

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

*Unite the left!*

Inside this week

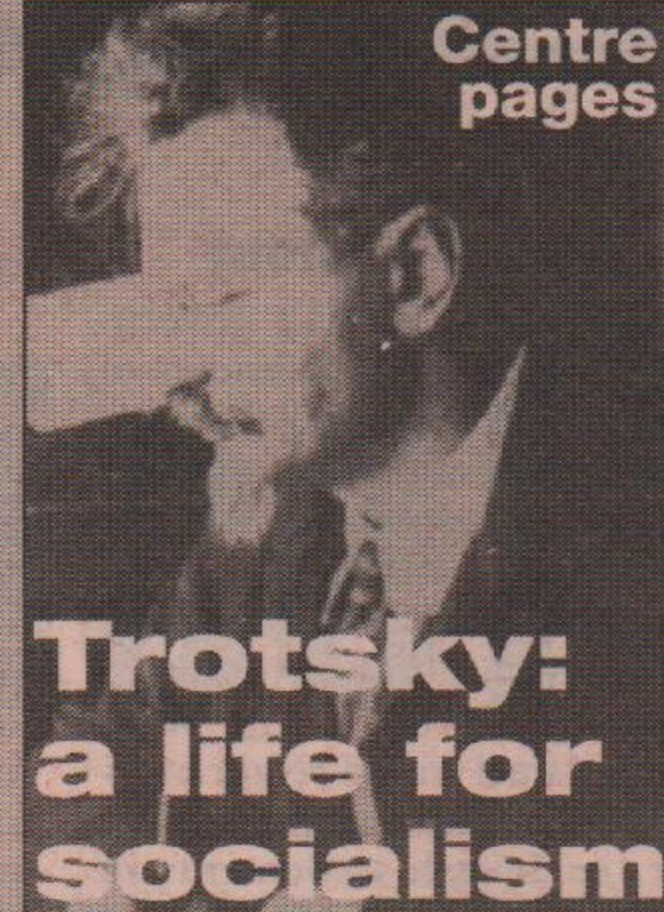


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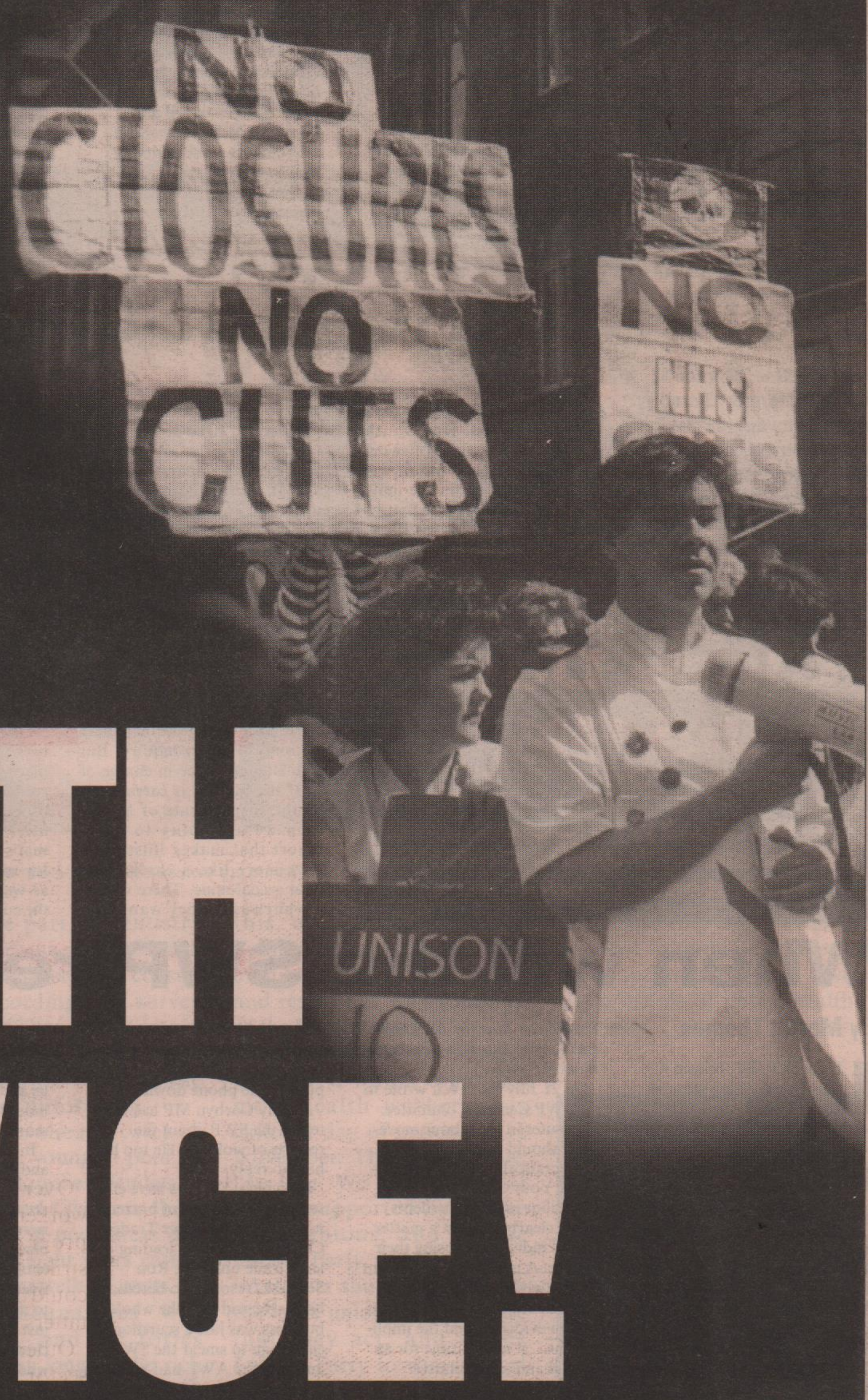
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## Tories push NHS to breakdown

# SAVE OUR HEALTH SERVICE!



## Unions: call day of action now!





# Breakthrough for PLO

By John O'Mahony

THE ISRAELI government and the leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organisation have agreed to Palestinian self-rule — "full autonomy" — in Gaza and the city of Jericho in the West Bank, and on moves to autonomy in the rest of the West Bank. Israel would retain overall control, and responsibility for the Jewish settlements in the West Bank. After two years of such Palestinian self-rule, negotiations would begin on full independence for a Palestinian state and on such intractable questions as control of East Jerusalem — Arab-controlled until 1967, but now

part of Israel's capital.

The agreement, which is expected to be signed in Washington next week, means Israeli recognition of the PLO, PLO recognition of Israel, and agreement by both to the principle of a two-state solution. Whatever the details of the agreement, and despite the immense obstacles to its implementation, this is an epoch-making breakthrough.

It is still a great deal less than the Palestinians are entitled to — an independent state in all territories where the Palestinians are the majority — but it seems to be a decisive step in the right direction. The principles Israel has now con-

ceded must, given the facts of the situation, unfold over time, with whatever setbacks and overhead costs, into a fully independent Palestinian state.

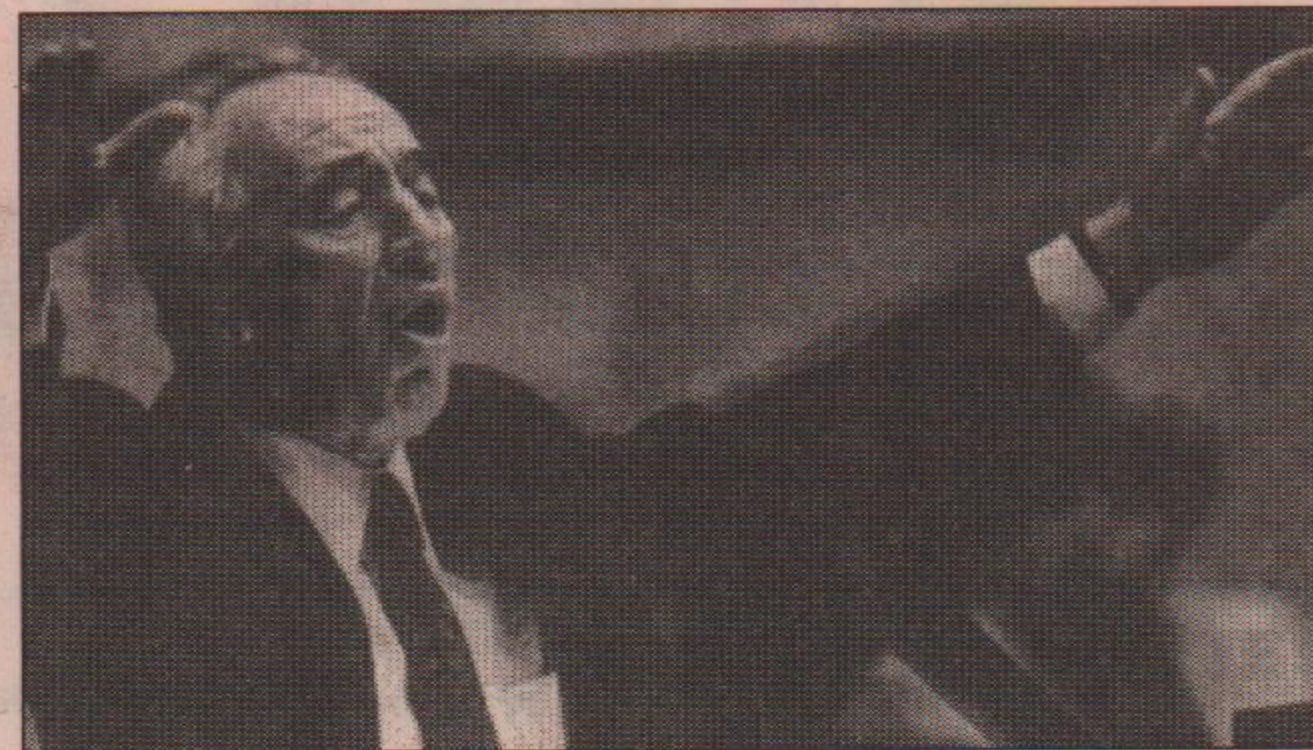
The opposition of this agreement may prove powerful enough to wreck it. Up to 50% of Israelis are shown in polls to favour holding on to the occupied territories. Already the Israeli chauvinists have started demonstrating against the agreement in Jerusalem. The right-wing nationalist opposition says it will try to bring down the government.

In the Palestinian camp too the opposition is likely to be massive and may be decisive. Reasoned politics play little

part in the postures of the very powerful Muslim fundamentalist groups. They will settle for nothing less than the old PLO policy of destroying Israel.

Among Palestinian nationalists too opposition is powerful: the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine has publicly threatened to assassinate PLO leader Yassir Arafat as a traitor. They can cite the limited character of the first steps conceded by Israel as arguments against the agreement.

It may be that opponents of the agreement would win the elections for the Palestinian self-rule institutions which are to be set up, thus making the agreement unworkable. Armed



Shimon Peres, Israeli Foreign Affairs Minister attempts to explain the policy to the Knesset

conflict between Palestinian groups is probable.

Socialists should in principle

welcome this agreement while denouncing the too limited character of the immediate concessions to the Palestinians. The bloc of Muslim religious bigots and "destroy Israel" Palestinian nationalists who will oppose this agreement — and would oppose any agreement that would leave Israel in existence — offer the Palestinian people nothing but more decades of misery, degradation, and political helplessness.

The only hope of something better lies in building on the principles enshrined in the agreement between the Israeli government and the PLO: mutual recognition and two states for the two peoples.

## Israel and Palestine: where we stand

### BRIEFING

SINCE 1967 Israel has held the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under military rule.

Most trade union activity is banned; Palestinians are often driven from their homes, as Jewish settlements are built in the area.

The Palestinians demand their national rights — the

right to a nation state within Palestine. We must also recognise the national rights of the Israeli Jews.

Though socialists earlier this century rightly opposed the creation of a Jewish state on land occupied by Palestinians (the result of which was the driving of many Palestinians from their homes), things have obviously changed. We must recognise that an Israeli

nation has been built in the Middle East. To try to turn the clock back to before Israel existed is not a democratic policy. Most Israeli Jews regard Israel as their homeland, whatever their country of origin. A majority were born in Israel and know no other homeland.

Socialists need a policy that is able to satisfy the national aspirations of the Palestinians and also pro-

tect the national rights of the Israeli Jews, while combatting the actions of the Israeli state against Palestinians inside and outside its borders. The creation of a Palestinian state alongside a Jewish state would allow for this.

Joint working class action between Israelis and Palestinians would be far more likely in a set-up where neither felt an immediate threat

from the other. This policy provides a framework for a struggle now by socialists for Arab-Jewish workers' unity and for a socialist United States of the Middle East. For the the Palestinians' right to a state of their own! For a socialist federation of the Middle East with the right to self determination for all nations, including the Israeli Jews.

# Behind the Bilsthorpe pit disaster

Paul Whetton, Manton NUM and former secretary of the Notts miners' rank and file strike committee, 1984-5, exposes the issues behind the Bilsthorpe pit disaster, where three miners died after a pit roof collapsed

THE BILSTHORPE disaster should never have happened. Had the National Union of Mineworkers been the only union with negotiating rights in the industry, then British Coal would never have got away with the use of roof bolts as a primary means of support. But the

UDM have allowed management to get their way.

Questions need to be asked. Why did British Coal put in a new head so near to an old one? It was bound to lead to a situation where the roof bolts compressed the rock too much, creating an unbearable strain. It is just too dangerous to work in that way.

Why are we told that we have too much coal in this country, when British Coal are trying to pinch as much coal as they can by cutting corners and killing miners?

We have been told that there is going to be an inquiry. But who is going to be in charge of it? If the inquiry is carried out by the Inspectorate of Mines, then we are going to see a report that makes Bilsthorpe look more like a chalk-mine than a coal-mine. There will be a whitewash. They want roof

bolts. No miner will be satisfied while these people are in charge of the inquiry. It is grotesque.

The Bilsthorpe disaster is a clear indication of the way the safety of mines is going. Privatisation will mean that health and safety goes through the window. Protection under the Mines and Quarries Act will go.

WOULD GIVE no credence to what NACODS are saying. They've threatened confrontation and gone to the brink too many times before. They betrayed the miners in 1984-5.

The UDM have no idea what to say. They are all over the place. The UDM has agreed to roof-bolting, but one of their officials came on the telly just after the disaster saying, "If that's the price we have to pay for roofbolting, then we might as well shut down every pit in the country".

There is no justice in this society for the vast majority of us. The manager at Bilsthorpe, Mr Robson, is the same man who had me sacked from Ollerton for the "crime" of putting up an NUM leaflet on a notice board. The Coal Board was ultimately found guilty of unfair dismissal, but they had got what

they wanted.

Robson will not be held responsible for the death of those three miners. People like him never are. Those people, the rich and powerful, are only too willing to accuse others. But the people at the top never have to face any kind of justice themselves.

## "Home alone": blame the Tories!

By Colin Foster

BRITAIN HAS less publicly-provided child-care for under-fives than any other west European country bar Portugal — and the shortage is getting worse.

That is the real scandal behind the recent press brouhaha over mothers leaving their children "home alone" while they went to work or on holiday. Pundits propose a legal minimum age for child-carers. Tories rage about the "evil" of single-parent families. They all miss the point.

In almost all societies before today's, small children were looked after by a network of people including older children, neighbours, grandparents, aunts, and so on.

Some of that system still exists today, of course. With greater social wealth, it could and should be supplemented by planned social care and proper training.

In fact capitalism pushes towards privatisation and commercialisation, not social care. Increasingly the norm towards which people are pushed, and on which official policy is based, is for small children to be cooped up with their mothers all day in small flats or houses, without help, training, or support for those mothers.

Children's play is more and more commercialised, shaped by the advertisers and the television schedulers rather than by their own imagination. Children have less and less time and space to themselves.

One small but dramatic index of this is that while in 1970 almost all seven and eight year olds walked to school by themselves, now most are taken to school by adults.

All this increases pressure on the time, energy, and money of parents.

