

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

It will be socialism or barbarism!

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Dirty,



Porter



Major

rotten



Rumbold



Aitken

scoundrels

DRIVE THE TORIES OUT!

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What is Clause Four?



Tony Benn and others on the left of the Labour Party are fighting to stop Tony Blair formally jettisoning all Labour Party concern with socialism, removing the famous "Clause Four" from the party's constitution. Why is "Clause Four" important? This week we give the usual editorial space to Tony Benn, who explains his view of why Clause Four is important and why socialists should do everything we can to beat back Blair's offensive.

AT ITS 1918 Conference, the Labour Party officially adopted socialism as its objective and the Constitution contained within it the famous Clause Four which set out that commitment to language that still speaks to us today with the force that it commanded then. Clause Four is often referred to but rarely quoted in full. It remains the clearest and best possible statement of the democratic, socialist faith and I have set it out in full.

Clause Four — Party objects

1. To organise and maintain in Parliament and in the country a Political Labour Party.

2. To co-operate with the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, or other Kindred Organisations, in joint political or other action in harmony with the Party Constitution and Standing Orders.

3. To give effect as far as may be practicable to the principles from time to time approved by the Party Conference.

4. To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.

5. Generally to promote the Political, Social and Economic Emancipation of the People, and more particularly of those who

depend directly upon their own exertions by hand or by brain for the means of life.

6. To co-operate with the Labour and Socialist organisations in the Commonwealth overseas with a view to promoting the purposes of the Party, and to take common action for the promotion of a higher standard of social and economic life for the working population of the respective countries.

7. To co-operate with the Labour and Socialist organisations in other countries and to support the United Nations Organisation and its various agencies and other international organisations for the promotion of peace, the adjustment and settlement of international disputes by conciliation or judicial arbitration, the establishment and defence of human rights, and the improvement of the social and economic standards and conditions of work of the people of the world.

Clause Four is so important that each of its seven paragraphs deserves some sort of commentary.

Paragraph One states the clear commitment of the party to democratic change through Parliament and sets out the requirement to organise a political movement to win support for its candidates for that purpose.

Paragraph Two spells out the objective of maintaining a close and continuing relationship with the Trades Union Congress and other organisations which will assist in realising the aims of the party.

Paragraph Three lays down the role of the party conference and its relationship to the party in Parliament. This key paragraph differentiates the Labour Party from all other parties in Britain because it gives individual members in the constituencies and affiliated members through the trades unions right to decide the principles of policy through their delegates at conference. It also calls upon the National Executive, the parliamentary party and Labour ministers in office to implement these policies "as far as may be practicable."

It does not as is often asserted seek to transfer the responsibility of government, when Labour is in power, from Parliament to Conference. But it is intended to mean, and must mean, Labour leaders must accept their obligation to carry policies decided by the rank and file and not to regard the activists who make up the real movement in the country as a mere fan club for the political leadership — endorsing all they say and do uncritically, and limited in their role to offer advice that can be rejected or accepted at will by the top brass of the party.

This provision in the Constitution is the hinge that joins the people to their party and it must be seen as a crucial element in the commitment of the party to democratic change. For without it those who join and work for the party and help to win power for a Labour government



Labour must fight for a General Election!

Blair and Prescott should be uniting the labour movement to get rid of the Tories, not diverting us into the destructive debate over Clause Four. Photo: John Harris

would have no guarantee whatsoever that their efforts would secure the changes which led them to join the party.

The leadership of the party can be seen, therefore, to share collective responsibility with the party rank and file to carry out the programme settled by Conference and presented to the electorate in the Manifesto.

Paragraph Four contains the best known and most quoted words. The idea of securing for the workers "the full fruits of their industry" owes much to the concept of a "surplus" appropriated from labour for capital which embodies the modern appeal of the Labour theory of value. This does not, as is often argued, involve the rejection of the idea of "profit", but it lays a claim to it and its disposal in reinvestment or social expenditure on behalf of those who create it — the workers both by hand and brain.

Thus the definition of a worker is extended to include both wage and salary earners and paves the way for the extension of trade unionism into the realms of clerical white collar, scientific and technical and managerial work which is now gaining parity in Britain.

The phrase "common ownership" is cast widely enough to embrace all forms of enterprise, including nationalised industries, municipal and co-operative enterprises, which it is envisaged should provide the basis for the control and operation of manufacturing, distribution and the banks and insurance companies.

In practice, Labour programmes and manifestos over the years have focused primarily on the great monopolies of financial, economic and industrial power which have

grown out of the theoretical operation of a free market economy. For the ideas of *laissez-faire* and free enterprise propounded by Adam Smith and carried forward by the Manchester School of Liberal Economists until they reappeared under the new guise of monetarism, have never achieved what was claimed for them.

Today, capitalist monopolies in Britain and throughout the world have long since repealed the laws of supply and demand and have become centres of political power concerned principally with safeguarding the financial investors who have lost the benefits of shareholder democracy and the great self-perpetuating hierarchy of managers who run them.

For this purpose they control the media, engage in direct propaganda and on occasions have been found guilty of corrupt practices on a massive scale or have intervened directly to support governments that will allow them to continue their exploitation of men and raw materials for their own benefit.

There is one other phrase in paragraph four which is less well known. This is the commitment to "the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service." It is from this phrase that we can draw our authority for the present pressure for industrial democracy, workers' control, or self-management, which is clearly the next step we must take if the existing public sector is not to develop into a corporatist nightmare permitting the worst forms of managerial authoritarianism to creep back through the back door in the public service, public agencies and publicly owned indus-

tries.

The ideas of workers' control have roots going deep into the history of our movement, and at one stage syndicalism, based on industrial unionism, was seen as a substitute for, and as an alternative to, parliamentary democracy. Since then there has been a great deal of rethinking about the meaning of industrial democracy in the Labour Movement.

It is clear that a move in that direction would substantially alter the role of the trade unions, since it must involve the acceptance by the unions of a far greater degree of responsibility. Though few Socialists would deny that this responsibility must necessarily pass to those who work, there are great dangers in involving the unions in responsibility if the necessary powers do not go with it.

Whatever problems may lie ahead, no one in the movement doubts that progress must be made, first to bring labour into a truly equal partnership in controlling industry and then in reorganising, so that those who actively create the wealth can shape the processes by which it is done and determine (within the framework of law and the needs of the nation) how the surpluses should be applied to develop our manufacturing, productive and service industries.

Investors there will always be, but there is no valid reason why the investors' money should give them first claim to control, before those who invest their lives. Political democracy wrested the control of Parliament from those who owned the lands and the factories. Industrial democracy is a logical and necessary development of it.

Continued on page 4

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

Karl Marx

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WE SAY

On to the Republic!

In one respect at least, the quality of public life in Britain has improved in the last few years — the quality of the Non-Stop Royalty Show is much higher than it used to be, especially the Charles and Di scenes. It used to be pure Barbara Cartland — gooey-sweet, chocolate box pretty — and utterly false. Now it is pure Monty Python. That is progress of a sort.

Think about it. Cast your mind back to the Wedding of Charles and Di — all that Walt Disney costumery, the empty, ridiculous pomp and ceremony, the hysterical — unearned and undeserved — adulation for dressed up nonentities the rich, unemployable, eccentric man and the rich, pretty young, occasional nursery school teacher. They would stay with us to be a blessing forever. They would breed people like themselves who would stay with our descendants, forever and ever. Amen.

Monty Python is better! And that — Monty Python — is surely what it is, this exhibition of squabbling "Royals" bearing tales against each other to the press, using journalists as ventriloquist dummies to tell their "side" of it to "the public", outdoing each other in futility, absurdity and mutually destructive frenzy — egged on, all the time by an exploitative, gleeful, derisive, competitive — "we can better that!" — press. The level of it! When one paper carried the "authoritative" account of James Hewitt's affair with Di, the News of the World produced a piece about the size of his willy!

Somebody is pulling our legs! Charles is now obviously John Cleese with large false plastic ears, and Di, ever more gaunt and caricatural, is Terry Jones or one of the thinner Pythons in a wig!

Monty Python is better than the old-style Barbara Cartland pseudo-romance because it has some ring of reality about it. And because it signals that this business has now become intolerably poisonous and cannot go on. It is degrading not alone to the idiot 'Royals' but to everybody else in Britain too.

These are people seemingly in the grip of a suicide drive to get themselves laughed off the stage of history. We should accommodate them!

Charles is reported to favour a scaling down of Britain's "Imperial Monarchy" to the modest level of the Dutch monarchy. Why stop at half-measures? We need to scrap the whole miserable institution of the British monarchy — and then give the stage on which Charles and Di are now mauling each other a good Cromwellian hose-down!

On to the Republic!

What is Clause Four?

From page 3

PARAGRAPH FIVE merits a special mention because of the general language in which it is couched. It commits the party to work for "the political, social and economic emancipation of the people," extending our interest beyond those who are actually at work to the old, the young, the sick and, indeed, to the whole community. It is often wrongly argued that Labour is only concerned with active, working trade unionists, to the exclusion of everyone else. Yet even the most cursory glance at the immense range of interests that characterises the work of the party and the unions will show how false that charge really is.

It is true that our formal links are with the organised Labour Movement, but that movement has always concerned itself with the interests of the nation and its people. Labour sees itself as their guardian, which, through its unity alone, can mount the strength to be an effective champion for their interests against the immensely rich, powerful and influential forces that constitute modern capitalism.

Paragraphs Six and Seven represent the British Labour Movement's internationalist stance in association with the peoples of the world and the expression of that role is to be found in the work of the Socialist International, the international trade union movement, and the great help and assistance that the British unions and the party give to those who are struggling to achieve in their countries the same objectives as we have set ourselves here.

I have commented at length on Clause Four, both because it is a remarkable summary of the experience that went before, and because of its growing relevance today as capitalism moves into decline. It must, for these reasons, remain at the core of our work.

The history of the Labour Movement cannot only be seen as the story of Christian philosophers or, for that matter, trade union leaders and Labour parliamentarians. For ideas without action will for ever remain as academic works, scholarly but sterile, and leaders are only important in so far as they truly represent those whom they serve. The real history of any popular movement is made by those, almost anonymous, who throughout history have fought for what they believe in, organised other to join them, and have done so against immense odds and with nothing to gain for themselves, learning from their experience and leaving others to distill that experience and to use it again to advance the cause.

British socialism, then, is an amalgam of that experience, a blend of theory and practice built up out of many centuries of effort and thought; drawing its inspiration from many sources and absorbing them all into a belief in basic human equality and freedom, to be expressed in the democratic forms of chapel, union and Parliament, to which all power should be accountable. The main instrument for advancing these ideas since the nineteenth century has been, and remains, the organised Labour Movement. That is why it is so powerful and so humane and so relevant today.

The statement defending Clause Four of the Labour Party constitution which we print here was written by Stan Newens and Ken Coates, and has been signed by 31 out of Labour's 62 Euro-MPs.

It is an important breakthrough in the fight against Tony Blair's fight to write working-class interests, common ownership, industrial democracy, and economic equality out of Labour Party politics.

At the level of Labour's rank and file, the opposition to Blair's drive to trash Clause Four ranges from the left across to many people in the centre or even the right wing of the Party and trade unions. At the level of visible national agitation, however, until the Euro-MPs' statement, opposition to Blair was almost entirely a matter of the "far left" of the Labour Party — Arthur Scargill, the Campaign Group Network, Socialist Organiser, and others.

The Euro-MPs' statement provides a basis to unite a much broader spectrum of the Party and the trade unions in defence of Clause Four.

Its proposal to keep Clause Four as "the historic touchstone" and to have Tony Blair supplement it by a separate statement of immediate policy is not ours. Socialist Organiser wants Labour to act immediately on the principles of equality, common ownership, and democracy, not just keep them as long-term ideals. We believe that is the only way to deal with the damage done by the Tories and the crises of capitalism.

In the current balance of forces, however, we are a small minority. The immediate bat-

tle is between Blair and his friends, wanting to excise those socialist principles altogether, and those wanting to keep them as long-term ideals. To concede that Blair should draft some statement of immediate policy is not to abandon contested ground to him; only a major turnabout in the balance of forces could stop him doing that. And it does not commit us to supporting what he drafts!

Why have the Euro-MPs have spoken out, while almost all of Labour's Westminster MPs have remained silent or backed Blair? Not because they are necessarily more left wing, but because they are less dependent on Blair's favour for advancement. The Euro-MPs' statement is thus testimony both to the wide range of opposition to trashing Clause Four among Labour Party members who have a chance to discuss the issue without excessive pressure, and to the unhealthily authoritarian, leader-centred regime being created in the Party.

The debate on Clause Four

THE OBJECTIVES of the Labour Party have since 1918 been defined in Clause Four (4) of the Party's Constitution:

"To secure for the workers by hand and brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of

popular administration and control of each industry or service."

At the Labour Party Conference on 4 October 1994, Tony Blair called for a debate on this section of the Constitution. "We have not changed to forget our principles," he said, "but to fulfill them."

We welcome such a debate provided it does not seek to repudiate Labour's past. It should serve both to defend and extend Labour's principles.

Clause Four insists on three crucial commitments: equality, common ownership and democracy.

