memories and a penchant for collecting large numbers of boring old papers may remember *socialist*, published "fortnightly" between 1990 and 1992. This was followed by *Red, Green and Radical*, one issue, 1992. *Red, Green and Dull* created a row at the Socialist Movement AGM for not having the word "Socialist" in its title. Now — that enough people have proved willing to waste enough money on funding it — we will have *Red Pepper*.

*Red Pepper* is linked to the "Socialist Network". But what is that? Red Pepper explains:

"Is Network an overused word?... computer network, rail network, commercial network, environmental network, Greenham network... now the Socialist Network.

"What does it mean? We think a network is an organisation of autonomous participants; equality is guaranteed because each participant has the choice of opting in or out".

Anyone still not quite clear can ring the Socialist Movement freephone on 0800 581611.

## GRAFFITI

# Britain's biased press: ordinary man lashes out

### PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

**D**EAR MR MacKenzie, I am just an ordinary, typical member of the public but I have become not inconsiderably displeased with your newspaper lately. In my judgement, you have allowed your once impeccable reputation for fair play to become tarnished by wholly unwarranted attacks upon the Prime Minister — a man universally acknowledged to be the greatest leader this country has known since Neville Chamberlain.

I know that you are in league with the so-called Euro-sceptics who have nothing better to do than stir up trouble over the Maastricht Bill, totally ignoring Mr Major's triumphant defence of every Englishman's right to work more than 48 hours per week, etc. Oh yes.

The last straw was your

wholly untrue suggestion that the Prime Minister is tired and depressed and considering resignation if things don't improve. Nothing could be further from the truth, I should imagine. As the Prime Minister made abundantly clear in his brilliantly witty speech last week, he is only depressed because England are doing badly at football and he can't spare the time to go to Old Trafford. He is fit and well. He is here and he is staying. Incidentally, I noticed that your paper scarcely mentioned this considerably important speech even though I imagine the Prime Minister's press office must have briefed you in advance about how important and full of agendas and vision and things it was going to be. Oh, no, you prefer to carp and line up with people like Mrs Thatcher and Mr Tebbit.

If the Prime Minister is indeed "sick" and "tired" I should imagine he is "sick" and "tired" of press reports in which malice masquerades as fact, gossip pretends to be informed opinion and Britain's brilliant economic recovery is constantly derided. In my judgement, there is clearly a press conspiracy against Mr Major. And I've a pretty good idea who's behind it, I can tell you. Oh

yes.

What makes me not inconsiderably angry, Mr MacKenzie, is that your newspaper has for months been demanding the sacking of Mr Norman Lamont (who, it must be admitted, does bear most of the responsibility for the government's recent temporary

*"I can scarcely believe I am reading the publication whose objective coverage of the general election made it a by-word for journalistic integrity."*

problems, even though his economic policies were entirely correct) and yet when the Prime Minister did just that, he still got no thanks. Oh no, you merely took the opportunity to step up your entirely malicious and destructive attacks.

What makes matters so very considerably galling is that your newspaper, together with a few others like the *Mail*, *Express*, *Telegraph*, etc., are supposed to

be on our side. One expects these sort of attacks from the socialist-dominated media like the BBC, ITV, *Daily Mirror*, etc. But with so-called "friends" like your newspaper and the rest of the so-called "Tory press", Mr Major plainly has good reason to feel a strong sense of bitterness, betrayal, annoyance and other such powerful emotions.

When I read the dishonest, negative and wholly unjustified attacks upon Mr Major that your newspaper prints day in and day out, I can scarcely believe that I am reading the same publication whose even-handed and entirely fair and objective coverage of the last general election (won single-handedly by Mr Major and his brilliant "Soap-box" idea) made it a by-word for journalistic integrity.

But I am not depressed. Oh no. I am here and I am staying. The unmistakable signs of recovery are all in place. We shall give Lord Sutch a drubbing at Christchurch. You will soon have to change your tune — all of you, including that smarmy Mr Neil and that patronising Mr Hastings. Oh yes.

Yours disgustedly,  
James Sargeant,  
Member of the Public,  
Great Stukeley.

# Change attitudes to save women's lives

### WOMEN'S EYE



By Jean Lane

**T**HE WORLD Health Organisation [WHO] gives 13 million as its latest estimate for people who have been infected with the HIV virus since 1983 — of whom 2.5 million have gone on to develop symptoms of AIDS — a 20% increase on last year's number. Most of the cases (nearly 9 million) are in southern Africa but there has been an alarming increase in HIV infection in Latin America and South-East Asia.

As yet the number of cases in Europe is much smaller, but with it standing at over 500,000 and rising the complacency of governments who no longer prioritise the promotion of safer sex using condoms or warn drug addicts not to share needles is inexcusable.

The old myth put about by the Tory tabloids and those who prefer 'Victorian values' (and would rather not even hear mention of condoms) that heterosexuals are not under threat has been shown to be false in cities in Scotland where about a third of new cases are of infection through heterosexual intercourse. Of course, it has long been known from Haiti and southern Africa that the HIV virus doesn't distinguish between people according to their sexual orientation.

According to the WHO 5 out of every 11 people recently infected with HIV are women. The position of women in society is placing them increasingly at risk: the lack of social and economic power of many women to say 'no' to unprotected

intercourse puts them in danger of catching the HIV virus.

Women who work in the sex industry are criminalised in many countries. That makes it harder to work among them teaching the importance of safer sex, and harder for governments to justify providing public money for free condoms which could help prevent the spread of infection. We should campaign for the decriminalisation of prostitution.

For huge numbers of women, saying no to a man they want to have sex with who won't wear condoms is impossible. Their confidence needs to be built through campaigns around safer sex but in every other sphere of life as well.

Huge numbers of women are economically dependent on men. Then it is even harder for them to insist on their right to enjoy sex which doesn't endanger health — either hers or his!

Women who are raped now have to fear HIV infection as well as the physical and psychological pain of having been

assaulted.

Social discrimination against women is part of the conditions allowing the AIDS epidemic to continue, together with the conditions of deprivation that lead to drug abuse, poor hygiene and lack of understanding about safer sex.

The struggle for equal rights for women is also a vital part of the fight against AIDS. We should campaign for proper health care for everyone, not just for the rich few.

The WHO predicts that condom distribution and safer sex education could halve the number of people who will become infected, for a cost of £1.6 billion — barely enough to buy one can of coke for everyone in the world. But the present regimes prefer to allocate resources to hyper luxury for the powerful few, and never have problems finding money for military spending and wars that cost far more.

For health policies that would save lives, we are given only the left-over crumbs. All that has to change.



*Labour must fight!*

# Why the Tories are in trouble

By Colin Foster

**T**HE TORIES ARE in a mess. And they will not get out of the mess easily — unless they are helped by the wretched and cowardly leaders of the labour movement.

For a couple of years in the late 1980s - the so-called "Lawson boom" - Tories started shouting about the "economic miracle" brought by Thatcherism. In fact British industry has been devastated by the last 14 years of Tory rule.

The sharp slump in 1979-82 destroyed about a quarter of all Britain's manufacturing industry. As a result, many lines of industrial production *no longer exist* in Britain, and since 1983 Britain has imported more manufactured goods than it has exported.

Japanese car and television factories, and other foreign investment, have been some counterweight to the de-industrialisation. Thatcher's economic strategy — if there was any coherent strategy at all - was to strip down the wage costs and social costs of capitalist production in Britain so that this island could become a cheap-labour production site for multinational industry, conveniently placed just off the coast of Europe.

The "social costs" have been stripped down — business taxes, labour laws, trade union rights. Britain now has laxer laws on business, and stricter curbs on trade unions, than, probably, any other country in Europe. Wages have not been limited quite so successfully, but are still lower here than in other major capitalist countries.

More Japanese and American capitalist investment has come to Britain than to anywhere else in Europe. Yet the English language is probably more important in attracting those capitalists than anything else.



John Smith: why won't Labour fight? photo Mark Salmon

Multinational investors do not just go where wages are lowest. They want an educated and skilled workforce, yielding high productivity; good communications; good access to suppliers; and good access to markets. And Britain's infrastructure of transport, education, training, and social welfare is collapsing.

According to figures recently calculated by the TUC, UK manufacturing productivity is still only 57% of Germany's or America's, 67% of Japan's, and 72% of France's. So, even though British wages are lower, wage costs *per unit of output* are 41% higher than in Germany and 22% higher than in France.

Industrial investment in Britain remains very low, and Britain's industry remains backward and stagnant compared with other

*The decisive problem for the Tory Government is the growing resistance of the working class. Any industrial upturn will speed that revival, and this at a time when the Tories are discredited politically.*

advanced capitalist countries. More investment goes out of Britain than comes in.

Against this background, the Tories are grappling with the immediate problem of a huge budget deficit. The Government may be £50 billion overspent this year, when as recently as 1989-90 it was spending £8 billion *less* than it received.

The immediate cause of this deficit is the slump: unemployed people pay less in taxes, and draw money from public funds through dole and other welfare payments. But even after an economic revival - on any foreseeable scale - there would still be a huge overspend.

In 1984-5 the Government raked in £12 billion in North Sea Oil taxes. That bonus was used, not for long-term investment, but to cut taxes for the rich. Now the oil is drying up, and in 1992-3 North Sea Oil taxes will bring only £1 billion. The tax cuts remain.

The boost to Government finances from selling off public assets is still fairly strong - the Tories expect £8 billion in 1992-3 from privatisation proceeds - but

it is bound to get smaller. The Government is running out of assets to privatise. Their current drive to privatise rail is a mess, seen as such even by many Tories.

The Government's budget squeeze leaves it only two options: to cut into the wealth of the rich, or to slash even deeper at social welfare provision. Being Tories, they will slash at welfare.

They will not get away with it as easily as before. They can no longer make people believe that welfare cuts are the necessary cost of creating a meaner, leaner economy. The millions who were outraged at the pit closure programme last October have not forgotten or forgiven.

John Major was elected as Tory leader to replace Margaret Thatcher at the end of 1991 not for any positive merits, but because he was Mr Not-Thatcher And Not-Heseltine. He was bland enough to be an icon for two contrary political messages: to the electorate, that Thatcherism would be replaced by some sort of "caring" Toryism, and, to the Tory hierarchy, that the essentials of Thatcherism would continue. In fact he has been able to carry through neither message competently.