The norm of the claustrophobic mum-at-home-with-kids family is unworkable; in real life child-care is a patchwork, with small islands of publicly-provided care by trained staff and a vast sea of ad hoc, makeshift, last-resort arrangements. No wonder many mothers sometimes feel they must "have a break", come what may.

No wonder many children grow up insecure, sullen, and resentful.

The labour movement should fight to save and expand nursery provision — but also to win a new society in children have proper human rights and social care and women have real equal rights cancelled out by unequal burdens of childcare.

**Unity demonstration**  
**Close Down**  
**the BNP**  
**March on the Nazi HQ**  
**Saturday 16 October**  
**Assemble 1pm Winns Common,**  
**Plumstead, London SE18**

## When will the SWP reply?

By Martin Thomas

IF IN DOUBT, brazen it out! Faced with a scandal about violence by SWP organisers at their *Marxism 93* "week of discussion and debate", the Socialist Workers' Party has adopted the old demagogue's rule of thumb.

On 13 July Jason Bonning had his head bashed against a wall by leading SWPer and Anti-Nazi League organiser Rahul Patel, and on 16 July Mark Sandell was knocked to the ground and kicked by a group including Ian Mitchell and Yunis, SWP organisers in the North East.

Bonning and Sandell are members of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty and supporters of *Socialist Organiser*. We have corroborating statements by other socialists present when Mark Sandell was attacked — Lee Rock (a supporter of the

*Republican Marxist Bulletin*) and Kirstie Paton (a member of *Workers' Power*).

On 21 July the AWL wrote to the SWP Central Committee: "Disputes in the labour movement should be dealt with democratically and not by violence. Your comrades' behaviour in these incidents was... clearly not just a matter of odd individuals losing their temper. A panel of independent and widely respected labour movement people should examine the evidence, and the implications... It is high time for an official and authoritative response by the SWP Central Committee".

Yet the SWP have made no effort to refute the charges. They have not replied to our letter. When we have phoned their office, they have put the phone down on us. When Mark Sandell phoned SWP leader Tony Cliff at Cliff's home, Cliff

declared: "I never even read the leaflets... I don't believe it happens, and that's all..." — before putting the phone down.

Jeremy Corbyn MP has written to the SWP about the reports of violence. He too has had no reply.

Individual SWPers have chosen their own ways of brazening it out. At Manchester Trades Council, the SWP's leading local trade unionist, Ron Sendzak, resorted to barefaced lying. He said that the whole business was just a scurrilous campaign to smear the SWP, and that the AWL had made no approach to the SWP Central Committee!

Other SWPers have said that we deserved the beating; yet others that they refuse to discuss it because it is "sectarian" to bother about violence in the labour movement when we could instead be talking about the SWP's "Start the Fight

Now" lobby of the TUC, or anti-fascist activity, or Timex; and a few that they agree with us and think there should indeed be a labour movement inquiry.

In its own way, the bluster and evasion by leading SWPers is worse than the original attacks. For a few SWP organisers to use fists and boots in place of argument is bad enough. For the SWP collectively to say: "We won't bother to answer these charges. We'll just deny, evade, or ignore the charges. We really don't care whether our organisers beat these people up or not" — that is much worse.

It is down to the rest of the left to show the SWP that we do care, and to demand answers from them. For copies of the broadsheet on the events at *Marxism 93*, and petition forms, send s.a.e. to AWL, P O Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



# Unions must call action now

# Save our Health Service!

**T**HE TORIES AND their managers, accountants, and money-men, are hacking the National Health Service to death.

They can be stopped if the trade unions and the Labour Party mobilise. A call for a mass campaign to save the Health Service, with strikes on a national Day of Action, would get a huge response. Time is short.

On 26 August Camden and Islington Health Authority told three big London hospitals to halt all non-urgent operations until next April.

University College, Middlesex and Bart's hospitals had treated "too many" patients so far this financial year and now — only five months into the financial year — the Health Authority's cash limits would allow no more.

It is routine now for Health Authorities to stop "non-urgent" operations in the last months of the financial year because their budget is exhausted. A halt just five months into the year shows the vicious penny-pinching turning into outright collapse.

People in constant pain and trouble from back disorders, hip problems, or cataracts, are being told that they must wait and put up with it all until next April at earliest.

Doctors and nurses at the hospitals are ready and able to do the operations. They are being halted only by the Government's crazy drive to get the Health Service operating like a *market economy* — an economy where cash counts for everything and need counts for nothing.

The same market madness is

behind plans to close or scale down many of London's big hospitals. They are "too expensive" — so they risk going broke in the new "internal market".

The Tories are not just crazy. They have a clear aim: to shift to a two-tier health service, where the poor get only minimal patching-up and the rich

*"UNISON has called a day of action on 11 November. That is too little, too late. We need a day of action supported by all the trade unions, and by the Labour Party, much earlier".*

get speedy high-tech treatment by paying for it.

The facts about America's market-based health system — where health care costs three times as much per head as in Britain but average health is worse, and admin overheads take 25 cents of each health-care dollar — do not deter them. In April this year, Tory minister Virginia Bottomley wrote to Health Service management instructing them to "identify areas... from which the public sector might withdraw".

The Tories have already driv-



Right now we need to mobilise to save the principle of public health provision. Photo: Garry Meyer

en a large part of dentistry into the private sector. Health Service managers and consultants (according to a survey this June) "expect certain expensive treatments to be excluded from some of the population" before long.

Babies are already twice as likely to die young in poor as in well-off families. Studies in Sheffield and Glasgow show that people in poor areas die, on average, eight years earlier than those in well-off areas.

Those inequalities will increase — and the Tories don't care as long as the rich are all right and their public spending bill gets smaller.

Health workers are fighting back, at University College Hospital and elsewhere. They need the support of the labour movement. If we mobilise on

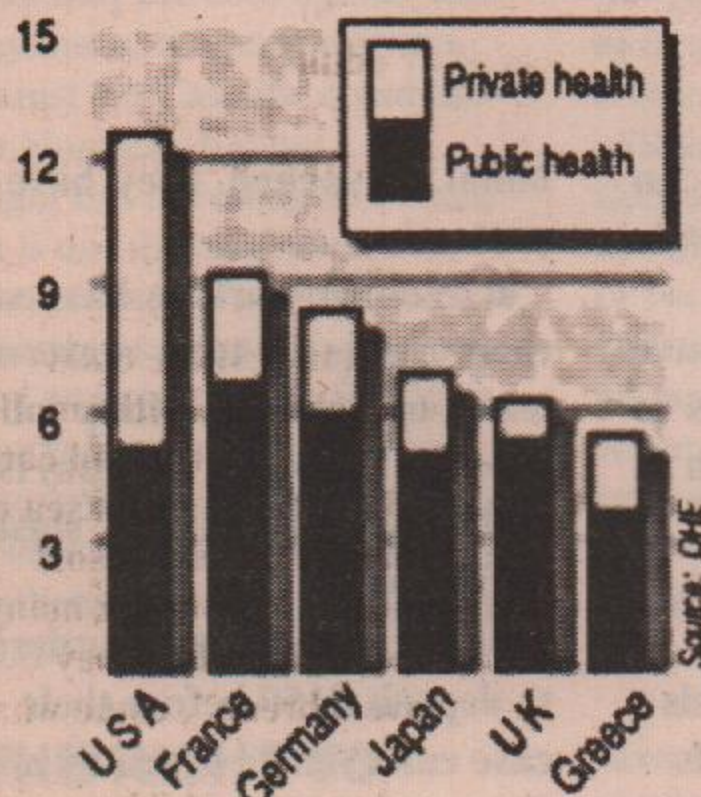
this, we can win: repeated opinion polls have shown that even most Tory voters oppose and resent the Tory rundown of the Health Service.

The public-sector union UNISON, which organises most health workers, has called a day of action on 11 November. That is too little, too late. We need a day of action supported by all the trade unions, and by the Labour Party, much earlier.

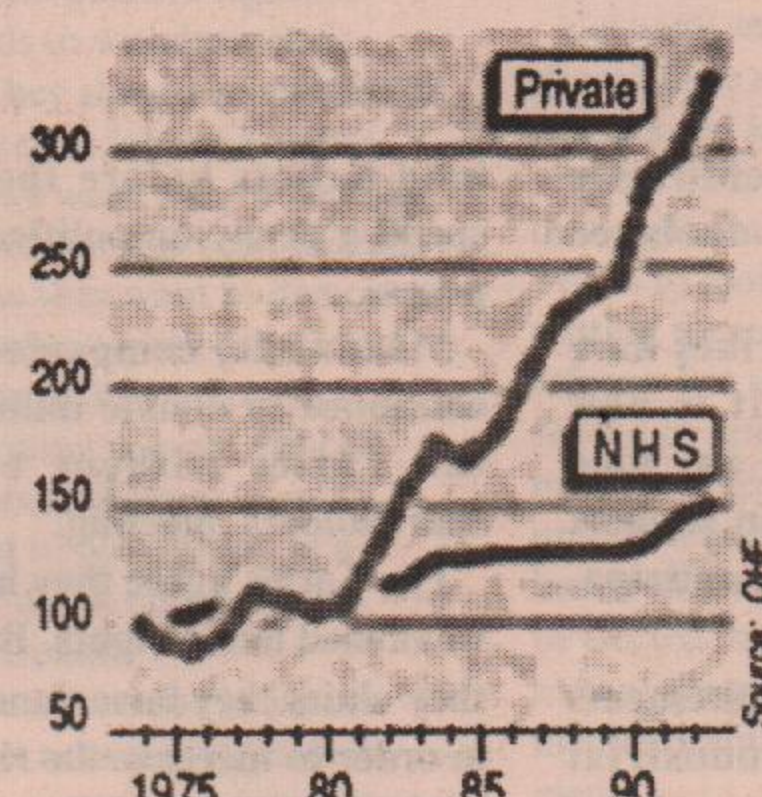
Activists should organise in the trade unions to make sure that they act, and in the Labour Party to win support and get the next Labour Government committed to restore health cuts and abolish the "internal market".

When we win those battles we will need to talk about reforming and democratising

the Health Service. But now we need to mobilise, immediately and massively, to save the principle of public health provision.



**Total health expenditure Percentage of GDP, 1990**



**Rising private health expenditure UK total health expenditure at constant prices. Index 1973 = 100**

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

Karl Marx

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# What should we be here for?

**“WHAT ARE we here for?”** asked George Woodcock at the 1960 Trades Union Congress. The same question faces this year's Congress, though incoming general secretary, John Monks may not pose it quite so blatantly.

## INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

The British trade union movement, having survived the Thatcher onslaught of the 80s battered but intact, now faces a more insidious threat: the loss of any sense of purpose. Poor, blundering Norman Willis responded to mass unemployment and anti-union legislation by attempting to turn the TUC into a purveyor of credit cards and cheap insurance, accompanied by periodic press releases urging such worthy objectives as “jobs and recovery” upon the government. Monks, though sharper and cleverer than Willis, has no more coherent vision of the way forward. His only public pronouncements to date have consisted of platitudes about the need for a “higher campaigning profile” (eg over rail privatisation) and a vague, unformulated proposal for “inter-recruitment” (ie the direct recruitment of members by the TUC, who would then allocate them to affiliated unions). Nothing wrong with either proposal, but they are hardly sufficient to answer the present crisis facing the whole of the trade union movement.

The crisis should not be underestimated. The left has got used to dismissing the preposterous claims of the “Euro-Communists”, who talked of “the end of the working class”, “Post Fordism” and so forth. We pointed out that, on the whole, trade union organisation has survived the recession remarkably well. Nothing like the great defeat of 1926 occurred in the 80s. One in three workers in Britain remains unionised — equivalent to the highest level of union membership in American history, for instance.

But in rejecting the exaggerated defeatism of the Euros and their co-thinkers, there is a danger of complacency. The last year has seen at least three crucial (and unnecessary) defeats: on the London Underground, London buses and the miners. In all three cases public opinion favoured the unions and union organisation was historically strong. What was missing was any coherent lead from either the TUC or the Labour Party.

**NOW WE FACE** a further round of anti-union legislation. The latest trade union Act will require union members to give regular written agreement to “check-off” arrangements for the payment of subscriptions, impose a seven day “cooling-off” period before legal strike action can take place even after a ballot, and require unions to give employers a list of all members to be balloted for strike action. It is potentially, the most devastating of all the Tories’ anti-union laws to date. And yet the response of the official “leadership” of the moment has been to shrug their collective shoulders and accept it as an inevitability. The response of most of the left has been no better.

Fed for years on a half-digested diet of out of context quotes from Lenin and Trotsky, most ‘revolutionaries’ dismiss all concern for working class organisation as “bureaucratism”. Point-of-production militancy has been artificially counterposed to defence of basic union organisation. The lack of real concern over the latest round of anti-union legislation and the Labour leadership's threat to the union link is symptomatic of this trend.

If you doubt it, compare the squaddist vigour that much of the left puts into anti-fascist mobilisations (important as they undoubtedly are) with their indifference to the mortal threats presently facing the organised labour movement. Defence of working class organisation simply isn't “sexy” these days. Fortunately the rank and file of the trade union movement is not so short sighted: at next week's TUC, an amendment from the AEEU (of all people!) will attempt to strengthen a fairly weak motion from the MSF, to read: “If more disputes like Timex are to be prevented... the punitive anti-union legislation must be removed in favour of a positive framework of law... this should enable workers to raise grievances without the threat of dismissal... and make solidarity activity lawful...” It didn't come from the AEEU leadership of course, but from the Districts and branches around Dundee, who have been closely involved with the Timex struggle. But this amendment is the single most important proposal before this year's TUC. And it answers the question, “What are we here for?”

# Time to free

## TUC debates anti-union laws

Gerry Bates and Jackie McDonagh take a look at the key issues at this year's TUC.

**T**HE TWO KEY issues at this year's Trades Union Congress are the anti-union laws and the defence of public sector workers.

The main motion on the laws comes from the technicians' union MSF. It is a very pale pink version of the “Workers' Charter” of positive legal rights for trade unionists that has been supported by a wide range of forces on the left, especially *Socialist Organiser* and AWL and the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers. MSF call for: “The General

Council to campaign for the repeal of anti-union legislation, and its replacement with a fair and balanced legal framework... (which) ensures that: 1) all employees can join, organise, and be represented by a trade union without fear of victimisation or discrimination. 2) All employees are so protected, whether working full- or part-time, at home or at a traditional workplace, and whether temporary or permanent”.

Unfortunately that is as far as they go in terms of specific commitments.

The TGWU and UNISON have amendments in which go some way towards strengthening the TUC's stand. In particular both unions call for the legal right to take solidarity

strike action. The UNISON formulation is the clearer of the two, based as it is on the policy that supporters of this paper have been pushing in the union for some years: “There is a legally recognised right to strike, to picket effectively and to take other forms of industrial action, including solidarity action”

Problems could well emerge in the compositing stage (the process by which different unions put together different parts of their resolutions and amendments in order to create a common position). UNISON delegates in particular should be alerted to the danger that the union leadership will use the opportunity to ditch the clear commitment to legalising solidarity action.

This happened last year and could well do so again, especially seeing as UCATT have put forward the call for: “The right to strike... including lawful solidarity action.”

This phrase is nonsensical. It means precisely nothing where solidarity action is illegal. Delegates should insist on a clear and unambiguous commitment to legalising solidarity action and should refuse to go along with any attempt to fudge the issue.

The railworkers' union RMT has also got an excellent amendment up on the same issue but it is tucked away in another corner of the agenda. With the experience of the Piccadilly Four (Guards sacked for involvement in industrial action and then denied a legal strike in their own defence) in mind the union calls for the legal right to: “be active in your union and to take industrial action without any fear of intimidation or pursuant persecution.” The call has been made3 even more relevant by the sacking of London Underground RMT activist Pat Sikorski (see page 16)

The section of the agenda on the public sector is full of fine words but contains absolutely no commitment to practical action. There are calls for opposition to the pay freeze, contracting out and privatisation and for more co-operation between unions, but that's all.

What is needed is for the TUC to name the day for coordinated national strike action against the pay freeze, cuts and privatisation and in support of all those fighting the Tories.

## Another turn of the screw

**T**HE TRADE Union and Employment Rights Act, which became law at the start of the month, is the seventh in a long line of Tory anti-union laws.