Equality does not just mean equality of opportunity. Even before the welfare system had been undermined by Mrs Thatcher, large numbers of people were afflicted by poverty. Today poverty and deprivation are growing by leaps and bounds. Socialism must surely mean a commitment to aim at the complete abolition of poverty, entailing a profound redistribution of wealth, as implied in Clause F o u r .

Common Ownership is not a synonym for nationalisation. Sydney Webb said it left open the choice of forms of common ownership "from the co-operative shop to the nationalised railway." Today it encompasses all forms of social ownership — municipal, regional, national perhaps even supra-national (eg the proposed European Central Bank); it includes co-operatives of many types, and schemes, for workers' self management.

Pension funds represent deferred wages and should clearly be seen as the proper-

ty of the work-force and those who have retired. They are surely an example of common ownership but such funds are not normally under the control of the "owners". The establishment of democratic control of such funds would totally transform the significance and perception of common ownership.

Democracy. In recent years local democracy has been undermined by cuts in public expenditure and the remorseless advance of unaccountable quangos. There is a strong case for decentralisation — transferring relevant powers from the centre to the regions and the localities.

The restoration of democracy also requires constitutional reform to establish Scottish and Welsh Assemblies and to devolve appropriate powers to the English regions. The democratic deficit in the European Union must be reversed.

Industrial democracy, which has been gravely undermined both by mass unemployment and negative legislation, should be a fundamental objective of our party. Employees and consumers alike should have the right to be fully informed, to express their views freely and to take part in making decisions which concern them.

The goal of empowering our citizens and enabling them to develop their full potential will never be realised within the centralised state of the British establishment. Clause Four represents the long-standing commitment of our party to achieve this.

The object of the present debate suggested by Tony Blair should therefore not be to change it, but to build upon it. What is called for is a separate statement to express the Party's aims today.

In 1959/60 when the then leader, Hugh Gaitskell, sought to revise the Party's objectives, a twelve point statement was produced which was, at the time, frequently described as "the New Testament," in contrast with the "Old," as represented by the 1918 version. Clause Four was to be retained as the historic touchstone. This provides a precedent which we should follow today.

To rescind Clause Four, if we really seek to "fulfill" our principles, would simply serve to confuse or dishearten our supporters and encourage our opponents. Only those who disagree with these basic commitments will insist upon repealing them and no powerful argument has yet been advanced which justifies this



The Labour leaders think its goodbye to Clause Four, but not if we can help it. Photo: John Harris

Labour's mass links

course of action.

Clause Four should therefore be retained in its present form exactly as it was in 1960 and we should actively seek to promote the principles and the values enshrined in it.

Signatories:

Stan Newens, Ken Coates, Michael Elliott, Alex Falconer, Clive Needle, Eryl McNally, David Thomas, Peter Crampton, Stephen Hughes, Roger Barton, Michael Hindley, Alec Smith, Barry Seal, Tom Megahy, Norman West, Christine Oddy, Ian White, Hugh Kerr, David Hallam, Ken Stewart, Richard Balfe, Shaun Spiers, David Bowe, Eddy Newman, Alan Donnelly, Sue Waddington, Joe Wilson, Robert Evans, David Morris, Alf Lomas, Michael McGowan.



How long will Blair's smugness last? Photo: John Harris

Support the campaign!

By Tom Rigby, Defend Clause Four Campaign Organising Committee

SATURDAY 12 November sees the first national meeting of the Defend Clause Four Campaign.

The campaign, which was launched at a packed meeting at the Party conference in October, is picking up broad support across the party.

Many party activists know that what is at stake here is the defence of the link between the Labour Party and the cause of the working

class.

This is not an issue the left can duck. Those people who talk about "boxing clever" and argue for putting forward a left-wing alternative to Clause Four are making a major tactical mistake.

There will be no real discussion. It is virtually certain that Blair and Prescott will present a new set of party objectives to the National Executive later this month and then push for a "consultative" ballot early in the new year.

The left will then face a major battle during that

"consultation period" and in the run up to next year's conference where any proposed rule change will either be accepted or neglected.

The conference on 12 November provides a useful opportunity for the left to rally its forces and to lay concrete plans for campaigning in the unions and CLPs.

Come along. Help build the campaign!

Defend socialism: a model resolution

WE SUPPORT the decisions of the 1993 and 1994 Labour Party Conferences to reaffirm Clause Four of the Constitution. We note that Clause Four (4) states that our aims are:

"To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service."

We believe that these basic principles are still valid. We

**Campaign
Launch**
12 November
12 noon
St Aloysius Social
Club
Phoenix Road
Euston, London

call on the leadership and the NEC to abandon their proposal to engage in a debate on the Party's Constitution. Such a debate can only be divisive at a time when maximum effort should be put into campaigning against the Tory government.

Sponsor the campaign!

Affiliation from £10 minimum/£30 regional organisations/£80 national organisations. Cheques should be made payable to "Defend Clause IV". Send to Defend Clause Four Campaign, c/o NUM, Miners Offices, 2 Huddersfield Road, Barnsley, Yorkshire S70 2LS. Or ring 071-708 0511

Trouble and strife in the T&G

SINCE BILL MORRIS' victory in the TGWU General Secretary election of 1991, the union has enjoyed if not peace, then at least the absence of war. This has been in marked contrast to the bitter internecine battle that raged inside the union throughout the latter 1980s.

Although portrayed as a left versus right conflict, it was a byzantine power struggle that did not appear to involve any significant policy disagreements. It took place entirely behind closed doors, with the bemused rank-and-file largely dependent upon carefully-planted stories in the national

press for their information. The right-wing faction finally gave up when Morris was elected and the Broad Left consolidated its majority on the executive. Since then, leading right-wingers have gone out of their way to give displays of loyalty to Morris and his deputy Jack Adams.

It all seemed too good to be true. And indeed it was. The first rumblings of renewed internal strife could be heard deep within the bowels of the union early this year. This time it wasn't the traditional left versus right conflict, but 'soft' left versus 'hard' left.

The Morris/Adams leadership had for some time been concerned about goings-on in the union's North West Region (a.k.a. Region Six). This, say Morris' supporters, was due to well-founded worries about the behaviour of full-time officers, the status of five long-running industrial disputes and the use of lay members as "stand-down" recruitment officers. Many Region Six activists, however, claim there is a witch-hunt against a Region noted for its militancy, successful recruitment techniques and general independence.

Either way, the T&Gs former legal secretary Albert Blyghton was dispatched to the North West to carry out an investigation into the Region. His report alleged a wide variety of 'irregularities', varying from relatively trivial matters (eg "the election and activities of education course tutors") to much more serious allegations of "fraud in industrial dispute payments."

As a result, disciplinary proceedings were initiated against three Region Six full-time officers on 17 February. One of the three — John Farrell — immediately went to the High Court to seek an injunction against the union. Not only was Farrell's High Court action unsuccessful, but it was also tactically unwise, alienating many on the left who believe such action to be only justified in the very last resort. Subsequent activities by the 'Justice for John Farrell Campaign' — notably their occupation of the union's national computer centre in Newcastle — have been equally ill-advised.

In an even more bizarre twist, another of the accused officials is said to have resigned after several hours of questioning by the leadership, and then taken a dossier of incriminating documents concerning ballot-rigging in the 1990 executive elections round to Scotland Yard!

Meanwhile, a new enquiry is now underway, headed by the union's vice-chair Peter Hagger. Given that any final internal appeal hearing must, under rule, be chaired by Dan Duffy, the choice of Hagger is technically quite proper. However, Hagger is widely disliked and distrusted in Region Six and his presence on the inquiry can only increase the atmosphere of paranoia there.

In such an atmosphere it seems quite likely that a candidate with Region Six connections will run against Bill Morris when he comes up for re-election next year. Such a challenge would be unlikely to attract much support outside of the North West: but it might well open up the field for the dreaded Jack Dromey to make a come-back. Then we'll see some real faction-fighting.

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

Prepare to defy Criminal Justice Act!



By Gerry Bates

THE METROPOLITAN Police were on the rampage at the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) demonstration last Saturday (29 October).

Snatch squads of about twenty police were charging into the crowd, grabbing demonstrators, charging them out of the march, pushing them up against a wall and body-searching them.

Heather, a demonstrator, described what happened to the victims of this searching: "They were quietly marching — their only crime was looking like anarchists."

The number of police on the demonstration was ridiculous. 2,000 police were on the streets, many in full riot gear, to police a 3,000-strong demonstration.

New Scotland Yard claimed there was an anarchist plot to 'hijack' the march.

This ludicrous claim was made because an anarchist leaflet had called on anarchists to go on the march with "red and black flags."

CND marches are not known for their street-fighting credentials and even as the police snatch squads waded into the crowd, demonstrators looked shocked and bemused rather than ready for a fight.

New Scotland Yard say they arrested two people on the demo, but they roughed up and searched many demonstrators "on suspicion of them carrying an offensive weapon."

After the outrageous police violence on the Criminal Justice Bill demo and lobby of Parliament, the massive over-policing of the CND demo is a warning to all of us that with the Criminal Justice Act becoming law on 3 November the police are gearing up for a crackdown on our rights to protest.

... the voice of revolutionary socialist youth.
This page is separately edited.
Editor: Mark Sandell
Phone: 071-639 7967
for details of our activity.
Letters and articles to *Youth Fightback* c/o PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

We cannot and must not shy away from a campaign of mass disobedience against the Criminal Justice Act. We must demand that the next Labour government repeal the Act and its attacks on our civil rights.

Labour Against the Criminal Justice Bill
Write to us for petitions, c/o 9 Love Walk, Camberwell, London SE5

Lobby against the Criminal Injustice Act!
Lobby of Keith Vaz's surgery
12 March, 10.00am, 144 Uppingham Road, Leicester

Save Labour from Blair!

By Mark Sandell

THE BATTLE for Labour's Soul is an ABC of the campaign to defend Clause Four of the Labour Party's constitution from Tony Blair's attack on it in his speech to Labour's conference.

With the sound of the ovation to Blair's first conference speech as leader still ringing in their ears, delegates leaving conference were met by members of the Socialist Campaign Group Supporters' Network petitioning to save Clause Four.

Many delegates had not taken in the implications of Blair's words, but Arthur Scargill hammered home the point: "This means war."

The vote by conference to reaffirm Clause Four on Thursday 6 October, two days after Blair's speech, was a shot across the leadership's bows and the sign that the fightback was in full swing.

The Battle for Labour's Soul is a manifesto published by the youth section of the Network for socialists who want to defend Clause Four.

Arthur Scargill's introduction argues the case for making Labour fight against attacks on civil rights, the Welfare State and for socialist policies.

Articles by Young Labour activists outline the importance of Clause Four both for Blair, who wants to rid Labour of any basic socialist ideas or commitment to the working class, and for socialists who want to bury capitalism.

Mick Duncan, Youth Officer of the Network, explains why young activists fighting Tory attacks like the Criminal Justice Bill should join Labour and fight for socialist politics.

An article by the late Eric Heffer

Debating Clause Four

THE BATTLE FOR LABOUR'S SOUL

Debating Clause Four
The Battle for Labour's Soul

80p/40p + 25p p&p
from: Socialist Campaign Group
Youth, 25 Howard Court, Peckham Rye, London SE15.

MP explains why state ownership is central to a socialist transformation of society, but only if it is combined with liberty and democratic control. Heffer condemns the old Stalinist regimes of the USSR and Eastern Europe and explains why they were not socialist.

The pamphlet outlines Blair's plans to turn Labour into a US Democratic Party and explains the history of Labour and Clause Four and of those who have tried to scrap Clause Four in the past.

Trade union activists explain why capitalism should not survive and cannot be re-moulded in the interests of working people.

The message of this pamphlet is that socialists should join the Labour Party and join the fight for socialism. It shows that every socialist has a duty to defend the Labour Party from Blair's gang, who want to make the party a second division bosses' party.

Get some copies of the pamphlet and sell them! (Details above.)

Defend Clause Four!
Socialist Campaign Group Youth meeting
Saturday 12 November
5pm, ULU, Malet Street
Speaker: Jeremy Corbyn MP

The Struggle for Workers' Liberty

Youth and students organise

FOLLOWING THE success of the "Ideas in Revolt" AWL youth conference in the summer, young members and students in the AWL are organising a weekend of debate, discussion and organising for action.

This student and youth conference, "The Struggle for Workers' Liberty" looks set to be bigger and just as lively as "Ideas in Revolt" — a must for serious socialist youth and students who want to learn, discuss and debate the issues facing the Marxist left in the 1990s.

The Struggle for Workers' Liberty
Alliance for Workers' Liberty
discussion weekend
3-4 December 1994 • Caxton House, London
More details: 071-639 7965

The Commission for Social Justice Report

How not to save the Welfare State

The Commission for Social Justice (CSJ) produced its findings on 24 October. Dale Street reports.

THE COMMISSION was set up in late 1992 at the initiative of the then Labour Party leader John Smith. Members of the CSJ include two Liberal-Democrats and a founder member of the Social Democratic Party. The chair of the CSJ, Lord Borrie, resigned from the Labour Party in 1976 and has only recently rejoined. The secretary of the CSJ, David Miliband, is one of Tony Blair's personal policy advisers.

The independence of this "independent inquiry" was always fictitious. Although it

maintained a strict independence from the ordinary membership of the labour movement, it was closely tied to the right-wing and "modernising" leaders of the Labour Party.

David Miliband was one such link between the CSJ and the "modernisers". Patricia Hewitt, a former policy adviser to Neil Kinnock provided another link.