**B**eyond the problem of their overspending, the Tories face three bigger problems.

First: Europe. The Tory policy of trying to develop Britain's economy as a low-wage, low-social-overheads offshore production site is at odds with the general policy of European capitalist classes. Those Euro-capitalists, however anti-union they be, want to get into the top notch of world capitalist competition, with the best-trained workers and the most advanced technology.

However, Britain's capitalists - the industrialists, and even more so the bankers and financiers - want to be *on the inside* of any integrated capitalist Europe. As big a factor as the poll tax in Thatcher's downfall was her European policy, disliked by the great majority of Britain's capitalists.

That is why Britain went into the Exchange Rate Mechanism. Unfortunately, British capitalism was in no fit state to keep its currency on level pegging with the German mark, and so, last September, the pound was pulled out of the ERM after something like £15 billion had been wasted on trying to keep it in.

The Government has been given a little leeway by the general disarray of the ERM, which makes British capitalists think that in the near future there will be no inte-



John Major: in deep trouble

grated capitalist Europe as regards money, and nothing to be "on the inside" of. It has also been given some room for manoeuvre by the fact that economic depression has been so deep that the increased import prices due to devaluation have not yet had a big impact on overall inflation.

But all that leeway is limited. France, Germany, and the Netherlands will want to move to some sort of Euro-money some time soon - they will certainly not hold off to save embarrassment for the British Government.

Before too long, the Tories have to decide whether they want Britain in or out of a more integrated capitalist Europe, and on the basis of that decision they have to make rapid and hard choices about whether to try to get the pound back into alignment with the mark and the franc. They are split over this — it is probably the biggest political split in the Tory Party since the early years of this century — and the choices cannot be fudged for long.

Even if they can fix up the Government budget deficit, control their splits over Europe, and then manage some economic revival, the Tories will face problems. The collapse of manufacturing exports, and the decline of North

Sea Oil, means that British capitalism has a chronic tendency to import more than it exports.

In 1989 Britain's "balance of payments" was £22 billion in the red. The problem has slipped from the headlines only because of the economic depression, which reduces imports. Any revival will increase imports.

Normally, and almost automatically, a "balance of payments" problem leads to the pound losing value against other currencies. It has lost value against the German mark steadily since the early 1950s, going down from 11 marks then to less than 2.5 now. A big "balance of payments" deficit would make pegging the pound to the mark, or keeping inflation down, almost impossible. Any economic success, in the way of industrial revival, will make the Tory Government's other economic problems more acute.

The third, and decisive, problem for the Tory Government is the growing resistance of the working class. The trade union movement is reviving, slowly and unevenly. Any industrial upturn will speed that revival, and this at a time when the Tories are discredited politically.

Now is the time for Labour to fight!



# How capitalism brought

Mark Osborn examines the roots of racism

**M**odern anti-black British racism has relatively recent roots, in the history of slavery and colonialism.

Racism did not start as a divide-and-rule trick imposed by the ruling class. The racist practice of slavery and colonialism came first; racist ideas came later.

When the slave trade started in the 16th century, and British capitalists took slaves, and sold them like cattle, bullied them and beat them, then soon, they began thinking of them as sub-human.

That is the natural way of things for slave owners. Colonialism produced similar results. When Britain conquered territories and peoples, and assumed the right to rule and make decisions for them, then British people began to believe those peoples were inferior.

So the roots of modern racism can be traced back to the planter class of slave owners. Although fear and suspicion of the stranger and the outsider had existed before, it had not been fear on the basis of skin colour.

In the ancient world there were many societies based on slavery. But there was no idea comparable to "race".

The ancient Egyptians looked down on the black peoples to their south, but they were just as scornful of other, lighter-skinned, neighbours. Egyptian artists caricatured the captives taken in war - but the peculiar dress of the Libyans or Hebrews was held up for ridicule as much as the features of the black southerners.

In Greek society the slaves were frequently of the same colour as their owners. There were many white slaves from the north and the east.

In Rome any citizen might become a slave and any slave a citizen. Slaves came from every province and every skin colour - so did the Emperors, of whom some were black.

There is nothing 'natural' about anti-black racism in the psychological-biological make-up of whites. This can be seen today by watching the way young children of different skin colours play together quite happily.

Racism was a product of the beginnings of capitalism. As Karl Marx summed it up: "the discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aborigi-



Winston Churchill



Colonialism in Africa was based on forced labour - so that an African worker in the Congo (above) could be punished for failing to produce enough rubber. The drive for profit produced this exploitation, racism reflected and boosted it.

nal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of black skins... The treasures captured outside Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement and murder flowed back to the mother-country and were turned into capital". Pre-feudal slavery was wedded to the most modern merchant capitalism in a drive which produced the capital for the future industrial revolutions.

Tens of millions of African slaves were taken across the Atlantic. The population of Africa remained stagnant in the period 1650 to 1850, while that of Europe nearly doubled.

The slaves were part of the 'triangular trade'. Boats took slaves to the plantations, brought sugar back to Europe, and then took manufactured goods to Africa.

In the beginning there were Indian slaves and white indentured labourers too as well as Africans. Black slaves were taken from Africa as a simple commercial decision: it was cheaper than going elsewhere. The reasons were economic, not racist.

Racist ideas squared an ideological circle for the capitalists. Their anti-feudal revolutions took place under the banner of liberty. Yet there was no liberty for the slaves.

Paradoxically, it was *because* capitalism had developed the ideas of universal human rights and equality - the same ideas that would later inspire the revolts of the colonial and enslaved peoples - that it also developed the ideologies of racism. Previous societies had had slavery and conquest - but their rulers had seen little need for general theories of racial superiority to justify the slavery and conquest.

The poor had no rights, whatever their skin colour and whatever their ethnic origin. There was no need for special theo-

ries to cancel the human rights of a special category of poor people.

Under the pressure of economic compulsion - the economic need for slavery - writers and thinkers developed the gut reactions of the planters into fleshed-out theories.

Those theories are as recent as the eighteenth century. Black people were called sub-human, allowing the bourgeoisie to have their 'liberty' and their slaves too.

Pseudo-science said black peoples were inferior - because of head shape, or some other rubbish.

Some of the ideas that were developed were perversions of real facts. Take the racist view that black people are "lazy".

In fact the slaves were not lazy, they were just *rebellious*.

In modern capitalist society the basic form of revolt is the workers' strike; the basic form of revolt in Stalinist society, where unions were forbidden, was absenteeism and perhaps throwing a spanner into the nearest machine. The equivalent on the plantation was: I am damned if I am going to work hard.

The slaves were not "lazy", they were fighting back! But, perversely, their struggle was turned back on them.

**C**olonialism and the slave trade also wrecked societies and civilisations. Much of the African past was destroyed.

Colonial intervention in India reduced a fabulous treasure-house, the world's leading industrial nation, to backward. Europe reduced Africa and India to poverty; and then built a whole racist ideology that the peoples of Africa and Asia were *naturally* "backward". In Ireland the British state brutalised the people and then blamed them for their own condition. They were described as "unstable, childish, violent, lazy, feckless, feminine and primitive".



The first big clampdown on black immigrants - Kenyan Asians - who were British citizens

But it is not true that only white men made slaves. The black Iraqis on your television screen during the Gulf war were brought there by Arab slave traders. The Arab trade in African slaves started earlier and finished later than the European trade, and probably enslaved more people. The history is not a simple black-versus-white one; in fact the African trade depended on the co-operation of many African chiefs who benefited from it.

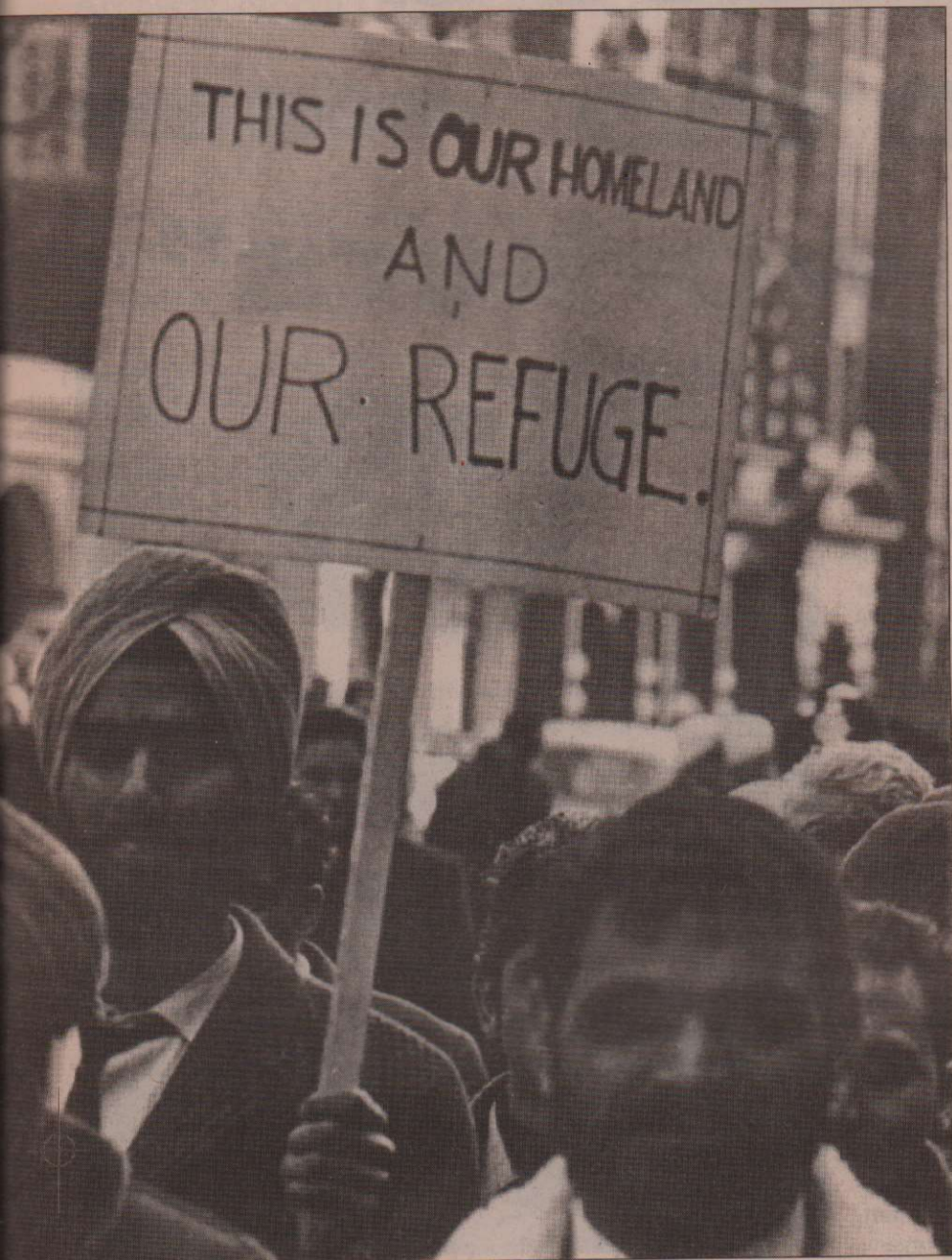
At the same time, there was opposition to slavery, in the name of human equality from white radicals. In Britain, for instance, during the American Civil War, the workers were solid for the Union despite their government siding with the slave-owning South and despite the unemployment caused by the Northern blockade of the South and the consequent lack of cotton for the Lancashire mills.