The most vicious parts of the new act are:

- All ballots for strikes and industrial action which involve more than fifty workers must now be postal. This will inevitably reduce participation as all the evidence points to the fact that workplace ballots get by far the highest turn-outs of any form of ballot.
- Unions will be compelled to give employers detailed information on any ballot that takes place

including: a list of all workers to be balloted; the ballot question itself; details of the ballot result and seven days' notice of any strike action (including a list of different dates of proposed strike action if a series of one day strikes are envisaged).

This will make it a lot easier for management to select and identify weaker groups of workers, as well as undermining the element of surprise involved in a campaign of one day strikes called at short notice.

- A new Commissioner for Protection Against Unlawful Industrial Action will be created and empowered to help any individual

member of the public to take legal action against a trade union.

This means that legal and financial aid to scabs and other anti-union reptiles will no longer be left to private initiative in the form of the Freedom Association but will become a nationalised industry.

- Workers who refuse to be transferred from one employer to another under the Tories' privatisation and Compulsory Competitive Tendering policies will lose all their rights; they will be treated as having had their contract “terminated” but will not have been sacked by either the old or the new employer.

# Why Britain's unions are not free

**I**F YOU ARE tired of hearing about the anti-union legislation, just remember what it means, and how appalling it really is.

Since 1980

- Rights to union recognition have been completely abolished.
- All forms of 100% trade union membership agreements have been legally outlawed.
- All forms of industrial action have been undermined by the rights given to employers to sack all or any of those taking strike action.
- All forms of secondary action and solidarity action, even by those working for cus-

tomers and suppliers of firms in dispute, have been declared unlawful.

- All unofficial strikes have been banned, and it is now unlawful to organise any kind of industrial action in support of those sacked for participation in such action.

● The detailed requirements for ballots before industrial action have been tightened and tightened. The judges have been able to rule strike after strike unlawful because of defective wording on the ballot paper, and in cases such as that involving the seafarers in 1988, to stop the union from even holding a ballot!

- Unions have been forced to

hold ballots before they can spend a penny on political purposes.

Meanwhile, companies have continued to donate millions to the Tories without even a shareholders' meeting.

The Tories agree they have weakened union rights. But they claim they have done this in order to increase the rights of the individual. If you are going to tell a lie, they believe make it a big one!

Since 1980:

- All workers with less than two years' continuous service have been excluded from the right to take a case of unfair dismissal to an industrial tri-

bunal. If sacked, they have no protection.

- Women workers have seen their rights to take maternity leave, and return to their job — already poor in comparison with other countries — slashed to ribbons.

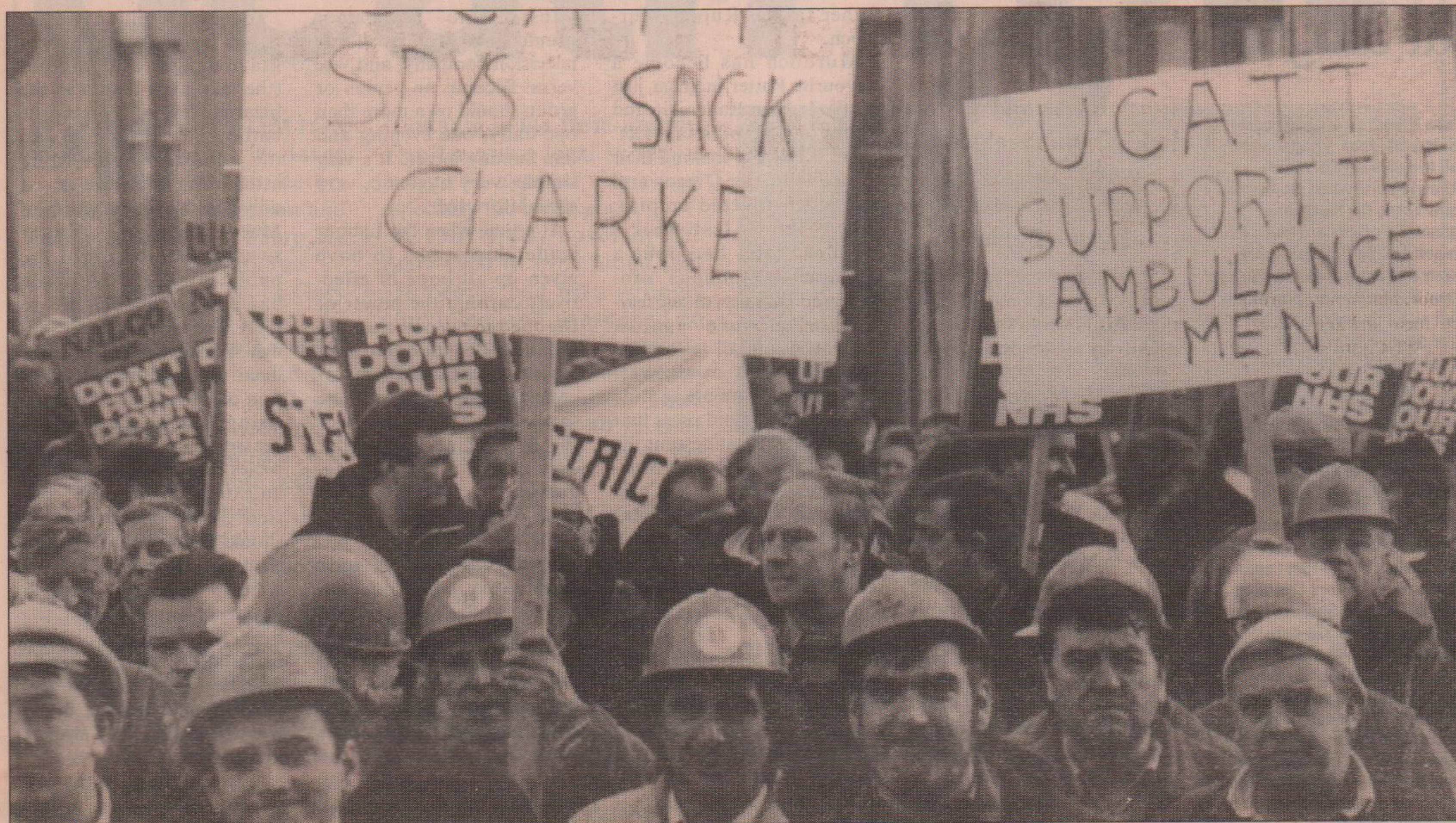
Workers can now be ordered to deposit £150 before their case can even be heard by an industrial tribunal.

Thousands of our young people working with low pay and atrocious conditions have been denied even the limited protection of the Wages Council machinery.

Unions governed by draconian and unjust laws like these are not free trade unions.



# our trade unions!



## 12 points of the Workers' Charter

The draft workers' charter of trade union rights was produced by Labour Party Socialists. It provides a working class alternative to the current legal shackles on the trade unions.

### 1. THE RIGHT TO UNION MEMBERSHIP

Individual workers are always in a weaker position than individual employers. In any case employers do not operate individually: they have their own "unions". Without the right to organise, workers will be helpless victims of exploitation.

In several West European countries the police and armed services have union rights. The Establishment wants to keep the police and armed services strictly hierarchical, compelled to obey orders without question. Union organisation would give police officers and soldiers the right to protest about their conditions and about the way they are used against miners, against ambulance workers, or against the Catholic communities in Northern Ireland.

A right not to belong to a trade union is not the equivalent of a right to belong. The right to union membership strengthens all workers and empowers us to develop a countervailing power to that of the employers. The right to "opt out" weakens that power. It strengthens the employer and is a weapon of capital.

### 2. THE RIGHT TO ORGANISE

Legislation must protect all workers against discrimination or dismissal on the grounds of union membership. It must provide rights of access for union representatives from outside — full-time officials or shop stewards from other workplaces. It must give clear protection against victimisation.

It must allow all shop stewards

at a workplace a broad range of facilities as well as time off for meetings and courses. It must allow ordinary members time off to attend meetings.

### 3. THE RIGHT TO RECOGNITION

Clear obligations must be imposed on employers requiring them to recognise and bargain with the representatives of independent trade unions. A Labour government should deploy a range of sanctions — of the quality and bile of the fines and sequestrations deployed by Thatcherism against working people — against those bosses who refuse to bargain in good faith.

### 4. THE RIGHT TO STRIKE AND TAKE SOLIDARITY ACTION

For the first time in our history, UK law should contain a clear and unequivocal positive right for individuals to withdraw their labour. They should be entitled to withdraw their labour because they want a wage rise, or because a fellow worker has been sacked, or because they want to demonstrate solidarity with other workers such as NHS employees for whom striking is more difficult — or workers striking to exercise their right to recognition in a company down the road or in John O'Groats.

If they exercise their rights to take direct action against their employer or action in solidarity with others taking primary, secondary or tertiary action, they should be protected against dismissal or discrimination. And their unions should be protected against injunctions or sequestration.

### 5. THE RIGHT TO PICKET

The right to attend at your own or

another workplace to express your support for fellow workers and hostility to the bosses is a fundamental civil liberty. The rights of free movement, and free speech, must be applied to the picket line. Workers should be entitled to picket any workplace in whatever numbers they see fit. Restrictions on the numbers of pickets are as undemocratic as restrictions on the numbers of those taking part in demonstrations.

### 6. THE RIGHT TO UNION DEMOCRACY

We simply want John Smith to give trade unionists the same rights to make their own rules as Jim Callaghan, Harold Wilson, Hugh Gaitskell, Clement Attlee and Ramsay MacDonald were prepared to give them. The right of union members to control their own rulebook is an important extension of democracy in our society.

Certainly every union member should have a right to vote on who should lead their union. It's a scandal that some unions refused that right, and it enabled the Tories to look as if they were putting through a democratic reform. But union democracy should be enforced by union members themselves, not by anti-union judges. Current Tory law insists that union executives must be elected, but by a postal ballot, so that the main influence on the members voting is the capitalist media.

### 7. THE RIGHT TO POLITICAL ACTION

Trade unions have to be involved in political action if they are to protect their members, just as the bosses have to be involved in politics if they wish to safeguard their profits. The Tories have ordained that every union must ballot its members on whether or not they want to maintain a political fund

every ten years. No such restrictions are placed on companies.

A Labour government should simply repeal the present Tory restrictions, leaving the whys and wherefores of political expenditure solely to the membership of each union.

### 8. THE RIGHT TO JOB SECURITY

As the law presently stands, you can work for a company for a year or 18 months and then be sacked with no rights to claim unfair dismissal, just because the boss doesn't like the cut of your jib. A Labour government must legislate so that the law on unfair dismissal and allied areas covers all workers. A special tribunal must be established to adjudicate on redundancy. All tribunals must be given power to compel reinstatement where they find dismissal is unjustified.

### 9. THE RIGHT TO A SAFE WORKPLACE

The Tories have undermined the law on Health and Safety by starving an already inadequately resourced Health and Safety Executive and Inspectorate of funds. Labour must qualitatively improve the situation in the light of the Zeebrugge disaster, Piper Alpha, and the position on the North Sea oil rigs. This is a life and death matter. Crucially, union reps must be given the right to stop the job immediately in the face of hazards.

### 10. THE RIGHT NOT TO BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

Because of their ineffectuality, only a handful of cases are heard each year under the anti-discrimination laws. We need clearer and stronger rights to protect workers against discrimination on the grounds of race, sex and sexual orientation. Industrial Tribunals must again be given the power to compel reinstatement.

### 11. THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Labour's proposals are vague on the enhancement of industrial democracy. The fiasco over the Bullock Report and "workers on the board" has stalled debates on this area for more than a decade. The issue must be re-opened. Immediately, a Labour government should introduce improved rights for shop stewards to receive information and consultation over profits, investment, takeovers, hiring and firing, and all aspects of the operation of the business.

### 12. THE RIGHT TO A FULL AND PROPER CONTRACT

For part-time workers, short-term contract workers and homeworkers. Around a third of the workforce now belong to the "peripheral" workforce. Part-time, temporary, seasonal, zero-hours—these are the new super exploited. They do not get the same rights as permanent, full-time workers. This additional exploitation applies particularly to women and black workers. It divides and weakens our class and exerts downward pressure on wages and conditions for the whole class. The peripheral workforce must receive the same rights as full-timers.

Finally, and crucially, we demand reform of the judiciary. The implementation of the Workers' Charter will be undermined if its interpretation is left to the present unrepresentative and unaccountable judges.

We need to make the election of magistrates and the junior judges part of local government elections, and ensure that the top judges are at least appointed after full parliamentary scrutiny, and on the recommendation of a new Judicial Appointments Committee.

## Why we need a Workers' Charter

THESE ANTI-UNION laws work. They work to weaken unions.

They work to cut wages. They work to instill fear into workers. They work to increase profits. They must be opposed now.

But we cannot ignore the difficulties involved, so vile are these laws, so far have they gone. The employers are able to get an injunction against a vast range of industrial action. Whilst resistance must be mounted, it can ultimately lead to sequestration — the state takeover of the assets of the union involved.

While we must urge resistance to the degree it is possible in every situation where we are confronted by the laws, we have to look at the weakened state of our movement. In most cases generalisation of a strike to other

groups of workers will be difficult. For the real answer, the permanent answer, the root and branch repeal of these laws, we shall have to look to a Labour government.

To argue otherwise is to hope for a sudden spontaneous explosion of working class industrial militancy on a scale not seen since the 1970s, when a developing mass strike wave freed the gaoled dockers.

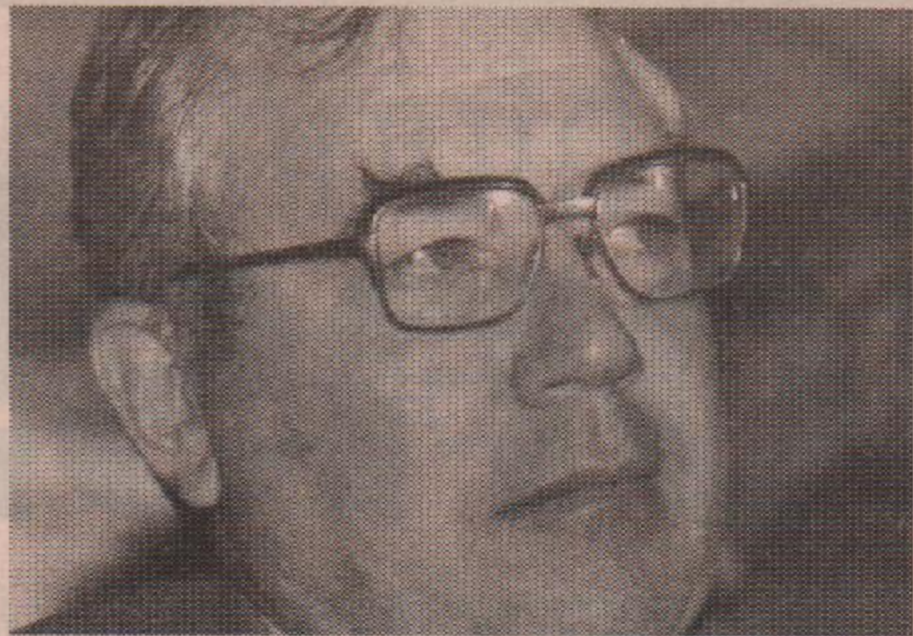
Such an explosion would be a truly wonderful thing if it happened but it is not very likely. For the left to base our strategy on such a hope would not amount to much of a strategy at all. In fact it would be an equivalent of waiting for the Second Coming.

Workers, especially the weakest with little industrial muscle, need legal rights. Legal rights provide more permanent protection than pure workplace strength, based as it is on the ups and downs of the labour market.

A campaign for positive legal rights for workers is much more advanced politically than the demand of some on the left for a return to the trade union immunities of old.

Positive rights would help all workers including those with little industrial muscle. They would compel vicious anti-union employers to accept trade union organisation in those areas that are now heavily de-unionised.