The CSJ allowed the "modernisers" to have the best of both worlds. On the one hand they claimed it was "independent" (and therefore not accountable to the rank-and-file of the labour movement). On the other hand they could exercise a decisive influence.

The real driving force behind the CSJ was accurately summed up by the *Times* the day after the report was published:

"The CSJ will have served its purpose if it frees Labour from past constraints and provides an intellectually respectable case for welfare reform." "Past constraints" means policy commitments. "Welfare reform" means cuts.

Or, as the *Guardian* put it the same day, in blunter terms: "the CSJ report opens the way for the abandonment of many of Labour's most historic spending pledges."

The report, "Social Justice — Strategies for National Renewal", is not a socialist document. It is not even a vaguely socialist document or an inconsistently socialist document.

Any idea that class and class struggle are the basic driving forces in capitalist society is alien to the CSJ. There is no recognition at all that the poverty and inequality are built into capitalism.

Instead the buzzwords of the CSJ are investment, opportunity, national renewal and "reconstructing the social wealth of our country".

Challenges to poverty and inequality are not treated by the CSJ as justified in themselves. Instead, they are seen as means to a "higher" end, the national renewal of (capitalist) Britain.

Poverty is not treated as bad for the poor — but as bad for Britain!

Thus, for example, mass unemployment is to be challenged not so much for the benefit of the unemployed themselves as because "the untapped talent of its (Britain's) people can be the basis of national renewal."

A decent childhood is likewise advocated in terms of benefitting the "national interest": "Investment in their (children's) life-chances is the best social and economic investment we can make."

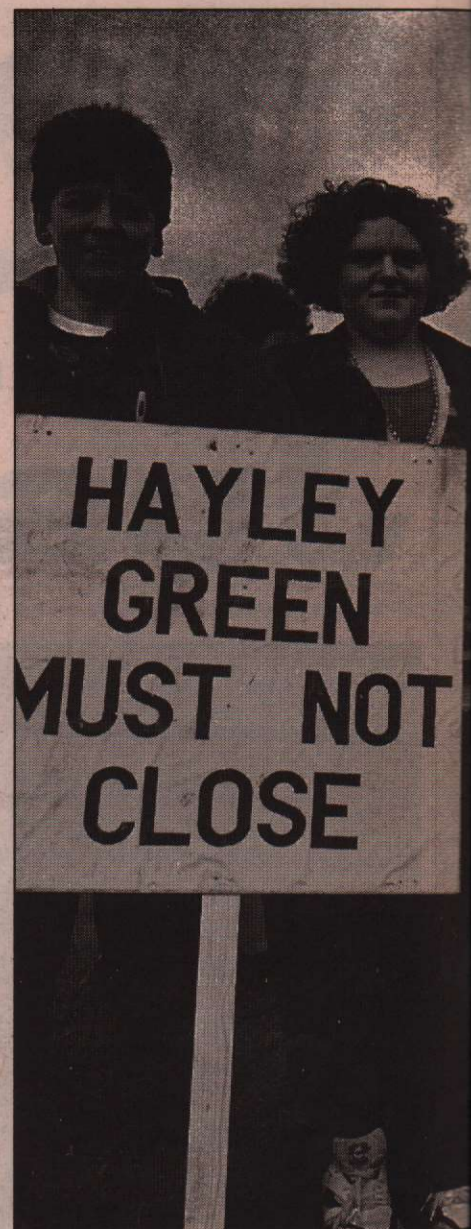
As Tony Blair put it in a sound-bite at the conference which launched the CSJ report: "I want to give people a hand-up, not a hand-out." The CSJ report certainly does not offer anyone a hand-out. If it is offering anyone anything at all, then it is a kickup the backside rather than a hand up.

The Welfare State envisaged by the CSJ is not one which redistributes wealth, in however limited a fashion. Instead, it is one which better "equips" people to compete in the dog-eat-dog world of capitalism. In the words of the CSJ, it should be "a springboard" rather than "a safety net."

Like the politics of the "modernisers" themselves, the politics of the CSJ are nothing but a watered-down version of the Tories' own policies. Means-testing should be increased, high direct taxation is ruled out as a matter of principle, and the private sector is to be encouraged in pensions, housing and elsewhere.

Even the modest reforms proposed in Labour's last election manifesto — increasing pensions by up to £8 a week, and restoring the value of Child Benefit to its 1979 level — have been ditched by the Party leadership on the basis of the CSJ report.

The CSJ report and the Labour Party leaders enthusiastic response to it are a further measure of their shift to the right.



The Social Justice Commission is indifferent

Transport counter-

Jill Mountford reviews the TGWU's report, "In Place of Fear"

With this report, the Transport and General Workers' Union has delivered a powerful counterblast to Labour's "modernisers" and their "Commission for Social Justice".

"Policies have been based on a number of unfounded myths. It is time to debunk them. The myth that an ageing population will mean too few people paying into the Welfare State: there are more people in the labour market now than ever before! The crisis in welfare is not caused by people living longer but by mass unemployment.

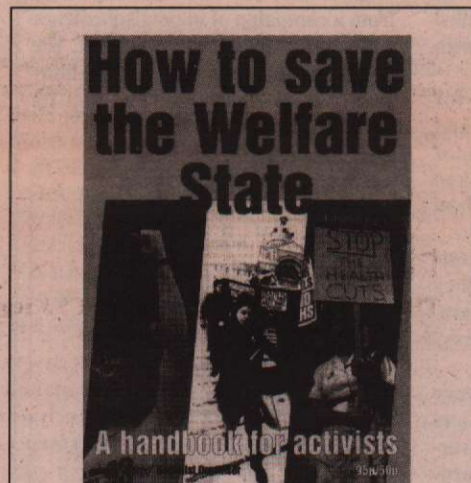
"The myth that we can't afford a decent Welfare State: our country produces more wealth now than ever before...

"The myth that universal benefits like Child Benefit are wasteful: Child Benefit is better at getting effectively to the people who need it than any means-tested benefit with its paraphernalia of bureaucracy, inspection, and stigma".

The report calls for comprehensive "social reconstruction", with a Welfare State based increasingly on universal services and universal benefits, rather than means-testing. "The taxation system must be used to redistribute wealth as well as to pay for welfare and public provision".

Produced in association with the Child Poverty Action Group, the Family Welfare Association, and the Low Pay Unit, the report bears the marks of a rushed job, with smaller resources than those available to the CSJ. And its conclusions are vague: they point towards the idea of the working class taking ownership and control of social wealth, but never plainly state it. But its indictment of Tory policies, and by implication of the feeble Labour alternatives favoured by the CSJ, is vivid and clear.

At the conference organised by the TGWU to launch the report, Professor Paul Townsend of Bristol University, called the CSJ report "shameful and shocking" and



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Worse than the Tories on student grants

By Elaine Jones

THE LABOUR LEADERS' Commission for Social Justice wants an expansion of higher education and more money for students. That is the good news.

The bad news? "The burden of expansion in higher education will have to be borne", the CSJ says, "by people who do best out of the current system — above all full-time university students living away from home".

In reality those students are in desperate poverty. They cannot afford books for their courses. Many have to take part-time jobs to get by, or end up sleeping in tents, caravans, and cars.

The CSJ wants to give students more money, but on a worse basis than the Tories. The Tories have cut student grants, but not to nothing. The CSJ would abolish all grants, and give students only loans.

Moreover, the CSJ would make students pay about 20% of tuition fees, again through loans. Under the Tories, tuition fees are still free.

Under the CSJ's plans, every student would begin life after college tens of thousands of pounds in debt.

If the CSJ reckons that full-time university students must bear the main burden, that does not make it generous to other young people. After considering the case for a grant to 16 and 17 year olds in education, they conclude that it must be means-tested because otherwise it would be too expensive.

After that comes the CSJ's "training wage" — a special low wage for young workers, lower than the national minimum wage which the CSJ proposes — and "workfare", with unemployed youth pushed into becoming cheap labour on government schemes.

The CSJ's argument for student loans is the same as the Tories': "Why

should the bus driver fund the education of the future doctor or lawyer?" But the real question is: why shouldn't the bus driver be able to go to college too?

Why not just raise the money for expanding higher education by more taxes on the rich?

To force graduates to repay loans does not come to the same thing. Not all graduates are doctors or lawyers, or even on above-average wages. The CSJ offers three different schemes for the loan repayments: in one, repayments would start at any wage above £57 a week, in the second, at 85% of average pay, and in the third, at average pay.

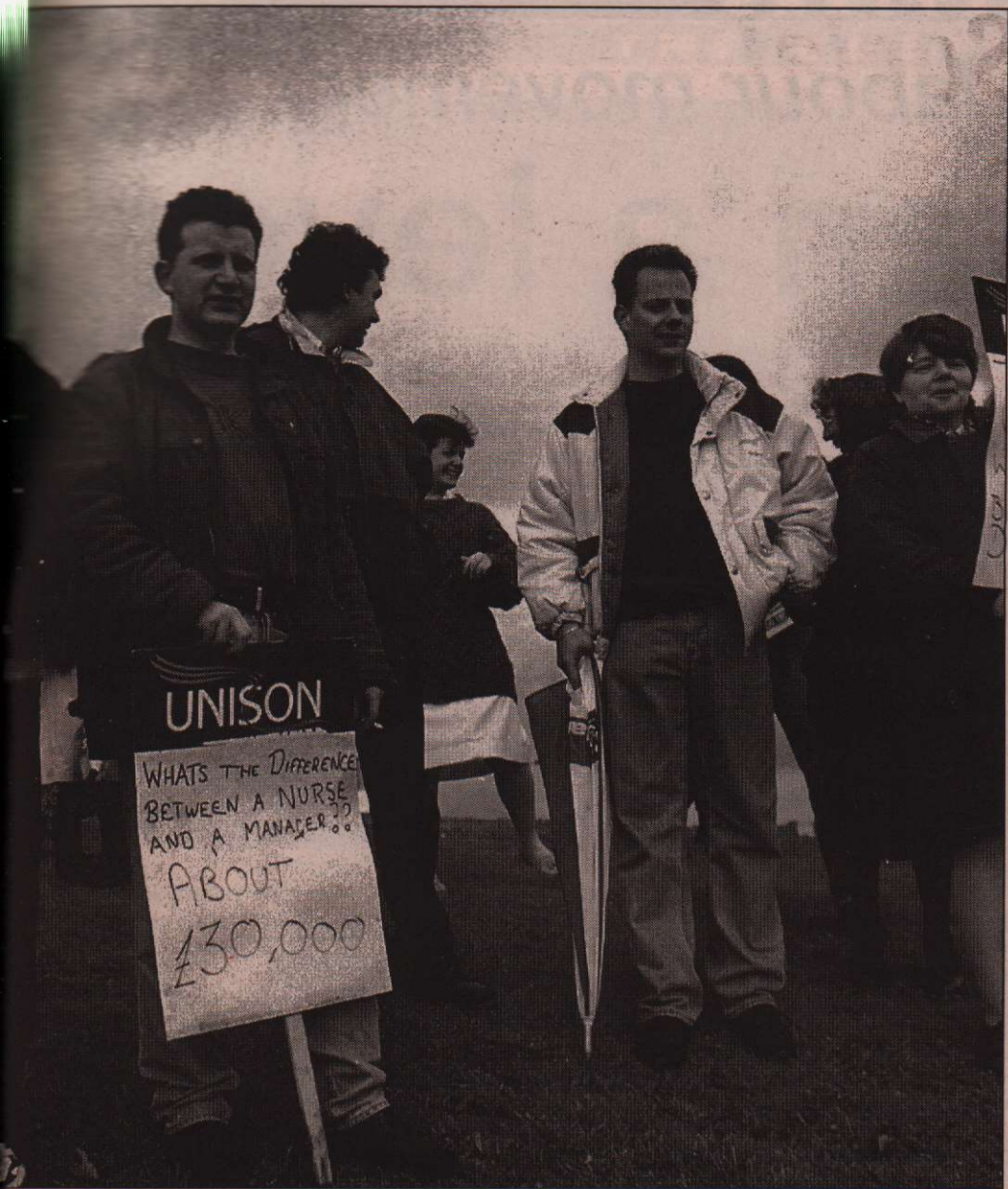
As universities expand — the CSJ talks of 40% of young people going into higher education — more and more graduates will be ordinary workers doing ordinary jobs.

Hidden under the CSJ's concern for "not breaking the bank" are two evil assumptions: that education is something to be bought, not provided as a right; and that education is primarily a means to make people more economically productive, and to enable them to get higher wages.

What about the bus-driver who wants to go to college to study literature, for example, not in order to get higher wages but simply in order to learn? It is difficult now. In the CSJ's scheme it would be nearly impossible: how will the bus-driver pay back his or her tens of thousands of pounds of debt?

It would be as logical for the CSJ to propose a "library tax" whereby anyone who uses public libraries often would have to pay extra tax.

The campaign against these proposals needs to start now in student unions and Labour Clubs. We need to pass motions against the plans to abolish grants, to commit the leaders of the National Union of Students and Labour Students to such a policy. Labour if it becomes the next government cannot be allowed to implement these proposals.



to the struggles of working-class people to save our health service. Photo: John Harris

Workers produce a blast

they had refused to address the "hierarchies of power" which form the basis of inequality.

