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# socialist OUTLOOK

## As Smith elected leader....

# Expulsions deepen Labour witch hunt

**By expelled Lambeth councillor Steve French**

AS JOHN Smith was elected the new Labour leader, five of the Lambeth 15 were expelled from the party.

Steve Nally was expelled for his role in the Poll Tax movement. Four councillors – Alison Higgs, George Huish, Rachael Webb and myself – were expelled for ‘unashamedly putting pressure on the council leadership’.

This horrendous crime meant that we simply expressed dissenting opinions.

This represents a qualitative deepening of the witch hunt. The National Constitutional Committee has expelled and suspended people simply for their opinions. It is the first time that the excuse of being a ‘party within a party’ has not been used.

Alison Higgs and myself have never made any secret of our support for Socialist Outlook, but this was not an issue in our expulsions. Labour general secretary Larry Whitty merely accused us of ‘agitating against national party policy’ and ‘attacking the council leadership’. For this people have been expelled and suspended.

Dissent is now an expellable offence in the Labour Party. The purge will now deepen, as press and TV silence help Smith keep his hands ‘clean’. Never has



John Harris

*In comes the new leadership – out go more socialists*

there been more need to build the Campaign against the Witch Hunt, and a united fighting left to defend the ideas of socialism.

**Get your local Labour Party, trade union or campaign organisation to invite one of the expelled councillors to speak. Contact Campaign against the Witch**

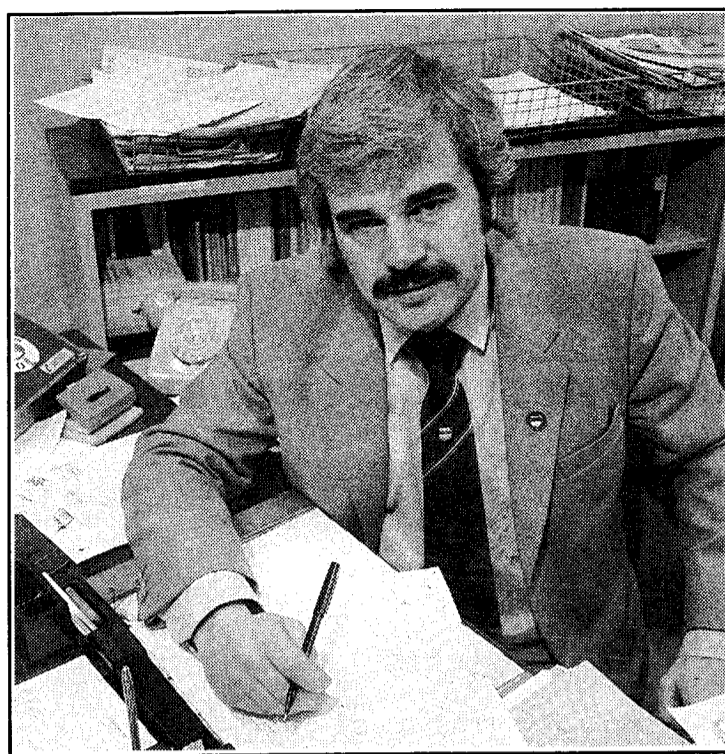
**Hunt, c/o 56 Ashby House, Loughborough Estate, London SW19 1QZ.**

*Four councillors were suspended for between six months and two years. Four more hearings will be held in September and as we go to press, Socialist Outlook supporter Cllr John Tuite is before the NCC. See page 2 for details.*

**Appreciation of Mr Kinnock, page 4.**



Steve French burns his Poll Tax bill: any dissent is now expellable



Witch-finder-general Larry Whitty

## Larry Whitty's new model Labour Party Shut up or get expelled

As a result of the National Constitutional Committee Lambeth inquiry, five people were expelled and four suspended for between six months and two years. KATE AHRENS spoke to STEVE FRENCH and ALISON HIGGS, two of the expelled councillors.

### What have been the results of the inquiry?

AH: George Huish, Rachel Webb, Steve and myself have been expelled. Lesley Hammond has been suspended for six months. Bill Houghting's been suspended until after the next selections for the council.

John Harrison's been given a choice of signing a 'loyalty oath' and being let back into the group after six months, or being suspended for two years, until after the council selections.

### Were you all given the choice of signing this

## Inside Labour's kangaroo court

By Steve French, Alison Higgs and John Tuite

IN ADDITION to the expulsions in Lambeth, four councillors have been suspended for periods of between six months and two years. The two year suspensions are effectively a ban on standing in the 1994 council elections. Further cases are being held this week and in September – and there will doubtless be further expulsions.

The National Constitutional Committee which heard the charges is a lynch court, where all normal rules of justice are thrown out the window.

A letter sent to the NCC by David Blunkett clearly named those who should have lesser punishments, and those who by implication should be expelled. Despite the fact this letter was withdrawn 'on legal advice', the mud stuck.

Larry Whitty or Joyce Gould merely had to say 'this person is not fit to be a Labour Party member', and like Pavlov's dogs the NCC responded.

The cards were so marked in advance that it was widely and accurately rumoured who was to be expelled and who suspended. It is strange that the South London Press announced Steve French's expulsion before his case had finished!

The 15 were charged simply with 'bringing the party into disrepute'. Who exactly is bringing the party into disrepute is a matter of subjective judgement.

Socialists should not be lulled by Smith's soft tones in to believing that the witch hunt will diminish. As Smith pushes the party rightwards there is the danger of hundreds of party activists being expelled.

### 'loyalty oath'?

AH: No. Quite early on in my hearing, Joyce Gould who was putting the case against me said that I was not fit to be in the Labour Party. She did ask me to say that I would *always* vote with the Group whip, but I don't think it was a really serious attempt to get me to lie on the floor and beg to be let back into the party.

SF: It was the same with me. Larry Whitty presented my case and at the start said that I was not a fit person to be in the party. I think that the NCC heard that phrase as an instruction to expel us.

It's clear that it's prearranged who's going to get offers like the loyalty oath. The hard left aren't even 'worthy' of that.

AH: With John Harrison, they were bending over backwards to help him say the right things. The whole tone was completely different, which backs up what Steve was saying about the hearings being rigged.

### What response have you got from the local labour movement?

AH: My constituency, Vauxhall has been opposed to the suspensions from the beginning and they're totally opposed to the expulsions that have taken place.

SF: We have support from Norwood CLP. Streatham CLP is controlled by the LCC and they were the ones who started the witch-hunt, along with their MP Keith Hill, and Kate Hoey, MP for Vauxhall. But even within Streatham there are some wards and the women's section who have supported us.

Every town hall union – except for the AEEU and UCATT – have given us support. Also Lambeth trades council has supported us.

Brixton UCATT branch has also given us support. So we don't feel isolated because there is the weight of support from the local labour movement and community.

### What makes these expulsions different from what we have seen before with the expulsions of alleged Militant supporters?

SF: This marks a real deepening

of the witch-hunt. Previously all the people expelled have been charged under the rule about organising a party within a party.

With us there has been no pretence. None of us have been charged with being in a proscribed organisation. We are the first people who have actually been expelled who haven't been charged with being in Militant.

All the expulsions have been transparently ideological, but these ones are even more transparent!

Some of the evidence against me and other people includes internal Labour Party material – position papers that we put arguing against cuts or the Poll Tax. The way we voted in the Group was also evidence of a 'sustained course of action prejudicial to the Party'. So it's a fundamental attack on the rights of party members to express a view that's contrary to national policy.

What struck me about the hearing was that they never even attempted to prove that I had brought the party into disrepute.

The evidence against me was either the positions that I had argued *inside* the party – which can't bring the party into disrepute with the public, can it? Or it was that I had broken the whip in full council meetings. There was an attitude that councillors voting against the whip equals disrepute, but how voting against the Poll Tax can bring the party into disrepute when 14 million people weren't paying, I don't know.

### How do you see the witch-hunt developing?

SF: The witch-hunt will accelerate. Some on the left think that John Smith is a 'nice' guy. That's wrong. Smith wants to move the party to the right, so it's a party that can make pacts with the Liberal Democrats.

So the witch-hunt will go on. Around the country, hundreds of people are going to be expelled.

The next lot is Sheffield where people are accused of being supporters of Socialist Organiser. That's a clear deepening of the witch-hunt.

There's a whole swathe of cases around the country, Brighton is next, where people have been suspended for sup-

porting their local councillors who were suspended for voting against the Poll Tax. All the local party structures have been suspended.

People now have charges against them purely because of their involvement in Friends of Brighton Labour Party. Part of our charges was the setting up of Lambeth against the Witch-hunt, so it's now a crime to defend yourself.

### What are the prospects of a fightback?

SF: These expulsions horrified a lot of people; not just the left, but a lot of people have said that the cases should be dropped.

Michael Meacher said at a meeting in Lambeth a few weeks ago that he thought the witch-hunt has gone far enough now. Tribune printed an article saying that the charges against us should be dropped.

So we can build a broad campaign that can encompass anyone who thinks that we should have the right to free speech inside the party.

### Resolutions

We want as many local Labour Parties and trade union branches as possible to put amendments and emergency resolutions protesting about the witch-hunt to Labour Party Conference, and we want to be invited to speak at labour movement meetings to give us the opportunity to tell people in the Party what the inquiry was really about.