Go-ahead, dynamic — wasting £7 million

## Siege? What siege?

### GRAFFITI

**T**HE UN ARE certainly winning the war of words in the former Yugoslavia. No situation is too tricky, no circumstance too dangerous, no plight too desperate for the UN. There are no sieges, it is merely that the Serbs are in a "tactically advantageous situation" near Sarajevo, on land "acquired by force". On the other hand using "all necessary means" to ensure that aid envoys get through means the UN not using force, even when necessary. Most importantly the UN has neutralised some of the most dangerous places in Europe by calling them "safe areas", although they rather gave the game away by putting the letters "UN" before "safe". But there is only so much you can change by words - calling David Owen an "international statesman" seems as plausible as a Bosnian Serb leader being recognised for his contribution to world peace.

**O**H, HOLD THE press, good news for David Owen. Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic has been appointed to the Greek Orthodox Church's 900-year-old Knights' Order of the first rank of Saint Dionysius of Xanthe. The reason for this honour? Karadzic's "contribution to world peace".

**W**HILE YOU might think that everyone might be trying to escape from Karadzic's efforts for peace in Sarajevo, there is at least one group of people trying to get in - the Ukrainian army. Under normal circumstance a Ukrainian conscript receives the princely sum of 12p a month, more likely to be 7p under new exchange rates. The minimum UN payment for serving in the former Yugoslavia is £330 a month. The rest of the Ukrainian soldiery clearly did not want to be left out of the big money. Recently the commander of the Transcarpathian military district was disciplined for selling guns to hunting clubs, and four airforce officers were caught having smuggled 26 Indians and Pakistanis into Poland in military helicopters at £1,000 a head.

**L**ABOUT STEPPED up their battle for the working class last weekend. Robin Cook turned up with a market stall in London's Spitalfields decked out with cassettes and CDs, expensive perfume, designer trainers and clothes, watches, car hubcaps and computer games. No, this wasn't the Labour leadership's attempt to bring in a little extra cash to sure up the party's perilous finances, but a campaign against that major threat to ordinary folk, cheap counterfeit goods sold from market stalls. Some of these goods were dangerous, and could even kill, said Cook, highlighting the risk from cheaply made

fake Nike trainers and overly tight Levi jeans. We can now all breathe a sigh of relief knowing that when we buy the new Sonic the Hedgehog game, the profits are going to a reputable multinational company like Sega, not some bloke from Romford with a lock-up full of dodgy gear. But there is one group of fakers whom Cook did not target. Somewhere down the Walworth Road are a group of people reselling old Tory policies as the genuine Labour article. Be warned - these goods can seriously damage your health.

**F**OR SALE, THE 53-room Palladian mansion, once owned by the 19th century Prime Minister Lord Liverpool and later by the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, set in the 320-acre Buxted Park, with a deer park and heated outdoor swimming pool. The mansion was bought by the EETPU under the direction of Eric Hammond in 1987, a year before the union's expulsion from the TUC. Hammond's plan was to use the mansion to offer low cost weekends for would-be members in the better paid sections of the white collar workforce. The union paid £6 million for the estate, spent £1.5 million doing it up, and has lost over half a million a year on it ever since. This new-style look-ahead union is now hoping to recoup about £3.5 million reselling — a loss of over £7 million. In the union the mansion has been dubbed "Eric's Folly".

**I**N 1969 400,000 young Americans sat in a field of mud for "three days of peace and music". Woodstock was the free festival that proved to be the high point of sixties American counter culture - more hot air than real radicalism. Since then many of the participants have gone to become the backbone of the US middle classes, but hold the memory of their "radical youth" sacred. Now the memory is up for sale. The 25th anniversary is being planned on the original site for next year. Tickets start at \$150 for a basic ticket, up to \$5,000 for the hotel and limousine package, which includes a photograph on the stage with the stars. While some of the original acts are unavailable (Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin), and others are now as safe as their audience has become (Bob Dylan), some of the original line up are considered a little too political for the more adult audience. So out goes Joan Baez, and in comes Barbra Streisand. The final irony is that the 10 mile perimeter fence will be patrolled by National Guardsmen, like the ones who shot at an unarmed anti-Vietnam war student demonstrators the year after Woodstock, killing three.

**T**HE TRAIN leaving from platform four has just gone into liquidation. The first private rail service, the Stagecoach service between London and Scotland, will close in October after reporting losses of £500,000 in its first year.

## GRAFFITI

# Thank God for Saint Dennis

### PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

**D**ennis Potter is not someone I'd much care to be stuck in a lift with. He's one of those morbid, self-flagellating Christian socialists forever brooding about original sin and its myriad socio-sexual consequences. His plays are about as much fun as a wet week in Milton Keynes.

But, at least the whinging playwright cares about things and is willing to speak out against the evils he perceives. His recent diatribe against John Birt, Marmaduke Hussey and the other "croak-voiced Daleks" presently Thatcherising the BBC was a wonderful polemic. More to the point, what Potter said about them was patently true. John Birt's response was to croak "bleakly pessimistic...no basis in reality...we are in a strong and healthy condition" - like a wounded Dalek.

Media coverage of Potter's speech concentrated upon his vituperation against the

Birt/Hussey regime at the beeb, all but ignoring his other target: Rupert Murdoch.

Murdoch has become a favourite Potter bugbear just as the Labour leadership and much of the official 'left' have been busy making their peace with the Digger and his multi-faceted empire. Even before last week's tirade, Potter had done a Channel 4 'Opinions' programme that was a scarcely-controlled rant against Murdoch and all his works: "There is an avid, wet-mouthed downmarket slide in Britain's tabloid press that began its giddiest descent the day marauding Rupert Murdoch acquired the *Sun* and dragged so many others towards the sewers where too many of his too craven employees have their natural habitat... Cannibalism, sadism, fetishism, Thatcherism. Endless sex, endless violence - Blown-away bodies emptied of their souls."

A rant, certainly. But a rant that concludes with some eminently practical proposals for bringing Murdoch and his ilk under some sort of control. Unlike many liberals and leftists, Potter rejects increased legal controls over the content of newspapers ("even one hesitant step down that road begins a journey that no society wishing to be free can ever safely contemplate"). Instead, he proposes draco-

nian limitations on ownership.

"First, no newspaper should own any part of any television company, and vice versa. Second, no person or group should own more than one daily, one evening and one Sunday paper. It's very simple, very hygienic, very straightforward..."

At a time when the Labour leadership seems to have given up all hope of effectively curbing the power of the media barons and the radical left continues to hanker after various forms of censorship, we should be thankful for the wisdom of the WhingEing Playwright, even if he is a miserable so-and-so.

**O**n the subject of good rants, the *Independent's* Andrew Marr last week devoted an entire column to a no-holds-barred attack on Paul Johnson. The denunciation was occasioned by some snide comments Johnson had made in the *Spectator*, deriding the *Indie's* campaign on the siege of Sarajevo. Marr replied with coruscating accuracy: "His (Johnson's) political journalism involves a relentless nastiness that rarely fails to leave its readers just a little bit less decent and tolerant than they were five minutes earlier. Johnson is a skilled manipulator of the baser instincts of the *Daily Mail's* Middle England. His

fingers know where the Hate Button lies."

The great tradition of journalists feuding in public is in grave danger of dying out (the last great feud was the bizarre Neil vs Worsthorne battle a few years ago) and it's good to see Mr Marr attempting to revive it - if only because (in the words of Marr) "nonsense, unanswered, can drip into the public mind". Mr Johnson has not, so far, deigned to reply. But in this week's Sunday Times he has at least lived up to Marr's description of him as a "self-dramatising Roman Catholic, a scatterer of crucifixes and bibles through his prose." In an extraordinary piece entitled "Why decent people should heed the elderly gentleman in Rome", Johnson writes: "The old man in Rome shouts against the deafening cacophony of materialism. We can hardly hear him above the din. But deep in their hearts, many want to listen. They suspect his notion of what life is about is right, and that all the others are wrong." Could this free plug for the Church of Rome be the first, long-awaited, manifestation of Rupert Murdoch's conversion to Christianity? Come to think of it, self-professed Christianity is the one thing that the socialist Potter, the populist Murdoch and the high-Tory Johnson all have in common. Which must prove something.

# The Lady from Wapping

### WOMEN'S EYE



By Jean Lane

**T**HE ELECTION of former SOGAT print union leader Brenda Dean to the House of Lords is a good time for us to remember 'Wapping'. 'Wapping' in 1986 was one of the great battles in the war between the Thatcherites and the labour movement. Remember?

To escape the power of the Fleet Street print unions, Rupert Murdoch "relocated" to Wapping in what used to

be the London docklands. The new British centre of Murdoch's empire, "Fortress Wapping" as Murdoch's friends called it - or "Scab City" as it was to us - was to be kept free of stropky print workers. They, together with their "restrictive practices", were to be left behind in Fleet Street. Those who worked there would have to accept Murdoch's terms. Those who would not accept Murdoch's union-busting "New Deal" would not work there.

But militant trade unionism did not stay behind in Fleet Street, sulking. The workers followed Murdoch to Wapping and an army of pickets laid siege to "Scab City". Thatcher, who had more than once allowed Rupert Murdoch to ignore Britain's anti-monopoly laws, now provided him with an army of police thugs to protect his Wapping operation against the anger of the men and women whose lives he had wrecked as casually and with as little compunction as he might have swatted flies. Again and

again, over many months, there was serious fighting around the perimeters of Murdoch's Docklands enclave. Hundreds of workers were injured. Those were policemen freed from doing similar work in the miners strike; they laid about these workers as well. Years later, when Tory anti-union laws and Thatcher's police thugs had won Murdoch's victory over the printers, the courts would rule that the police had used "excessive violence" and compensate some of the printers whose heads and lives they had broken.

Brenda Dean was one of the official leaders of the workers in that battle. A more incongruous, improbable, incompetent and ultimately disloyal leader you would not easily find!

There was nothing of the great woman working class leaders in the lady-like Brenda. This was no Mother Jones, no Genora Johnson, no Rosa Luxemburg. Like so many of the trade union leaders who found themselves fac-

ing Thatcher's murderous onslaught, Brenda Dean was not a militant trade unionist; she was a career union official. Brenda was not made or schooled for the class struggle - and the workers she led knew it. Her lack of fire, militancy, commitment or initiative made her the target of fierce criticism.

In the election for leader of the newly united print workers union, the GPMU, she was defeated by Tony Dubbins - who was no better than she was during the strike - and is no longer a union official. Major offered her a seat in the Lords. She accepted! One of the official leaders of the second greatest trade union struggle of the Thatcher years accepts a peerage from the government which used Cossack tactics to smash the workers she led!

Those who fought the police at Wapping would not be all that surprised. They knew what the Tories knew. Brenda deserves it. What will she call herself? Baroness Wapping? Lady Judas?





Youth Fightback is...

... the voice of revolutionary socialist youth. This page is separately edited.

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for details of our activity.

Letters and articles to *Youth Fightback* c/o PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

# USA: end death row

**"E**CONOMICS plays a large role in determining who goes to prison and who is executed". "There are no rich people on death row".

These are the words of Gary Graham, who has spent 12 years on death row in Texas for a crime he insists he did not commit. He has been just hours from death on three occasions.

At 17 Gary Graham was advised by a crap state defence lawyer to plead guilty to a series of robberies and shootings. He always said he did not commit them.

He was convicted because of identification by one witness who was 33 to 44 feet away from the robber in a dark car park!

Four people have given Graham alibis for the time of the crime.

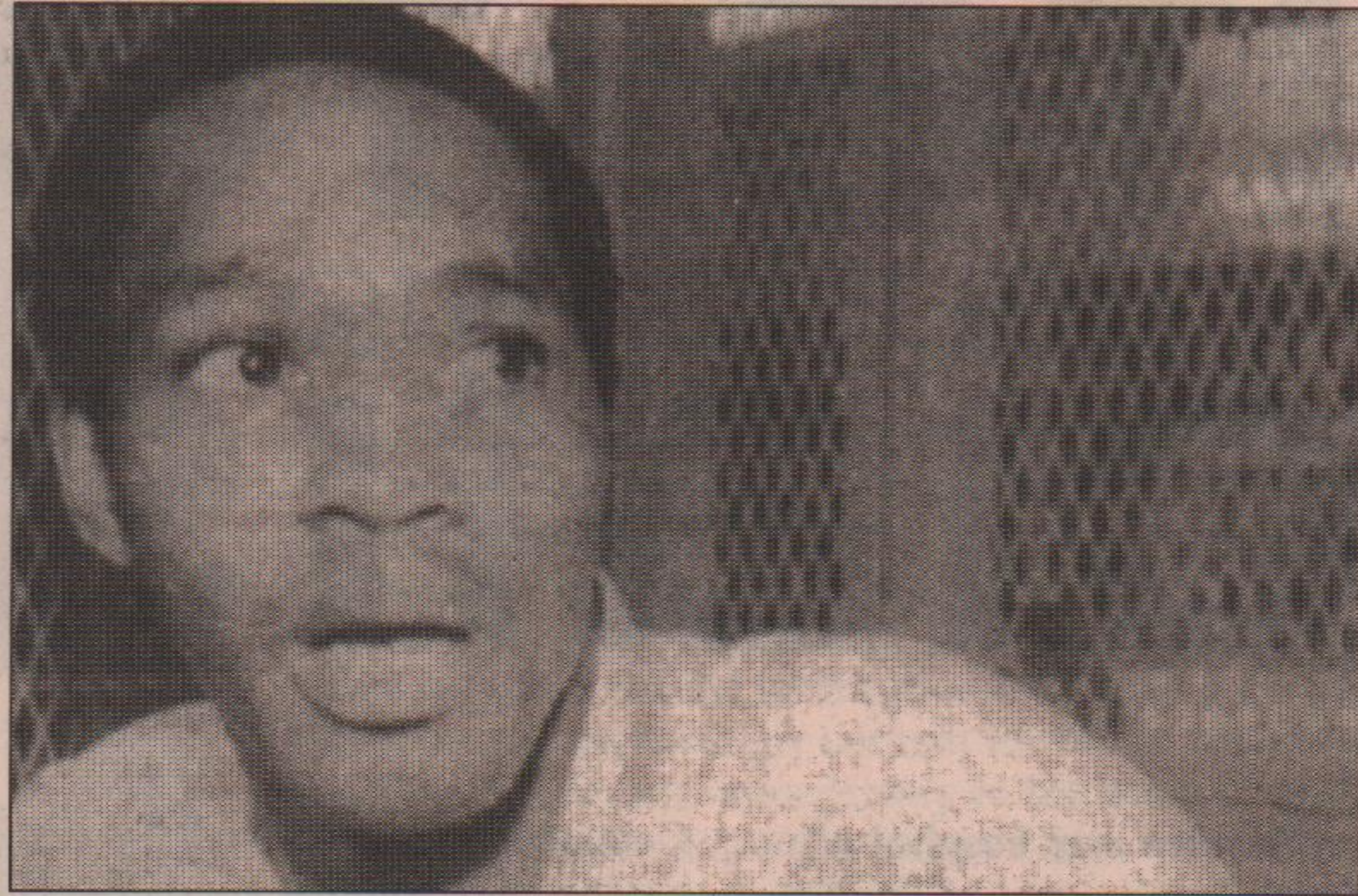
Graham is far from unique. The American legal system is weighted against the poor, especially the black poor.

A 1987 study covering the years 1900 to 1985 found that 350 people had been wrongly convicted and sentenced to death and 23 of them executed.

**The US has since 1985 executed five juvenile offenders. There are currently over 40 juvenile offenders on death row in the US!**

The whole legal system is twisted by racism. Graham was found guilty by a 12 man jury, 11 of whom were white. In April an all-white jury in Fort Worth recommended Christopher Brodsky, a white supremacist, for probation after convicting him of the murder of a black man.

Jack Greenburg, former director of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, has said "Virtually all executions have taken place in former slaveholding, segregating areas and states and have been carried



Gary Graham — on death row

out with disproportionate frequency against blacks who kill whites."

Only the rich can afford justice. Several states place a \$1000 limit on the defence provided for people on trial for their lives. Public legal systems are grossly inadequate. Yet Dallas County, Texas spends an average of \$265,640 in prosecution of a case.

Youth for Justice say: The labour movement in the

US and across the world must come to the defence of those like Gary Graham who are victims of the poverty and racism of the world's richest country and who face death by the butchers who rule the US legal system.