The TGWU report places the class struggle between workers and employers at centre-stage, opening with a section on workers' conditions and workers' rights. Attacks on trade union rights and workers' legal guarantees, coupled with economic crises, have made jobs insecure, harder, and often miserably paid.

"Citizens' Advice Bureau advisers regularly have to warn clients", the report notes, "about the serious risk they will be taking by pursuing their statutory rights... Employees who attempt to ensure that their employers fulfil their legal obligations may find themselves dismissed without any right to redress... Some employers sack staff as a matter of policy just before they reach two years' service [and thus qualify to claim for unfair dismissal], to re-employ them immediately afterwards".

Jobless and low-paid workers, and their families, thus increasingly seek help from the social-security system. But, so the report shows, benefits are inadequate and erratic. The system fails completely for the 16 and 17 year olds who get no benefit and end up begging on the streets, and for many other people.

Just one of many case-histories in the report is the following: "A man's benefit was reduced to £40.30 because of a dispute about his reason for leaving his job. Out of this, direct payments were being made for rent, community charge, water and electricity, leaving him with £1.04 per fortnight to live on. He was receiving food parcels from the Samaritans and had stopped using any heating".

The increased use of means-tested benefits and provision has also sharpened the "poverty trap" for low-paid workers. Some low-paid workers on Family Credit lose 96p of any pay rise through taxes and loss of benefits.

The report goes on to show how the Health Service and other public services have been eroded by cuts in cash and by attempts to mix them more with the market. There has been "a shift away from investment in universal provision, free or cheap to everyone at the point of use, towards charges for services and means-

tested exemptions for the poorest".

A substantial section on the voluntary sector argues that voluntary groups are in danger of being reduced to the status of contractors working for local authorities, with "the huge reserve army of volunteers and paid professional staff... used as cheap labour to undermine salaries and working conditions".

The report argues for a legal minimum wage of £4.15 an hour. It would help over four million people, reduce inequality, and push up inflation only slightly.

Policies for full employment, trade union rights, and workers' legal rights are, so the report insists, essential to any rebuilding of the Welfare State.

In place of fear: the future of the welfare state. £10 (£5 concessions) from the TGWU, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1.



TGWU General Secretary, Bill Morris has pledged that there will be no retreat on the demand for a national minimum wage of at least £4 an hour. The Commission for Social Justice has proposed a rate of £3.50 an hour, claiming that a higher rate would destroy jobs.

What they say

Education

NURSERY EDUCATION should be available for all three and four year olds. The CSJ assumes a take-up of 85% of three year olds and 95% of four year olds. The proposal is justified in terms of it being a good investment: it will help provide a skilled labour force in future years.

There is nothing radical about such a proposal. Nursery education is already much more widely available in other European countries than in Britain. Even the Tories are likely to adopt such a policy by the next General Election. However, it will not be publicly-provided nursery education, freely available to all. Instead, there will be a means-tested patchwork of provision.

Training

EMPLOYERS SHOULD have to pay up to 2% of their payroll to help cover the costs of training. But the training levy in operation before the Tories came to power was 5% of an employer's payroll.

"Social, personal and educational skills" are to be "advanced" by the introduction of a "voluntary" Citizen's Service, aimed mainly at a million unemployed people aged between 16 and 25. Participants in the Citizen's Service would be paid £50 a week or credits to go towards paying for higher education.

This is quite similar in fact and tone to the Government's Community Action scheme. The question to be asked is: if there are so many community-based jobs needing to be done, why not create real, full-time, permanent jobs on proper wages?

Unemployment

THE CSJ PUTS forward a variety of proposals, mostly to do with subsidising employers for taking on the unemployed as cheap labour.

Employers who take on the long-term unemployed would be given a subsidy amounting to 80% of Unemployment Benefit. Employers taking on the long-term unemployed could also be given a "holiday" from paying National Insurance contribution for them.

The Government already runs a similar pilot scheme called Workstart (aimed at people who have been unemployed for a very long time). The subsidy is much higher!

Employers, say the CSJ, should be offered the unemployed on a "trial basis." An unemployed person could work for an employer for a month whilst continuing to be paid benefits rather than the going rate for the job.

All lone parents (over 90% of whom are women) with children over the age of five must register as available for work. So too must the partner of anyone claiming benefit. Failure to do so will cost them their welfare benefit.

Employment

A NATIONAL minimum wage of just £3.50 per hour is advocated by the CSJ. This is 65p an hour less than the figure advocated by most trade unions. The CSJ claims that a national minimum wage of above £3.50 an hour would cost jobs.

And, according to the CSJ, 16 and 17 year old workers should make do with a minimum wage one third lower than the £3.50.

All employees should be protected by legally guaranteed minimum rights six months after starting work (compared with two years at present). But whatever happened to John Smith's promise that all employees should receive such protection as of day one at work?

The government should establish a consultative body of employers and trade unions in order to prevent "leap frogging" during pay negotiations and to work out what level of pay rises "the economy as a whole can afford."

Taxation

A MODEST TOP rate of income tax of just 50% (the current top rate is 40%) should be introduced. This should be restricted to those who earn five times more than the average national earnings, i.e. those on £85,000 plus per year or the wealthiest 1 or 2% of the population.

Mortgage interest tax relief should be phased out. The Married Couple's Allowance should be scrapped.

Most controversially, Child Benefit paid to better-off parents should be taxed, even though the amount of money raised would be scarcely more

than the administration costs. The principle of universal benefits is thus to be eroded.

Pensions

A minimum pension guarantee should be introduced. It would be higher than the current level of state pensions and Income Support, but the CSJ does not give an figure for what it would be. Given that the state pension for a married couple is only £92 per week, the introduction of a minimum pension guarantee could still leave millions living in poverty.

The guaranteed pension would rise in line with earnings. But there would be no benchmark against which the state pension would be increased. This effectively makes the pension a means tested benefit.

Younger and middle-aged people should be "required" to take out a second pension. This could be either a state occupational scheme (eg SERPS) or a private scheme. But the base line for the CSJ is that the state can no longer be expected to pay a decent pension for all and that it is the individuals own responsibility to prepare financially for old age.

The CSJ wants the state pension age for men and women to be equalised — but at 65, not at 60. Yet another Tory policy adopted by the CSJ.

Housing

"WE WANT TO see private, as well as public, capital invested in the renewal of Britain's housing" says the CSJ report. Local authorities should therefore be empowered to set up Local Housing Companies which would create public/private finance partnerships.

The private rented sector should also be encouraged: "Private renting has an important role to play in making the housing system more flexible, more efficient, and more just."

Although the CSJ recognises the scale of the problem of bad housing and homelessness, and advocates subsidising the building of homes rather than artificially high rents (through Housing Benefit) it offers no commitment or specific figures for increased spending on subsidies for local authorities or Housing Association grants.

Health

THERE IS NO suggestion in the CSJ report that the havoc wreaked on the NHS by the Tories in recent years should be undone. The most radical proposal which the CSJ has to make concerning the invasion of the NHS by the private sector is that VAT should be extended to private medical treatment.

The CSJ discusses health and the NHS within the same framework as the Tories: how much can the country afford to spend on the NHS and how should "scarce resources" be allocated within the NHS.

The CSJ ducks out of answering the first question by arguing that prevention (i.e. preventive medicine) is better than cure. This is true. But it does not justify the CSJ's failure to argue for increased funding for the NHS.

In discussing "the many different ways of rationing medical treatment" and "the best ways of deciding priorities", the CSJ is hardly any less evasive. But the one group of losers specified by the CSJ are those in need of long term care — pensioners, and those dependent on community care services.

Individuals should arrange their own insurance to cover any need for long-term care. Treatment for illness should continue to be free, but assistance with daily living should be means-tested.



Photo: Martin Shakeshaft



What is the Alliance for Workers' Liberty?

TODAY ONE CLASS, the working class, lives by selling its labour-power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the social means of production. Life is shaped by the capitalists' relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes unemployment, the maiming of lives by overwork, imperialism, abuse of the environment, and much else.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty aims to regroup socialists in a democratic organisation which can convince and mobilise the working class to overthrow capitalism. We aim not to create a new labour movement, but to transform the existing workers' movement, trade unions and Labour Party.

We want socialism: public ownership of the major enterprises, workers' control, and democracy much fuller than the present system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We stand:

- For a fight to rebuild the Welfare State; for health care, housing, education and minimum standard to be available to all, by right. For the extension of the principle of social provision for need from a limited range of services to the whole economy.
- For social planning, for a sustainable use of natural resources.
- For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. For a mass working-class-based women's movement.
- For black and white workers' unity, organised through the labour movement, to fight racism and the despair which breeds racism. For labour movement support for black communities' self-defence against racist and fascist violence; against immigration controls.
- For equality for lesbians and gays.
- In support of the independent trade unions and the socialists in Russia and Eastern Europe. We denounce the misery caused by the drive to free-market capitalism there, but we believe that Stalinism was a system of class exploitation no better than capitalism.
- For a democratic united Europe; against the undemocratic and capitalist European Community, but for European workers' unity and socialism, not nationalism, as the alternative.
- For a united and free Ireland, with some federal system to protect the rights of the Protestant minority.
- For the Palestinians' right to a state of their own, alongside Israel, and for a socialist federation of the Middle East with self-determination for the Israeli Jews.
- For national liberation struggles and workers' struggles world-wide.
- For a workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, to take solidarity action, and to decide their own union rules.
- For a rank and file movement in the trade unions.
- For left unity in action; openness and clarity in debate and discussion.

Marxists and the labour movement More than a lever

PLATFORM

By Martin Thomas

I agree with Alan Johnson's basic argument (*Socialist Organiser* no.616) that Marxists must seek to organise as a lever within the existing labour movement, rather than in sects. But I think he overdoes the argument on a few points.

He argues that when the British Communist Party was set up as a revolutionary party in 1920, they would in fact have done better to gather under the name of one of the component groups — the British Socialist Party — and seek to continue the British Socialist Party's affiliation to the Labour Party.

Probably so, if the communists of 1920 were already organised as a coherent group. But they were not. A party had to be organised before party tactics could be worked out.

Lenin, Trotsky, and the Communist International called for the formation of new parties in all countries, and insist-

ed they be called "Communist Parties". Was that sectarian fetishism of titles? Why would all the Bolshevik leaders, after decades of superbly flexible tactics, suddenly become sectarians?

Their aim was to bring together all the genuine working-class revolutionaries in each country — whether from the old social-democratic parties, from anarchist groups, or from the trade unions — on the basis of the fight for workers' power through soviets (workers' councils), and without demanding that they bow to the banner of any of the previous groups. The name Communist Party corresponded to the political task.

All the early Communist Parties outside Russia, and not just the British one, were plagued by what Lenin called the "infantile disorder" of ultra-leftism. Rosa Luxemburg's close comrade Leo Jogiches is said to have wanted to give up on the infant Communist Party of Germany after its first congress, when it voted to boycott National Assembly elec-

tions. The Bolshevik leaders, and Luxemburg, thought it better to go for broad regroupments of revolutionaries and then to educate and orientate them, rather than settling for what would have been small sects fully on the Bolshevik tactical "line".

In Britain an appeal to rally to the BSP could only have produced a small sect with a "correct" line on Labour Party affiliation but few other strengths, and the rallying of the most courageous and most committed revolutionaries to a rival group whose ultra-leftism would have been worsened by the division.

And Lenin's approach produced remarkable results. As Alan's article describes, within a couple of years the sectarian, ultra-left CP of 1920 had been transformed by education and discussion into a competent force doing effective work in the trade unions and the Labour Party.

Later Alan seems to generalise, condemning "the open organisational separation of the CP from the Labour Party" more

or less on principle, and defining the proper role of revolutionaries as "a body of opinion within the labour movement". Given the repressive, witch-hunting regime imposed on the Labour Party by its leaders, surely in most times revolutionaries who seek to educate themselves and discuss their ideas openly — and no organisation can remain genuinely Marxist without such clear discussion — have no choice but some degree of "organisational separation" from the Labour Party, some combination of "Labour Party legal" and "Labour-illegal" work? And the CP in the 1920s showed well how such a combination can be effective.

Moreover, to define Marxist organisation as "a body of opinion within the labour movement" is, strictly speaking, far from adequate. We have to be more than "an ideological lever in the mass movement". We have to work to change the labour movement organisationally as well as ideologically; and even while we are still small, we have to reach out to

student protests, hospital closure battles, nursery occupations, strikes, youth campaigns, and other battles by people *not yet in the labour movement*.

One final quibble: Alan seems to derive the need to relate to parliamentary politics from what is "nationally specific" in Britain. He cannot intend this, or else he would be saying that leftist anti-parliamentarism was quite all right for other countries! And I do not know quite what he means by "strategic combination of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary action... in the institutional democracy of a socialist society".

As John O'Mahony and John Bloxam put it in debate with the late Eric Heffer MP (*Workers' Liberty* no.14), "After World War I in Austria and Germany for a while you had a mixture of parliament and workers' councils... In practice, the bourgeois parliament dominated and eventually sapped and destroyed the workers' councils. A choice has to be made between workers' councils and parliament..."

Stop violence within the left

WHILE WE were selling our literature and talking to other participants at the Youth Against Racism in Europe (YARE) camp (16 August 1994), one of our comrades from the International Communist League (ICL) was physically assaulted by Damien Elliot the leader of the French GR/JCR group (Gauche Revolutionnaire/Jeuneses

Communistes Revolutionnaires) which recently joined the *Militant's* "Committee for a Workers' International".