At the end of the day, it's the idea of socialism that's under attack in the Labour Party. We need to build a united fighting left to defend the ideas of socialism and that obviously should take up the question of the witch-hunt, but also needs to fight around the crucial questions facing us now.

This includes defending the link between the party and the unions, opposition to pacts and alliances with the Liberal Democrats, fighting against the Maastricht treaty and the ruling class's idea for a united capitalist Europe, and organising anti-racist activities.

● For more information about fighting against the witch-hunt contact the Campaign Against the Witch-hunt, c/o 56 Ashby House, Loughborough Estate, London, SW9 1QZ

# Socialists must fight Maastricht!

**THERE IS** an urgent need for a labour movement campaign against the Maastricht Treaty, to give voice to the socialist case against the new bosses' Europe.

The treaty itself is quite unambiguous and makes no apologies for its central aims, which it sets out with brutal frankness.

Crucial to the whole operation is the creation of European monetary union. To bring that about requires a 'harmonisation' of the European economies. And this in turn means cutting national budget deficits and reducing inflation to levels acceptable to the most powerful EC governments.

Or, to put it more bluntly, it means deflation and cutting government spending. Article 104c of the Treaty specifies: 'Member States shall avoid excessive government deficits'. The same article outlines a complex paraphernalia of measures for checking that member states comply with this provision, including eventually levying fines and other punishments.

Cutting budget deficits will radically alter the way in which social policy functions in EC states. State subsidies to the welfare state in many countries, and especially Britain are going to be savaged.

'Price stability' is mentioned as a crucial goal many times in the treaty. For example Article 105 on monetary policy states: 'The primary objective of the ESCB (European System of Central Banks) shall be to maintain price stability'.

It is not just the welfare state which will be crushed by this deflationary regime. In every country but Germany the economy depends on open or hidden state subsidies and support. Without it, important areas of European industry - those outside the German-dominated industrial centre of Europe - are going to suffer badly.

The treaty does not deal at length with questions of citizenship and civil liberties. These are



*Dynamic Douglas Hurd keeps vigilant watch on the Eurocrats*

mainly dealt with in the notorious 1985 Schengen agreement. But Article 8b of the treaty gives the right to citizens of any member state to vote, and stand as candidates, in municipal and European elections in any EC country in which they are resident.

The same right does not exist to stand in, or vote in, national elections. Giving voting rights in national elections to EC residents is fraught with difficulties, especially since millions of immigrant workers are excluded from national elections.

When the Treaty is put together with the Schengen agreement, a frightening picture of 'fortress Europe' emerges. Since citizens and residents of EC countries will have extensive rights to move their place of residence within the Community, a wall is being erected against immigrants and asylum seekers.

Anyone barred from one country in the EC will be barred from them all. Increased co-operation between immigration and security services will step up surveillance throughout the EC, in the name of fighting crime and 'terrorism'.

The treaty (article J) establishes an extensive framework for common foreign policy, and security and military policy. This is already coming about through the plans for a 100,000-strong military strike force, comprising soldiers from various countries.

Given the demise of the USSR, who will this military force be used against? The most likely targets are on the periphery of the EC, in the third world.

With so much at stake for the working class, it is a scandal that the opposition to Maastricht should have been left to individual MPs, with the pace being set by the most right wing press.

A socialist campaign to defeat Maastricht is urgently needed, that will refute the naive view that the vast superstructure of the bosses' EC can be 'democratised' from the inside or annexed through the election of socialist parties to the European Parliament.

There is not the slightest chance that piecemeal reforms legislated through the talking shops of Brussels and Strasbourg could topple capitalist rule in a post-Maastricht Europe, any more than parliamentary reforms have shown any chance of defeating capitalism on a national level.

Only the independent mass action of the working class can confront and defeat the power of capital and its state apparatus, building on the kind of pent-up militancy that has recently been displayed by workers' struggles in France, in Spain, Italy and Germany.

The working class across Europe needs to forge its own international fighting links and a new class struggle leadership that will lend genuine solidarity to the struggles in each European country. The chain of European imperialism must be broken at every possible point, as the only serious basis for a socialist united states of Europe.

## John Palmer: Clueless in Strasbourg EC is no way to a socialist Europe

JOHN PALMER, European editor of the Guardian and leading member of the Socialist Society, argues for a qualified 'yes' to Maastricht in the latest issue of *Socialist*.

In arguing for a 'yes' without illusions, he says that the problem with the treaty is that it is not federalist enough, leaving all power in the hands of national governments, and the non-elected Council of Ministers which represents those governments.

On this Palmer is absolutely right. The 'Europe' now being constructed is undemocratic to the core. Why vote for it then?

John Palmer's position is that the left should not oppose the process of European integration, but fight for increased federalism through democratising the existing structures of the EC.

This would centrally involve fighting to give the European parliament real power, rather than its current decora-

tive function; and devolving power downwards to the regions.

Democratising the EC is an illusion. The whole structure and meaning of the EC, before and after Maastricht, is based on agreements between governments, through secret discussions.

The central *non sequitur* of Palmer's argument is to be found in the following passage:

'Should the left have voted against Maastricht? No, because a defeat for Maastricht would mean less democracy, more inter-governmentalism, less power to the European parliament and regions, less priority to social and citizens' rights, less defence of the environment, more unaccountable power for those running police, immigration and security policy, and untrammelled priority for the internal market.'

The logic of this is baffling. All the evils which John Palmer enumerates as consequences of not having the

treaty are in fact consequences of having it. And he makes no reference to the key questions of monetary policy and budget cutting which are central to Maastricht.

### Federalism

According to Palmer 'all consistent left or green/socialist strategies for Europe are 100 per cent federalist in inspiration'. Yes, a federal Europe is what the left should fight for; but we should not be partisans of a capitalist 'federal' Europe which is in fact undemocratically controlled by governments.

Palmer argues strongly for the development of Europe-wide movements of the working class and the oppressed, a Europe-wide trade union movement, and pan-European political programmes. Again this is perfectly correct; but why does it imply support for Maastricht?

Underpinning much of John Palmer's argument is the idea that the

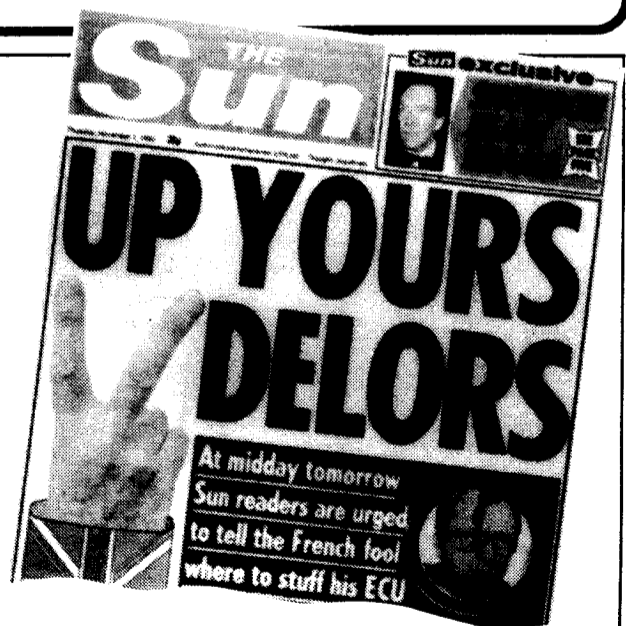
left should not be 'anti-European'. But it is falling into an obvious trap to say that those who are anti-EC and anti-Maastricht are 'anti-European'. It is a short-sighted pragmatism to believe that the only way to be 'European' is to support the capitalist juggernaut under construction.

Palmer waxes indignant over the crude nationalism and 'Little Englandism' of many opponents of Maastricht. Shouldn't we be a bit uncomfortable about being in the same camp as Margaret Thatcher and Nicholas Ridley?

It is quite true that there is crude nationalism in the labour movement

over the EC. We should not capitulate to it. But that in itself tells us absolutely nothing about what policy to adopt towards Maastricht. The argument can be turned around. Why should we be in the same camp as John Major, Francois Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl?

For John Palmer the left is 'confused, wrong-headed and downright perverse over Maastricht'. But the Fortress Europe which Maastricht implies is an attack on workers, immigrants, asylum seekers and the third world. It is confused, wrong-headed and downright perverse not to fight it tooth and nail.





Kinnock: laughing all the way to the bank?

# Exit stage right

## An appreciation of Neil Kinnock

By Phil Hearse

IF THERE is one image of Neil Kinnock that I will remember it is his speech at the 1985 conference, denouncing the 'obscurity' of a Labour council, Derek Hatton's Liverpool, sending round redundancy notices by taxi.

Of course the redundancy notices were a tactical ploy by Liverpool's rate-capped council, never meant to be implemented. But Kinnockite councillors nationwide have since then been busy making real cuts and redundancies, destroying jobs and services.

The second image of Kinnock which sticks in my mind is him standing frozen, embarrassed and wishing he were somewhere else, on the one occasion that he actually turned up to a miners' picket line.