"Liberal" US President Clinton is now increasing by about fifty(!) the number of crimes which carry the death penalty!

The labour movement should totally oppose the barbarity of

the death penalty. It is nothing but state murder. To those who claim it is a curb on crime the short answer is to be found in these facts: Texas, the top killer state, has executed 56 people since 1982 and it has 375 people on death row, yet the FBI admit that since 1981 Texas has been America's most violent state!

Free Gary Graham! Stop state killings!

As we were saying...

**LABOUR:**  
No policy for youth

**Reactionary git of the week...**

## Quack Doctor

Our award for "Reactionary Git of the Week" goes to a doctor who in a recent survey of GPs said if women under 16 years old came to him for contraceptives he would send them away with a flea in their ear and tell them to bring their parents.

If a woman goes to a doctor for contraceptives, she should get them. It is not some silly-old-fart of a doctor's job to tell women what to do.

Attitudes like this lead to unwanted pregnancy and messed up young lives.

Too many GPs still refuse to give contraception to those under 16. All those who are sexually active must have equal rights to safe sex!

# The discipline of the slave pen

**T**HE LAW SAYS that beating people is wrong. Yes, unless they are children! In that case it is "discipline".

Reporting last week on a case where a professional couple were arrested for "actual bodily harm" against their 11 year old son, who was beaten with a shoe, the Sun said "... discipline within the family isn't cruelty. It's the right of a caring parent."

In British law you can be prosecuted for violence against anyone — except a child in your care! The case of the child-minder who won the right to beat children in her care would not have come to court except that she was not the parent.

It is sickening! The group in society who most need protection from violence — children — are the only group who can be legally beaten!

Children are under the power of adults, and particularly of parents. They are physically weak. This imbalance of power leads to terrible and widespread abuse, yet children are denied protection unless their parents do them serious injury. And they are treated as the property of their parents.

Adults in families are given this power

because of the part the family plays in capitalist society.

The family saves the bosses the expense of rearing the next generation of workers. It helps instill in us from the earliest age ideas of obedience and an acceptance of authority based on power, force and might.

The family prepares the next generation physically and mentally for their role in our world of wage slavery.

It is not surprising that right wing rags like the Sun newspaper get very worked up by even mild attempts to curb parental violence against children.

Brutalising children is a necessary part of preparing children to live in the vile world the Sun glories in — the world of wage-slavery where might is right. Of course parents should be allowed to beat their children with shoes! That's their job!

Children should have equal rights. Children need more protection not less. We need much tougher laws against adult violence.

The law must recognise that children are people, members of society, not private possessions of their parents.

## No youth policy

I HAVE just returned from the World Congress of the International Union of Socialist Youth in Portugal. The 2,400 delegates included 500 Germans, 120 Swedes, six Japanese, six Maltese and even one from Bhutan. The UK sent no one and was the only EC country unrepresented, which says something about our youth policy and internationalism.  
GLYN FORD,  
LABOUR MEP FOR  
GREATER MANCHESTER  
EAST,  
MOSSLEY, LANCASHIRE

Taken from *Tribune*



# Trotsky

## a life for socialism



Leon Trotsky died 53 years ago in a Mexico city hospital after having been struck down with an ice-pick by an agent of the Russian dictator Joseph Stalin. In his 60 years Trotsky played many parts: the young militant in the anti-Tsarist underground and then in Siberian exile; a leader in 1905 of history's first soviet in St Petersburg and then — on trial for his life before the Tsarist courts — the courageous defender of the democratic right to insurrection; the organiser of the October 1917 insurrection in Petrograd; the builder of the revolution's Red Army which fought a civil war and drove the invading armies of 14 capitalist states out of the territory of the workers' republic; the founder with Lenin of the

Communist International; the defender of the October Revolution against the Stalinist counter-revolution; the advocate before the bar of history of the murdered October revolution and the real Bolshevik party against the bourgeois and "socialist" lies which identified the Stalinist counter-revolution with the revolution of 1917 which it had drowned in its own blood.

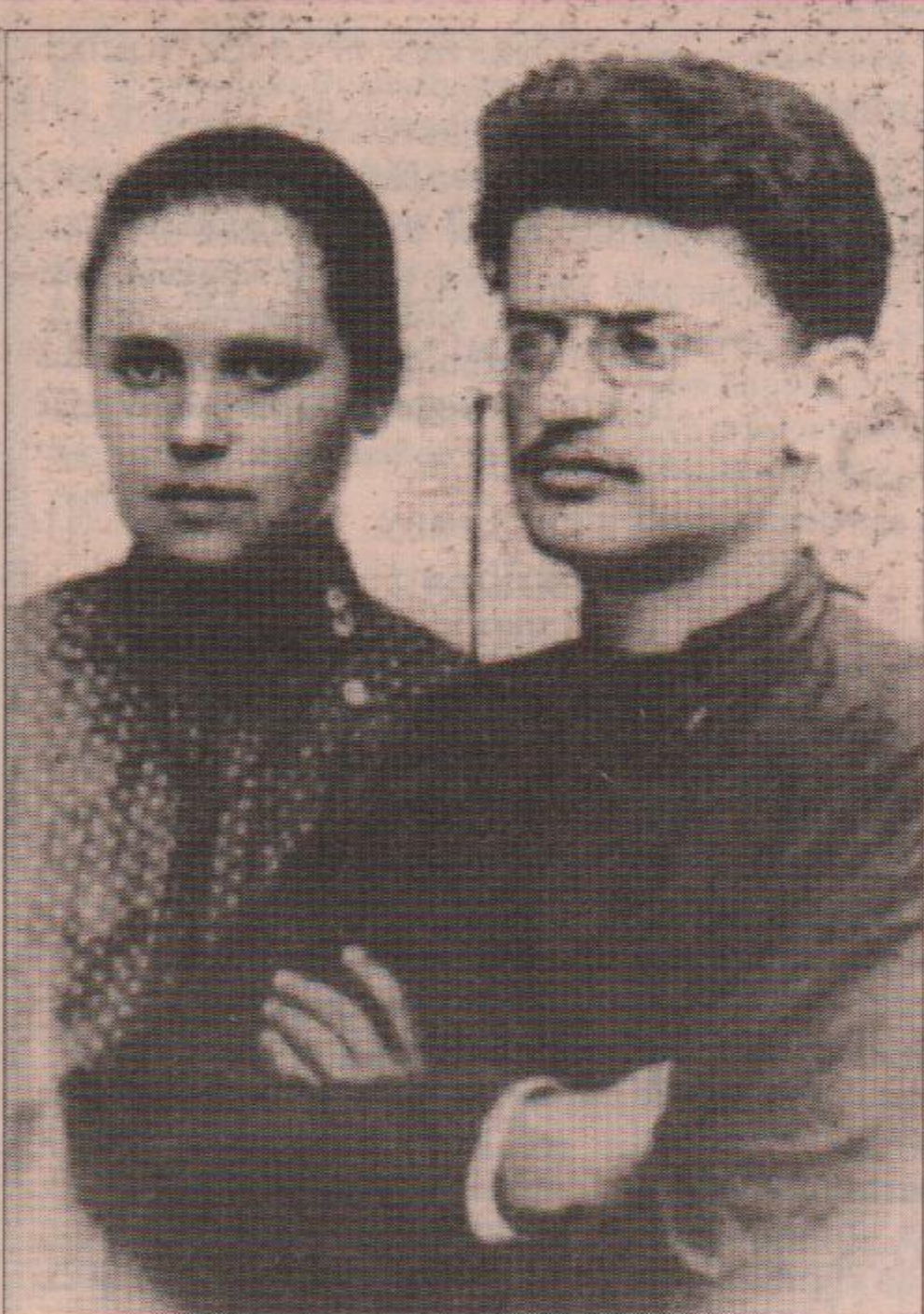
Towards the end Leon Trotsky was the very personification of the proletarian revolution. Today his name is one of the names of an elemental force in history — the drive for the working class emancipation. Trotsky died on 21 August 1940. The cause he represented still lives.

### Civil war, famine, the Army and the Soviet Republic

The new government had plenty of enemies. Other governments, those who supported the old one, another organised a civil war against the new government. Trotsky created the Red Army 'Whites', or counter-revolutionaries. It was a war, in which the Russian workers and peasants suffering. Eventually the Whites, as well as armies from 14 countries, were defeated. By a terrible cost. There was famine; the cities lay in ruins; and the working class was massively reduced. After the civil war, an effort to reconstructing society had to be carried out in a picture, depicting Trotsky, the leader of the

### 1905: the year of the Soviet

In 1905 there was a mass revolutionary wave in Russia, beginning with huge demonstrations outside the Tsar's — the Emperor's — palace. Central to the revolution was the small but militant working class. Strikes and general strikes were the dynamo behind the revolution. The workers created new democratic organisations called 'Soviets', which means 'councils'. The Soviets were a new, distinctly working class form of democracy. Trotsky was elected President of the Soviet in the Russian capital of St Petersburg. Unfortunately, the revolution remained largely isolated to the cities and so it was defeated. Trotsky and other workers' leaders were put on trial and again sent to Siberia. He managed to escape a second time, and lived in exile until the revolution of 1917. This picture shows Trotsky in a cell after his arrest in 1905.



### Young Trotsky

Trotsky was born Leon Davidovitch Bronstein, son of a Jewish peasant family in the Ukraine. Even at school he was a radical, and he was won to Marxism by Alexandra Solovskaya in the last years of the nineteenth century. Alexandra would be his wife. Together they became involved in the early 'social-democratic' — which in those days meant revolutionary Marxist — movement in Russia. Like many other Russian radicals, Trotsky suffered imprisonment and deportation to Siberia. In 1902 he managed to escape to join Lenin, one of the Party leaders, in exile, working on the newspaper 'Iskra', (the Spark). The young Trotsky is on the right of this picture, with Solovskaya next to him.



### Revolution 1917

The workers rose up in revolution in February (or March by later and modern calendars) 1917. Again soviets were created. This time the Tsar was overthrown. Trotsky and Lenin argued for the soviets to take state power, displacing the "Provisional Government" set up after the February revolution. Lenin's party, the Bolsheviks, soon to be renamed the Communist Party, at first disagreed with this idea. But after April 1917, the Bolshevik party was won over to it, and Trotsky ended many years of estrangement from Lenin by joining the Bolshevik party.







# Red the public

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## Stalinists paint Trotsky out of history

The Russian revolutionaries were part of an international movement. They saw the revolution in Russia as only the first step in the socialist revolution all over the world. After the revolution, great workers' struggles were unleashed across Europe and elsewhere. These struggles were defeated; but under the leadership of the Bolsheviks in Russia a new international Communist movement was built to fight against capitalism and against the old Socialist Parties which had betrayed the cause of international socialism by supporting the First World War.

This picture was taken in Moscow at a rally after the Third World Congress of the Communist International (Comintern). Later the Stalinists were so determined to wipe out the memory of Trotsky that they erased his image from the photograph.



## Against 'socialism in one country'

Why did Trotsky become 'persona non grata' in the USSR? With the defeat of the international revolution, and the isolation of the workers' state in Russia, workers' democracy fell victim to a privileged bureaucracy, whose leader was Joseph Stalin. Trotsky and others tried to prevent the rise of Stalin and his faction, and to defend the original aims of the revolution. They formed the 'Left Opposition' to fight for workers' democracy, and for the international extension of the revolution, because the rulers in Moscow were increasingly content to rest on their laurels. They began to argue that world revolution was unnecessary in the short term. Russia could build 'socialism in one country'. In practice this meant a turn away from the world socialist revolution and the transformation of the international communist parties from organisations fighting to make a working class revolution in their own countries into frontier guards and foreign policy makeweights for the Soviet Union.

This photograph shows the funeral of Dzerzhinsky in July 1926. It was Trotsky's last public appearance as a leading member of the Communist Party.

## Murdered by Stalin

After years in exile, Trotsky eventually settled in Mexico. During these years he watched the Comintern degenerate along with the Soviet state itself. Faced with the rise of Hitler, the Stalin-dominated Comintern took the ridiculous line that the Socialist Parties were the main enemy. They collaborated on occasion with the Nazis against the Socialists, whom they called 'social fascists'. This policy helped Hitler to take power without serious opposition, though the CP and the Social Democratic Party had many millions of supporters, some of them organised in CP and Social Democratic militias. Then in Spain in 1936-7 the Comintern helped strangle a workers' revolution in order to keep in with their capitalist allies.

The Trotskyists concluded from all of this that it was necessary to build a new working class International — the 'Fourth' International.

The Stalinists had to get rid of the Trotskyists, who were like a ghost from their revolutionary past — and, so they feared, the harbingers of a future revival of revolutionary socialist politics in the working class. In 1940 an agent of the GPU, the



forerunners of the KGB, assassinated Trotsky at his home in Mexico.

They killed his body, but they could not kill his ideas, nor the international struggle of the working class. Over the last 40 years the working class in Germany, Hungary, Poland and elsewhere have gone into action against the totalitarian bureaucracy which lying claimed to be the embodiment of socialist and working class interest in Eastern Europe.

## Testament

For forty-three years of my conscious life I have remained a revolutionist: for forty two of them I have fought under the banner of Marxism. If I had to begin all over again I would of course try to avoid this or that mistake, but the main course of my life would remain unchanged. I shall die a proletarian revolutionist, a Marxist, a dialectical materialist, and consequently an irreconcilable atheist. my faith in the communist future of mankind is not less ardent, indeed it is firmer today, than it was in the days of my youth.

Natasha has just come up to the window from the courtyard and opened it wider so that the air may pass more freely into my room. I can see the bright green strip of grass beneath the wall, and the clear blue sky above the wall, and sunlight everywhere. Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression and violence and enjoy it to the full.

L Trotsky, Coyoacan, 27 February 1940



## American debate strategy for black liberation

# Black self-determination or workers' unity?

Is "Black self-determination" or separate struggle the road to black liberation in the USA? Or is the answer black and white workers' unity?

Here we continue to present the debate taking place in the American journal, *Bulletin in Defence of Marxism*

*Socialist Organiser* 558 carried Peter Johnson's article arguing that "If black and white workers struggle together for socialism and black liberation under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party they can win both. If they do not, they can win neither.

SO 560 carried a reply, "In defence of black nationalism", by Steve Bloom and Claire Cohen.

Here Johnson replies (abridged for the sake of space) to his critics. He replies both to Bloom and Cohen and to an article in the May 1993 edition of *Bulletin in Defence of Marxism* by Vera Wigglesworth and Jim Miles.

The Wigglesworth-Miles article is available for 50 pence from *Socialist Organiser*.

Contact *Bulletin in Defence of Marxism*, 27 Union Square West, 2nd Floor Room 208, New York, NY 10003.

STEVE BLOOM AND Claire Cohen's article attempts to place its criticism in a revolutionary framework. But it suffers from lack of clarity on the basic Marxist concepts of "nation" and "self-determination" and an objectivist view that blacks somehow will find their way to revolutionary consciousness spontaneously, with Trotskyists acting only as their "outside allies".

Bloom and Cohen complain that my attempt to provide a scientific definition of the concepts "nation" and "self-determination" is a "quibble over terminology". This shows a dangerously light-minded approach to theoretical questions.

Fortunately, there is no need for a lengthy explication of the term "self-determination," because Bloom and Cohen concede that the SWP's latter-1960s usage was not Lenin's and Trotsky's:

As far as "self-determination" is concerned, Johnson is technically right but still wrong on the substance of the matter. Marxist terminology, like anything else, can change under changing circumstances...

During the 1960s the black community itself began to use the idea of "self-determination" as synonymous with "black control of the black community." This was not a theoretical innovation of Breitman or the SWP, but merely the adoption of a new meaning for old terminology resulting from the evolution of a particular struggle. Would it have been better for the SWP to sit on the sidelines and lecture blacks about the proper use of words?

Should Trotskyists have sat on the sidelines and lectured the black movement about the proper use of words? No. Should we have sat on the sidelines, cheered the spontaneous black struggle, and adapted to its inevitable confusion? No. Should we have attempted to intervene with our indispensable analysis, programme and strategy? Yes.