Elliot was evidently enraged that we were selling our new pamphlet, "Militant Labour's Touching Faith in the Capitalist State." Our pamphlet includes the full text of a pamphlet recently published in France by Elliot's own GR/JCR! It

exposes the *Militant* tendency's blatant anti-Marxist position that the racist cops of capitalism are "workers in uniform" and the notion that the proletariat should support police "unions." The physical attack followed earlier threats that if we came within five metres of the GR/JCR tents they would "bury" us.

On 11 October our comrades were physically attacked again by the JCR thugs in front of a hundred witnesses at Tolbiac University in Paris.

Recourse to physical violence

to stop debates in the workers' movement is not new. This is the method used by the social democrats and Stalinists when they have no political response. The JCR — who more and more resemble a gang of hooligans rather than a political organisation — show themselves incapable of giving a political response to a leaflet we were distributing with contained a polemic against them on the question of the state and the cops.

The campus administration at Tolbiac, who know a friend

when they see one, found themselves in a bloc with the JCR against us. The security guards wanted us to leave the campus because this band of gangsters attacked us. We fought the administration last year in order to remain politically and physically present on this campus and we will continue to do so.

We are against violence in the workers' movement and for respecting the democratic right of all workers organisations to express themselves.

Spartacist League/Britain
PO Box 1041, London NW5

A cheap attack

I read your paper of 13 October. While finding several articles of interest, I was perturbed by the short article "SWP, the musical". I find some of the hackneyed sloganising of Socialist Worker as irritating as you do. However this was simply a cheap attack, devoid of political content. Frankly it could have appeared in *New Statesman* or *Tribune* without alteration. Possibly even in the bourgeois press.

It is one thing to criticise the style and tone of *Socialist Worker*, but do you actually disagree with fighting against grants cuts, the pay freeze, the BNP or the Criminal Justice Bill? Of course you don't! However the article could certainly be taken by a new reader to imply that.

A few other items in recent issues that I have seen worry me too. For instance on South

Africa you sing the praises of WOSA and its standing in the elections. Frankly, I thought they were complete wallies to do so. Their pathetic vote probably discredited Trotskyism more than it strengthened it. I find *Militant's* line far more realistic than yours. I'm also a little suspicious of the truckers' strikes. Sure, the ANC shouldn't allow cops to break up strikes or demobilise the masses. The way forward though, is via a political campaign for a workers' government not simply economic struggles. Sometimes the bosses actually support strikes for their own reasons. Remember for instance, that the truckers' strike in Chile was used to undermine the Allende government. Do the South African truckers see their dispute as with the bosses or the ANC government?

John Laurence
Wembley, London

Alliance for

WORKERS' LIBERTY

Meetings

NOTTINGHAM

Saturday 13 November

Day school: the politics of *Workers' Liberty*

11-5 Queen's Walk Community Centre, The Meadows

LANCASTER

Saturday 5-Sunday 6 November

Weekend school: the politics of *Workers' Liberty*

Farmers Arms, 10.30 Saturday

Tuesday 8 November

"Why should Marxists defend the Welfare State?"

1.00 Lancaster University Students Union

LEICESTER

Tuesday 15 November

"Lenin, Trotsky and 1917"

7.30 Leicester University Students Union

SHEFFIELD

Thursday 24 November

"Socialism, revolution and parliament"

Pat Murphy of the AWL debates the SPGB

7.30 SCCAU, West Street

NEWCASTLE

Thursday 10 November

"Should Labour Defend Clause Four?"

7.30 Rossetti Studios

"The Case for Socialist Feminism"

4.00 Student Union, University of Northumbria

LONDON

Saturday 5 November

Educational School: "the German revolution 1918-19"

12.00-4.00: details from Mark on 071-639 7965

Wednesday 9 November

"Is this Social Justice? A discussion about the Social Justice Commission"

Speakers: Jill Mountford (Welfare State Network) and Alison Brown (NUS Exec).

7.30 Lucas Arms, Grays Inn Road, Kings Cross

BIRMINGHAM

Thursday 10 November

"Can students beat the Tories?"

1.00 Conference Room, Students Union, University of Central England



"The film script has stripped away much of what was essential in the play."

A film to rot your teeth



Matt Cooper
reviews
*The Browning
Version*

Directed by
Mike Figgis

ANYONE WHO has seen *The Remains of the Day* will not fail to recognise *The Browning Version* as a vastly inferior attempt to cash in on that film's success. Here we have Cocker-Harris, (Albert Finney), a classics teacher at a British public school, forced into early retirement on the spurious ground of health. His wife (Greta Scacchi) is unfaithful to him, his colleagues often contemptuous of him. He is redeemed when a boy gives him a copy of Browning's translation of the *Aeschylus*.

The most glaring fault in this film is its representation of a mock "English life" for an American audience, an increasingly ubiquitous trait in British films. Life appears as an endless circle of formal social engagements to show off refinement and manners

such as tea on the lawn within view of the crumbling stone walls of Georgian architecture. All very stiff upper lip and "English", neatly packaged, and stamped "for export".

Terence Rattigan's 1948 play on which the film is based explores Cocker-Harris as a lonely, sad and repressed man, a symbol of a pitiful middle class living in fear of both the workers and their aristocratic betters. But this film makes Cocker-Harris simply an inexplicable personal failure. Albert Finney conveys the suffering and loneliness of the man well, but within a film script that has stripped away much of what was essential in Rattigan's play.

In fact much more is lost than this. There are currents of sexuality in the original play, but not in this film. There is a strong suggestion in the play that Cocker-Harris's wife is unfaithful because Cocker-Harris's sexuality is not directed at women, and their marriage is therefore a sad and sterile one. Rattigan's original stage presentation featured a gay actor, Eric Portman, in the role of the classics master, and — the much more faithful 1951 film adaptation starred the bisexual Michael

Redgrave. This dimension is missing from Figgis's film. Here the woman is simply unpleasant.

The inexplicable thing about this adaptation is its modern-day setting. A 1940s "costume drama" would at least have made the constellation of symbols of repression used by Rattigan comprehensible again. The 1990s are not the 1940s. Class relations have less to do with deference than with crude money relationships, where bank balance trumps "breeding".

The greatest sin against the play is in the film's ending. Rattigan had Cocker-Harris have what Primo Levi would have called "a moment of reprieve." He realises that not all of his life has been pointless and wasted when his student presents "The Browning Version" to him. This personal, interior moment means that he can face his empty and wasted life at least with a memory. In this film the act is one of public redemption: everyone's attitude towards him is changed. This is the film's "feel good" factor. It could rot your teeth! Figgis's film collapses into an unholy mess that neither enlightens nor entertains, while doing Rattigan a great injustice.

Two of the best

TWO RECENT films are far more worthy of attention. *Pulp Fiction* is directed by Quentin Tarantino. Anyone who was disappointed by last year's *True Romance*, filmed from an old Tarantino script, will be glad to know that it was Tarantino's directorial debut, *Reservoir Dogs*, that measured his talent. *True Romance* was a messy and episodic exercise in wish fulfilment, but *Pulp Fiction* in a wondrously slick and competent piece of cinema. Most of all, it is thoroughly entertaining.

Through three stories linking the same underworld lowlife of Los Angeles Tarantino creates the thriller set pieces that he relishes. This is not a film that has any message at all; its task is to entertain, and it does so superbly. Tarantino evokes wonderful acting from his unlikely caste. John Travolta as the heroin-soaked hit man Vincent seems to be playing the role that was always meant for him; Bruce Willis as the boxer on the run from the mob at last finds a role that suits his features; and Samuel Jackson, as Travolta's philosophising accomplice who wants a new life, plunders every "black hood" convention and then turns it inside out.

Despite press hype, this is not a violent film, but a come-

dy of manners. There is perhaps one scene that might scare the horses, but otherwise everything is just so much theatrical blood (and not as much of that as you'd expect). In terms of pure entertainment you are unlikely to see a better film this year.

A SECOND worthwhile recent release is everything that *Pulp Fiction* is not, except that they are both banned in China. *To Live* completes a trilogy of epic films from China's new guard of film directors — known as the "Fifth Generation" — released this year. All examine life in China from before the 1949 Stalinist revolution to the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s, and beyond. *To Live* is a very different film from both *The Blue Kite* and *Farewell my Concubine*, but Zhang Yimou's *To Live* (he previously made *Raise the Red Lantern*) matches both of them. With rich wit and feeling, he follows the fate of one family through turbulent years. He avoids making general political points, depicting everything in personal terms. It is Yimou who has come in for the brunt of the Chinese censors' wrath in recent months. If you have a chance to see this film (*To Live* is only on a very limited release) do, and you'll find out why.

People who want to prove the unprovable



Paddy Dollard
reviews *Battle of
Wills*

Part of BBC2's Shakespeare
on the Box series

Many years ago I read with riveted fascination a big book on the history of a controversy that has more than a little interest for citizens of a socialist movement that has reduced itself to a sprawling archipelago of self-blinding sects — the dispute about "who wrote Shakespeare". It was called "Shakespeare's Lives", and I think the author was called Schoenbaum.

The dispute has raged for well over a hundred years now and rages still. Last week it was the subject of one programme in BBC2's Bardfest.

Shakespeare wrote "Shakespeare", you say? But almost nothing is known about William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon. What little is known about "the Stratford man" deepens the mystery that must attach to "Shakespeare", whoever he was.

How could anybody be so universal, know so much about so many different sorts of human beings?

And how, ask the "anti-Stratfordians" (those who believe that William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Avon did not write the works of

"Shakespeare") could the small-town petty-bourgeois with at best a grammar school education have known courts and palaces and the princely exercise of state power — things that the author of "Shakespeare" knew so amazingly well that plays he wrote about the politics of a different world, can still talk to us about the essentials of our political world, 400 years later? Richard III, or Hamlet, for example.

There is, however you look at it, an awe-inspiring mystery about Shakespeare. It is the same sort of mystery as you confront in Mozart, but far greater and with no obvious solution.

From early childhood Mozart produced a wonderful profusion of musical patterns, as if he were a medium for some force outside himself. But Shakespeare dealt with character, situations, history.

Where Mozart can probably be explained by the qualities of a unique but more or less self-sufficient musical-mathematical mind trained from infancy by his musician father, Shakespeare did not deal with patterns in his own mind, but with patterns in society, psychology and history. Where did he learn? How did he know? What experiences shaped and instructed that wonderful mind about the world?

For now, the mystery of Shakespeare is insoluble, and maybe it always will be. We simply do not know. And that not knowing is very unsatisfying.

Enter the anti-Stratfordians. Their game is to find the most likely "alternative Shakespeare" from among public figures who were Shakespeare's contemporaries and

about whom, unlike "the Stratford man", much is known.

So who was "Shakespeare"? Was he Francis Bacon hiding behind that name? Or Christopher Marlowe? Marlowe died 20 years before Shakespeare — but can you prove that he did not go to the continent and write "Shakespeare"? No one can!

Or was it perhaps the Earl of Oxford? There are other "alternative Shakespeares", among them Queen Elizabeth I.

Sects have formed around favoured candidates — Marlovians, Oxfordians, Baconians. All of them try to prove the unprovable, sometimes by way of sifting through texts for secret encrypted messages from the real "Shakespeare".

All of them have gone on from the paucity of information about "the Stratford man", rejecting chaste scientific restraint and the unsatisfying "I don't know", to a conviction that "Shakespeare" was Bacon, Oxford, Marlowe; but they have only subjective grounds of intuition, inclination and sympathy on which to mount their conclusions.

It is probably no accident that one of the founders of the first, Baconian, school of anti-Stratfordians was named... Delia Bacon.

The anti-Stratfordians' arguments inevitably depend on suppression and selection of evidence, and on an impatient dismissal of what science tells them or it can't tell them, and on special pleading for their own candidate. They fill the void in what we know and can hope to know with fantasies and projections, thrown up arbitrarily and subjectively.

And thus, over a hundred years, the anti-Stratfordians have created a paranoid sub-culture of warring sects that parallels and overlaps with both religious and political sectarian formations, of which they are, I suppose, a hybrid specimen.

One of the beauties of the game is that anybody can play. Your opinion is as good as anyone else's. One man, a once-prominent Tory, Duff Cooper, wrote a whole book about it — he was an Oxfordian, I think — after it came to him in a flash of intuitive knowledge, one day in a World War I trench, that that yokel Shakespeare couldn't possibly have written those plays. Class snobbery seems to be a prime component of all the anti-Stratfordian schools — the gut conviction that "Shakespeare" couldn't have been that pleb from the hick village in Warwickshire.

Sigmund Freud was an anti-Stratfordian; so is Enoch Powell. Anybody can play!

Unlike "Trotskyist" groups which begin as rational formations, relating to the real world, and then degenerate into people poring over texts and half-divine revelations, the anti-Stratfordians are not subject to the sometimes shattering blows of experience. They start by discounting the only available "experience" — the evidence, such as it is — and take off from there. They are impervious to criticism. They can go on forever! Maybe they will.

"Class snobbery seems to be a prime component of the anti-Stratfordian schools."