There is no doubt that Kinnock started out as a left winger of the traditional Tribunitary type. He trod the well-worn path of the bright young leftist seeking 'career' and personal advance.

In the late 1970s and early

1980s something happened not in Labour's traditional game-plan. A very different type of left emerged, associated with the name of Tony Benn.

Fighting to bring the labour movement under democratic control and implement across the board radical policies, they shook the Labour and union bureaucracy to its core.

After Michael Foot's 1983 debacle, panic set in. Cometh the hour, cometh the 'man'.

### Bully

Destiny arrived in the form of the 'dream ticket', Kinnock and Hattersley, charged with smashing the left and 'modernising' Labour.

Destiny (and the union bosses) had chosen well. Kinnock revealed himself to be a ruthless, cynical bully. Miners, council workers, printers, dockers - indeed the whole of the organised labour movement - paid the price.

But Kinnock was more than just a right-wing thug. He was also profoundly empty of vision, programme or principle. Labour policy fashioned in his image became little more

than an advertising slogan, capitulating at every turn to Thatcherism.

The great turning point of 1980s politics was of course the miners' strike. Upon its defeat the Tories built their 1987 victory; and paralysed Kinnockism delivered them another in 1992.

And it was during the miners' strike that Kinnock's betrayal of the labour movement was most foul. In time-honoured fashion the Labour and union leaders prepared their own defeat by undermining workers' struggle.

Kinnock departs washed-up and humiliated, but with the prospect of a social democratic sinecure, and big fees from memoirs. His utter failure signifies but one thing; the complete inability of right-wing social democracy to give an answer to capitalism's crisis, or to defend the most basic interests of the working class.

One of the most stupid sayings ever is that the working class gets the leadership it deserves. British workers never deserved Neil Kinnock, any more than they deserve John Smith.

### Leadership election fiasco

## No ideas, no fight

JOHN SMITH'S huge electoral college victory showed one thing about the Labour leadership election - it was a no-contest fiasco.

The undemocratic rules which kept Ken Livingstone and Bernie Grant out of the contest meant that the left had nothing to fight for.

The net result was that the candidates, with the possible slight exception of John Prescott in the deputy contest, had nothing to distinguish them.

But it can't be denied that Bryan Gould tried to present himself as, very moderately, to the left of Smith.

Thus although the left had very little interest in the election, the crushing majority for John Smith, especially the almost monolithic vote in the constituencies, does say something about the state of the Labour left. The defeats engineered by new realism have taken their toll.

Labour's new agenda was clearly set out by last Saturday's mega-boring Mogodon event. John Smith pronounced simultaneously that he was against the block vote, and against a referendum on Maastricht.

Thus on the one issue on which Labour could inflict a big defeat on the Tories, Smith announces that he won't fight. That sums up Labour's new leadership in a nutshell.

## BR Privatisation Organised chaos!

By Sam Stacey

RECOGNISING the immense political and practical problems involved in rail privatisation, the government's sell-off proposals are cautious; it will be creeping privatisation rather than sell-off in one-go.

A new company, Railtrack, will own, manage, operate and invest in track and signalling. It will be responsible for timetabling and allocation of 'slots' in the network which operators will use.

It will also be required to make a profit from the charges made for using the track.

### Franchises

Services will be open to franchising, while BR will continue to operate those services not franchised. Existing trains will be rented out to save the cost of privateers buying their own stock.

The freight and parcels businesses will be sold off; stations will be leased or sold off.

Railworkers know already, having seen the effects of bus privatisation, that the scheme will be a disaster in terms of jobs, conditions of service and wages.



Knapp: a change of haircut - but not policies

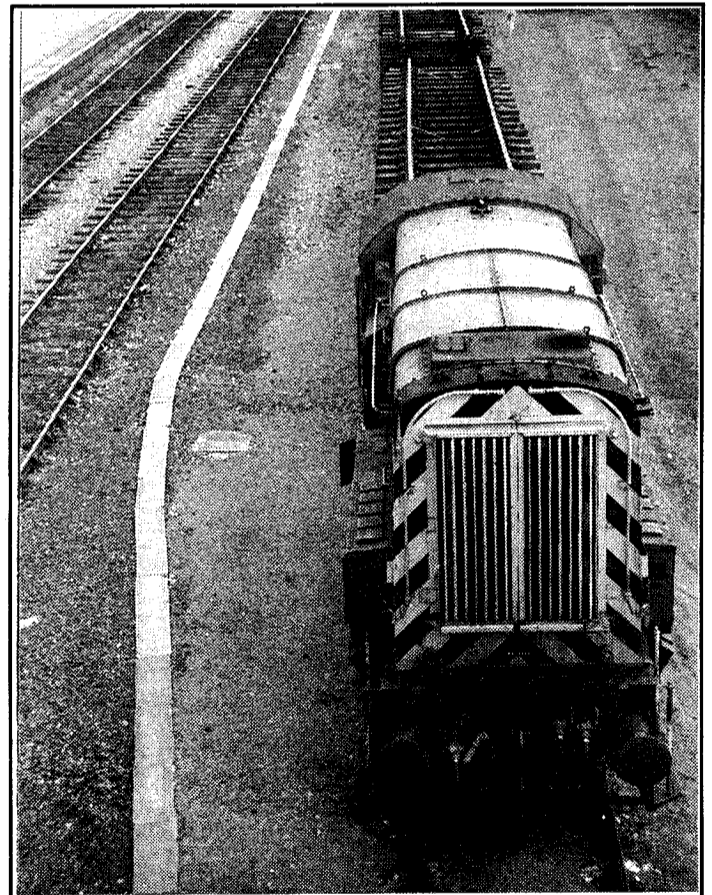
But can it be stopped? Activists have a difficult situation because of the demoralisation caused by the failure of Jimmy Knapp and the RMT leadership to fight the BR restructuring process.

### Knapp

Knapp's talk of 'fighting' privatisation is viewed with scepticism.

At the RMT conference it was made plain that the campaign would be primarily a parliamentary one, with sponsored MPs moving amendments to introduce 'safeguards'. In fact this amounts to no real fight at all.

What should be done? First there must be a campaign for a major national demonstration



Track-laying - left to BR: profit taking will be privatised

against privatisation. This could be a focus for other groups of workers facing a similar threat - miners, civil servants, Parcel Force, NHS workers.

At a local broad-based campaigns must be built on the theme of defending the public sector.

At the end of the day however protests, even if they involve mass mobilisations, will not prevent the measure going ahead.

### Industrial action

Knapp said at the AGM: 'if all else fails we must consider

industrial action'.

However, any serious campaign must prepare the membership for such action from the beginning. A political battle is therefore needed in RMT against a purely parliamentary focus.

Building a broad based campaign which links the defence of the interests of the workforce with those of service users is important in exposing the disastrous consequences of the break-up of the network. But only action in defense of jobs, conditions and the service to the public will force the Tories to retreat.

## SMTUC rallies opposition to new realism

# Bosses' offensive can be fought!

By Alan Thornett

THE EMPLOYERS' offensive - new management techniques, anti-union laws, privatisation - can be fought.

That was the message hammered home at the highly successful SMTUC conference last weekend, attended by nearly 450 people.

As OILC leader Ronnie McDonald pointed out, delegates were present at the conference from all the main industrial struggles currently taking place - Burnsalls, the London Joint Sites Committee, Islington, Newham and Birmingham NALGO branches, Pergamon and the Post Office REM 11.

Highlight of the conference was a rally addressed by Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn. But the conference was remarkable for the high level of input by the delegates themselves.

This showed that the new management techniques are facing every kind of industry, from cars to teaching, from local government to transport.

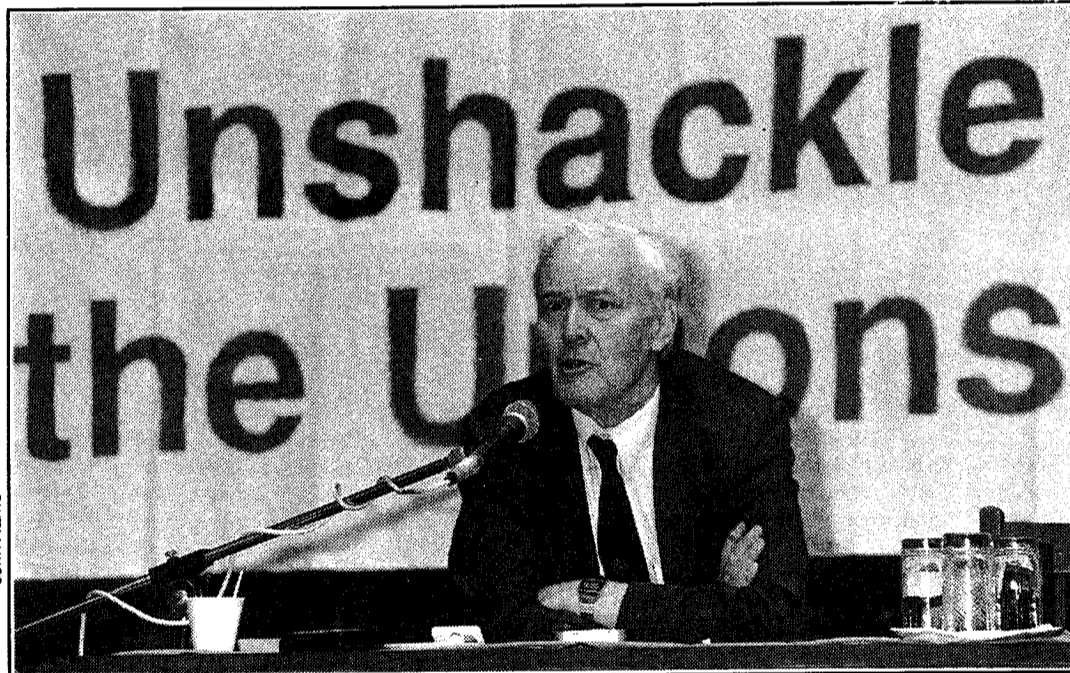
There is a surge of activity at rank-and-file level as workers search for weapons to fight the imposition of these techniques.