Moving on, Bloom and Cohen correctly observe:

So the real question that needs to be addressed is not whether the SWP was sufficiently orthodox in its definitions when it made its turn toward black nationalism during the 1960s, but whether that turn was right or wrong. And this takes us to the real substance of our disagreement with Johnson's article.

They continue:

Whether or not the black community in the US is a nation in the strict scientific meaning of that term, and whether or not true "self-determination" in the Marxist sense of a separate black state is possible, the revolutionary struggle of blacks to control their own communities, to shape their own destiny as a people, is, in these two respects, 100 per cent analogous to the dynamics of national liberation as properly defined by Peter Johnson. The campaign for "black self-determination" as understood and defined by the black community itself is both a basic struggle for democratic rights and human dignity of an oppressed people, and a fight which, if waged in a revolutionary manner (or if it is victorious even in part), can seriously weaken the US ruling class. It is therefore, a struggle which all

working people in this country should encourage and support. [original emphasis]

Good. This is an important statement. Trotsky and the pre-1960s SWP saw the development of a revolutionary struggle for an independent black state in the South as a potential channel for the struggle for black liberation and a potential component of the struggle for socialism in the US. They said Trotskyists should support such a struggle if it developed, although they should not advocate it. In fact, such a struggle did not develop and is extremely unlikely to develop, although Trotskyists still should support it if it did develop.

There is, however, an analogy between national liberation struggles and the black liberation struggle in the US. The extent of the analogy is that oppressed nations and racially oppressed American blacks are struggling for the political power to end their oppression. The limit of the analogy is that in the case of American blacks the right to secede and form a separate state is not the relevant form of this political power.

Black control of the black communities is not the relevant form of this political power, either. Trotskyists should support most demands for black community control, apart from those that strengthen the capitalist state or deepen the capitalist exploitation of black workers, but we should understand and explain that community control is not enough. Too many decisions affecting the black community are made and, because of the interdependent nature of a modern, industrialised economy and society, must be made outside the black community.

The actual dynamic of the struggle for black liberation is not the struggle for the right to secede from the US, nor the struggle for black control of the black community.

Rather, the actual dynamic is the combined, multi-racial working-class struggle for socialist revolution and black liberation, in which black workers, taking advantage of their strategic position at the centre of the industrial working class and most metropolitan areas, as well as their generally higher political consciousness, provide overall leadership to the working class and defend their interests both as workers and as black people.

The second main disagreement I have with Bloom and Cohen is over the role of Trotskyists in the struggle for black liberation. The key passage in their article is the following:

If genuine working class revolutionaries are going to forge a real alliance with genuine black revolutionaries, our task is clearly to convince blacks that we are not simply trying to use, manipulate, or sacrifice their struggles for our own ends, as so many have before us. And the only way we can do that is

to unconditionally support whatever legitimate demands emerge from the black community — up to and including the demand for a separate national state. That support cannot be half-hearted; yes, well, we acknowledge your democratic right to decide this, but we really think it is a bad idea." No, it will have to be militant and wholehearted support. "If that is what the black community democratically determines, that is what we want, too, with all our heart and soul, and we will fight to the last drop of our own blood alongside of you if that is necessary to achieve your objectives." White workers and revolutionaries who think like that will prove that they are worthy of the trust and collaboration of the black community.

There are three problems with this passage. First, it assumes that Trotskyists and other "genuine working-class revolutionaries" are outside the black liberation struggle, trying to "forge a real alliance with genuine black revolutionaries". But black Trotskyists are "genuine black revolutionaries", the most politically conscious part of the black proletarian vanguard. Second, it assumes that Trotskyists should follow rather than lead the black liberation struggle. On the contrary, Trotskyists, to the best of their ability, should lead the struggle for black liberation. Finally, it reeks of liberal moralism. It portrays Trotskyists as white outsiders whose only role is to "unconditionally support whatever legitimate demands emerge from the black community... to the last drop of their own blood" and thereby prove themselves "worthy of the trust and collaboration of the black community".

How different this is from the attitude of Trotsky, who thought that supporters of the Fourth International should intervene actively in the black struggle, putting forward their own analysis, programme and strategy, as they would in any other struggle.

VERA WIGGLESWORTH and Jim Miles's "Marxism and Black Self-Determination: In Reply to Peter Johnson" takes a very different approach from that of Cohen and Bloom. While Cohen and Bloom, following Breitman, revise traditional Marxist theory on the national question to fit the real situation of blacks in the US, Wigglesworth and Miles attempt to revise reality to fit the traditional theory. But they come to the same conclusion: denying the necessity for multi-racial working-class unity and Trotskyist leadership in the struggle for socialism and black liberation.

Wigglesworth and Miles begin by stating their view of the concrete goals of the struggle for black liberation as follows:

Yet the struggle for self-determination is what will place African-Americans at the forefront of confrontations with the bourgeoisie. The coming fight of African Americans will not only be for freedom from oppression, for equality, for equal opportunity. It will be a fight for political power to bring about, secure, and advance those aims.

Very good. But what kind of political power? Political power as a leading component of the proletarian ruling class of a unitary workers' state? Or political power in a separate black nation-state? Wigglesworth



"Black power" protest in the 1960s: Marxists supported the movement, but were they too uncritical?







*Labour-union links: the history and the struggle now*

# Traditions do not keep themselves

Stan Crooke reviews *The Contentious Alliance — Trade Unions and the Labour Party*, by Lewis Minkin, Edinburgh University Press, 1991; £14.95.

**R**UNNING TO NEARLY 700 pages, Lewis Minkin's *The Contentious Alliance* is a detailed examination of the relations between the trade unions and the Labour Party.

Minkin's argument is that these relations are governed by a series of informal and unwritten 'rules' which constitute a kind of collectivist labour movement etiquette, the most basic of which is that trade unions are concerned with trade union issues such as pay and wages, whilst politics should be left to the Labour Party. Each wing of the labour movement, therefore, should respect the autonomy of the other.

This 'rule' emerged because of a combination of factors: traditional trade union suspicion of politics, right wing hostility to the socialist aspirations of many pioneers of the Labour Party, and hostility to electoral politics from some left-wing trade unionists.

Another factor was respect for the (unwritten) British constitution. Undue pressure from the unions on a Labour government might — heaven forbid — be deemed 'unconstitutional'.

Similarly, according to the rule at least, the Labour Party, especially when in power, was expected to respect and protect trade union independence. Free collective bargaining and the right to strike were traditional 'no-go areas' for a Labour government.

**"Defence of TIGMOO demanded solidarity with a Labour government even when the government was in breach of basic trade union values".**

Even *supportive* interventions by Labour Party members into industrial disputes were not welcomed by the unions. And trade union sponsored Labour MPs were warned to steer clear of disputes involving members of their sponsoring union. Industrial disputes, according to the 'rule', were the province of the unions, not the Labour Party.

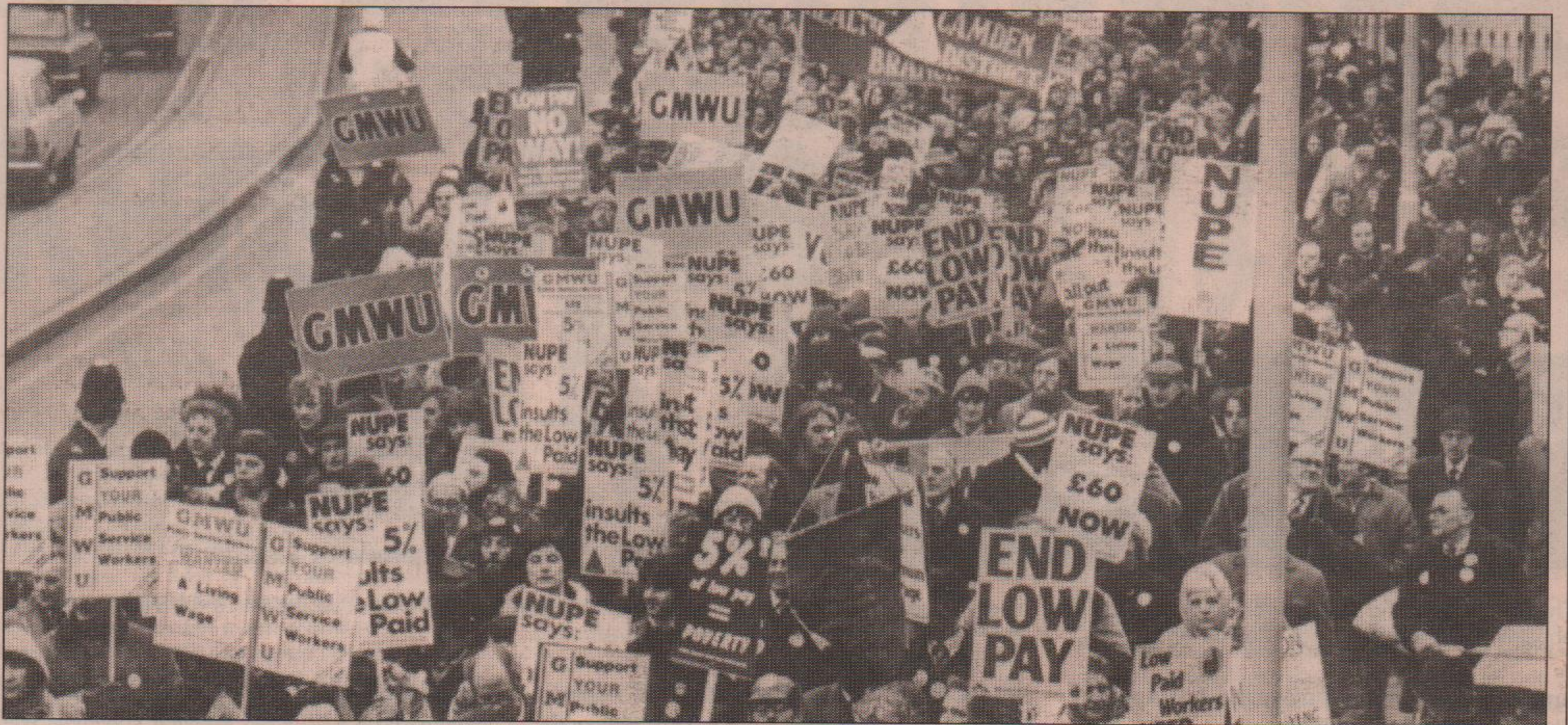
Linked to this basic 'rule' were a number of other 'rules' which helped provide a 'code of conduct' for trade union representatives in their dealings with the Labour Party.

Trade unions were concerned with priorities. Their main priority was the interests of their members. Broader issues, especially those of a political nature, were far lower down the scale of priorities (if they ranked as a priority at all).

Other rules flowed out of basic union values such as solidarity and unity. In the realm of relations between the unions and the Labour Party these values meant the defence of TIGMOO ("This great movement of ours") against those who sought to split it from within or attack it from without.

Defence of TIGMOO demanded solidarity with a Labour government even when the government was in breach of basic trade union values and the attacks came from the left.

The book has been thoroughly researched



Lewis Minkin blames working people — striking to defend their conditions — for the 1979 General Election defeat of Labour.

and contains a wealth of detail but is still open to a number of basic criticisms.

Minkin mentions in a single sentence that "they [these 'rules'] were essentially the legacy of the right rather than the left in the unions". But everywhere else in the book Minkin tends to regard the 'rules' as neutral.

The 'rules' have helped maintain right wing control of the labour movement.

And Minkin does not point out the pattern behind breaches of the 'rules': either the right wing is striving to reassert control in the face of left wing upsurge, or the right wing wants to pursue policies (wage controls, limits on the right to strike) which infringe traditional trade union autonomy. Everything is dealt with as if it were an "accident" rather than as something inherent in the 'rules' themselves.

In Minkin's history of the Labour Party there are some curious omissions. The origin of the Labour Party as the political wing of the trade unions at the turn of the century is mentioned only in passing. There is no reference to opposition to its establishment by those trade union officials who preferred continuing reliance on Liberal MPs.

Minkin's emphasis on 'rules' produces a history of the Labour Party in which developments are explained by observance — or sometimes breaches of — the 'rules'.

Broader political developments are not ignored entirely. But they end up as little more than a backcloth to developments in which the driving force is the 'rules', almost as if they had some life of their own.

Minkin also downplays the extent to which the left of the labour movement has fought against right wing domination of the Labour Party. Instead of being treated as an arena of struggle, the Labour Party is portrayed as something fixed and immutable, governed by its 'rules'.

In the early 1920s, for example, Communist Party members mounted a serious campaign for the adoption of socialist politics and more democratic structures by the Labour Party. But Minkin mentions this only in a footnote to chapter two. Minkin's focus is the 'rules', not the struggle.

**I**N THE EARLY 1980s, the left was in the ascendancy in the Labour Party. The right wing wanted the unions to use their financial "clout" to beat back the left wing advance. Minkin illustrates this with quotes from Labour right wingers: "The trade unions have every right to insist on this (i.e. bringing the left wing NEC to heel) and if there is any prevaricating, the unions should use their financial muscle to do just that —

insist".

The body through which the unions exercised their "financial muscle" was Trade Unions for a Labour Victory (TULV). Despite all the evidence concerning the right wing's factional motivation, Minkin insists that TULV was "a consensual collective organisation" which aimed at "a balanced political leadership and consensual purposes".

All that was a code for the slogan "Stop the left!"

Moreover, the formation of TULV was itself a breach of the 'rules', as it constituted an unprecedented intervention into the internal affairs of the Labour Party by the unions and thus breached the tradition of mutual autonomy.

Minkin explains this away by arguing that it was the left which was breaching the 'rules' by its campaign for reform of the party and support for workers in struggle! TULV was "really" only an attempt to restore the effectiveness of the 'rules' under threat from the left.

At this point, Minkin's self-presentation as the unbiased, scholarly observer of the "contentious alliance" becomes less and less credible.

For instance, trade union struggle is blamed for Labour's defeat in 1979: "It was the industrial actions of the winter of

**"... extraordinary is Minkin's claim that since 1983 "the Labour Party has made a remarkable recovery".**

1978/79 which, in the end, fatally undermined the possibility of a third consecutive term of Labour in office." Also, proposals to re-structure voting at party conferences so that the Parliamentary Labour Party could cast a block vote of 20-30% are described as proposals for "the integration of the PLP into the conference". In fact this was a blatant attack on democracy and a further concentration of powers in the hands of a few hundred MPs.

Even more extraordinary is Minkin's claim that since 1983 "the Labour Party has made a remarkable recovery". As evidence of this he cites "a new communication to members

— *Labour Party News*", Peter Mandelson's control of the Communications Department ("invigorated" and "full of innovation") and the growing efficiency of Walworth Road as a whole ("the building had been turned round").

The massive shift to the right in Labour Party policies in recent years, is described by Minkin as "a response to that desire for moral autonomy and self-expression which is a feature of the age". When people use language like that, you know they're covering up for something.

**O**N THE KEY QUESTION of trade union-Labour Party links, Minkin advocates reduction of the block vote to just under 50% at party conferences, the right of unions to split their block votes, state finance for political parties, and the creation of "associate membership" status for payers of the political levy who identify with the Labour Party.

Whilst a strong case can be made for splitting the block vote by individual unions, Minkin's other proposals would drastically weaken union input into the Party (reducing the block vote to less than 50%), prove unworkable ("associate membership"), or be wrong in principle (state financial support for parties).

Yet Minkin concludes his work with a passionate plea for maintaining the Labour Party as a trade union based party.

For all the Labour Party's flaws it still "embodies an ideal of participatory democracy". The Labour Party is "public testimony to the remarkable political creativity of working people — 'hands' who gave themselves political voices".

Beginning a descent into idiot optimism, Minkin argues that Labour-union links are rock-solid: "Why did the SDP split and not the Labour Party? Why did the Liberal Party split (as it has done before) and not the Labour Party? Why did the International Marxist Group split and not the Labour Party?"

Suggestions that the Labour Party is weakening the links as a move towards complete destruction are dismissed by Minkin as "from some, a bit of left-wing pleading to bolster a weakening case and, from others, right-wing wishful thinking."

It would be naive in the extreme to assume that the right-wingers in the leadership of the Labour Party share Minkin's loyalty to TIGMOO.