Socialists and

TO MANY, it seems that the political arguments between socialists are all pointless bickering, and that we should forget them and instead sink all our differences, uniting behind some sort of left-consensus policy. One historical experience, above all others, shows the short-sightedness of this view: the collapse of the socialist parties at the start of World War 1 in 1914. In Germany, in Austria, in France, and in other European countries, sizeable "social-democratic" parties had been built over the decades before the war. "Social democracy" then meant Marxist and revolutionary — in words, at least. Many of the activists in these parties believed that they were advancing steadily towards socialist revolution. As the working class grew and became more organised and educated, the social-democratic parties and the trade unions linked to them also grew — and they would grow, so they thought, until they became an

TREACHERY, OPPORTUNISM, conservatism, chauvinism — these were the victors of the day. And not even the revolutionary traditions of the Russian movement rendered it immune from them.

Plekhanov, the scintillating Marxist, the godfather of the whole Russian party, the man with whom others broke but never ceased to admire, sank to the level of drummer-boy to czarist imperialism.

"The marauders are at the borders of my country and are ready to rob and murder. Make your reservations," he urged the Duma deputy Burianov. "This is absolutely necessary — but vote for the credits. The rejection of the credits would be a betrayal [of the people] and abstention would be cowardice, vote for the credits!" The old man was for the imperialist war, for saving the French bourgeoisie in the name of the revolution of 1789, against the barbarism of the German Junkers. Together with such Bolsheviks-turned-patriot as Alexinsky and Liubimov, he joined hands at Lausanne in 1915 with turncoat Social-Revolutionists like Avksentiev, Bunakov, Voronov and Argunov to launch the chauvinist paper *Priziv*.

The Mensheviks, those abroad in particular, under Martov's leadership, took up an internationalist position, but they never strayed from the centrist camp of Kautsky.

Trotsky, with a group of Bolsheviks and left-wing Mensheviks, took over the Parisian *Nashe Slovo*, fought for a revolutionary internationalist position until deported to Spain, but did not reconcile himself with the Bolsheviks until after the March revolution.

Lenin and Zinoviev, speaking for the Bolshevik Central Committee abroad, in Switzerland, were like a voice crying in a mad, war-devastated wilderness for their far advanced, consistent revolutionary position.

Names which once commanded nothing but respect in the Russian movement were now associated with service in the camp of czarist imperialism. Plekhanov, Alexinsky who later passed openly into the camp of czarism, Potressov, Mazlov, Cherevanin, Vera Sassulich, Ida Axelrod, to say nothing of the prince-regent of the anarchists, Kropotkin, all became social



Lenin

patriots.

In Russia especially, the Mensheviks took an ambiguous centrist position, or else became semi-pacifist, semi-collaborationists in the war. Outside of Russia, nobody could be found to support the drastic thesis of Lenin in favour of revolutionary defeatism, for a thoroughgoing break with the centrists of all shadings — nobody. And even in the Bolshevik party itself, very few, certainly in the first period of the war, were those who stood by the Swiss exiles.

Hundreds of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks enlisted in the French army, fearing that a German victory would mean the end of European civilisation. Another Bolshevik group, centred around Lunacharsky, published *Vperiod* in Switzerland, confining its programme to the demands for peace without annexations or indemnities, general disarmament, and a United States of Europe.

In the leading circles in Russia, matters were still worse. There the distinction between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks was often difficult to discern — at times for cause.

In the August 8 1914 session of the Duma, convened by the Czar to demonstrate the national unity of the Russians, the Menshevik Khaustov read a joint declaration of the deputies from both social-democratic fractions, which declared their refusal to vote war credits. But, it added, in order to show that their refusal did not breathe the spirit of support for the Central powers, they would abstain on the vote — a position which instead breathed the spirit of support for Kautsky's position.

In November 1914, the Bolshevik deputies, Badayev, Petrovsky, Samoilov, Shagov and Muranov, together with the representative of the central committee, Kamenev, were arrested at a secret meeting where Lenin's startling theses on the war were just being considered. At the trial of the six, they declared that the theses were a draft from abroad, but they themselves were not in agreement with it. In their appeal against the verdict all the defendants declared themselves expressly against points 6 and 7 in Lenin's theses because they "contradicted the declaration which was read in the name of the two fractions on 8 August" and moreover "were not shared either by social-democratic deputies or by the central instances of the party." Point 6 dealt with revolutionary defeatism as the lesser evil for the proletariat; point 7 dealt with the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war against the bourgeoisie! Yaroslavsky's history euphemistically dismisses the whole affair with the judgement: "It is true that not all the accused adopted an equally worthy attitude."

In the United States, the party also divided into two main camps. With the war in its third year, the American Socialist Party called an emergency convention in St Louis at which the famous majority resolution was adopted, taking a militant attitude against that impending war. Except for Debs, Coldwell and a few dozen others, none of the leaders of the party outside of the militant left wing, organised but tiny, ever allowed the majority resolution to leave the paper it was written on. The semi-patriotic, semi-pacifist minority resolution, signed among others by John Spargo, George H Goebel,

overwhelming power.

The outbreak of war in July-August 1914 shattered these illusions of easy progress. They showed that behind their "Marxist" facades, the leaderships of the socialist parties had gone rotten. They supported their own capitalist governments in the war.

The party leaderships had come to be dominated by opportunists, tied more to their Parliamentary positions or trade-union offices than to the working class or to the Marxist phrases which they still used. Crucial in this degeneration was the parties' policy of hiding or smoothing over political differences. Arguments, both from left-wingers seeking sharper, clearer commitments to struggle, and from right-wingers wanting to scrap the parties' formal revolutionary stand, had been stifled or fended off.

Political clarity was subordinated to bureaucratic time-serv-

ing. Only a few parties, like Lenin's Bolsheviks in Russia, had put political clarity first — and won a reputation as quarrelsome pedants and splitters. But they were the only parties able to stick to socialist principles in August 1914.

This week we print the second part of an account by Max Shachtman, reproduced from the US Trotskyist magazine, *The New Internationalist*, August 1934. In this second part Shachtman describes how Lenin and his comrades drove forward the struggle against half-hearted, muddling-through politics in the course of the war itself. While some socialists were "anti-war" but limited themselves to bleating appeals to the warring capitalist governments to make peace, Lenin argued that the war arose from the very nature of capitalism, and called for each working class to take revolutionary action against its "own" government, whatever the consequences for the military balance.



The cannon fodder of imperialist war fight back: anti-war protest in Petersburg, 1917

Cameron H King, Charles Edward Russell and the present party chairman, Leo Krzycki, really represented the course pursued by the authoritative party leaders in action — the legend of the St Louis resolution to the contrary notwithstanding.

The extreme right wing split off from the party, and with Phelps Stokes, Henry Slobodin, William English Walling, Charles Edward Russell, A M Simons, Alexander Howat, Louis Kopelin, John Spargo and several other patriots — many if not most of whom had but yesterday been the most insubmersible phrase-revolutionists — they formed the Social Democratic League and together with the AFL bureaucracy, the American Alliance for Labor and Democracy.

The official party promptly forgot the St Louis resolution. Meyer London, its lone Congressman, conducted himself disgracefully, never used the floor to attack the war, and confined his anti-war activity to voting in favour of or not voting against practically all the war

measures and appropriations. The socialist alderman in New York City voted for Liberty Bonds and a Victory Arch. Hillquit announced in 1917: "I do not advocate an immediate separate peace, a withdrawal by America. Nothing that I have ever said or written could justify such a sweeping assertion... I want America to act, not to withdraw." The National Executive Committee issued a manifesto in the same year saying: "We are not discouraging enlistments. We are not obstructing the conduct of the war." and while Debs went to prison, the party's struggle against war was entirely submerged and dissolved into the pacifist People's Council — the League against War and Fascism of its day.

It seemed that the whole International had turned delirious with war fever. All the hidden jingoism of the socialist leaders came to the surface as the flames of war burned off the thin veneer of their Marxian phraseology.

The French and Belgians and English became the most inflamed "jusqu'au boutistes" — bit-

the test of war



Luxemburg

ter-enders. In Austria, Pernerstorfer took care to explain that the tiny anti-war minority was composed not merely of academicians, but of Jews. Austerlitz wrote blood-curdling leaders — "On to Paris" — in the *Arbeiterzeitung*. The *Reichenberger Vorwärts* under Joseph Strasser, the only paper in the dual monarchy to take a revolutionary position was suppressed by the government and its place taken by a right-wing organ which outdid its Viennese model.

In Germany social democrats went from patriotism to open imperialism. Heilmann, who demanded the conquest of the Baltic, shouted: "let the eternally vacillating figures suddenly desire to play the strains of the 'International'



Trotsky

— as for me, I go to Hindenburg!" Meerfeld claimed that the rejection of annexations was un-Marxian. Landsberg claimed that the annexation of Poland up to the Narev line was still far from a wild annexationist policy.

Not only the old opportunists, but many who had but yesterday distinguished themselves by a fiery oratorical or literary revolutionism overnight became just as fiery patriots — a somersault which was psychologically explained by Freidrich Adler and not so wrongly as "Kriegsbegeisterung also Ueberkompensation der Insurrektionsgeluste" — war frenzy as an over-compensation of lust for insurrection.

Paul Lensch, another of the radicals who voted against war credits on 3 August in the fraction, soon occupied himself with proving by Marxism that the fraction could not have acted otherwise than it did. Konrad Haensch, another of yesterday's wordy radicals, described his own transformation in a rapturous paean which should never be forgotten.

"Not for everything in the world would I live again through those days of inner struggle! That impulsive ardent yearning to fling yourself into the vast stream of the general national floodtide, and from the other side, the terrible fear of the soul to follow this yearning relen-

lessly, to surrender entirely to the mood which roared and raged all around you and which, did you but peer into your heart, had already long ago taken possession of your very insides! That fear: shall you not become a scoundrel to yourself and your cause — should you too feel the way your heart commands? Until at last — I shall not forget the day and hour — the terrific tension suddenly snaps, and you dare to be what you really were; until — despite all petrified principles and wooden theories — for the first time (the first time for almost a quarter of a century!) with swelling heart, with clear conscience, and without any fear of thereby becoming a traitor, you join in the tempestuous storm-song: Deutschland, Deutschland uber Alles!"

To swim against this stream — no, not a stream, a torrent! — how many were there? Internationalism was submerged, and true internationalists could be found only with the greatest difficulty. Only those with the stoutest hearts, only those inspired with the most deep-rooted conviction, believed that the International — the new International — could and would be rebuilt, that the social revolution would rise triumphant from the blood-soaked trenches. And they were completely isolated!

Whatever opposition to the war manifested itself in the first period was for the most part pacifist, vacillatory, cowardly — in a word, Kautskyan. And even this tendency made little headway until it became clear that the prevalent optimism — "The war will only last three months!" — rested on self-deception.

The Independent Labour Party was overwhelmingly pacifist in its policy; the Communist movement finally emerged out of such tiny revolutionary anti-war groups as the British Socialist party, the Socialists Labour Party, the Shop Stewards' movement. In France, the predominant anti-war tendency was for a long time that led by Longuet and his friends, for whom Woodrow Wilson was the new Messiah. Even the French Zimmerwaldians did not all stay with the revolution to the end. Of that little group which was so heavily influenced by Trotsky, few remained with the revolutionary movement. Merrheim, the most popular of the Zimmerwaldians, turned Wilsonian, and then became a violent enemy of Communism and the Soviets; Bourderon soon returned to the bosom of the social democracy; Brizon, who also became a Wilsonian, returned from Kienthal with the report that he had had "to defend France inch by inch against Lenin" and his thesis on defeatism; Monatte returned to syndicalism, and Loriot died as a Communist who withdrew to the position of syndicalism; Rosmer outlasted most of them and then retired from active political life.

In Germany, the brave internationalists assembled around immortal Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht constituted only a handful, and even here it required all the persuasiveness of Rosa's command to convince Liebknecht of the imperative need of breaking openly to the discipline of the social patriots. The mainstream of proletarian anti-war sentiment flowed in the channels of centrism, and was vitiated by Kautsky and Bernstein. "We too wanted to bring about the speedy termination of the war," wrote the former, "but not by means of a revolutionary rising, which seemed to us improbable..."

In Italy, where the Socialist Party took a militant anti-war position, where the patriots like Bissolati, Cabrini and Bonomi, had already been expelled in 1912 for supporting the Tripolitanian war adventure (expelled on the motion of Benito Mussolini!) the most authoritative leaders were unable, for years, to bring themselves to a separation from the right wing and centrist elements which would have permitted the speedy — the timely! — growth of a strong revolutionary party.

Only in a few parties did the revolutionary Marxists find support: among the Russian Bolsheviks, the courageous Serbian socialists, the Rumanians, the Bulgarians, some of the

Swiss and Scandinavians, the Hollanders and very few others. As for the rest, the imposing idea of transforming the imperialist war into the war for the social revolution took their very breath away. The thesis of revolutionary defeatism as the lesser evil for the proletariat, far from meeting with a favourable response, encountered savage attack. And most fantastic of all appeared the idea in which was concentrated the most urgent need of the revolutionary proletariat of that period; the irrevocable break with the Second International and the founding of the Third International. Even those who would acknowledge that the former had failed, would not agree that it was bankrupt and had to be discarded. For the first years of the war, Lenin and the consistent Marxists were practically alone and few, very few.