Representatives of one branch of the FBU told of how the new techniques were being applied to the fire service, and had circulated a paper within the union arguing for resistance.

### Local struggles

The number of local struggles represented was also revealing; as the Tories and the bosses press home their post-election attack, a rash of resistance struggles is emerging.

Delegates warmly greeted the announcement of the victory of the Alcan Birmingham dispute, where after a long



Warning of 1930s style slump - Tony Benn

strike 300 workers won recognition of their union, the reinstatement of two stewards sacked nine months ago, and an 11 per cent pay increase.

Lawyer John Hendy stressed the damage done to the labour

But the 'framework' proposed by the SMTUC committee and adopted by the conference highlighted continuing the fight against new management techniques, the fight for democracy in the unions and fighting unemployment.

Resolutions adopted included organising a lobby of the TUC in Blackpool on 9 September, and supporting a campaign in defence of the Labour-union links, starting with support for the petition campaign organised by the CLPD.

It was also decided to investigate the possibility of a conference of union broad lefts.

### Slump

Outlining the tasks of socialists in the next period, Tony Benn warned that we faced a slump of 1930s proportions. In this period, historic gains of the British people like local government and the welfare state risked being destroyed.

Unless a socialist vision to change society was campaigned for, he argued, we faced major social unrest.

NUM leader Arthur Scargill pilloried the right wing leadership of the unions and the



Pillorying the right-wing union leaders: Arthur Scargill

leaders had rallied round the miners' strike, he said, the Tories would have been defeated. And today we have to break the union laws to defeat them.

NCU militant Marian Brain, speaking for Women for Socialism, highlighted the historical role of women in working class struggle - a role continued today by the mainly women workforce at the Burnsall electroplating plant strike in Smethwick.

### Unique

Last weekend's conference was a unique event. In the current situation only the SMTUC has taken the initiative to begin organising the fight against new management techniques, and has been able to mobilise significant groups of trade union activists who are determined to fight back.

The conference was also remarkable for the serious and comradely tone of debate, and the near absence of sectarian rancour.

In the next period the SMTUC will be producing its own pamphlet on the management techniques, in order to promote the widest campaign on this issue. Now is the time to get trade union organisations affiliated to the SMTUC.

**'There is a simple answer to class collaborationism' said Scargill 'it's simple - resist!'**

## The bosses' offensive

### Anti-union laws and the new management techniques

*The Bosses' Offensive* is Socialist Outlook's new pamphlet on the challenges facing union militants today. Packed with facts and figures on the impact of the Tories' anti-union laws, *The Bosses' Offensive* outlines how workers can organise to fight the New Management Techniques and reinforce union organisation.

**The bosses' offensive**

Anti-union laws and the new management techniques

Outlook

Available at just £1.50 from Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.

For information about the SMTUC, and for affiliations, write to Carolyn Sikorski, 53a Geere Rd., E15 3PN.



High hopes not delivered – FSLN supporters watch their leaders swing rightwards

Bob Gannon/Insign

## Nicaragua's FSLN

# The great moving-right show

By Sergio Rodriguez in  
Mexico City

THE US CONGRESS has just frozen aid to Nicaragua, on the pretext that Violeta Chamorro's government hasn't sufficiently 'de-Sandinised' the state.

Washington's aid to the right wing National Opposition Union (UNO) government has been less than Bush promised. And it is subject to draconian conditions, meddling in Nicaragua's internal affairs.

The US demands economic and state reform, the dismantling of the public sector and the eviction of the Sandinistas from positions of power. Up to April 1992, Managua received \$581m dollars, mainly aimed at stabilising the economy – reducing inflation and deadening the impact of the 'adjustment policy'.

### Conflict

This has increased pressure on the FSLN, which has formally asked to join the Socialist International (SI). Apart from the discussions around the deteriorating standard of living and the dismantling of the revolution's gains, it is wracked by conflict over the coming elections and its possible 'co-government' with the so-called 'civilised' right.

On January 16 the Nicaraguan people learnt that General Humberto Ortega – commander of the revolution, still head of the army – had awarded the Camilo Ortega medal to US Lieutenant Colonel David Quinn.

Outrage erupted immedi-

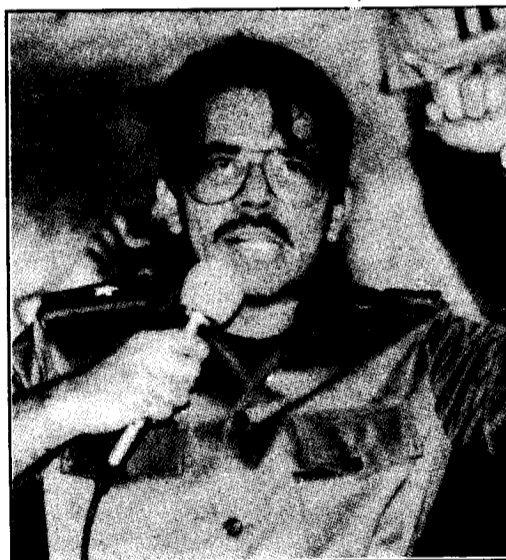
ately. FSLN commander Luis Carrion said in the daily *Barricada* that it was 'a political mistake...this medal was a historic symbol for a whole generation of Sandinistas...the indignation among the people shows that this was an error'. But he was careful, adding that FSLN fighters shouldn't send back their medals.

Ortega retorted that the medal had been given to other foreign military advisers and launched a blistering attack on 'ultraleftism' in the Sandinista ranks.

'Don't be fooled by the radical-sounding words of ultraleft minorities who are trying to manipulate patriotic feelings and national pride to stir up a fanatical confrontation between Nicaraguans and the USA.

'This radical minority are uselessly trying to attract the poor with impossible and destabilising proposals which would only result in worsening their already crushing difficulties...'

Behind the scandal over the medal lie other problems – those of the Sandinista Popular Army (EPS). It has been through numerous crises: the sending of missiles by some of its officers to the Salvadorean FMLN fighters; the lack of help for redundant EPS fighters, leading to the appearance of the *recompas*; and the US military blockade.



Daniel Ortega – against currents

Ortega evidently decided it was opportune to give the medal to an American officer. Quinn is no lowly military attache to the US embassy. He used to direct the US inquiries which tried to prove that the Sandinistas were giving military aid to the FMLN.

He discovered the sending of missiles, and tried to get both the Sandinista officers and the Salvadorean fighters imprisoned. He sabotaged an offer of arms sales to Nicaragua from Taiwan.

Humberto Ortega wants at the same time to be a member of Chamorro's government and a

strategist for the FSLN – the opposition. And that can only happen if the FSLN ceases to be the opposition party and accepts co-government.

Ortega's character shows through in the phrase 'The best way of making people understand difficult things is electric shock therapy.' That was the role of the medal.

He used a similar method at the first FSLN congress in 1991, when he refused to go on the national leadership because of constitutional problems. But he also explained the FSLN's role in the new international situation, having lost the government and in a situation of social unrest.

He argued that the 'tercerista' line of 1979 should be resurrected. It may be true that the tercerista line was successful in 1979. But 12 years later, Chamorro and Lacayo aren't Somoza and Bush isn't Carter.

The people aren't just anti-dictatorship, they know what socialism is and they have a certain class consciousness. That's why Humberto Ortega remonstrated with workers on strike and appealed for sacrifice in 'the national interest'.

Daniel Ortega answered by saying that 99.9 per cent of strikes are provoked by workers' specific needs and so are just. But Humberto's line is beginning to bear fruit.

A little later, an appeal was published in the Nicaraguan press signed by a supposed 'centre current', composed of middle-ranking Sandinistas, some closely linked to Ortega. They preached the necessity of redefining the FSLN's politics according to the 'immediate priority': a broad 'national agreement', including the president's entourage. They have now become the proponents of co-government.

### Virulent

The Sandinista leadership's reaction was, at least superficially, virulent. Daniel Ortega's main criticism was that the existence of currents would make the FSLN seem divided. But the substance of the current's positions wasn't attacked.

And the signatories had put their fingers on the problem. The elements of co-government have existed ever since Violeta Chamorro took power:– the agreement on the armed forces and police, the participation of known Sandinistas in the management of big banks.

The 'centre current' just recognised reality. The consensus in the Sandinista assembly on calling for a 'national accord' confirmed it.