**I**n the heyday of the British Empire racism and nationalism penetrated every part of intellectual life.

They had the effect of pinning the workers to the bosses in the mistaken belief that they had more in common with Queen Victoria than with the Indian poor. Frederick Engels wrote to Karl Kautsky in 1882: "You ask what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general: the same as the bourgeois think. There is no workers' party here, you see, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the



# ght racism



tion came in 1968, when a Labour Government, shamefully, changed the law so that s — could not come to Britain when they were persecuted in Kenya.

workers gaily share the feast of England's monopoly of the world market and the colonies".

Many labour movement leaders campaigned to restrict the entry of Jews fleeing Eastern European pogroms at the end of the last century. The first modern immigration act was passed against the Jews — the Aliens Act of 1905.

Immigration laws have been one of the major mechanisms of state racism over the last 30 years. After the Second World War, capitalism expanded, and the British bosses toured Africa, the Caribbean and India looking for workers to work in British industry.

As the boom slowed the racist right mobilised. It was led by Winston Churchill the supposedly great leader of British democracy in World War 2 and grandfather of the current racist bigot. In 1955 Churchill proposed "Keep Britain White" as a Tory election slogan. The Metropolitan Police described "coloured people" as "work-shy and content to live on National Assistance and immoral earnings."

Black workers found 'colour bars' in clubs and housing. Black community organisations began life as self-help groups in response to this racism.

Racist attacks became more common, and in 1958 there was a riot led by organised racists in Notting Hill, west London. The Immigration Act of April 1962 began the current process of formal racism - laws which discriminate against black people. Immigration Acts of 1968 and 1971 completed the process, barring

almost all immigrants from Africa, the Caribbean and India except those joining close family here.

In addition to legislation there have been assaults from the right: "If you want a nigger neighbour, vote Labour" was a Tory by-election slogan in 1964. Thatcher said that "this country might be swamped by people from a different culture" before her election victory in 1979, taking some of the political ground from under the fascist National Front who, during the 1970s organised some thousands of white British people.

On the street the police have posed a constant threat to black people. A Policy Studies Institute report from 1983 shows that in the Metropolitan Police racism is "expected, accepted and even fashionable". Racist stereotypes have moved on to target black youth as drug dealers and criminals. Take the Evening Standard's coverage of last week's Operation Bumblebee police "crackdown on crime". The Standard's reporter went with police on a raid: the young woman "claimed she was 18" and her partner's wall was "covered in Bob Marley posters". Got the message?

**B**ut the story of racism is also the story of struggle and resistance. In the last 30 years the battle to confront all forms of racism has broadened out.

The fight against racism must be bound up with the struggle to replace capitalism with democratic, working-class socialism. As Malcolm X said: you can't have capitalism without racism.

# A short history of radiation

**N**INETY EIGHT years ago, one of the most far-reaching discoveries of our age was made, and by accident too. The Austrian physicist Wilhelm Roentgen was passing an electric current through a vacuum tube when he noticed a glow from a screen coated with a fluorescent chemical several feet away. Thus does noted science journalist Catherine Caufield open her book *Multiple Exposures\**, which covers nearly a century of radiation and radioactivity.

LES HEARN'S  
**SCIENCE COLUMN**

Roentgen soon discovered that the glow was caused by a new type of ray which could pass through paper, copper, flesh etc, but which was unable to pass so easily through lead, glass or bone. The rays, soon dubbed "X-rays", could affect photographic film and Roentgen started taking "photographs", one of the first being of his wife's hand, complete with wedding ring. Only the bones and the ring were visible.

The new rays caused an enormous enthusiasm in the scientific and non-scientific worlds alike. A major theme in Caufield's book is that of the uptake of new discoveries without adequate safeguards. Thousands of X-ray pictures of living creatures and of human hands, feet, chests etc were displayed to audiences at exhibitions in America by Thomas Edison (who invented a portable fluoroscope) and many others.

The medical possibilities of X-rays were soon spotted and pictures were taken to diagnose bone problems or to locate bullets. Patients with cancers, tuberculosis or inflammations were also treated with the rays, sometimes successfully, sometimes with disastrous consequences. One little girl with a hairy mole on her back suffered from an appalling inflammation of the skin on her back after two hours of X-rays daily for 16 days. The wound took a very long time to heal.

One of Edison's assistants, Clarence Dally, lost his hair and suffered severe ulcers on his hands as a result of his work on an X-ray powered light bulb. These refused to heal, despite operations to graft skin from his legs onto his hands. Eight years later, he was to be the first to die from X-ray damage, his burns having developed into cancer. Only a year after the discovery of X-rays, 23 cases of severe injury were known but still many enthusiasts refused to believe that X-rays were to blame. In a heroic self-experiment, an American physicist, Elihu Thompson, exposed the end of his little finger to X-rays for half an hour (this being the part of his body he felt he could best do without!) There was no immediate effect but a week later it was swollen and painful. Several weeks later, much of the skin was clearly dead as was some of the flesh.

**P**rotective measures began to be introduced, such as lead shields, and by 1901 only one X-ray injury was reported. However, long term effects were just beginning to appear in the form of cancers. Clarence Dally underwent a series of partial amputations of his hands and arms after suffering six years of increasing pain, before dying at the age of 39. In 1908, the American Roentgen Ray Society heard of 350 such "martyrs to science", many having suffered pain "almost unequalled by any other disease".

Some scientists tried to tackle the problem by controlling and reducing the amount of X-rays produced by machines. Early radiation limits exposed operators to amounts of X-rays hundreds of times greater than today but still less than that experienced without controls. But despite the evidence of damage to others, many radiologists assumed "it couldn't happen to them". X-rays are invisible, of course, and are not immediate in their action (like HIV?).

The First World War brought a great expansion in use of X-rays but a decline in safety measures. Afterwards there was an explosion in the use of X-rays for medical problems, ranging from birthmarks and acne to syphilis. A treatment for depression in women was to irradiate the ovaries! X-rays were also enlisted in the beauty industry to remove unwanted hair. In one case, a woman had 19 treatments over two months. She developed redness and itching of the skin, leading to painful ulceration on the hands, forearms, legs and knees. She ended up bedridden.

In the 1920s, a second wave of deaths among the pioneer radiologists occurred and scientists became aware of the ability of X-rays to cause cancers and leukaemias perhaps decades after the initial overexposure. It was not until 1934 that effective limits on X-ray exposure were set and in 1936 a monument to 169 "martyrs of radiation" was erected in Hamburg. It had to be expanded to accommodate hundreds more names, not including those of patients, many during the First World War, or of the victims of the beauticians or other quacks.

Caufield deals next with the discovery of radioactivity, and I will continue my review of her fascinating and well-written book next week.

\* Penguin £5.99

Correction: in my article in the last issue of SO, the extra risk of cancer to atom plant workers from radiation exposure below the "safe" limit was 3% not 8%. This was thought to have resulted in fifty, not forty, extra cancer deaths out of the 1700 recorded.



# Poland in transition to private-profit economics

## “We need to base a movement on the needs of the workers”

**Milka Tyszkiewicz, a Polish socialist, reports from Wrocław**

**W**E ARE IN THE middle of a big psychological shift, particularly amongst unemployed workers, who are realising that their economic position has got worse, and probably permanently. This means that some very dangerous far-right forces and opinions are beginning to grow.

The situation is perhaps not as bad as in Germany, but the tendency is clearly visible. Some of the worst politicians are trying to use this mood to build their own base in the run up to the elections.

I think that Polish society is moving towards more undemocratic forms of rule. The questions are: how quickly will things move? How far will the right go?

From the left's point of view the elections coming in September are a positive chance to speak up and to organise.

Thankfully the far right — “proto-fascist” is too strong — is not well prepared for the elections. These people are characterised by: “anti-imperialism”, pro-capitalism, fundamentalist Catholicism and racism.

Their racism is directed against foreigners in general but particularly against Germans and Jews.

Their organisations are weak, but last weekend they demonstrated in Warsaw with openly anti-semitic

slogans. They demanded that president Lech Walesa should resign and denounced him as a Jew.

In opposition to these demonstrators Walesa appears daily on television to state his support for democracy and opposition to racism. There's some change here, because Walesa himself has been accused of anti-semitism in the past.

There is another dangerous movement taking place as Walesa attempts to form a political party based in the working class via the Solidarity Network. It is very populist, but at the same time “pro-reform” ie pro-market. His strong presidential rule is being backed by big capital. Walesa is right in the middle between big capital and the workers.

Fortunately the new elections seem set to limit this threat, particularly as Walesa has made a deal with the present government. He says he will support the government in these elections if they will back his next presidential campaign.

I think that the left will perhaps take more parliamentary seats than it currently has.

The vote of the post-Stalinist Social Democrats looks set to rise significantly. Perhaps they will stabilise the situation on the left. Not only former Stalinists vote for this party. They also get support from the intelligentsia, such as teachers.

The Democratic Union, as a ruling party, has travelled a long way to the right.

The post-Solidarity left is very

small. One group, the Union of Labour, led by Karel Modzelewski, is unfortunately much more to the right than the post-Stalinist party.

On these grounds I prefer the post-Stalinist Social Democrats.