Twenty of history's most amazing years have passed since the colossal tragedy of 4 August 1914. The working class is at the conjunction of three crucial processes: the Second International has succeeded in regaining if not its lost progressive character then at least the grudging support of millions of workers; the Third International has lost both its progressive character and the support of the masses who flocked to it in the early years of the war; the world is plunging with terrifying speed into the abyss of a new world war.

And because war is not merely inevitable under capitalism, it is actually impending as this is written. Because the Stalinist International is even less capable of leading the struggle against the new imperialist carnage than it was of leading the struggle against Hitlerism. Because the Second International remains true to itself and to its past, true to its bourgeois fatherlands, because tomorrow it will enter the service with the way-cry of "Democracy versus Fascism!" as it did twenty years ago with the war-cry "Democracy versus Kaiserism!" or "Kulture versus Czarism!" we in turn have raised the war-cry of "for the proletarian revolution to end imperialist war!" "For the Fourth International to lead the proletarian revolution!" What the slogan of the Third International was in the last war the watchword of the Fourth International shall be in the next: the rallying banner of all that is alive and vigorous in the proletarian movement, the avenger of the exploited and oppressed and martyred, the executor of the testament of our death, the intrepid challenger and deadly enemy of the ruling class and all class rule. And it will have among its mottoes the stirring inscription of Schiller's symbolic clock:

Vivos voco, mortuos plango, fulgura frango.
I summon the living, I mourn the dead, I shatter the thunderbolts!

Glossary

1789: the French revolution which overthrew the king and opened the way for (capitalist) democracy. In the wars that followed against Europe's monarchies, the French revolution was sustained by tremendous "revolutionary patriotism", the memory and example of which was later abused by French nationalists to give a left-wing gloss to themselves.

A FL: American Federation of Labour. It was the main trade-union organisation in the USA at the time, but very conservative, and almost entirely limited to skilled, white, male workers.

Bolsheviks: the more revolutionary faction in the Russian Marxist movement before the war.

Central powers: Germany and its war allies.

Centrist: the "centrist" socialists in World War 1 were those who advocated a pacifist middle course, as against the "government socialists" on one side and the revolutionaries on the other.

Chauvinism: extreme nationalism.

Czar: emperor, or king, of Russia.

Defeatism: Lenin argued that "Only a bourgeois who believes that a war started by the governments must necessarily end as a war between governments and wants it to end as such, can regard as 'ridiculous' and 'absurd' the idea that the socialists of all the belligerent countries should wish for the defeat of all 'their' governments..." He counterposed this revolutionary attitude to the pacifist one of appealing to the established governments to make peace.

Deutschland uber Alles: German national anthem.

Dual monarchy: Austria and Hungary.

Duma: a sort of parliament.

Hindenburg: chief commander of the German army.

Independent Labour Party: was then a sizeable force in Britain, as an affiliated party within the Labour Party.

Jingo: warmonger, extreme nationalist.

Junkers: landlords in eastern Germany.

Kautsky: the main theorist of the German socialist movement before the war. Became a "centrist" during the war.

Kienthal: site of a conference of anti-war socialists, later than Zimmerwald (q.v.).

Mensheviks: the less revolutionary, more conservative, faction in the Russian Marxist movement before the war.

Plekhanov: founder of the Russian Marxist movement. Even after he had become a chauvinist in the war, Lenin and his comrades used to advocate the study of Plekhanov's earlier writings, especially on philosophy.

Second International: the international alliance of socialist parties, set up in 1889. Collapsed in 1914; was re-established, but in very feeble form, after World War 1. The Third International, organising Communist Parties worldwide, was launched by Lenin and his comrades in 1919; it later degenerated under Stalin's influence, and was formally wound up in 1943. Trotsky, Shachtman and their comrades started arguing for a Fourth International after 1933, when the German CP proved incapable of learning any lessons from Hitler's victory in Germany. The Fourth International was eventually set up, as a very small group, in 1938; its international lines of communication were largely broken during World War 2; it was reorganised after 1944, but from about 1948-51 veered towards politics very different from Trotsky's and splintered into a number of factions.

Shop stewards' movement: shop-steward organisation developed in Britain for the first time during World War 1, through the efforts of militant socialists in the engineering industry.

Tripolitanian: Libyan.

Woodrow Wilson: President of the USA; preached pacifism and the right of nations to self-determination, but brought the USA into the war.

Zimmerwald: site of a conference of anti-war socialists.

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Tories cut road safety

By a Department of Transport worker

IN JULY of this year as a Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) was speeding along, travelling up the M11 to the north, when part of its prop shaft fell off, bounced across the motorway to the other carriageway and hit a car. The driver was killed — in front of his wife and children.

Earlier this year a HGV carrying a full load (over 15 tonnes) of chemicals was stopped on the M62. It was discovered that the vehicle had no fire extinguisher or fire-fighting equipment whatsoever even though the chemicals were potentially highly explosive.

The HGV had travelled through Manchester and if it had caught fire large parts of the city could have been blown off the map. The driver could not have extinguished any fire that started before the whole load went up.

These examples are common-place. It seems that nearly every day we hear of minibus crashes, coaches getting smashed, and lives lost. An increasing number of accidents are a direct result of Tory transport policies.

The Department of Transport (DOT) estimates that 9% of the HGV fleet, (some 40,000 trucks) operate illegally.

Operating illegally means that these vehicles are not covered by an "O" licence. This licence is supposed to guarantee that HGVs, buses, and coaches are run by people of "good repute", with sufficient financial resources to ensure that proper vehicle maintenance is carried out, and that the vehicles operate out of proper premises.

DOT inspectors periodically check that maintenance is done. But such a system smacks to the Tories of intolerable state interference with the "free market." They would like to just scrap the whole system. Fortunately, they can't because crashes and deaths would sky-rocket. Instead they are adopting the approach they have taken in the Health Service and elsewhere: slowly dismantling the system, deregulating it and cutting funding.

In the last year the number of HGVs inspected by the DOT dropped by 19%; inspections on buses/coaches has been reduced by 14%. This, despite the fact that about a fifth of all vehicles were found to have critical safety defects.

At the same time as the inspection figures were announced the Tories declared that the safety inspection arm of the DOT would be cut! It is quite clear that if inspections decrease the number of illegal vehicles will increase. There will be more deaths, more crashes.

So alarming has the situation become that the government's own "independent" Traffic Commissioners, who act as the watch dog of the "O" licence system, have been speaking out.

One Traffic Commissioner stated: "I

am very concerned by recent serious accidents involving both coaches and mini buses. They underline the need for us to retain firm controls over operators, particularly in terms of maintenance and drivers' hours, and this requires vigilance on my part... Above all it requires adequate resources. I am most concerned that in practice enforcement by the Vehicle Inspectorate (DOT's safety inspectors) in these key areas appears to be falling."

The cuts in funding have not even begun, so the situation can only get worse.

The Traffic Commissioner for Scotland stated in his latest report: "Scotland represents one third of the land mass of Great Britain and sheer distance and travelling time require a minimum of Vehicle Inspectorate (VI) staff if enforcement is to be properly applied. I believe we are already below that number."

The Tories' response? Cut 472 VI jobs.

The effect on drivers is also dire. The enforcement of regulations governing the maximum number of hours a driver can work over a given period is very lax in Britain. Fear of losing their jobs and the structure of their wage system (more loads, more pay) forces drivers to work an excessive number of hours. DOT cutbacks will mean the decline of state regulation of drivers hours. This in turn means longer hours for drivers. And that, inevitably, means more accidents.

The Tories are introducing a deregulation bill which they hope will become law late in 1994 or early 1995. The bill will further weaken the "O" Licence.

At present vehicle operators have to re-apply for their licence every 5 years. The Delegation Bill will replace the 5 year licence with a "lifetime" one. In theory, there will no longer be periodical checks on how operators run their vehicles. Again, as state regulation weakens, safety standards will inevitably fall.

In a free market, an operator who maintains safety standards (which costs money) and enforces drivers' hours (which also costs money) stands to be undercut by operators who don't!

Undercutting by vehicle operators by way of dropping standards has reached such a level that in a recent DOT swoop on HGVs working on the Severn bridge, the majority of vehicles were found to be working illegally. Whose job were the HGVs working on? One let by DOT itself! And this despite the fact that DOT contracts have a clause in them to ensure that only licensed HGVs can be used on their jobs.

Many individual Tories have, of course, a direct financial interest in "freeing" the market in road transport.

The minister in charge of buses for example, until he became a minister two months or so ago, was the paid

Parliamentary consultant for the Bus Federation. He is also part owner in a bus company!

Another DOT minister has a large share-holding in a firm which, according to its registration papers at Companies House, was set up as a car dealership; he is a HGV operator and has a number of other transport related interests. This is the minister responsible for vehicle registration and car dealerships!

As one comrade commented recently: "This government increasingly resembles the French government of the 1830s and '40s described by Marx, where sections of the French bourgeoisie had direct control of the government and state and used it for their own narrow advantage, even against the rest of the bourgeoisie."

In Britain under the Tories it appears increasingly that some members of the bourgeoisie are taking over those parts of the state which are supposed to regulate their businesses. Then they make up the rules to suit themselves!

Problems of enforcing safety regulations are not just confined to road vehicles.

The marine safety inspectors are being cut back; car accident investigation is taking a funding cut; the DOT body which deals with airport security is also being slashed (a large funding cut); air traffic control is being privatised.

ALL THESE measures — every one of them — will mean more deaths and accidents.

These cuts also flow out of a large element of irrationality.

The Transport Research Laboratory, one of the world's best centres of research, is to be privatised. This establishment carries out long-term research into all aspects of road transport. For example, they did the work which showed that seat-belt use would save a significant number of lives, paving the way for legislation. They do crash-testing on cars. The sell-off will mean that government has no access to independent advice on matters such as vehicle safety.

Stranger still is the case of road tax collection. The government estimates that £145 million of road tax remains uncollected each year. Yet the Tories intend to close the offices which collect unpaid road tax. 1,500 jobs will be lost in the process.

To compensate for this loss of resources, the Tories intend to broaden the tax base, by making every car liable for tax. At present a car is only liable if it is on the road. Now your old banger in the garage, which can't move, will be liable for tax; all the used cars in a scrapyard are liable as well! Of course every pound lost in tax revenue means that a pound will be cut by the Tories in expenditure.

The process of neglect reached a mini

climax in Cheshire a few months ago, when the police, to save money, discontinued vehicle checks. At the same time, and for the same reason, DOT did the same thing. So, for a period of time, the state abandoned the enforcement of drivers' hours and safety regulations in a large part of the country!

It was only following protest from the CPSA, a civil service union whose members work in DOT, and from a local MP, that some sort of safety coverage was restored to Cheshire.

The Tories' plans to cut back on safety inspections on road vehicles, rail, ships and airplanes must be stopped. Of course they realise, as any rational person would, that their plans will lead to more lost lives, to large-scale tragedies (such as the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise) and greater exploitation of transport workers. Exploitation, they want to increase — and evidently they do not care about lost lives and maimed bodies.

The labour movement must expose and publicise the Tory attacks, and get a firm commitment that any future Labour government will clamp down on illegal vehicles, and increase the number of staff employed on enforcing safety regulations as necessary.

This will lead to protest from haulage firms. They will say that such a policy would lead to crippling restraints on the "free market." The labour movement's reply should be: good! Your ability to maim and kill people with unsafe vehicles should be restrained. It must be ended!

The CPSA has started such a labour movement campaign. Hopefully other unions and the Labour Party will add their weight to it.

The CPSA has shown that in most offices responsible for collecting unpaid road tax, large amounts remain uncollected because of lack of staff.

The union estimates that for every pound spent on staff salaries, two to three pounds are collected in tax. Millions of pounds are literally waiting in offices to be collected, yet at the same time hospital wards are shutting down for lack of money!

Over the next one to three years, the Tories want to cut at least 3,700 jobs from DOT. That is nearly 27% of staff. Those staff can and should be deployed to enforce the existing safety legislation rather than wasting them in the dole queue.

It shouldn't be a gamble when you board a bus or coach. Your safety and your life should not depend on whether the owner is really of "good repute" and can be trusted to carry out safety checks and not to force his drivers to work an illegal number of hours. It should be a basic right to travel safely. Like so many other basic rights, the Tories are taking it away.

It is — literally — a matter of life and death that we don't let them get away with it.

RMT — Rob Dawber for President!

By a railworker

VOTING IS NOW taking place in the railworkers' union RMT for the position of National President.

Sitting right winger Don Loughlin has done everything he can to help Jimmy Knapp block and frustrate the left majority on the union's executive. He must be removed.

The best way to do that is to vote for Rob Dawber, the candidate of

the serious left.

Rob is the only candidate who has made a clear call for union officials to earn the average wage of RMT members and for the renationalisation of BR without compensation. Rob is also the only candidate pledged to defend Clause Four of Labour's constitution, in opposition to RMT sponsored Labour Party Deputy Leader John Prescott, who is trying to claim trade union support for abolition.

Rob's platform includes:

- More resources must be put into the branches in support of local reps — those now in the front line.

- Every allowance, every condition, every job must be defended, and the reps should not feel isolated.

- The union should be encouraging and organising resistance at every level to the privatisation drive.

- The Labour Party should be committed to renationalisation of BR without compensation. That would stop privatisation in its tracks.

- Socialism and Clause Four should be defended in the Labour Party.

- Union full-timers should not receive management-level wages; only the average of the RMT member plus necessary expenses. Vote Rob Dawber!