A large part of the Latin American left has caught a social democratic fever. The Spanish and French Socialist Parties are the main instigators of the 'new left's' attempt to join the Socialist International.

They are pushing the Mexican Democratic Revolution Party, Colombia's M-19, the FMLN, Uruguay's Broad Front, the Brazilian PT and the FSLN to become full SI members.

**"The 'centre current' just recognised reality. The consensus in the Sandinista assembly on calling for a 'national accord' confirmed it"**



State Department still alarmed that armed forces are under Sandinista control

Bob Gannon/Insight

But the case of the Sandinistas is a surprising one. Not only because it was the first party to ask to join the SI, but also because of the harsh criticisms of the SI made by Daniel Ortega at the time of the Gulf War.

At that time Ortega said that the peoples of the Third World had no international organisation to represent them and that the liberal, christian democrat and socialist internationals represented the North – imperialism.

### Authoritarian

Suddenly the analysis has changed and the FSLN leadership has even gone back to the old authoritarian and anti-democratic methods. The supreme body of commanders took the decision to ask for membership of the SI by itself, without consulting the Sandinista assembly.

The arguments employed during the Gulf War were radically changed. The SI was suddenly presented as a 'friend', ignoring the role Felipe Gonzalez and Francois Mitterrand played in the Gulf War, and that of the social democrat governments in Latin America.

But there is worse to come. In an interview in *Barricada* Daniel Ortega explained that the decision to join the SI had been taken by the leadership because no-one opposed it at the FSLN congress – which is completely untrue.

The SI is not exactly at the most glorious moment of its history. They lost the elections in Sweden, Germany and Britain – and if there were elections now in France, they'd lose.

In Latin America they were beaten in Ecuador and Peru, and will be beaten in Venezuela. In Europe the social democrat government par excellence – in the Spanish state – has succeeded in raising unemployment to 25 per cent of the active population, passed racist legislation and bowed

down to imperialism.

The FSLN's entry to the SI – along with others – will be much more profitable to the SI than to the parties themselves. One of the voices raised against joining was Carlos Fonseca Teran, son of the FSLN's founder Carlos Fonseca, in the *Nuevo Diario*.

The social democratic model – which its supporters call democratic socialism – is a sort of charitable capitalism, incapable of resolving man's (sic) essential problems...

'Even supposing the FSLN is accepted without being social democratic, reality tells us... that Sandinism would cease to be an alternative for the social majority in Nicaragua because, given the absence of an alternative economic model, the FSLN would be absorbed by social democratic proposals'.

And so the plenum of the Sandinista Assembly confirmed the FSLN's positions on an agreement with Chamorro. The government's weakness made it an easy choice, given that the apparent alternative was a hard-right, contra-based administration.

Divisions in UNO are at their height. When the most right wing faction in UNO took control of the parliamentary group, the government's crisis deepened.

In that sense, the main support for Chamorro's government has been and probably will be the EPS, the FSLN's parliamentary group and to some extent the FSLN itself.

When the Sandinista assembly discussed launching an appeal for a 'national accord', it formally rejected 'co-government'. But it agreed to commissions which would resolve the government's problems.

In the FSLN's eyes, this proposal's main aim would be to

'elaborate an alternative proposal which would change certain elements of the government's plan so that it costs the country less'.

In other words they are trying to use the government's weakness and isolation, along with its own strength in the mass movement, to reduce the anti-working class profile of the government's plans.

When the results of the assembly became publicly known, Antonio Lacayo, the president's right-hand man, declared 'The FSLN's position is positive, constructive and correct. The FSLN is part of a great national project aiming at moving the country forwards.'

### Double aim

There is a double aim behind the FSLN's attitude. The country's economic situation is rightly judged to be the most serious crisis in its history. While inflation and public spending have been controlled, the social cost is enormous.

55 per cent of the active population are unemployed – 90 per cent on the Atlantic Coast. 300,000 peasants have no access to credit, which is worsened by the crisis hitting the cotton and coffee industries.

The much-vaunted North American aid has been frozen after reports by the counsellor to Alfredo Cesar, the old President – who is today a partisan of the 'hard line' against the FSLN. He maintains that funds were diverted to the EPS and the FSLN.

All of this is pushing the country to the brink of social catastrophe. The economic situation puts enormous pressure on the Sandinistas and pushes them towards an accord

with the government.

There is also a strong feeling of defeat. One idea is becoming more and more common in the FSLN – 'Thank God we lost the elections!'

The problems of the war and American intervention remain in the background, as does economic defeat – the defeat of a whole project for development – nothing to do with a socialist economy – which tried to establish a market economy with a social aim.

But the revolution didn't manage to create a better social situation for the people or develop Nicaraguan capitalism. This assessment of the past exercises more and more pressure on the Latin American left. 'There won't be any alternative to capitalism in our countries: at best, we can hope to humanise capitalism or limit its most savage aspects.'

'And if it's the only alternative, well, it's better not to be in government, or certainly not alone, not controlling the executive' – that's the conclusion that many Sandinistas seem to have come to for the 1995 Presidential Elections.

This leads to on to 'We are working with the government and keeping an opposition discourse. We reject neo-liberalism and are adopting a plan to adapt the government's neo-liberal programmes.'

'We demand revolutionary principles and are explaining the changes happening in the world. We reaffirm collective leadership. We proclaim unity and are explicitly excluding divergent ideas'.

There is a grave danger in this situation: the FSLN has used its social power to put this new vision into practice. But no-one knows whether, in time, it will be successful.

The workers in the towns and countryside, the thousands of un-

employed, the thousands of ex-EPS soldiers, no longer have any reason to go on supporting collaboration which does nothing to improve their standard of living.

Until now explosive situations have been contained. But as the Aeronica strike<sup>3</sup> or the *recompas* problem shows, it's becoming increasingly difficult.

The Sandinistas' supporters are beginning to lose patience, because they were told repeatedly that the Sandinistas' defeat would substantially improve their standard of living.

The war has finished, but the social conflicts started by the 1979 revolution are still there and have been growing. The FSLN couldn't 'govern from below' as Daniel Ortega promised on the day after the election defeat.

The FSLN is participating more and more in government from above every day. And at the same time it's trying to channel popular mobilisations, enclosing them inside limits which are becoming more and more difficult to accept.

This is why the FSLN is still stuck in a labyrinth. And why the rest of the Latin American left are in the same boat.

### Notes

1. The *recompas* are ex-EPS soldiers who have defended collective farms and other targets against ex-contras.

2. The 'Terceirista' tendency in the FSLN argued for, and won, a policy of alliance with the patriotic bourgeoisie.

3. Aeronica, Nicaragua's nationalised airline company, was threatened with 49 per cent privatisation by the UNO government. The workforce went on strike, demanding 25 per cent of the company and no job losses.

59 strikers were arrested, accused of terrorism, and the airport occupied by troops. In the end the workers won their demands, but the privatisation plans continue.

This article will appear in the next issue of *French Imprecor*. It was translated by Patrick Baker

**"When the most right wing faction in UNO took control of the parliamentary group, the government's crisis deepened"**

# Winston Silcott Rotting in gaol on a spurious charge

By Andrew Conroy

LAST NOVEMBER Engin Raghup and Mark Braithwaite walked free after five years in jail, when their convictions for the killing of PC Blakelock were quashed.

The third person from the Tottenham 3 - Winston Silcott - is still inside, unjustly convicted of murdering the north London gangster Anthony Smith.

Smith had several times threatened to kill Winston for his part in defending a Broadwater Farm youth whom Smith's gang were after. The gang attacked Winston with knives in December 1984; in the ensuing fight Smith was stabbed.

He was taken by two gang members to the London Hospital where he died a week later. They were questioned by police at the hospital; they gave false names, were carrying knives, and were arrested.

Winston surrendered himself to the police in February 1985, when he was charged with Smith's murder. He was on bail for this in October 1985 when he was charged with the Blakelock killing.

## Publicity

Winston was tried February 1986, in the midst of the blaze of publicity around Blakelock. Smith's two gang members, no longer facing charges, appeared as prosecution witnesses. Winston was the only defence witness.

Under pressure and in a vulnerable and frightened state, Winston failed to put his true defence of self-defence. He has since sworn an affidavit that he did this on the advice of his legal representatives.

His lawyers deny this but clearly went along with the altered story, raising questions of professional conduct. Changing his story was disastrous. Winston was seen as an unreliable witness even though Smith's friends admitted possession of knives. The jury found him guilty and he was sentenced to life.

In 1988 Winston applied for leave to appeal the Smith conviction. Lord Lane refused the appeal on the grounds that even though it was possible to accept that the lawyers had behaved improperly and that Winston had acted in self-defence, it was his fault that he had accepted their professional advice.

## Floodgates

Lane was also concerned that allowing an appeal on grounds of negligent defence would 'open the floodgates' to many other similar appeals. This recalls Scarman's comment on refusing the Guildford 4 appeal, of the 'appalling vista' that would open up if it could be shown that the police had lied.