The mood among workers is a type of syndicalism; they do not think of themselves as being on the left. The recent strike threats were organised by Solidarity Network and the demands were political rather than trade union. Their demand was for the resignation of the government.

This is not really good — such a strike could be influenced by any sort of political force, including the far right. We need to base a movement on ‘trade union’ demands and the needs of the workers.

In fact there were not really big strikes, just the beginnings of strikes. The main leader was a supporter of Walesa in the Warsaw region. The biggest factories in the heavy industry sector, health workers and teachers were all involved. The teachers' action was particularly spectacular and well organised. This strike was organised by both the Solidarity and post-Stalinist unions.

People's consciousness is developing to the extent that they can see that government policy affects them directly. But the left is conservative. The Social Democrats have learnt from Western social democracy.

The post-Solidarity left is right wing.



Fortunately, Walesa's attempt to form a new party tying the Solidarity union to big capital looks like failing

There is no real mass force to influence the working class in a situation where the workers want rapid change.

My organisation, the Socialist Political Centre, has helped to start a national anti-fascist organi-

sation. Their first action was in Wrocław on 9 November 1992, the anniversary of Kristallnacht. There was series of demonstrations on 1 May this year. A national anti-fascist newspaper is being produced next week.

## Trade unionists seek alternatives to privatisation

Kristyna is the president of the factory commission of an electricity supplier in Wrocław; Wieslaw is an engineer on the national committee of trade union Solidarnosc's agricultural branch; and Wojtek is also an engineer at the same plant as Wieslaw, a member of the factory council and the translator for them all. The following is an edited transcript of a discussion between them and Paul Hampton when they visited Hull recently.



Lech Walesa

Also present was Dave Green, an AEEU member from Northampton, who had helped arrange the speaking tour.

The three trade unionists are all unpaid, lay officials in trade union Solidarnosc.

*What was the purpose of your visit?*

Our main purpose was to meet with British trade unionists and talk about privatisation. The model for privatisation in Poland is the Thatcher model, and we hope to learn some lessons for opposing it. Also we want to know more about cooperatives, as we think that they are an alternative to privatisation.

*What is the extent of privatisation in Poland at present?*

Currently about 20% of firms have been privatised. Many firms are still state-owned, and in May the government passed another privatisation bill in parliament. The electricity supply is due to be privatised in the next few weeks — but trade unionists do not accept the proposed privatisations.

Trade union Solidarnosc is still an independent union, with no links and no support for the government. Many of the people in government came from the trade union, but when they took power they changed. But you can see the differences today, now that the government has fallen. It was the Solidarnosc deputies in the parliament who moved the vote of no confidence.

In this way we hope that the government will express the needs of workers. The trade union has the power to force its demands — but we are not seeking to take power in a revolutionary way.

*Are you saying the trade union is not sure what it wants? In the 1970s we used to say British trade unions were organisationally strong, and often very militant, but still politically and ideologically weak. Could you say the same about trade union Solidarnosc?*

The problem in Poland is the legacy of the inefficient Stalinist system, and also the debt. The

working class is totally against privatisation, because we know it will mean unemployment, attacks on the health service and corruption, but we still face the problem of what to do with all this “real estate” (factories). This is why we are interested in cooperatives.

*In Britain we would see many dangers in cooperatives, in-house bids and management takeovers. A coop in a sea of capitalism would be subject to the same competitive pressures as a capitalist firm, and might be forced to sack workers, cut wages, etc. despite the good intentions. Isn't this also likely in Poland?*

We have to make use of the wealth, hence the idea of coops. Some coops already exist but there is no overall framework to develop them. Trade union Solidarnosc wants the workers to have a full share of the company. The works councils in the factories are already strong. Our model is the works councils in 1980-81, which began to link up regionally and nationally.

These coops would operate in parallel to the government. The conditions in Poland today are different to those in Britain. We think that our ideas are a third way between capitalism and the old Stalinism in Poland.

*How can British socialists and trade unionists help in your struggle against privatisation?*

Firstly, we need more discussion of ideas. We are trying to establish a workers' hostel or club near our factory where trade unionists from overseas can come to stay and talk with us. We also need money and equipment, especially for printing material. We would like to organise exchange visits for our kids and British children, especially to help them learn English (though there are some financial obstacles to this). Most of all we want to exchange concrete experiences, especially with workers at factory level who are also fighting in Britain. We want to know what they think, not just the opinions of officials.



# Workers' Liberty '93...

...is three days of socialist debate from **Friday 2 to Sunday 4 July** at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, Archway, North London, hosted by the **Alliance for Workers' Liberty**.

## FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

■ **What do we do about the police?** (3.30) with *Clara Buckley* (Orville

Blackwood Campaign), *Joanne Rowe* (M25

campaign) and *Ruth Cockroft*. ● *John O'Mahony* (editor of *Socialist Organiser*) discusses the **Legacy of Max Shachtman** (8.15). ● **What should socialists say about the prison system?** (6.00)

### Debates:

■ **Which way forward in the unions?** (7.15) *Trudy Saunders* debates the Democratic Left. ● **Should we build a Leninist Party?** (3.30) *Mike Marquese* (*Labour Briefing*) debates the AWL.

### Course:

■ A four-part introduction to **Marxist economics** with *Martin Thomas* (Starts 3.30).

### Black History:

■ *Sab Sanghera* looks at the **Roots of modern British anti-Black racism** (7.15). ● *Dion D'Silva* examines the history of **Black workers in the British class struggle** (6.00). ● *Bruce Robinson* on **Music of Rebellion** (US jazz, soul and blues 1955-70) (7.15).

## SATURDAY HIGHLIGHTS

■ Former Black Panther and current leader of the Los Angeles Coalition Against Police Abuse, *Michael Zinzun*,

speaks on **What we can learn from the Black Panthers** (1.30) and **Los Angeles, One Year On** (5.00).

■ *Anthony Arblaster* on **Opera** (3.00). ● *Cathy Nugent* on the **History of Rioting** (5.00). ● *Jeremy Corbyn MP* on **Can the Labour Party win?** (1.30). ● *Peter Tatchell* and *Maria Exall* on **What can we learn from Queer Politics?** (3.00). ● *John O'Mahony* on **The Revolutionary Paper** (6.30).

### International crisis:

● *Branka Magas* on **Yugoslavia** (1.30).

### Black History:

● *Gail Cameron* from *Socialist Organiser* editorial board on **Marcus Garvey and the Roots of American Black Nationalism** (10.45).

### Additional Sessions

● *Jim Kearns* discusses **What is Human Nature?** (10.45). ● *Alan Johnson* speaks on **Can we win a majority for socialist revolution?** ● *Belinda Weaver* on **What will socialism be like?** (3.00). ● **Who was Jesus Christ?** (5.00) with *Rob Dawber*. ● **Do films lead to violence?** with *Geoff Ward*. ● **Socialism and Zionism — a contradiction?** (5.00) with *Vicki Morris*.

## SUNDAY HIGHLIGHTS

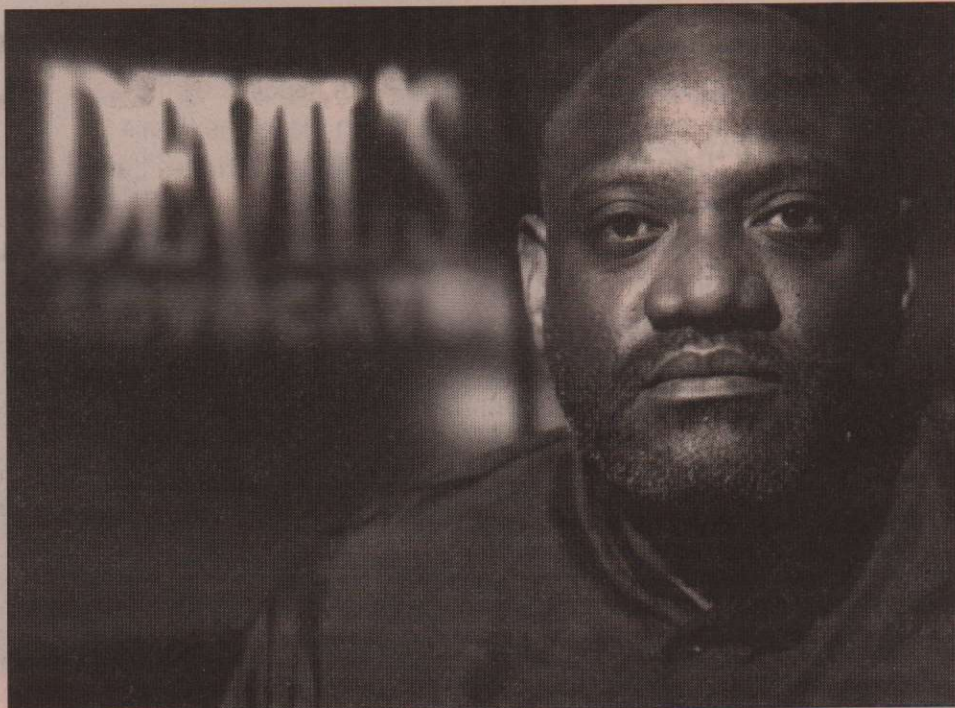
■ *Dion D'Silva* (author of the AWL pamphlet *Malcolm X*) looks at **Martin Luther King** (1.45).

### Debates:

● **Which way forward in Ireland?** (1.45). ● **What should we say about Black Power?** (10.30).



Peter Tatchell will debate Queer Politics with Maria Exall (3.00pm, Saturday 3 July).



## Darcus Howe speaks at Workers' Liberty '93

*Devil's Advocate* (Channel 4) host and political activist Darcus Howe will be speaking alongside Michael Zinzun from the Los Angeles Coalition Against Police Abuse (5.00pm, Saturday 3 July).

Michael and Darcus will speak about the roots of the 1992 Los Angeles uprising and discuss the issues that currently face the people of LA.

### Forum on Education:

● *Liam Conway* on **What sort of Education do School Students need?** (10.30); and *Jason Barron* from Summerhill School on **How Summerhill works** (12.00).

■ *John O'Mahony* on the **Cliff-SWP tradition** (10.30).

■ *Matt Cooper* on **Post-Modernism** (3.00). ● *Mark Serwotka* on the **Unions and the Civil Service** (1.45).

■ **The Gene Revolution** (3.00) with Les Hearn (*Socialist Organiser* science correspondent)

### International:

● *Tom Rigby* on **South Africa** (3.00).