Liverpool UNISON witchhunt: "let the members decide!"

By Albert Troutman

THE WITCHHUNT of four Liverpool members of the public services union UNISON has been brought to a standstill after the 4 successfully applied for a High Court injunction to halt the disciplinary hearings.

The four Social Services activists have been charged with organising unofficial strike action and intimidation. The main mover behind the charges is the branch secretary, Judy Cotter, who felt her position under threat.

Both the investigation and the hearing have been a farce. A whole series of irregularities have discredited this disciplinary action.

A series of complaints had been put in by members against Judy Cotter, the branch secretary. The National Executive agreed to charge her as well as the four Social Services activists. This was a very transparent manoeuvre to appear even-handed, dropped at the last moment — by whom and on what authority has not been made clear.

The disciplinary hearings have been called off twice before. The preparation of the case against the four took a full year. Yet the four were only allowed a few weeks to respond to the allegations.

Many of the details of the investigation have been kept secret from the four. Under the rules they were entitled to the

full report. Specific evidence to back up the charges of intimidation was being withheld until the hearing, making it difficult to prepare the defence.

The disciplinaries were becoming a sham and a stitch-up.

The four had a stark choice — to go along with the hearing, let themselves be stitched-up, disciplined and conceivably expelled from the union, or fight by the means at their disposal by taking the matter to the High Court to stop the hearing on the grounds of natural justice.

Could they appeal to the rest of UNISON against the unfair hearings? The problem is the disciplinary procedures adopted by UNISON.

At a national level the body which decides to take disciplinary action is the National Executive. The body which hears any disciplinary is the Disciplinary Sub-Committee, a sub-committee of National Executive members. The only appeal against any disciplinary is to the Appeals Panel, made up of Service Group Executive members, who are in the main National Executive members. This is a disciplinary set up Joe Stalin would have been proud of.

The matter is now due to be heard at a full High Court hearing in at least two months. That breathing space must be used to build up pressure on the national leadership to call a halt to the disciplinaries.

The investigation and hearing stand discredited. If the General Secretary dropped the charges against Judy Cotter, he should also drop the charges against the four. If he won't do it, the National Executive must call a halt to this sorry episode.

The only way differences can be resolved is through democracy and through letting members decide who they want as shop steward, convenor or branch secretary. Liverpool UNISON members are still being denied their right to a branch AGM.

Let the members decide. Stop the witchhunt. Give Liverpool its AGM. Stop the disciplinaries

CPSA: unite the left

By Trudy Saunders CPSA DHSS

THE SITUATION for Civil Servants has never been worse. More job losses, involving 25,000 in Whitehall alone over the next two years, have been proposed by the Tories; widespread market testing and privatisation are taking a grip on the Civil Service; pay and grading are being devolved; there are widespread attacks on conditions; and sackings for disciplinary offences — once rare — have become a frequent occurrence.

While the Tories do their worst, the CPSA's "Moderate" Executive and full time officials sit with their overpaid, overfed bums on their hands. Instead of leading a fightback against the Tories, the "Moderates" spend their time turning down strike submissions from branches desperate to defend jobs and conditions.

Last month the CPSA NEC moved to close down DSS Inner London South branch for the crime of organising workplace meetings for all DSS workers regardless of whether they are in the "Contributions Agency" or the "Benefits Agency".

The so-called "Moderates" insist that workers who share the same workplace should not be in the same branch. Instead, they support the Tories' artificial and phoney division of DSS workers!

The reason for this that the unsustainable Contributions Agency union structure provides a nice little rotten borough for the "Moderates" friends in the misnamed "Democratic Left".

With attacks from the employers, and worst union leadership in the movement, now more than ever we need an effective, united left opposition in the CPSA.

This weekend's Broad Left conference (5 November) will provide an opportunity for activists to discuss the strategy needed to build such a left.

We can learn from the recent unofficial section forum, which saw activists representing 90,000 of the union's 125,000 members hammering out a common approach across the section which included proposals for union democracy and a co-ordinated program of industrial action to defend jobs and resist privatisation and market testing.

There is no principled reason for the present division of the CPSA left into three groups: BL,

Socialist Caucus and BL '84.

The Broad Left, which is still the largest should stop pretending that it is the only left organisation. In the interests of creating a single unified organisation, it should be prepared to compromise with other forces.

That would mean proposing rules and a constitution for a united left substantially different from those of the current BL. There must be safeguards written into the constitution to prevent Militant from treating the BL as its own property.

Militant will also have to break from their practice of opposing in the BL campaigns and initiatives which they do not control, such as "End the ban!", the campaign to oppose the Labour Party's ban on this newspaper.

BL '84, who originally split off from the BL on a soft-left Kinnockite trajectory, should realise that they are not quite the force they used to be. They delivered no more votes for the Unity slate this year than the hard left Socialist Caucus. They should not continue to demand half the seats on an Executive slate that they deliver a quarter of the votes for!

And the small minority in the Socialist Caucus who think that the main enemy is Militant and that the Unity initiative is bound to fail should stop sniping from the sidelines. For a united left based on national industrial action to defend jobs!

In Brief

Rover workers have narrowly voted to accept a pay deal supposedly worth 10.7% but in reality 3.7% this year and 4% or inflation next.

Royal Mail management have offered a pay rise of just 2.3% despite making profits of £283 million — up by over 10% from last year.

The strike at Arrowsmith printers in Bristol is over after 18 months. 121 workers went out in April 1993 but after 18 months a narrow majority have voted to end the strike. Despite widespread local support — including walkouts by CPSA members in Job Centres when the company tried to advertise for scabs — the GPMU never used its national power to win the dispute.

Farm-fresh bacteria!



FOR A long time, farmers have been adding antibiotics to the food of farm animals. This is done not to treat infections but to stop them happening in the first place. The economic benefit is that the animals grow faster, but there are other drawbacks which don't appear in the farmers' balance sheets.

For one, the practice might have been designed to breed bacteria resistant to antibiotics. Any bacteria with resistance to the drugs used would survive and be able to breed unhindered by the presence of other competing bacteria.

There is some evidence that this is happening. The Department of Health reports that outbreaks of salmonella food poisoning caused by a strain resistant to commonly antibiotics have reached epidemic proportions. The death rate in these infections is far higher than with ordinary salmonella food poisoning. Many outbreaks have been traced to the eating of chicken and pork, both of which are reared intensively, with routine dosing with antibiotics.

Other types of bacteria have developed multiple drug resistance, leading to great difficulties in treatment of infections. Some of the alternative antibiotics that have to be used have very nasty side effects. Misuse of antibiotics has undoubtedly been a factor in causing multiple drug resistance, but another factor has been the ability of unrelated bacteria to swap the genes for drug resistance, an ability that has been put to use in genetic engineering.

Now, there is evidence that drug resistance genes in bacteria infecting farm animals can be passed on to bacteria that infect humans. *New Scientist* reports that researchers at the University of Illinois have found that genes for resistance to tetracycline have been transferred from bacteria in the guts of pigs, sheep and cows to distantly-related bacteria found in the human mouth and gut. The bacteria cause disease in the gut and gums. Tetracycline is a very widely used antibiotic.

The researchers extracted the tetracycline-resistance genes from the animal and human bacteria and found that they were virtually identical. The similarity was between 94 and 98%, indicating a very recent transfer. If the genes had simply been inherited from the common ancestor of the bacteria, hundreds of millions of years ago, they would be expected to have evolved significant differences by now, with a similarity of perhaps only 10%.

These results are not completely conclusive but any innocent explanation would seem extremely unlikely. The practice of adding antibiotics to animal feed must be further called into question. But are there also implications for the safety of releasing genetically-engineered organisms into the environment (or at least into the supermarket)?

The Flavr Savr tomato carries a gene which slows down ripening and also a gene for resistance to the rarely-used antibiotic kanamycin. Could this gene get into gut bacteria? May I say in advance that it is extremely unlikely — tomatoes and bacteria are extremely dissimilar — and would probably not have any serious implications, even if it did happen? It is worth checking though, as more and more genes are put in organisms where they are not normally found.

Wandsworth cuts fightback

CAMPAIGNERS against the cuts got a boost from the tremendous turnout by local people on the lobby of Wandsworth council two weeks ago. Over six hundred people turned up, young and old, black and white.

The council still voted to close the luncheon day centres for the elderly. Everyone was determined to stop further cuts, including the closure of George Potter House

Elderly People's Home and the privatisation of all remaining homes.

Unions and community groups are building for a day of action on Wednesday 7 December, culminating in a demonstration outside Wandsworth Town Hall.

For more details contact: Wandsworth Fightback, c/o Bob Nightingale, 248 Lavender Hill, SW11.

Council workers unite with parents to stop family centre closure

ON THURSDAY 13 October a lobby of over seventy council workers and local families stopped Haringey Council closing a local family centre, Red Gables, with the loss of twelve jobs.

The victory is an important one, as the council plans to make over five million pounds of cuts in the next few years. The local UNISON branch, who organised the lobby with the family centre workers, recognised the need to unite with the users of the service. Many local families turned up and explained to councillors how their children had benefitted from Red Gables.

At the same time as the closure was being discussed, the council

was proposing a multimillion project to build a cable car at Alexandra Palace. Council workers need to build on the success of this lobby to defend jobs and services elsewhere in the council.

Safety first!

A MAJOR national campaign has been set up over the issue of transport safety standards. The initiative has the backing of the TGWU, ASLEF, RMT and the civil service unions in the Department of Transport.

If you want a speaker, then phone the DoT trade unions on 071 276 6644.

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All out on 9 November!

Students against the grant cuts

By Alison Brown

THIS WEDNESDAY (9 November) students will march in London in protest against cuts in their grants. The demonstration — organised by the National Union of Students — follows local protests in Bournemouth, Lancaster, Newcastle, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and elsewhere.

It is good that the NUS is organising a national demonstration in defence of student grants. It is essential, though, that this demonstration is not be allowed to become a mere token protest.

That means that student activists have to be geared up to building the campaign's momentum when they get back to their colleges.

It means organising local marches, pickets of Tory MPs' offices, lobbies of MPs' surgeries and occupations.

NUS has very little planned after the demonstration. It seems that they intend to organise just one demo,



Students must keep up the pressure on the Tories — and on the NUS leaders

(under pressure from student activists) and then return to the old tea-with-Tories routine. However, whatever the NUS leaders' intent, the campaign still needs national action to provide a focus for local action, and to unite students from around the country.

NUS London Area, together with the Welfare State Network, is holding a lobby of Parliament on Tuesday 29 November — Budget day. *This should be the next national action that your student union mobilises for.*

The fight over grant cuts has taken on

a new political urgency with the publication of the Report of the Commission on Social Justice. The Commission is urging the Labour Party to scrap grants entirely, and to make students pay 20% of their tuition fees.

In response to this, the student movement needs to reassert its basic policies, and campaign for free education. And we need to ensure that the right-wing Labour NUS leadership is forced to side with students, even if that means standing up against their friends in Labour Party HQ.

By Mark Osborn

PEOPLE APPLYING for immigration status in Britain are being held on a routine basis in prisons and detention centres, where they are systematically abused, forced into hunger strikes and suicide attempts. This is according to a recent report by Amnesty International.

Last week an immigration detainee from Pakistan was so badly injured that an airline captain refused to take him. His injuries were self-inflicted, made in desperation, and they involved wounds to his stomach, wrists and legs. His wounds were not adequately treated before his deportation and at the time he was dressed only in pyjamas and a blanket.

After the failure to get him onto the plane, the Immigration Service sent him to Rochester prison which holds immigration detainees. One prison officer there said: "We've seen some horrific things but that just topped it all... What we are talking about is lack of care. It was worse than inhuman to say the least."

The number of asylum seekers and other immigrants held in prison (such as Pentonville) and immigration centres (such as Campsfield near Oxford and Haslar near Gosport) has skyrocketed. Numbers of asylum seekers held has doubled over the last 18 months to 622, and over 9,000 people are currently being held under the 1971 Immigration Act. The number of asylum seekers being detained has increased steadily since the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act came into effect last year.

There are no limits to the amount of time people are detained, and some have been held for up to 17 months. Once you are detained your fate is entirely in the hands of the Home Office: no right to bail, no right to know why you are being detained, and no right to make an appeal against your detention.

Detainees, like other prisoners, are often held in overcrowded and squalid conditions, subject to 23-hour lock-ups, have to slop-out and face other kinds of deprivation and humiliation. No prisoner should have to face these conditions.

At least people who have been imprisoned through the criminal justice system have some political rights! These people — who have come to Britain fleeing repressive regimes under which imprisonment without trial could be a norm — have no such rights! There have been as a consequence a series of tragic events.

- Omasase Lumumba died in Pentonville prison in 1991. He was being restrained by prison officers in a strip cell at the time of his death. The jury inquest into his death ruled that Omasase was "unlawfully killed."

- The death of Joy Gardner in 1993.
- The detention of large numbers of Jamaican visitors at Christmas 1993.

This situation is unspeakably unjust. Many detainees have felt compelled to go on hunger strike to draw attention to their condition and lack of rights.

The labour movement should take up the Charter for Immigration Detainees published by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and campaign for its demands (see page 2 for details).

Socialists should also call for the scrapping of all immigration controls, and fight for the rights of asylum seekers to enter Britain freely.

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