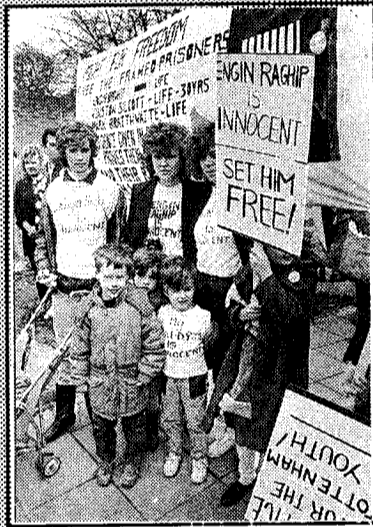
Winston had been tried and convicted by the media for Blakelock's murder before either case came to court. The Smith jury were given special protection during the case.

This could only prejudice the jury into seeing Winston as a dangerous criminal. He was found guilty of killing Smith because he had already been declared Blakelock's killer.

Winston's case is by no means unique. The Guildford 4, Birmingham 6, Maguire 7, Winchester 3 and Judith Ward have shown the lengths British justice is prepared to go in attacking Irish people. The Cardiff 3 and Tottenham 3 are just two instances of Britain attacking blacks.

Stephen Kishko and the Bridgewater 4 are the police attacking white working class people. Meanwhile the Guinness defendants, the police charged from the Wapping dispute, and the Maxwell brothers next year no doubt, have their trials stopped or receive minimal sentences.

British justice is class justice. Racism, against black or Irish people, is the servant of class justice. Police frame-ups demonstrate the strength of the state against those who try to fight back.



Campaigning freed Engin Raghup



The fascist threat: a BNP member heckles the Rolan Adams demonstration earlier this year

# Picket Home Office against Asylum Bill

By Oliver New

WESTERN EUROPE takes six per cent of the world's refugees - the majority are forced to flee to poverty-stricken third world countries.

And compared to our European neighbours, Britain already has the worst record of all.

Small countries like Holland and Sweden take as many refugees as we do. Now the Asylum Bill will make matters even worse. It would be better named the 'Refugees - Keep out Bill'.

British big business makes millions from cheap third world labour. Its 'national interests' are protected by spending billions on advanced weapons - which end up being used to protect such vital British interests as Kuwaiti oil.

If this racist Bill becomes law it will be one more kick in the teeth to the victims of these policies. The last version of the Bill had to be withdrawn after widespread opposition, with an election looming.

But despite daily TV images of refugees fleeing war, torture and starvation, the Bill is certain to contain the same racist and draconian proposals aimed at eroding civil liberties even further.



Asylum Bill architect - Ken Baker

The Bill is likely to include the following measures:

- Refugees without official papers won't be allowed onto planes - the airlines will be forced to turn them away;
- refugees will be 'processed' in a few days, without a fair chance to explain their case;

- they will be denied legal aid.

- they will be treated like criminals, with their fingerprints taken;

- unaccompanied children will be deported;

- welfare benefits will be taken away while a decision is made on their application.

Anti-racist activists now have a few months to build up a groundswell of opposition to the racist Bill.

Following a successful picket of the notorious Harmondsworth Detention Centre, the West London Alliance Against Racism and Fascism has called a mass picket of the Home Office in August.

Supported by the Southall Monitoring Group, the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism, the Newham Monitoring Project and others, the picket is set to be a major event in the fight to stop the latest attack on Britain's black community.

**Friday August 7**

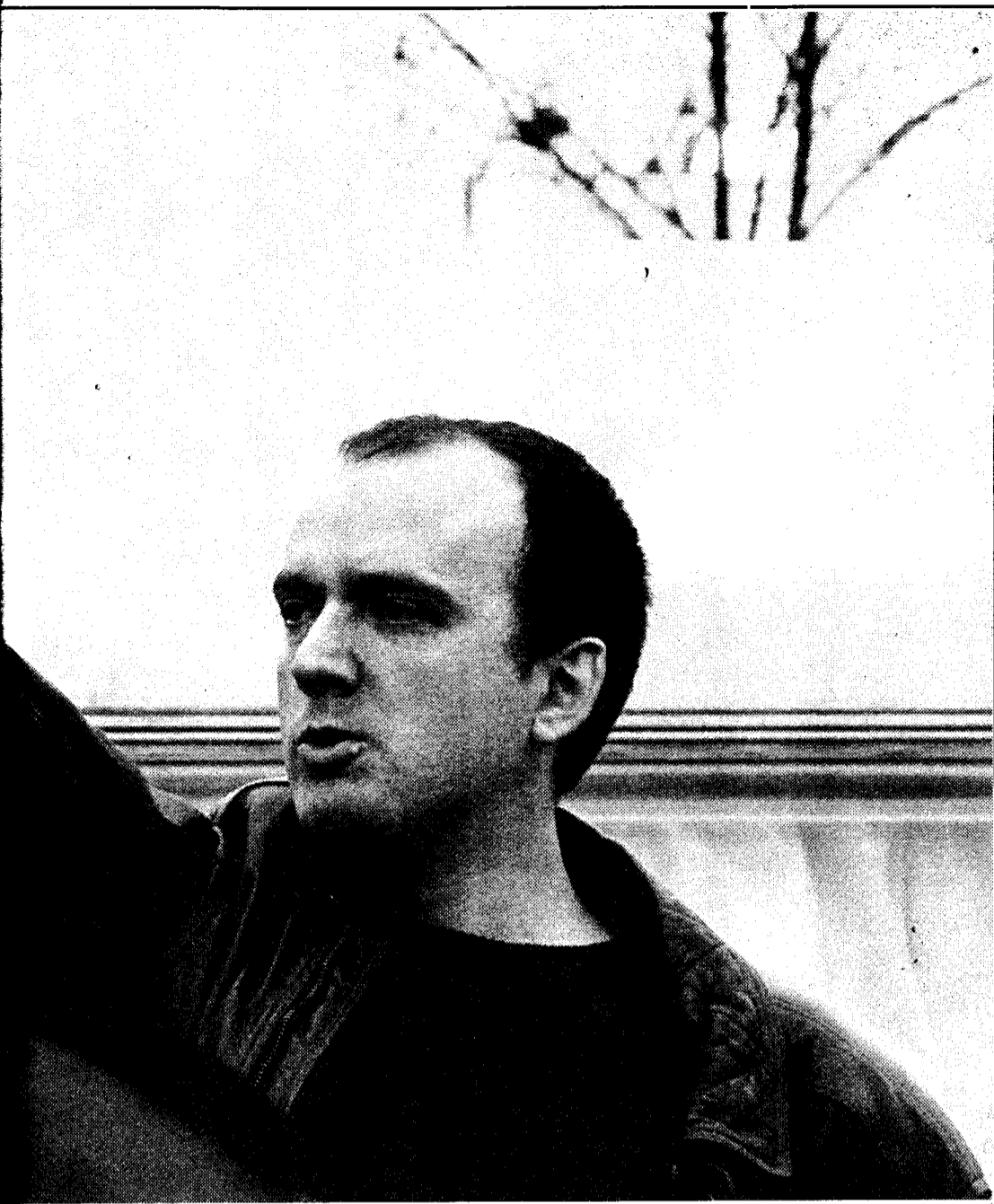
**Stop Asylum Bill**

**Refugees are Welcome Here**

**Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1**

**PICKET THE HOME OFFICE**





Andrew Ward

# Muirhouse fights back against fascism

By Denise Shaw

MUIRHOUSE Anti-Racist Campaign (MARC) was formed a year ago on one of Edinburgh's largest council estates to kick out racists.

Muirhouse is one of five estates in Greater Pilton and has its fair share of problems with poverty, bad housing and unemployment at the top of the list. But when racism reared its ugly head this predominantly white community moved fast to stamp it out.

MARC was formed in August 1991 after a small group of BNP supporters became active on the estate. They started to terrorise a Glaswegian man, Chris McCracken, and his Botswanan wife, Maria, who had just moved in and were awaiting the birth of their first child.

They daubed racist slogans telling Maria to 'go home' outside their front door, jostled Maria in the street, shouted abuse and made phone calls in the early hours of the morning.

Willie Adams of MARC said 'It was getting out of hand and people on the estate were em-

barrassed that it could happen on their own doorsteps.

We didn't want the racists here and we knew the police and council would only drag their feet, and that something serious would happen if we didn't move quick'.

Willie called the first meeting of MARC and was astonished at the response. Hundreds of people turned up - even the mother of some of the BNP activists - and they immediately drew up a plan of action to give practical help to the McCrackens.

## Guarded

70 people marched on the house that the BNP were operating from. About 20 fascists cowered behind their windows. Then a guard was put around the McCracken house for weeks until the council found them a new home on the estate.

Chris said 'I was amazed at the strength of feeling. People we didn't know stopped us in the street to say how sorry they were.

They couldn't do enough for us. The BNP became too afraid

to harass us. Eventually they moved out of the house they were operating from because they got a taste of their own medicine'.

Nobody on the estate, however, has any illusions that the BNP won't be back, even though they're not visible at the moment.

## Prime ground

Muirhouse has the sorts of problems that can make it prime recruiting ground for fascists. Willie says 'MARC has been very successful in this one case, but we're not resting on our laurels. We have to keep vigilant and make links with other anti-fascist groups.