● *Don Filtzer* on **Russia in Crisis**.

### Black History:

● *Gail Cameron* discusses **Answers for the Black Community in Britain** (3.00).

Workers' Liberty will be packed out. Be sure of getting in — get a programme now!  
[Programme gives entry to the event]

- Before end June: unwaged £7; low-waged/students £11; waged £16.
- On the door: unwaged £8; low-waged/students £12; waged £19.
- One day tickets: £3 and £7 (waged) before the end of June.

Cut off and return

Workers' Liberty '93 \* I enclose £ ..... \* Please send me more details of WL '93

Name .....

Address .....

(Cheques/postal orders payable to "W.L. Publications")

Send to: WL '93, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

\* Delete as appropriate



# Revolutionaries and parties

This week's extract is from the *Communist Manifesto*, written by Marx in 1847 and published in 1848 as a basic statement of its ideas by the Communist League, a revolutionary group of which Marx was then a member. [The word "Communist" then had none of the overtones it now has because it was taken over and misused by Stalinism.]

The Communist League was mainly based in Germany, but had members in other European countries. The extract we reprint is about the relation of the Communist League to the working class and other working-class parties. It declares that the League — in contrast to most other socialist or communist groups at the time — based itself not on some individual's blueprint for a better society, but on the struggles of the working class. It lays down the basic principles which explain both why Marxists must organise ourselves into a clear-cut organisation of our own, like the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, and why we seek to integrate ourselves into the broad labour movement, both trade unions and Labour Party. We also print relevant extracts from notes on the *Manifesto* written by David Riazanov, a member of the Bolshevik Party and director of the "Marx-Engels Institute" in Moscow until Stalin moved against him in 1931.

## Proletarians and Communists

IN WHAT RELATION DO THE Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole? The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working-class parties.

They have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.

They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.

The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.

The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.

The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer.

They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes.

## Communists, Chartists, reformers

THE WORDS "COMMUNISTS DO not form a separate party conflicting with other working-class parties" might, at the present moment, give rise to

misunderstanding. They might mean, and some have erroneously supposed them to mean, that Marx and Engels were antagonistic on principle to the creation of a separate communist party. These words must, however, be interpreted in the light of the historical circumstances in which the Communist League came into being. As far as the organisation of workers into parties on a national scale is concerned, there was at that time only one such party, the Chartists in England. In France, apart from the social democrats under the leadership of Ledru-Rollin and Flocon, there was nothing more than a group here and there that had been linked up with the old Barbès (1809-1870) and Blanquist organisation which had come to grief during the defeats of 1839. In addition there were some "circles" of "materialist communists" and "working-class equalitarians". Although these groups and circles, in contrast with the petty-bourgeois party of social democrats, were almost wholly composed of proletarians, nevertheless, prior to the year 1848, they did not become anything more than groups or circles, and were not in any sense of the term a nation-wide organisation. Matters were no better in Switzerland, or in Belgium and Germany.

But the Communist League, from the very outset, was formed as an international organisation, and was obliged to order its relations towards its national sections in such a way as to avoid unnecessary overlapping between these and any national parties that might exist. Such precautions were especially required in the case of England, where Chartism had become, above all, the political organisation of the working class. The English communists, among whom we may mention George Julian Harney (1817-1899) and Ernest Jones (1819-1869), did not found a new party. They merely endeavoured to fuse Chartism and communism, to play the part of advance guard, and to place in the forefront of their discussion the question of property.

The National Charter Association was formed in 1839, to agitate on behalf of the demands which, a year earlier, had been embodied in the People's Charter. This

body, whose special aim was to alleviate the sufferings of the artisans and labouring classes, may be regarded as the first political party of the workers. Engels gives us a vivid description of how the partial struggles of separate unions and their subsequent federation into the class struggle on a national scale, were gradually transformed into a political struggle of the whole working class.

"The worker does not reverence the law, he merely submits to its enactments so long as there is no possibility of changing it. It is, therefore, perfectly natural that he should endeavour to change the law, and to replace bourgeois legislation by proletarian legislation. The English workers have thus been moved to draw up a scheme of reforms which were embodied in the People's Charter, a purely political document aiming, among other things, at the democratic reorganisation of the House of Commons. Chartism was the compact expression of working-class opposition to the bourgeoisie. In trade unions and in strikes, this conflict assumed a local and sporadic form; individual workers or sections of workers waged war against individual bourgeois. If at times the struggle became generalised, this was seldom because the workers, for their part, had consciously willed it. In so far as a deliberate widening of the scope of the movement occurred, it was the outcome of the Chartist agitation. For in Chartism, the whole working class is ranged against the bourgeoisie, attacking in the first instance the political power of the bourgeoisie, striving to make a breach in the walls of laws by which this power is encircled."

The People's Charter was drafted in 1838 at a conference held in London between six members of the House of Commons and some representatives of the London Workmen's Association. They petitioned for: 1. Universal suffrage for all men over twenty-one years of age; 2. Annual parliaments; 3. Abolition of the property qualification for members of parliament; 4. Vote by ballot; 5. Equal electoral districts, so as to obtain a more just representation; 6. Payment of members.

Wherever there exists a workers' party, the communists merely form a considerable section of such a party, having this advantage, that their theoretical training enables them to understand the conditions, the progress, and the general results of the workers' movement. Thus it was that the communists were in a position to make their influence felt in the two working-class organisations which were flourishing about the middle of the last century: the Chartists in England, and the champions of agrarian reform in the United States of America.

Marx, and more especially Engels, both of whom had already formed ties with the Chartists, now (after the publication of the *Manifesto*) entered into still closer relationships with the communist wing of the Chartist movement, with such men as George Julian Harney and Ernest Jones.

The intimacy was encouraged and aided by the London members of the Communist League.

Matters took a very different course in the United States, where the Communist League had not secured an independent footing. Among the German workers settled in north America, the one to exercise the most notable influence was Hermann Kriege (1820-1850), who had emigrated to the States in 1845. He got into touch with the American organisation known as the National Reform Association, which had been inaugurated in 1845 with a view to acting as the legal cover to the secret society Young America. This latter was, as Engels says, endeavouring to impart a democratic form to the government, as a weapon against the bourgeoisie, and to use this to further the cause of the proletariat. Among other things they put forward such claims as the nationalisation of the land, and the limitation of farms to the size of 160 acres.

In October 1845, Young America held a congress in Boston and invited the New England Working Man's Association (which had been started that very year) to take part. The congress adopted a program wherein the right to live and the right to freedom were proclaimed, and, in addition, it was declared that a man had a right to receive so much land as was essential to the maintenance of himself and his dependents.

Marx had no illusions as to the nature of such a program. He and those of his way of thinking therefore protested against Kriege's endeavour to build upon the movement for agrarian reform, to give it a more definite, a higher aim, to take it as a model for the communist movement.

After securing a few paltry reforms in the realm of agrarian legislation, the movement petered out. In essence it was a farmers' agitation, and the industrial workers who participated in it, few in number, were swept into a back-to-the-land movement.

During the period from 1845 to 1848, Marx and Engels considered it of the utmost importance to get into touch with an organisation which undoubtedly exercised a good deal of influence upon the American workers, although Marx had an exaggerated idea of the extent to which proletarians were contributing to the agrarian agitation.

The social democracy in France at that time was characteristically represented by Ledru-Rollin (1807-1874) and Louis Blanc (1811-1882). In 1848 [the 1848 revolution] it was destined to play a most ignominious part. Its members were drawn from the ranks of the petty-bourgeoisie and the proletariat. They had no clear idea as to the conditions requisite for the workers' emancipation, they placed their hopes upon such issues as "the right to work", "the organisation of labour", the foundation of societies for co-operative production, and the like.

The tactics Engels recommended in relation to the social democrats were as follows: "At critical moments, therefore, the communists will have to make common cause with the democratic socialists, and, temporarily at least, to co-operate in a general line of action. But they can do this only so long as the democratic socialists do not enter the service of the ruling bourgeoisie and refrain from attacking the communists. It is obvious, however, that such common action does not exclude the discussion of theoretical differences."

*"Wherever there exists a workers' party, the communists merely form a considerable section of such a party, having the advantage of their theoretical training."*

*"The Communists have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole... they do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement."*





Mr White American Average (Michael Douglas) clashes with Hispanic youths

# Through the eyes of a Ceaucescu

## Cinema

Belinda Weaver reviews *Falling down*

**F**ALLING DOWN AIMS to show us what happens when Mr White American Average is pushed to breaking point by American urban life. He cracks, and he cracks up. He wants revenge.

Unfortunately, the film never shows us what stresses Michael Douglas's Bill Foster has suffered. All we see is a sweaty man in a traffic jam suddenly going berserk.

Traffic jams aren't pleasant, and some days go better than others, but Foster's outbreak is ridiculously overscaled. He's like a tantrummy three-year-old shouting that he's going to kill everyone in the world.

## Periscope

Richard Love previews *Cheers* (Ch 4, 11-13 June)

**C**HANNEL 4 IS HAVING a *Cheers* weekend to mark the end of the long-running and still amusing American sitcom. On Friday it's the second part of the slightly ridiculous *Rebecca's Story*, in which Rebecca thinks she's been asked on a date by a very eligible rich bachelor but in fact has been invited to do bar work at some posh, private function, and Cliff is suspected of murdering his mother. On Saturday and Sunday there is a two-part finale to the show.

*Cheers* is set in a Boston bar. The action revolves around the regular drinkers and staff. The characters are larger than life, with their own particular hang ups. Most of the humour

Along the way, we learn that Foster has an estranged wife, Beth, and he has a daughter too, whom he's not permitted to see. We're encouraged to sympathise with Foster, to feel impatient with Beth's intransigence, even as we see what a crazy Foster really is.

Awful as he is, the film is on his side. His methods are extreme, sure, and he goes too far, but the film is still very sorry for him. It excuses his juvenility, his aggression.

Though Foster leaves a lot of carnage in his wake, he himself kills only one person — a gay-baiting, neo-Nazi store owner who tries to embrace the vigilante Foster as a kindred spirit. The store owner is human garbage, so we're meant to cheer as he's finished off. Foster's trashing of a Korean store, his racial taunting and harassment of the owner, his

comes from dialogue and one-liners. *Cheers* is not very 'right on': for example, Sam (the bar owner) is sexist, but he is also ridiculous and much of the humour mocks his sexism and machismo. *Cheers* reflects social attitudes rather than trying to create a model of any sort. It attacks bad attitudes with humour, but mostly it doesn't try to be politically correct.