Keep the Link Campaign: campaigning to preserve the trade union-Labour Party link. Contact: 120 Northcote Road, London E17





Clint Eastwood — as Clint Eastwood

# With the best bits cut out

**Cinema**

**Matt Cooper reviews *In the line of fire***

**T**HEORIES ABOUT who killed US President John F Kennedy are staple fare for Hollywood films of late. Was it the CIA, or a cabal of Pentagon officers forestalling a pull-out from Vietnam, or the Cubans, or the Mafia?

*In the Line of Fire* puts forward another theory — it was his bodyguard's fault. It is a bodyguard's duty to "take the bullet" for a president — to put their body between the gun and the target and if necessary be shot in the process. This particular bodyguard, Frank Horrigan (Clint Eastwood), didn't react. After the first shot hit Kennedy he did not move to protect the president, and let the second shot kill him. The theory is pure fiction, but it could give the film a springboard for an reflection on the ethics of sacrificing your own life for that of another — especially when that other is a politician, maybe abhorrent.

Frank starts thinking about this in the film. But as with too many other lines of thought in the film, abruptly

stops soon after starting. You find yourself feeling that Clint Eastwood is playing Clint Eastwood — Frank plays jazz piano, he has maverick liberal political views, he is something of a cynical misogynist, he's getting on a bit and can't really carry off the hard man act any more. Eastwood isn't doing the Dirty Harry bit again. He is pensive, sensitive and doesn't seem to derive undue pleasure from shooting people.

As a liberal agent Horrigan was Kennedy's favoured FBI man. He had the president's ear. He was one of the new generation who came in on Kennedy's coat tails. With Kennedy's death something in Horrigan died too. He lost his wife, he lost his ideals, he lost his way.

Now it is the beginning of 1993 and a lame duck president is about to lose an election. The hope of the Kennedy years is being reborn (with Clinton?)

Into the picture steps Mitch Leary (John Makovich, playing a wonderfully over the top psychopath). Leary wants to kill a president, any president will do as long as it's the current one.

This is Horrigan's last chance — will Leary be his Nemesis or his Redemption? Either he will take the

bullet this time, or he will fail to save president number two.

Of course, the future is ours to know, and the film becomes as exciting and unpredictable to watch as jelly setting.

Yet, there seems to be traces of a better film left here. You get the suspicion that parts were written out and much more ended up on the cutting room floor, leaving incongruous ghosts haunting the remains of the film.

Leary is an ex-CIA assassin. He claims that the CIA have made him a monster, and for some reason the CIA wanted to kill him. These suggestions are made in the shadows of the film and peter out.

Leary's motives are vague, and what should clearly have been the core of the film, telephone conversations between Leary and Horrigan where each begin to get under the skin of the other, are under-developed. Instead you get a "love interest", giving every appearance of being grafted onto the film at a late stage.

The result is a film that doesn't seem to be a film — the acting is excellent but the plot comes and goes, and everything under the surface appears to have been purged.

**The Sicilian mafia**

# Made in the USA

**Television**

**Paddy Dollard reviews *Timewatch*, BBC2**

**E**VERYONE, I suppose, knows a bit of the story. I knew that for a long time that during the Second World War the US government used the Sicilian mafia to help it conquer Sicily, and that in return for mafia collaboration, the Italian-Armenian mafia boss, "Lucky Luciano" gained an early release from a US jail.

Luciano, who returned to Sicily on his release, had, I knew, been one of the brokers in the deal. That much is widely known.

There is a great deal more to know roots and ramification of this astonishing story were uncovered in BBC 2's *Timewatch* last week.

After 1922, Mussolini's fascist regime made war on the mafia gangsters who — together with the semi-feudal landowners — ruled Sicily. Mussolini's fascist gangs ruling by lawless terror, were now doing to the whole Italian ruling

*"The victorious Americans released mafia men from Mussolini's jails and appointed large numbers of these "anti-fascists" mayors of towns and villages. They were... raised to unprecedented heights. Why?"*

class what the mafia gangs had long done for the Sicilian landowners. The two had a great deal in common: they were rich. But Mussolini's had state power and used it ruthlessly.

Operating without the old constraints of bourgeois democratic legal procedure, the fascists conducted an effective counter-terror against the mafia. They occupied villages, rounded up suspects en masse, and jailed and interned alleged mafiosi without trial. In this way they broke the power of the mafia, though without wiping out all traces of it.

The mafiosi had good reason to "hate fascism". By contrast in the USA, the mafia thrived when World War 2 broke out. They joined "the anti-fascist united front".

The Federal Bureau of Investigation was still officially denying that any such thing as the mafia existed. That did not stop US counter intelligence making an alliance with it!

The mafia infested the American sea ports and the labour unions. In return for favourable treatment, they helped the government agencies

make sure everything was under control, and that the "war effort" was not weakened on the waterfront. It was one way of policing the labour force. It lent immense strength to the gangsterism which is still powerful in the American labour movement.

The mafia was also used to kill suspected Germany agents. When, after 1960, the CIA tried to use the mafia to assassinate Fidel Castro, no new ground was being broken.

Out of this mafia-US Government alliance on the waterfront grew the idea of using the mafia to smooth the American invasion of Sicily. The half-crushed mafia was a ready made anti-fascist fifth column there. The mafiosi and those "influenced" by them greeted the American army as their liberators. So they were!

The victorious Americans released mafia men from Mussolini's jails and camps and appointed large numbers of these "anti-fascists" mayors of towns and villages. They were not only restored to power, but raised to unprecedented heights. Why?

The mafia were anti-communists in a Sicilian world where the landless and the peasants wanted to overthrow the landlords and the US had decided to throw all its weight behind the forces of capitalistic conservatism in Sicily, as everywhere else in the world, they did not come more conservative than the mafia!

On behalf of the Sicilian ruling class the mafia — soon integrated into the Christian Democrat Party which has ruled Italy for half a century — now made war on the Sicilian common people, resorting to large scale massacres where necessary.

Some at least of the US officials in 1943 and after knew what they were doing and meant to do it. It was a lesser evil than Stalinism, a great and growing power in Italy.

Why the bourgeois democrat American Republicans chose to confront the Stalinist Russian Empire and its allies and dupes in Italy and elsewhere as the allies of savage reaction is one of the paradoxes of history. But they did, all over the world, in Sicily the great bourgeois democratic republic of the West helped the mafia, whose roots stretched deep into the feudal Middle Ages, climb once more onto the back of the people.

US socialists agitated in vain for a democratic US foreign policy which would ally with those — such as the Sicilian workers and peasants — seeking democracy, self-determination and justice.

In Sicily the US put in power a gangster republic which used all the techniques of Mussolini's fascist regime had used to keep the people down.

Sicily was the first piece of Hitler's Europe to fall to the US led allies, who said they were fighting a war for democracy. 50 years after the US army with the help of the mafia took control of Sicily, the war for — bourgeois — democracy is still not over there.

**Comrades in Arms**

Received with Thanks 1/- towards the Communist Party's great Campaign for £40,000 by March 31st, 1942

Harry Pollitt

**Those who do not learn from history are condemned to relive it**

Scotland Yard has a "Black Museum" where relics and mementos of spectacular crimes are stored. There is no museum of political crime. Nevertheless we record these two items for display in some future "Museum of crimes against socialism". The first is a poster — one of many in the same vein — from 1942, lauding the great butcher Stalin and his close comrade in arms, the lesser butcher Churchill. The other is a typical 1942 receipt for a donation to CP funds signed by CPGGB Secretary Harry Pollitt and adorned with the head of the then British Prime Minister. In those days the CP broke strikes and witch hunted strikers. Harry Pollitt made a notorious speech in which he said: "Today it is the class conscious worker who will cross the picket lines". If you thought that the recent crop of Liberal Democrat "Communists" around "Marxism Today" were in socialist terms the lowest of the low, think again. In 1945 the CP went to the right of the right wing Labour leaders, arguing for continuation of the Tory-Labour Liberal coalition!



# "I felt as if someone had walked over my grave"

## ON THE SPOT

By Garry Meyer

**O**N HOLIDAY in Poland last month, I visited a place called Oswiecim, which once had another name. The Nazis, when they occupied Poland, during the Second World War, changed the name of this town to Auschwitz. They turned it into the site of a mass extermination camp.

Here the Nazis killed between 1.5 and 2 million people.

Death was inflicted on them by starvation, exhaustion, beating, hanging, firing squads and gas. The vast majority of prisoners died by gas.

Up to 2,000 prisoners would be crammed into a chamber and gassed.

After they were dead their gold teeth would be removed, their hair cut off. All the treasured possessions that they had managed to bring with them in suitcases to the camp would be stored for redistribution and recycling by the Nazis. Nothing was wasted here but human beings.

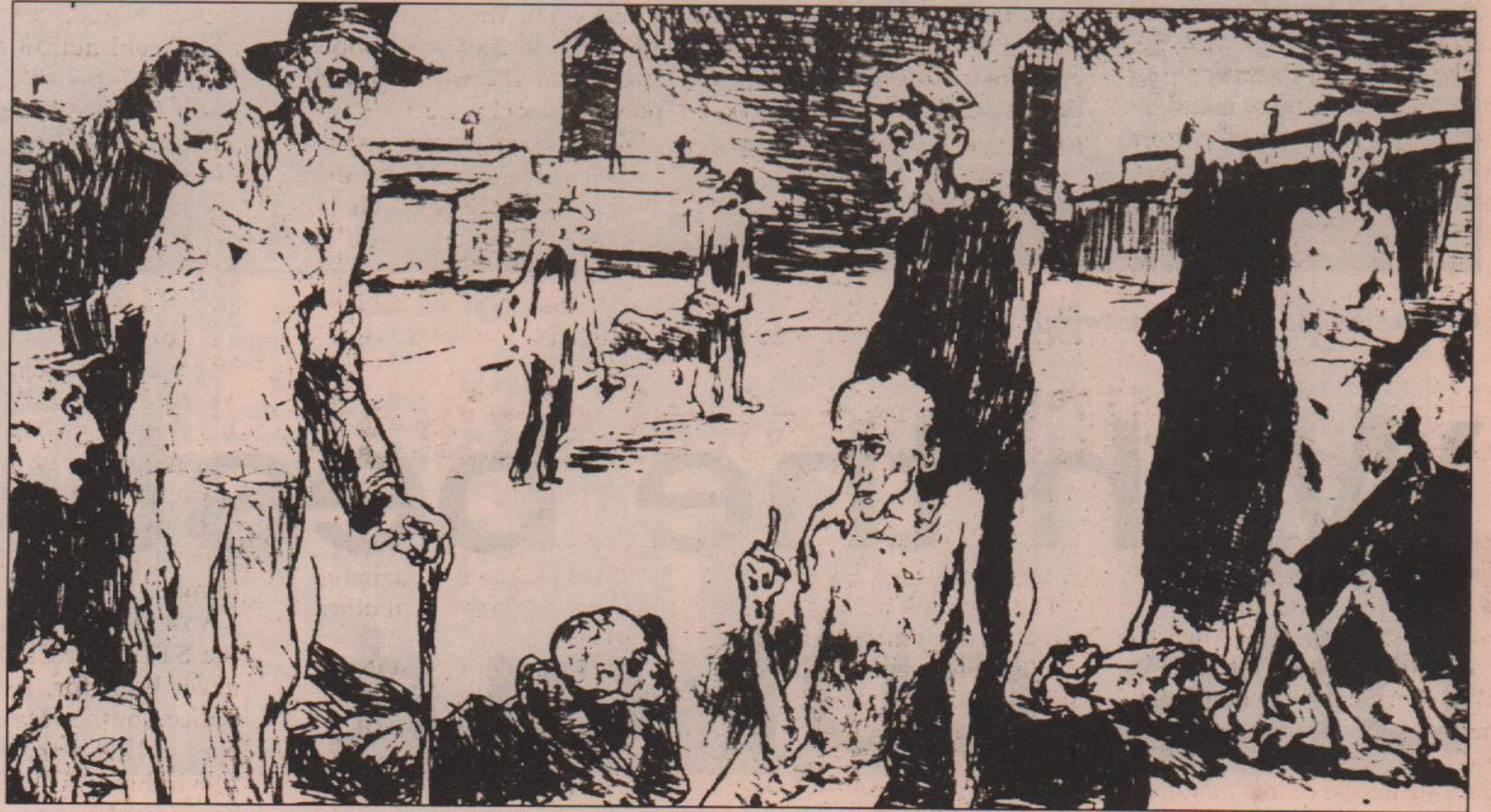
The Nazis killed others as well as Jews at Auschwitz. The first victims were Polish political prisoners. They killed gypsies, Czechs, Yugoslavs, Soviet POWs. People were transported from as far away as Greece to die here in Auschwitz. Many thousands died on the way.

Auschwitz is now a museum. Exhibits show what life was like in the camp and how the Nazis' "exploitation of corpses" was carried out.

*"Here the Nazis killed between 1.5 and 2 million people. Up to 2,000 prisoners would be crammed into a chamber and gassed".*

You can still see some of the hair, spectacles, clothing and other personal belongings piled up by the Nazis alongside the ashes of their victims.

You can still see suitcases



Over one and a half million people were killed in Auschwitz

with people's names painted on them.

I saw one suitcase with my own surname painted in yellow on it. I felt as if someone had walked over my grave. Except that the victims of Auschwitz did not have a grave.

Half of the old camp is given over to what you could call shrines to the different peoples who perished here. One each

for the Jews, Dutch, Russian, Polish. But I looked in vain for a memorial to the labour movement militants who died here. Political prisoners were the first to die at Auschwitz, amongst them many trade unionists and socialists.

Over the entrance to the camp the sick and cynical Nazis inscribed "Arbeit macht frei" (work makes free). It is still

there.

I came out through that gate through which so many had passed in the other direction, never to emerge, and thought, seeing "Arbeit macht frei" above the gate, of the savage ethnic massacres now raging in Yugoslavia and of the revival of fascism in France and Germany until it is again a power in Europe; and I said to myself: the great lesson of this terrible 20th century is that only socialism will make us free! Only socialism will ensure that there will be no more atrocities like those at Auschwitz.

# Why we back free speech

## PLATFORM

By Mark Sandell

*"Freedom is always and everywhere the freedom of the one who thinks differently"*

Rosa Luxemburg

**P**ROBABLY THE single most important reason why the working class don't overthrow the bosses is the hold that the bosses' ideas have on our minds. The ideas in most peoples' heads stop them fighting for socialism.

Of course these ideas are not fixed; they change, particularly when people are involved in struggles against the system. But a scientific understanding of capitalism — Marxism — has been hammered out only by socialists who have learnt from many struggles and studied society's history. To master these ideas you have to work at it, study.

Revolutionaries keep these ideas alive. But we are usually in a small minority. The bosses' ideas, on the other hand, dominate through the media, through the education system and through the general

culture of capitalist society. These ruling ideas act like invisible policemen in the heads of workers, acting on the front-line defence of capitalism.

Socialism is only possible through the self-liberation of the working class. Revolutionaries must, therefore, win workers over to our ideas. For this reason it is very important that the battle for ideas is free and open.

Socialists must defend free speech because:

a. We want workers to liberate their own minds, to learn to think for themselves, to choose socialism rationally and reject capitalist ideas. We cannot impose socialism or socialist ideas on people. We aim to help promote the self-liberation of the working class.

b. Revolutionary ideas in capitalist society will at most times be held by a minority. Acceptance of any degree of state repression of free expression makes it easier for the freedom of socialists to be repressed. For example the Public Order Act introduced by the British government in the 1930s, supposedly to repress the British fascists, is still used to ban socialist meetings and demonstrations.

c. Socialist understanding of the world has come from the

hammering out of ideas in debate. In a changing world our ideas can only stay alive if we continue to question and debate our own ideas. For that you need freedom!

### Against bans and censorship

Even the most vile ideas need to be defeated on their own grounds. Repression will not get rid of them. The SWP's Anti-Nazi League has tried to get libraries to ban books by Holocaust revisionist David Irving and Adolf Hitler's. This is absurd! Of course we must not let fascists freely build up their violent gangs. We must stop fascists holding meetings to build up their gangs. We must physically stop them attacking us. But the ideas of Hitler and Irving must also be taken on and defeated as ideas, not given the status and glamour of some mind-bending drug too dangerous for rational debate.