That's the only way to ensure we know where the BNP are operating so we can defend our communities from them. Working together is the only way to defeat them.'

MARC shows what a strong community can do. Muirhouse residents are now looking at a long term anti-racist campaign and they welcome anyone in Edinburgh who wants to join them.



Wanting to put the boot in

# A landmark against police violence

By Louise Holloway

POLICE RACISM and violence is an everyday reality in Britain. But a reality which is covered up, with the victims often silenced.

Police are of course well-placed to organise an effective cover-up - frequently knowing methods of attack that leave no mark and always believed in court against any victim, particularly if they are black.

But when their racist abuse is caught on tape, things get a bit more difficult. This is why Newham Monitoring Project (NMP) spokesperson Hossein Zahir describes the recent case of Malkjit Natt as 'a landmark case'.

He explained 'Mr Natt's case was not exceptional, what was unusual was that he had a tape recorder and recorded his beating and racist abuse.

It throws away the whole public relations exercise of the past 10 years and reveals the constant threat black people face. It also jeopardises any further attempts by Newham police to gain any public confidence.'

Now the NMP are demanding the immediate sacking of the two cops involved, as well as a full public inquiry into policing in the area, and particularly the notorious Plaistow police station. Their campaign against police attacks recently attracted 500 supporters at short notice to protest outside the new police 'fortress' at Forest Gate.

Malkjit Natt's is by no means an isolated case. NMP are linking it with three other racist attacks carried out by Newham police in a new protest aimed at the local 'Police Consultative Committee'.

The series of assaults includes the case of the Dennis family, where a 3 year old child was thrown into the street naked, the case of the Imbert family, where a woman suffered a heart attack as police raided her house, 'looking for someone' who in fact wasn't there; and the case of Mr Deane and his son, violently attacked and hospitalised, with no provocation whatsoever.

It is a case of a police force out of control - like so many. And it is yet more proof, if it were needed, that promises from Lord Scarman and Met chief Peter Imbert that 'racism is a dismissable offence', are not worth the paper they are written on.

The disciplinary action after Malkjit Natt's case says it all. The loss of one day's pay.



Demanding action - NMP

# Community protests against racist murders

**By Trevor Wongsam**  
MANCHESTER'S black community has been devastated by the murders of shop-keeper Siddik Dada and taxi-driver Mohammed Sarwar. Their funeral was accompanied by a wave of protest.

Much of the city was brought to a standstill by a convoy of over 800 cars, most of them taxis, driven in solidarity and out of respect for Mr Sarwar.

A one day strike call was observed by most Manchester taxi bases and many shops along the procession route were closed as a mark of respect.

Anti-racist campaigners and black activists from all over Manchester have since united in the Mohammed Sarwar and Siddik Dada Memorial Committee to raise awareness around the issue of racist attacks.

The Committee is demanding that the police recognise the racist nature of the attacks and justice for the victims' families.

Now the Committee has called a demonstration in August 22, aiming to act as a national focus for protest against the rising tide of racial violence.

A series of meetings to build for the demonstration have attracted wide support from the local community. The first took place in Withington, the com-

munity in which Mr Dada lived and worked.

Addressed by Dada's sons as well as anti-racist campaigners, more than 100 people turned out, with many local residents pledging to play an active role in the campaign.

Following widespread media coverage, the Committee's profile and confidence are growing fast.

Support has now come in from the Anti-Racist Alliance and a host of local groups such as the Newham Monitoring Project.

Snowballing support from around the country means that this should be the largest anti-racist demonstration Manchester has ever seen.



Fascist bands are alive and gigging

## Blood and Honour Fascists infiltrate youth culture

**By Molly Parker**  
BLOOD AND HONOUR is a skinhead movement, promoting openly fascist bands, and running its own, although irregularly published, 'Skinzine' and mail order services.

Originating from the 'Rock against Communism' movement (the fascists response to Rock against Racism) Blood and Honour split from the National Front in the late 1980s, and now have a core group of around 300 - although some estimates put its periphery at around 8-10,000.

Contrary to claims in the Guardian, Screwdriver are very much alive and gigging, frequently playing in Britain and elsewhere in Europe.

Fronted by Ku Klux Klan member, Ian Stuart Donaldson (who has been convicted of participating in a racist killing) Screwdriver are the most notorious of the Blood and Honour bands, which includes 'Oi' bands like Skullhead and No Remorse.

The appeal of such bands is to disaffected white working class youth. They concentrate their efforts in places where the black community is small or negligible - often rural or suburban areas.

Security around Blood and Honour gigs is tight; notification is by word of mouth, and may involve many re-direction points, policed by less cerebral cadre, in an effort to keep the location of the venue unknown.

The Blood and Honour skinhead movement is only one aspect of the fascists' project to penetrate youth culture. Having

had some success with the scooter clubs the BNP and NF fellow travellers are now turning their attention to bikers.

Interesting to note, then, that Ian Stuart Donaldson also has another band, White Diamond, which is a heavy rock outfit.

Despite the obvious relationship between the BNP and Blood and Honour, it remains an uneasy alliance. Donaldson and his attendant boneheads are not the best PR for the new model BNP, who have been clearly embarrassed on a number of public occasions by their presence.

Conversely, Blood and Honour have accused the BNP of exploiting them as little more than a fund-raising sideline. Nevertheless, Blood and Honour provide a fertile recruiting ground for the BNP.

The impact of Blood and Honour type organisations on youth must not be underestimated by the left or the anti-fascist and anti-racist movements. The need to stop their events taking place whenever possible is self-evident, but all too often our response is purely reactive.

The strength of Rock against Racism in the late '70s was that it represented a positive alternative for working class youth who might otherwise have been drawn in by the superficial anti-establishment posturing and violent 'street cred' of fascist youth culture.

The promotion of a youth-relevant anti-fascist and anti-racist culture remains the best way to win young working class people away from the sewer politics of Blood and Honour.



Birmingham Six released - but there are plenty of Irish prisoners to be victimised

# White skin is no protection if you're Irish

**By Liam Mac Uaid**  
'THE SCREWS had a battle-cry - Get the niggers! Get the Irish!' explains Gerry Conlon in *Proved Innocent*, his account of the story of the Guildford Four.

From the Attorney General to the arresting officers and forensic scientists, there was a conspiracy to take revenge on the Irish for the actions of the IRA.

But along with revenge there was also a desire to frighten the Irish in Britain and prevent them from opening their mouths on the subject of Britain in Ireland.

### Terror

The IRA and the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) were the weapons used to frighten the Irish in Britain. The IRA was a terrorist organisation and the PTA was a law that gave the British government the power to arrest and detain anyone suspected of being involved in terrorism.

particularly after an IRA action. You see the eyes of the Special Branch at Passport Control light up in anticipation when they see the Irish travel documents and resign yourself to some extra attention.

Dover never fails to disappoint. Travelling to and from Ireland via Heathrow, there are armed police scrutinising everyone who walks through. If you're wearing a leather jacket and jeans you've probably missed your flight.

### Hold up

The Special Branch must know something about IRA fashion-sense that nobody else does. They can hold you for up to 12 hours under the PTA for these 'security checks' and for a week without charge if they wish.

A security check is possible in an Irish airport in Dublin. The British Embassy in Dublin is a target for IRA attacks. An

Irish journalist was arrested on his way to report on a recent IRA shooting in the north of England; even Irish diplomats and TDs (MPs) are not immune from the PTA.

The Irish embassy is so inadequate at responding to this sort of racist harassment that the police are allowed a free hand. And they know how to use it.

This is why they are so keen on the PTA. The ordinary law may be adequate to deal with IRA activities, but it doesn't give quite the same scope for large-scale terrorisation.

White skins give Irish people protection from random racist attacks and insults from drunks on the other side of the street. But read *The Sun*, listen to 'comedians' like Jim Davidson or get stopped at Heathrow and you soon find out that even a white skin is no protection.

**No justice!  
No peace!  
Demonstrate  
Saturday August 22  
Plattfields Park, Wilmslow Road  
Rusholme, Manchester  
Assemble 12.30pm**

## Columbus 500th Anniversary Ortega and Aristide speak at resistance rally

By Chris Jones

WHILE THE Queen graces the official August 15 Liverpool celebrations of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyage to America, a rally with Daniel Ortega and deposed Haitian president Aristide will celebrate 500 years of resistance.

In 1990 the Andean Indians of Ecuador staged an insurrection to win land rights and recognition that Ecuador is a 'pluri-national, multi-cultural state'.

This insurrection was partially prepared by the development in the late 1980s of indigenous peoples' organisations dedicated to celebrating 500 years of resistance to the impact of Columbus and European colonisation.

In April of this year their campaign continued with marches by Amazon Indians on the capital Quito.