The current series hasn't been as good as previous ones (they never are) but unlike its contemporaries (especially *Roseanne* which hasn't been running nearly as long) has remained entertaining to the last.

The finale of *Cheers* has been hyped and will probably be a disappointment, but unless I have anything better to do I'll watch it and almost certainly enjoy it. Most of all, *Cheers* knows to quit when it's ahead — what a shame so few other programmes do.

threatening behaviour in a Whammyburger joint, are all pretty minor stuff, really, because no-one gets hurt, no-one gets killed.

When Foster bazookas some roadworks, it's the little guy's pay-off against the authorities. It's wish-fulfilment on a grand scale.

The film is offensive on many levels.

The character of Prendergast, the retiring cop who tracks Foster down, is clichéd. Prendergast, a deskbound cop with a nagging wife, wants to stay on the job, but he has to pander to his menopausal wife. By facing down Foster, Prendergast finds himself again. He learns to be man enough to tell his wife to have dinner waiting on the table when he gets home.

Women come in for a trashing all through the film. Either they throw you out but still want money, as Beth does, or they're whining bitches like Prendergast's wife. Though Beth is perfectly within her rights to try to keep her violent husband at bay, she's shown as just too rigid. Prendergast's partner Sandra is a woman, but she spouts men's views. She urges Prendergast to tell his wife off.

The film tries to have it both ways — it shows enough violence to please the sensation-seekers, while pretending to deplore violence.

It's ambivalent about Foster. As a laid-off worker in the defence industry, he's angry. He thought he was protecting America, and now America doesn't want him any more. But most sacked workers don't go on violent rampages. Foster has real grievances, but he is a nut as well — a rigid, violent bigot, with a hair trigger temper

and a giant chip on his shoulder.

To try to excuse his rampage is obscene. Yet the film constantly tries to win our sympathy for him, especially at the end.

Life in big cities is often a battle to fend off hostility and indifference. Bureaucracy, loss of work, traffic, ugliness, things breaking down — these all make life meaner and harder to bear.

But solutions can never be individual. Howls of rage like Foster's are useless, pointless. The film gives no hint that there might be other ways to express anger — useful ways like organising to get things changed.

It simply uses Foster as sensational news. Though it does try to come up with reasons for his outbreak, they don't seem very convincing. Everything is just too pat. And though it's refreshing for Hollywood not to treat a psychopath as one-dimensionally "evil", it does so by reducing his victims to cardboard and stereotype. We're meant to cheer when they "get" it.

The film has no answers for people genuinely trying to come to grips with alienation, people who have to live in fear of armed vigilantes or crazies on the loose.

It seems infected with a view of the world that looks down on people as they are — struggling, coping with life — and finds them repellent. Mme Ceaucescu looked on Romanians like that. Worms, she called them.

*Falling down* calls people worms, then blames the worms. It doesn't blame the rottenness that breeds worms — the social decay, the lies of politicians. The film's solution is to throw the bad apple into the garbage, as if that made everything fine again.

## Ruined lives

### Television

Joe Lee reviews *Ordinary lives* (BBC1, 2 June) and *First Tuesday* (ITV, 4 May)

**O**RDINARY LIVES was about refugees from Serbian prison camps living in a United Nations High Commission for Refugees 'house' in Croatia.

The programme tried to tell the human stories behind the headlines, but we did not by any stretch of the imagination see ordinary lives.

The refugees sat on their bunks in their overcrowded castle, obligingly recounting tales of horror. Which now, to add insult to injury, includes the inhuman bureaucracy which surrounds their movements. One man released from a prison camp 'failed' to get hold of a piece of paper he needed to 'prove' his status. He and his family were ejected from the hostel.

*First Tuesday* the other week succeeded in giving personalities to the victims of the conflict.

A Croatian returned to an ethnically mixed Bosnian town where she had once lived and found that old, religion-blind friendships were strained, that all the people were gradually identifying with one or other side in the conflict.

One Muslim family, who stayed at home now that their workplaces were closed, chopped wood, listened to the radio and discussed the encroaching war. They hoped their village would be in one of Vance-Owen's Muslim 'cantons', not a Croatian one.

As weeks passed they developed the habit of putting on their best coats to take their teenage son for safekeeping to their daughter's house over the valley in a Muslim area... and fetching him back again when they missed him too much.

Croatian militiamen appeared in the town and dug gun emplacements overlooking Muslim homes. They banned Muslim men from gathering in public. The Muslims had guns because they had served in the ex-Yugoslav army and spent periods on the Muslims' defensive front-line. Now they used the guns to guard their homes at night.

The Muslims and the Croats, once friends, no longer spoke. The sister of a Croatian, expelled from her home by Muslim forces, arrived in the town, feeding the Croats' suspicion of their neighbours.

The Muslims expected to be attacked any day. It had become dangerous for our reporter to stay, and she left the village for Croatia.

Weeks later she returned again. She walked down the street she had known. The Muslims' houses were burnt out. A Croatian woman, at once shame-faced and smug, couldn't say why she was unharmed and all the Muslims had fled. She just counted herself lucky that 'her' militia had been strongest in that area and that she could go on living her 'ordinary' life.

The reporter found her Muslim friends at their daughter's house whence they had fled the 'ethnic cleansing' of their village by Croatian militiamen.

In the garden on a sunny day they were still the ordinary people we'd been introduced to months before, but now they cried and fell on the ground like people on the news.

And it was easy to care about them and to want more to be done for them.



# Labour Party Annual Conference model motion

This model motion on Labour Youth is supported by Socialist Organiser, CLPD and Labour Brief-

“Conference accepts that winning more young people to the Party must be seen as one of the chief tasks of Constituency Labour Parties. Conference therefore welcomes the NEC’s proposal in its document “Proposals for Change”, presented to the 1993 Youth conference, to raise the age limit for youth sections. The NEC is instructed to present 1994 Annual Conference with a constitutional amendment to provide for this.

“At the same time Conference rejects the document’s suggestion that new youth sections ‘would

not have a representative role and would not send delegates or resolutions to constituency party General Committees’. Conference believes there is an urgent need for more young people on GCs and that GC representation for new youth sections would help achieve this.

“Conference also resolves that the setting up of new youth sections should be the responsibility of Constituency Labour Parties, either individually or jointly, and that our already overstretched Regional Offices should not be given this additional burden”.

# Raising money for socialism

**S**OCIALIST Organiser and the Alliance for Workers’ Liberty is raising extra money. We aim to raise £4,000 by our Workers’ Liberty ’93 event at the beginning of July.

We are currently spending extra money by sending our organisers over to Ireland to help build an organisation. This week Tony Dale will be speaking at Queen’s University, Belfast, on the Troubles.

This work costs money. So do our plans to update the software which we use in the production of Socialist

Organiser. So far we have raised £1,285.80 in donations and fundraising. Thanks this week to com-

rades in the AWL teachers fraction for £200, to a comrade in North London for £50 and Sheffield AWL for £30.

Please send donations to AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. Cheques payable to “WL Publications”.

# Selling Socialist Organiser

**T**HE SUMMER weather and longer days gives us an ideal opportunity to start new door-to-door sales on local estates and streets. Door-to-door sales are a great way of getting out and talking to people about our socialist ideas. It can also be a good way of establishing regular sales.

Door to door sales can be tied to campaigning and petitioning around local issues (or national issues). Why don’t you plan a door-to-door sale in your area? Let us know how you get on.

This is just one of the ways in which Socialist Organiser is planning to increase sales over the coming months. As

the Tories get themselves into more and more of a mess over Europe, and the economy, it is important we double our efforts to get our message across. If you would like to help us by taking a bundle of papers to sell each week, or by increasing the number of papers you sell, contact Jill on 071-639 7967.

# Socialist Organiser Summer Draw

We need more sellers to promote our Grand Summer Raffle. The draw will be made at the end of our Workers’ Liberty event on Sunday 4 July.

- 👉 First prize: weekend for two in Paris
- 👉 Second prize: colour TV
- 👉 Third prize: case of wine

For booklets of tickets please phone Mark on 071-639 7965. Please return raffle stubs and money as soon as possible to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

# Alliance for Workers’ Liberty public meetings

## Thurs 10 June

### “Fight police harassment”

Youth Fightback meeting: 12.00, Southwark College Common Room (Cut site)

### “Is socialism dead?”

York AWL debate the Tories. Room G120, York University

### “Fight police harassment”

Luton Youth Fightback meeting: 7.30 pm, Youth House, St. Mary’s Road, Luton

### “Education in Crisis”

Nottingham AWL meeting: 8.00 pm, Salutation Inn, Maid Marion Way

## Tues 15 June

### “Fight police harassment”

Youth Fightback meeting: 1.00 pm, Lewisham College

## Thurs 17 June

### “Race and the working class”

Sheffield AWL meeting: 7.30 pm, SCAAU, West Street

## Thurs 24 June

### “How to defend public sector jobs and services”

Manchester AWL meeting: 8.00 pm, Unicorn pub

## Fighting racism

## Thurs 10th June

### “Stopping racist violence”

8.00, St Jude’s Church Hall, Mildmay Grove, London N1. Organised by Mildmay Branch Labour Party

## Friday 11 June

### Picket of Winston Churchill’s surgery

3.00, 146 Flixton Road, Daveyhulme, Manchester. Organised by Manchester Area NUS

## Sat 12 June

### Demonstrate against racist attacks

National ARA demonstration Assemble: 11.30 am, Norbury Park, South London

### Tyne and Wear Anti-Fascist Association Carnival

1.00-7.00 pm, Nunsmeor Park, Newcastle

## Wed 16 June

### M25 Campaign/Youth for Justice benefit

at Newcastle Powerhouse Club, 10.00-2.00 am. Late bar

# Why you should be a socialist

**W**E LIVE IN A capitalist world. Production is social; ownership of the social means of production is private. Ownership by a state which serves those who own most of the means of production is also essentially “private”.

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

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

From that come such things as the savage exploitation of Brazilian gold-miners, whose life expectancy is now less than 40 years, and the working to death — it is officially admitted by the government! — of its employees by advanced Japanese capitalism. From this comes the economic neglect and virtual abandonment to ruin and starvation of “unprofitable” places like Bangladesh and parts of Africa.