Rational debate is our greatest weapon against the barbarism of fascist filth and rancid race hate.

### Even for bigots?

We cannot convince people of our ideas by repressing those who oppose our ideas. For example

some on the left, especially the Socialist Workers' Party, believe in denying anti-abortionists the right to speak or to hand out leaflets.

Not only does this alienate workers who believe in democratic freedoms, not only does it cut against socialist democracy, it also makes the anti-abortionists into martyrs to intolerance and champions of freedom. It helps them make their message more attractive.

If socialists cannot win the debate with the anti-abortionists, we will never win workers over to our ideas!

The violent attack on members of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty by Socialist Workers' Party organisers is just one example of how easily the denial of free speech to those on the right can become a denial of free speech to your opponents on the left.

If violence and repression are allowed to become the way we solve differences on the left, then the left will die politically. We will never be able to win against the really powerful ideas pumped out every day by the capitalist system.

However things may sometimes look, freedom is the natural weapon of the left, not the right!

Alliance for Workers' Liberty

Education Bulletin

Capital Study Notes

£2.50

By Martin Thomas

Published by the Alliance for Workers' Liberty

These notes are based on courses on *Capital* volume 1 taught over recent years. They are designed to help study of *Capital* in classes or individually. They provide a summary of the main ideas in *Capital* to guide the reader through the book; give references when a section of the argument raises questions dealt with by Marx in later parts the book, in other writings (or not at all); and try to make Marx's ideas stand out more clearly by critically contrasting them with orthodox economic thinking. Published by the Alliance for Workers' Liberty and available for £2.50 plus 34p postage from WL Publications, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



# Timex: betrayed by the union leaders

By Stan Crooke

**T**IMEX CLOSED down its Dundee factory at the end of the weekend shift last Sunday, 29 August. It was seven months to the day after the workers first went on strike at the beginning of the current dispute.

The strike in January had been in opposition to management's imposition of a rota for lay-offs. When agreement had been reached on the issue of lay-offs, management demanded major cuts in pay and working conditions.

The workforce agreed to

return to work "under protest". Management's response was to lock them out, sack the entire workforce, and recruit scabs.

Factory output slumped in terms of both quantity and quality. The sacked workers mounted an energetic campaign of mass pickets and demonstrations. Only half a dozen of the original workforce returned to work and accepted the cuts in pay and working conditions.

In mid-June Timex decided to cut its losses and announced closure of the factory. Over a period of seven

weeks the staff and scab workers were paid off and machinery was shipped out of the factory, culminating in last Sunday's closure.

Timex can hardly claim a victory. Their first choice was to slash pay and conditions. Only when they failed to do so in the face of solid opposition from the workforce did they opt for closure.

The sacked workers themselves made it clear all along that either they got their jobs back at the original rates and working conditions or Timex would be forced to shut down.

They are now still continu-

ing with a campaign in the form of a call for a boycott of Timex products.

A number of legal aspects of the dispute also remain unresolved. Complaints of unfair dismissal have been referred to industrial tribunals. And sacked workers are also planning legal action for loss of personal possessions as a result of the lock-out.

The energy and militancy displayed by the sacked workers over the past seven months are in sharp contrast to the Scottish TUC and the leadership of the AEEU.

Despite the fine speeches, lethargy has been the hallmark of the STUC. Not until July did the STUC get round to calling a Day of Action in support of Timex workers, only to call it off because it was "too busy" with other things.

A demonstration called by the STUC for 21 August was never built for. At four days notice another Day of Action was called for 25 August. Inevitably, this turned out to be a complete non-event.

Far worse has been the role

played by the AEEU leadership at national level. It threatened strikers with loss of strike pay if they misbehaved on the picket line, and attacked the strike committee for inviting Arthur Scargill to speak at a solidarity rally.

Worst of all, Jimmy Airlie "negotiated" a deal involving a 30% cut in pay for workers as the basis for the "settlement" of the dispute. The workers were unanimous in their rejection of the deal, the contents of which revealed the readiness of the AEEU leadership to knuckle under to Timex's demands.

The workers also suffered from the absence of an international shop stewards' combine. Contacts by the Dundee workers during the dispute have now established the basis for such a combine.

Workers in other multinationals should recognise the need to establish strong international combine committees before a dispute breaks out.

The workers also suffered from the absence of a ready political answer to the threat of closure. The Labour

party's shift to the right has pushed the idea of nationalisation under workers' control off the political agenda. It needs to be put back on the agenda.

Even right-wingers in the Labour Party and the trade unions have pointed to the Timex dispute as an example of how the laws are rigged against the workers.

But calls for defiance of the anti-union legislation right now should also be linked with campaigning for the removal of all the Tories' anti-union laws from the statute book and a Workers' Charter.

Timex claimed that its attacks on pay and conditions in Dundee were dictated by the need to compete with cheap products manufactured by low-paid non-union workers in the "Third World"

Timex's solution was a "levelling down" to Third World pay and conditions. The answer of workers in West must be a "levelling up", supporting the struggles of "Third World" workers to win union rights and decent pay and conditions.

## Support UCH hospital strike!

**P**ORTERS AND nursing staff at University College Hospital, London have been on strike since 17 August.

The strike, to stop the closure of the hospital, is the first indefinite strike by hospital workers for many years, suggesting that the long period of low morale

amongst NHS trade unionists could be drawing to a close.

The dispute is hotting up. As we go to press management are due to start a renewed drive to shut down wards.

The UCH workers are going to need to prepare for occupations and attempt to seize con-

trol of Emergency Cover, as well as building the maximum possible solidarity from other workers.

The leaders of UNISON — the giant public sector union — should bring forward their day of action on the NHS from 11 November.

## Bosses' onslaught on London buses

**T**HE ATTACKS on London bus workers' wages and conditions continue unabated in the run-up to deregulation and the continued privatisation of the bus service.

New contracts being presented to garages all over London are slashing wages (50% take home pay has been lost in the last 5 years), hours are increasing to a dangerous level, spread over and unsocial allowances are being cut and the pension scheme is threatened.

In order to ensure the divided response of bus workers, each unit is offered a different contract. But the effect is the same for all: the workers pay for the attempt to make bus routes attractive to would-be buyers.

The union has shown a disgraceful inability and, in some areas, a seemingly conscious decision not, to fight these attacks. With one day strikes here and there, and actions inside the garages - important actions but not enough to win on their own - they have, in effect, overseen the closure of garages, the multiple sackings of their members and the smashing of the conditions of those left behind.

Sackings in a South East unit are so high that when one of the garages, Peckham, closed and

the workers were moved to the two neighbouring garages at Camberwell and New Cross, their spare lists were unaffected! New workers in a garage spend at least a year on a spare list covering sick, holiday and maternity leave until they get their own regular job. Normally, the influx of large numbers of workers, with seniority from another garage would mean their having to stay on the spare list even longer, causing resentment. One Camberwell conductor said that they did not have enough spare drivers in their garage, even after the closure of Peckham.

In another area, Metroliner in Northwest London, the union bureaucracy has surpassed itself in its craven kow-towing to management's wishes. On 25 June all London was balloted over a new set of conditions. Metroliner voted overwhelmingly against by 416 to 114. Willesden garage, where an organiser against these attacks worked, returned a vote of 242 to 18 against the new contract. The union, instead of getting the message and organising strike action against the attacks, re-presented the same deal, slightly reworded, for balloting to members on 30 July.

Not surprisingly, the vote over the whole unit was whittled down to 302/207 against the deal.

This was not because more of the membership had seen the error of their ways and recognised the deal as a good one, but because they had lost confidence in the union leadership to win a better deal. In Willesden garage, where an organised opposition to the union bureaucrats still existed, the vote was still a massive 205 to 32 against.

It is not the first time that the union leadership have used such tactics. The 1988 pay deal was voted down by the whole of London by 6 to 1. The leadership reballoted and reballoted every time management offered another quarter percent or just the offer of talks until they got what they wanted: a narrow vote for the deal. They then used the final result as an excuse for doing nothing: "Well, we would have fought but we didn't have the membership behind us".

A job had to be done on the militants at Willesden garage. Management found willing helpers in the local union leadership. After the second ballot, Harry Foley, the unit T&G chairman put a notice on the boards demanding that the "faceless scriptwriters" of the local rank and file newsletter, the Busman's Punch, reveal themselves. Up to a dozen bus workers were sacked at the end of July and beginning of August. One of them, Denis Clark, a militant, sacked on a triviality, waited for Foley in the canteen before going together for his appeal only to find that Foley had gone in without him. He came out saying: "They won't change their minds. You're sacked".

Gerry Downing, another militant, was suspended for handing out leaflets. Two workers in the garage wrote out occurrence reports saying that they felt their livelihoods were threatened by his literature. Management said that these were given to them by Elvis Vaughan, the garage union representative. Vaughan withdrew from representing Downing and, at his hearing, Vaughan, Foley and the two report writers all spoke against him. Downing was dismissed.

Despite it all bus workers can still win if:

\* The one-day strikes are built upon. A campaign needs to be waged inside the garages by the union to build for all-out, indefinite strike action across the fleet.

\* Links are made with the unions on the rail and the tubes so that joint action can be organised.

\* Most importantly, the membership sticks with the union and calls their leaders to account. Get rid of the ones who will not carry out the wishes of the membership and replace them with others who will.

\* This means building now amongst the rank and file of the union a movement of members who are prepared to fight the attacks and build a campaigning democratic union. With such a movement inside the T&G, militants in the garages, like those at Willesden, will not be so easily picked off by management.

## Sacked for solidarity

By a DE CPSA member, Sheffield.

**T**WO CPSA members have been sacked and eight disciplined for allegedly "bringing the Employment Service into disrepute".

The sackings came after

CPSA members walked out of Bedminster job centre when management insisted on carrying scab vacancies to undermine the Arrowsmith dispute, where printers have been locked out after taking part in their unions' national pay campaign.

ES offices across Bristol have voted for strikes to force reinstatement and the dropping of disciplinary action. The strikes will take place on 2 September.

Since the introduction of Agencies into the civil service, sackings have been on the increase. This latest attack — which has led to the sacking of longstanding Broad Left activist Amanda Lane — is surely a sign of things to come, as the Tories start their drive to "contract out" large chunks of the civil service.

Contact the Defend our Union Campaign, c/o GPMU, Print House, Baldwin Street, Bristol BS1 2NQ.

**The round-the-clock occupation at Springdale nursery, to stop Islington council closing it, is still going strong after three months. The council has said it will cut off utilities, but workers who came to disconnect the electricity turned back after talking to the nursery occupiers. The campaign will be taken into local Labour Party meetings again this month. Support is needed to keep the occupation running: messages of support and donations to Islington Under-Fives Action Group, c/o Springdale UFEC, 15a Springdale Road, London N16: 071-923 0263..**

## Market Testing fight at the crossroads

By Trudy Saunders  
CPSA DsHSS Section  
Executive Committee.

**A**CROSS THE Civil Service the fight against Market Testing is getting ever more urgent.

Thousands of jobs are on the line. Management are hiving off vast amounts of work to the private sector or forcing workers to bid for their own jobs on worse terms and conditions.

Faced with these unprecedented attacks on civil service workers the right wing leaders of the CPSA union are failing to lead the kind of concerted national strike action that could beat the Tories.

The first ballot for national action will not be until until late autumn, with a one-day strike planned for 5 November. Other civil service unions will be involved in this day of action, but IRSF, the tax workers' union, will not be balloting for strike action.

CPSA Section Executive Committees in DsHSS, Home Office and DoE/DTp have played a key role in forcing the National Executive to call action on 5 November. But the national leadership are unlikely to turn the day into the start of

a serious campaign of national action to stop the Tories.

More section-wide action is going to be needed.

Unfortunately, after unprecedented support for a one-day strike on 2 July, the DsHSS have failed to lead any more action or win any significant gains from management.

The left on the Section Executive have argued that the point of calling section-wide action is not simply to force the national leaders to act. We are in a position of strength in the DsHSS from which we could force management to back down. That would give confidence to workers in other sections and put more pressure on the National

Executive to call more strikes.

Activists also need to push for a national ballot on non-cooperation with all matters to do with market testing. Effective non-cooperation could quickly lead to disciplinary action from management and thus the need to spread action in support of the "disciplined" workers.

Whilst it is obviously preferable to have a proper national strike called by leaders who want to fight, it would be a big mistake to concentrate solely on pleading with the ultra-right-wing leaders of CPSA to call national action. Non-cooperation and section-wide strikes put the fightback in the hands of the members.

### THE INDUSTRIAL FRONT

This weekend sees a demonstration in support of the sacked Revell and George print workers. They were locked out for their part in the GPMU national wages dispute. Assemble 11.30am, Saturday 4 September outside Revell and George, Cow Lane, Salford. March to Manchester Town Hall. The sacked Crawley Binworkers are also holding a demonstration. Assemble 10.30am Saturday 4 September Central Drive, Crawley. For more information contact Jimmy James on 0293 535030

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# SOCIALIST

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## Strike against Tube sackings!

### After seven months' lock-out

# Timex bosses cut and run



By a Central Line RMT member

IN THE SPACE of less than two weeks London Underground Ltd managers on the Central line have framed and sacked two guards, Ray Stelzner and Patrick Sikorski.

Ray was sacked on the basis of ludicrous charges which were not backed up by any evidence whatsoever. At the same time, Ray's driver, who was charged with the same offence, has had no action taken against him.

Pat was sacked for his role in organising and building support for Ray.

These two sackings represent a new disciplinary drive from Underground managers designed to intimidate and demoralise Central Line train crew in the run-up to the line switching over to one-person-operation. Millions of pounds have been spent on new stock for the line, so any potential opposition to OPO has to be removed from the scene.

The sacking of Pat Sikorski is particularly significant.

Pat is the RMT union District Council Secretary (the most important lay official on the Underground). His victimisation is clearly a case of management throwing down the gauntlet to the unions. It is therefore vital that the most effective possible action is built in Pat's and Ray's defence. The RMT is set to ballot train crew for a Central Line strike on the issue. This needs to be followed through with a ballot across the whole combine. With the new Tory law in place which forces unions to hold postal ballots for strike action it is going to be vital that the RMT throws all its resources into winning a massive "yes" vote for Ray and Pat. Jimmy Knapp, the RMT general secretary, should get out to the depots and canteens and show the rank and file that the union's top brass are four square behind them.

Meanwhile everything possible must be done to pull the train drivers' union ASLEF behind the RMT. That means pressing the ASLEF leadership to call an official legal strike ballot alongside the RMT.

Tubeworkers cannot afford to allow the crazy inter-union rivalry that exists on the job to continue. We paid for this disunity last year when inter-union competition blocked the emergence of a united front against the implementation of the Company Plan.

Now the plan is in and tubeworkers are paying the price in attacks on terms, conditions, jobs and trade union rights.

We must unite to stop the rot.

# Unite pay fights to beat the Tories!

By Chris Croome, Sheffield UNISON

WELL OVER A MILLION workers could be called into battle over the next few weeks to defeat the Tories' 1.5% pay freeze.

Over 600,000 white collar council workers will be balloted on a rolling programme of six days of national strike action. A yes vote in this ballot could leave the Tories' pay policy in tatters.

Other sections of public and private sector workers are edging towards a showdown with the Tories and the bosses:

- Local council manual workers have not settled.
- Ambulance workers are balloting on action short of strikes.
- Firefighters' delegates are set to

meet this Thursday 2 September to throw out the employers' "final" offer, which means accepting the pay freeze this year.

- British Telecom workers in the NCU will now be balloted for action over pay after BT bosses failed to get the unions' left-led executive to sell a 1.9% pay rise to the members.

The Tories are very vulnerable.

The magnificent teachers' boycott of the Tory tests exposed their weakness. It is now up to other groups of workers to follow through the attack. From by-election disasters to chaos over Maastricht and rail privatisation, the Tories have shown themselves divided. The last thing they want now is a showdown over pay.

The time is right to fight. The key

task now is to win huge majorities for action in the ballots that are, or will soon, be taking place.

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