**F**ROM THAT COMES the cultural blight and barbarism of our society force-fed on profitable pap. From it come products with “built-in obsolescence” in a society orientated to the grossly wasteful production and reproduction of shoddy goods, not to the development of leisure and culture.

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

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

by the ruling classes around the principle of profitable anarchy and the barbarous worship of blind and humanly irrational market forces.

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

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

From the exploitation of wage-labour comes this society of ours where the rich, who — through their servants and agents — hold state power, fight a relentless class struggle to maintain the people in a mental condition to accept their own exploitation and abuse, and prevent real democratic self-control developing within the forms of what they call democracy. They use tabloid propaganda or — as in the 1984-85 miners’ strike — savage and illegal police violence — whatever they need to use. They have used fascist gangs when they needed to, and they will use them again, if necessary.

**A** GAINST THIS SYSTEM we seek to convince the working class — the wage slaves of the capitalist system — to fight for socialism. Socialism means the abolition of wage slavery, the taking of the social economy out of private ownership into common cooperative ownership. It means the full realisation of the old demands for liberty, equality and fraternity.

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

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

under workers’ control.

The working class can and should win reforms within capitalism, but we can only win socialism by overthrowing capitalism and by breaking the state power — that is, the monopoly of violence and reserve violence — now held by the capitalist class. We want a democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers’ democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats’ and managers’ privileges.

Socialism can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers’ struggles worldwide; we back the struggles of workers and oppressed nationalities in the ex-Stalinist states of Eastern Europe and in still-Stalinist China.

What are the alternatives now? We may face new wars as European and Japanese capitalism confronts the US. Fascism is rising. Poverty, inequality and misery are growing. We are deep in the worse capitalist slump for 60 years.

Face the bitter truth: either we build a new, decent, sane, democratic world or, finally, the capitalists will ruin us all — we will be dragged down by the fascist barbarians or new massive wars. Civilisation will be eclipsed by a new dark age. The choice is socialism or barbarism.

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

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

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



# Support the Timex strikers!

By Stan Crooke

**"B**loody awful", "A total disgrace", "Scandalous", "Insulting", "Disgusting" and "Draconian" were just a few of the expressions used by sacked Timex workers after a mass meeting last Thursday (3 June) to describe the "compromise deal" negotiated by the AEEU's Jimmy Airlie with Timex management.

After only half an hour the meeting closed with a unanimous rejection of the deal.

Timex owner Fred Olsen urged Timex workers to "go home and think again" after the rejection of the deal. But as sacked vice-convenor Willie Lesslie put it at last Monday's mass picket:

"I have done as Fred Olsen advised. I calmly reflected on the situation Fred Olsen and Timex have put me in. I am sure now as I ever was before that we were right to reject the offer by the company".

Timex workers left last Thursday's mass meeting to return to the picket lines. Jimmy Airlie

left the meeting to return to another round of "secret negotiations" with Timex management.

The Timex strikers have not been demoralised by the failure of negotiations to produce a settlement. On the contrary, the provocative and insulting nature of the "compromise deal" has strengthened their resolve to stand firm.

Warnings from Fred Olsen about possible closure of the Dundee factory have had the same result. Indeed, right from the outset, the Timex strikers have made it clear that either they get their jobs back or the factory closes.

The unanimous rejection of the deal by Timex workers has also given a boost to their supporters, reflected in the increased size of the mass picket last Monday morning.

In the aftermath of the mass meeting the Timex strike Committee outlined the next stages of their campaign:

- stepping up the campaign for a consumer boycott of Timex products by appealing for support for it from the inter-

national trade union movement;

- the holding of an all-Scottish shop stewards meeting in Dundee this Sunday;

- a mass demonstration and rally at the Timex factory on Saturday, 19 June;

- staging demonstrations outside the factories of major Timex customers, such as IBM in Greenock.

Trade unionists should make sure that there is a massive turnout in Dundee on 19 June

and also campaign to transform the consumer boycott of Timex products into a trade union boycott in the workplace.

AEEU members in particular should also be demanding an end to the "secret negotiations"

with Timex — if any negotiations take place, then members of the Timex Strike Committee should be involved.

**Timex mass demonstration**  
Saturday 19 June 6 am-12 noon  
Speakers • music • refreshments

## The treachery of Jimmy Airlie

The deal which Jimmy Airlie, the AEEU's Executive Council member for Scotland proposed to last Thursday's mass meeting of Timex workers involved:

- the abolition of the yearly bonus of one week's wages;
- cutbacks in Timex's contributions to the company pension scheme;
- the ending of canteen subsidies, leading to a doubling of meal prices.

- scrapping the company savings plans, leaving workers £8 a week worse off;
- cuts in sick pay, and longer qualifying periods of sick pay;
- a worsening of pay scales;
- a two year pay freeze;
- re-training of all sacked workers taken back on by the company;
- the testing of all sacked workers for their commitment to the company;
- redundancy payments for work-

ers deemed to have failed re-training or to be lacking in commitment;

- minimum statutory redundancy payments for workers not prepared to return under such conditions.

The deal meant worse working conditions and a 27% cut in pay — compared with the 10% cut in pay which Timex demanded in January and which was one of the factors which sparked off the current dispute.

The parts of the deal concerning re-training and aptitude tests would have been used to get rid of the shop stewards and other shopfloor leaders. Again, this marks a step backwards compared with January, when Timex was going "only" for selective lay-offs.

Jimmy Airlie should count himself lucky that he encountered no more than laughter when he read out the terms of the deal at last week's mass meeting.

The deal also makes a mockery of Bill Jordan's reference last month to Arthur Scargill as the "captain of the Titanic". ("When you're negotiating in difficult waters, you don't invite on board the captain of the Titanic".

Airlie's deal would have done to pay and conditions at Timex what the iceberg did to the Titanic!

Airlie and other AEEU officials were involved in eight weeks of secret negotiations with Timex before the contents of the deal were finalised. During those two months there were no consultations with any of the Timex shop stewards, who were informed of the deal's contents only on the eve of the mass meeting.

According to Airlie, the deal was "The best that could be negotiated with the company" — exactly the same expression he used in January to "justify" his equally shameful deal with Hoover.

Sensing the imminent rejection of the deal, Airlie did not formally recommend it to last week's meeting. He claimed that he was merely doing his duty(!) and informing the strikers of the deal.

Despite his doing the dirty work for Timex, the company has not returned the favour — instead it has gone public and said that it had a deal with the union (i.e. Airlie and his cronies) which the union should now get its members to accept.

Clearly, therefore, Airlie backed the deal — which he himself had negotiated — and changed his tune only in the face of hostility to the deal at last week's meeting.

The fact that Airlie has shown himself to be even less trustworthy than Timex manager Peter Hall is surely the ultimate condemnation of this one-time Communist Party member and "Red Clydesider".

## NALGO Conference

### Build for UNISON!

By Chris Croome, Sheffield NALGO shop steward

**T**HE PUBLIC service union NALGO meets for its annual conference next week, just a fortnight before it merges with NUPE and CoHSE to form the new union UNISON on 1 July. No one seems to be sure when UNISON will hold its first conference. The bureaucracies of the three unions appear to want some time to stitch things up before convening one.

It is vital that the motion at NALGO conference calling for a UNISON conference this year is carried, and our NEC is held to that policy. Otherwise differences between the policies of the former unions will be used as an excuse for not carrying out mandates we give them.

At branch level, where it is most important, sectional interests are preventing unity. The democratic merging of branches should happen as quickly as possible in order that the greater potential strength of UNISON can be realised.

UNISON brings with it the real chance of forging greater unity between traditionally divided blue and white collar members and winning real improvements in pay and condi-

tions.

The motion from Barnsley calls for a UNISON campaign for a 35 hour week, a decent minimum wage and harmonisation, to the highest level of all terms and conditions. This motion, and the one on harmonisation from Leeds, should be supported and activists should fight for the policy in UNISON.

As a matter of principle, UNISON should ballot members for action against the government's 1.5% pay limit. However, the leadership's proposal for three-day action and selective all-out action has two flaws.

The six rolling days of action in 1989 proved popular and should be repeated. Selective action should not be part of the strategy. It leaves the majority of members inactive, is difficult to escalate and the employers will be able to manage it far easier than in 1989.

NALGO Action, the branch sponsored, activists' newsletter, has been relaunched as UNITY — for a democratic, fighting UNISON. Independent branch campaigning is one of the traditions that NALGO must take into UNISON, and UNITY is the natural forum for activists to use to campaign within UNISON.

By a railworker.

**F**OLLOWING THE Referendum Ballot decision by the rail union RMT to accept BR's "offer" on redundancies and giving of work to contractors, RMT activists have stepped up their activity in opposition to the leadership's manoeuvrings. These grades within the RMT with the most experience of work being given to contractors are the track workers-Signal and Telecomms, Permanent Way and Overhead Traction grades. They are also the most numerous. Knapp made sure that the ballot coincided with most of the activists being away from work at a union grades conference in Ayr. Otherwise their influence at

work would have easily made up the 183 shortfall needed for rejection.

But the delegates did not waste their time in Ayr. Two thirds of the conference attended a fringe meeting on the Campaign for a Fighting and Democratic Union, the conference, condemned past handling of grades restructuring by the leadership and called for the resignation of all in the leadership responsible.

This was linked to the current dispute and the continuing fight by this group of grades to resist contractors. The Executive minority were at that time preventing a third day of action to fight contractors.

Every grades conference has the

right to send two resolutions to the union's Annual General Meeting. Last year this grades conference resolution condemning the entire union leadership for their handling of S&T Restructuring and calling for their resignation was passed overwhelmingly by the AGM but then ignored by Knapp and Co.

This year one of the chosen resolutions repeats the condemnation and links it to the need to fight on against redundancies and contractors. Knapp has ruled the resolution out of order. It is not, he says, "germane to a particular grade, or Grades Conference".

Meanwhile he has written to

every branch, twice, warning us to ignore correspondence and leaflets from the Campaign For a Fighting and Democratic Union and saying that he intends to take action against those involved. This is a time, he says, for "unity and strength of purpose". He is making no such threats to the Magnificent Seven of Executive right-wingers.

All branches need to take action on this and bombard Knapp with resolutions and letters supporting the right of the Grades Conferences to submit what they themselves see as "germane" to their own particular members. We should be controlling our General Secretary, not the other way round.

## NCU votes to keep the link

By a London BT engineer

**T**HE ANNUAL conference of the National Communications Union has voted to keep the link between the Labour Party and the trade unions, and retain collective representation in the party.

Delegates argued against any weakening of the link at national

or branch level, and the composite passed included opposition to any proposals that undercut effective collective representation such as the "registered supporters" scheme.

The only opposition in the debate was from the top table — from a national officer and the outgoing Executive.

The new left dominated Executive will fight for the retention of the link but those defeated in the debate are attempting to sabotage the decision of conference: the outgoing Executive has sought legal advice on the debate with the intention of ruling it out of order on spurious grounds.

## MSF backs Labour's union link

By an MSF conference delegate

**B**EFORE conference, the *Guardian* reported that the Executive was "expected to urge rejection of motions" to keep the trade union/Labour Party link following the "28-8 soft-left majority" result in the Executive elections.

In fact the Executive didn't: it supported, unamended, a composite that called for maintenance of trade union participation in elections for Labour Party Executive and leadership elections and in Parliamentary selection and the maintenance of the block vote at not less than 50% of the total Labour Party conference vote. The motion also opposed any attempt to remove Clause 4 Part iv from the Labour Party constitution and encouraged political levy

payment.

I wonder who gave the report to the *Guardian*. I do hope it wasn't the General Secretary!

MSF members are being consulted by questionnaire on Labour Party/trade union links, candidate selection and leadership election. An emergency motion ensured that the Conference decision is binding on MSF delegates to national bodies, if the results of the questionnaire are different.

The Timex strike was discussed; a bland emergency motion was carried congratulating the local MSF organisations on preserving terms and conditions and allowing MSF members to determine their own destiny. Motions placing demands on the Executive to send a national delegation to the mass pickets and on the members not to cross picket lines were lost or not discussed.

## DsHSS Market Testing:

### Start the fight on 2 July

By Mark Serwotka, Sheffield DSS

**T**HIS MONTH civil service workers in the DsHSS will be balloted for a one day strike over Market Testing on 2 July. We must all work flat out to deliver a 'yes' vote both in NUCPS and CPSA ballots.

Market Testing is the most serious threat ever faced by Civil service workers. 87,000 civil servants will be Market Tested over the next 2 years alone with the aim of cutting 25% of cost and driving us into the ground. Unless we stop the Tories there will be mass job losses. Our wages will be cut, our conditions worsened, our unions undermined and services to the public will deteriorate. Women will be particularly threatened as the majority of part time workers who will have their hours cut to below the minimum for employment protection. Equal opportunities will go out of the window and our pensions and redundancy rights will come under attack.

The 2 July must be the beginning of a section-wide strike campaign leading to all-out strike action to force the Tories to withdraw their Market Testing plans in the DsHSS.

A successful strike will help pressurise the National Executive Committee (NEC) into taking a lead. It will give confidence to other sections of the union who are considering action. It will also be a clear indication to the DsHSS Section Executive Committee that they must organise further action.

What you can do now

- Organise walk-outs when the Market Testing teams arrive.
- Organise non co-operation with the teams. This is not a disciplinary offence and helps disrupt the process.
- Pass resolutions calling on the DsHSS SEC to draw up plans now for action after 2 July and to focus on the only realistic demand which can unite civil service workers: the withdrawal of the government's Market Testing programme.

## Industrial front

Royal Mail has found that 70% of the workforce are unhappy at work. The large survey was carried out among 90,000 workers. The UCW says that low pay is the root cause of dissatisfaction.

**Over 500 television licence inquiry officers held a one-day strike on Monday 7 June in protest at cuts in meal and travel allowances.**

The AEEU engineering union has attacked Fords for importing 2,000 Fiesta cars from Spain after cutting 4,000 jobs in Britain last year.

By putting the issue in this way the AEEU will alienate Spanish workers — precisely the people who British car workers need to unite with in order to tackle the Ford management. The issue must not be imports but saving jobs by cutting the working week.

ABB Transportation, formally BREL said that it would cut 896 jobs in its 6,000 workplace on Monday 7 June. BREL was privatised in 1989. RMT officials will meet management on Wednesday 9 June.



# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

## Don't duck the fight against cuts!

An open letter from Islington nursery parents to the NALGO union conference, which opens in Brighton next week



Labour's leaders should stop attacking the trade union link, and start backing trade unionists in struggle, as at Timex (above)

### Take on the Tories! Keep the Link!

# Labour must fight!

By Chris Reynolds

**"INSTEAD OF ATTACKING** this awful government", so GMB union general secretary John Edmonds told his members this week, "a number of Labour politicians have decided to attack us".

He is one hundred per cent right. The drive by Labour's new yuppie leaders against the trade union link has sparked a deep and broad revolt by ordinary middle-of-the-road trade unionists.

Edmonds was equally spot-on when he wrote in the *Sunday Mirror* (6 June): "Ordinary voters know that the Conservatives are wicked and arrogant."

*But do they know what Labour stands for?*

*Since the election, the knock-out blows against John Major's government have not come from Labour. We seem to be holding back and waiting for the Tories to destroy themselves.*

*The Labour movement still seems dazed from last year's terrible election defeat.*

*Well, we're running out of time. We've got to shake ourselves out of our lethargy. As England's footballers discovered on Wednesday night, you have got to play with real commitment, or you can be beaten by a team you thought were losers."*

Edmonds is a hypocrite — he himself pioneered trade-union "new realism" (i.e. not attacking the Tory Government) and the campaign against the trade union block vote in the Labour Party — but his hypocrisy

now is the homage which opportunism has to pay to grass-roots working-class loyalty.

So miserable is Labour's leadership team of "grey men in suits" — John Smith, Gordon Brown, Tony Blair — that even old Labour right-wingers are complaining. Denis Healey — the same Healey who pushed through the IMF cuts in 1976 — recently said: "We have become very timid about opposing orthodox views. We tag along. We're reluctant to offend anyone".

Barbara Castle — the same Castle who tried to impose Labour anti-union laws in 1969 — told the *Guardian* on 5 June:

"Increasingly, the problem of the Labour Party has become psychological..."

"We, the Labour Party, have not got the natural arrogance of the Tories... We're too modest. Never has the case for socialism been more glaring. For goodness sake, this is the last moment of all to be apologetic".

Even from a right-wing Labour point of view, the Labour leadership's current policy is stupid and counterproductive. Even the most conservative, un-militant, right-wing trade unionists are protesting.

All the big trade unions, with the single exception of the AEEU, have come out against the idea of cutting the trade union voice out of the Labour Party. *Labour's leaders should dump this destructive idea now, carry out last year's Labour Party conference policy of continuing the present forms of trade union representation, and turn their fire on the Tories!*

But John Smith is reported by the press to be "standing firm" — for once — against his own party! His aim must be to persuade fainthearts to come forward with "compromises" — like the unworkable bureaucratic scheme for "registered supporters", favoured by Tom Sawyer of NUPE — to "avoid a split". But wouldn't a split between a small parliamentary clique, on one side, and the big majority of the movement, on the other, be better avoided by the minority backing down?

More on the union conferences, page 15; more on John Edmonds, "Sleeper", page 4.

**A** MONTH AGO, NALGO general secretary Alan Jinkinson "repudiated" the action by Islington nursery workers, members of NALGO, who joined up with parents to occupy our nurseries and stop the Labour council closing them.

No cut could be meaner than these nursery closures — hitting at tiny children and often hard-pressed parents — and none could be crazier. The cost would be counted for decades to come. American research suggests that £1,000 "saved" in nursery cuts brings extra costs of £4,100 in undeveloped talents and lives which go into the hands of social workers or police.

The Islington nursery workers' action was right in line with official NALGO policy of fighting cuts. Yet Alan Jinkinson "repudiated" it because Islington Council threatened legal action against NALGO.

The "repudiation" was always stupid and cowardly. A month later, there can be no doubt about it. Alan Jinkinson's ducking-out only transferred the legal threat onto the local Islington NALGO branch, which voted unanimous support for the occupation at a well-attended meeting. Legal action against the union branch would be much easier, politically, for the Labour council, than action against the national union.

Yet Islington council has not dared to put the threat into practice. Taken aback by the wide support for the nursery occupations, it has dithered. At a council Labour group meeting on Monday 7 June, a proposal to reverse the nursery cuts was squeezed out only narrowly: the right wing pushed through a vague alternative proposal, which suggested concessions but ducked firm commitments, by 18 votes to 15. 13 out of 20 local Labour Party ward branches had voted to keep the nurseries open.

Islington council's right-wing Labour leadership must be unable to believe their luck. Threats of all sorts against the local NALGO branch, the nursery workers, and us, the parents, have had little effect. Yet against the national union — a mass organisation, much better placed to resist threats than us locally — an empty piece of bluff produced immediate results!

If NALGO nationally had supported our occupations from the start, then there can be little doubt that we would have won by now. As it is, it will take longer and be more difficult, but we remain determined. Within the next couple of weeks our struggle is due to be joined by a local strike of the National Union of Teachers, also against education cuts.

Emergency resolutions for NALGO conference from Islington NALGO, Barnsley NALGO, and Renfrew District will call on the union to scrap the "repudiation" and back the occupations. Back the resolutions! Fight the cuts! Save our nurseries!

• Messages of support and urgently-needed money for the occupations to Springdale UFEC, 15a Springdale Rd, London N16, or Harvist UFEC, 100 Hornsey Rd, London N7; cheques payable to "Islington Under-Fives Action Group".

More on NALGO conference: page 15

## Subscribe to Socialist Organiser

Name .....

Address .....

Enclosed (tick as appropriate):

- £5 for 10 issues
- £25 for a year
- £13 for six months
- £..... extra donation.

Cheques/postal orders payable to "WL Publications"  
Return to: Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

Australia: \$70 for a year, from WL, PO Box 313, Leichhardt 2040. Cheques payable to "Socialist Fight"  
USA: \$90 for a year, from Barry Finger, 153 Henderson Place, East Windsor, NJ 08520. Cheques payable to "Barry Finger"

**SOCIALIST** Inside this week  
**MALCOLM**  
 Behind the hype  
 see page 19

**Buses, rail, plus, public sector**

**STRIKE TOGETHER!**

**Unit to beat sackings, sell-offs, cuts**