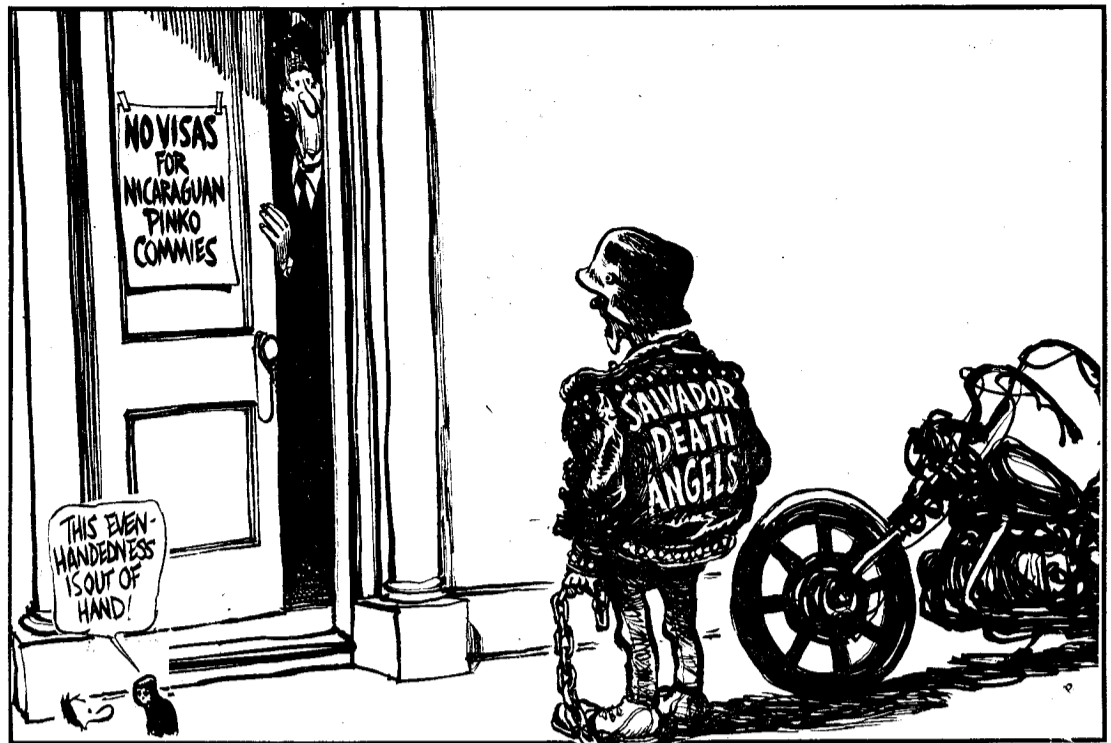
1990 also saw the 75-day

stand-off between Mohawk Indians and Canadian soldiers, also fighting for land and cultural rights.

In Nicaragua a new cross-party organisation has just been formed to defend the autonomy of the Indian-dominated Atlantic Coast region against Chamorro's reactionary centralising government.

The world-wide celebrations of Columbus' 'discovery' of America have acted as a focus to draw these struggles together. In response to official celebrations which forget the racism, massacres and destruction of colonisation, a campaign throughout the Americas has been formed to link the struggles of indigenous peoples, and the often overlapping struggles of blacks and the poor.

The campaign has sought the unity of workers and peasants and to adopt the revolutionary approach of Chico Mendes, assassinated leader of the Brazilian rubber tappers, who managed to unite the struggle of the rubber workers with the



Indians against the Brazilian government.

But a recent split from the campaign by some indigenous peoples organisations, fearing their specific interests were being swamped, shows this campaign will not be easy.

Support organisations for the campaign in the Americas have been built world-wide; but alas the British left has not taken it up forcefully.

Amends can be made with massive support for the 15 August rally and festival. On

that day both the Queen and George Bush will attend official events. They will doubtless ignore the fact that Liverpool was built on the slave trade.

But that will not be forgotten at the resistance rally. Speakers apart from Ortega and Aristide will include Guatemalan Indian leader Rigoberto Menchu, and other leaders from Cuba, the FMLN of El Salvador, ANC,

Brazilian Workers Party, and black leader Angela Davis from the US.

It will be the rally of the year - be there!

*Festival and rally, 12 noon to 2am, Liverpool University Students Union, 24 Hardman St., Liverpool. Tickets £7.50 waged/£4 unwaged.*

*Phone 051 709 3995 Ext. 214 to book.*

### Repression versus reaction

## Stalemate in Algeria

By Geoff Ryan

SIXTEEN DAYS after the killing of Algerian President Mohammed Boudiaf, the leaders of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) were sentenced to 12 years prison by a military court. In between these events Prime Minister Sid Ahmed Gozali resigned. None of this has brought Algeria any closer to stability.

In his six months in office Boudiaf failed to resolve any of Algeria's problems. Retrieved from his long Moroccan exile, he was never more than a figurehead for the corrupt FLN regime.

#### Unknown

Despite his reputation as a leader of the national liberation struggle, he was totally unknown to most Algerians - the overwhelming majority of whom were born after independence. Among the unemployed youth - the main base of support for the FIS - he had no support.

His attempt to tackle corruption was quickly halted by senior FLN figures, primarily in the army. The military remains the main power base of the regime and were not prepared to allow various generals and ex-President Chadli Benjedid to be accused of helping themselves from the

state coffers.

To maintain his rule Boudiaf increasingly resorted to repressive measures. Thousands were interned without trial. Oppositionists were accused of acting as French agents. Even those who supported the 11 January coup (which deprived the FIS of electoral victory) were attacked.

On the economic level Boudiaf had no more success. With repayment of foreign debt using up over 80% of GNP he had no choice but to obey the IMF's diktats. Despite massive devaluation and a 300 per cent increase in the price of basic foods, the IMF was still not satisfied.

#### Poverty

The state-owned oil industry was being privatised and opened up to foreign capital. Agricultural cooperatives were to be broken up and sold off. Factories were closed. The poverty of the masses increased rapidly.

The FIS grew rapidly after unemployed youth launched a series of protests in 1988. But the repression under Boudiaf has taken its toll.

Though it is able to carry out some guerrilla actions - using volunteers with experience from Afghanistan - it is unable to take advantage of the regime's crisis. Its public

demonstrations have been pitifully small. Its apparatus has been effectively dismantled.

#### Lenient

Nevertheless, the FLN regime doesn't feel in a position to step up the repression. The 12 year sentences for FIS leaders Abbas Madani and Ali Belhaj were relatively lenient.

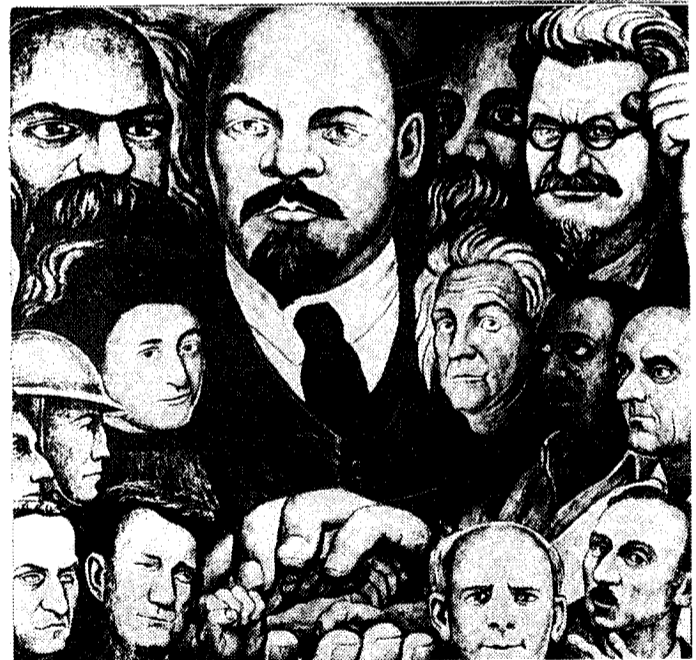
They could have been sentenced to death - but the regime was clearly worried about the possible reaction.

The weakness of the FLN, the FIS and other opposition groups means that instability will continue. None of these forces is in a position to win a decisive victory. The IMF will use this political stalemate to step up the pressure.

The Algerian working class has begun to respond to the massive increase in unemployment and cuts in living standards. There has been some resistance, particularly by teachers. But so far this remain isolated and spontaneous.

The General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA) is discredited and collaborates with government economic policies. The only way out of the impasse is if the struggles can develop a national leadership prepared to oppose the IMF's demands and those who are implementing them.

## socialist OUTLOOK



### National Rally

75 years of the Russian  
revolution

## In defence of October

### Ernest Mandel

(United Secretariat of the Fourth International)

*Kingsway College  
off Grays Inn Road,  
London WC1*

*Friday October 23, 7.30pm*

# Ex-USSR after Yeltsin...

By Paul Clarke

LAST WEEK, the so-called 'trial' of the Soviet Communist party opened in Moscow. But Russian President Boris Yeltsin cannot hope to achieve much in the way of political capital from it. Bashing the Communists will have less and less significance in a society falling to bits, and where public opinion is turning against the hero of the August 1991 coup.

Yeltsin's own coup was completed last December in the wake of the banning of the Communist Party, as Gorbachev was evicted from the Kremlin, the Soviet Union was formally dissolved.

Since then the living standards of ordinary people have fallen dramatically. The income of an average worker is 2000 roubles a month and a doctor 1000 a month, whereas a living wage is estimated to be 4000 roubles a month.

Other economic indicators are catastrophic. Since 1990 output has fallen by around 25 per cent. Investment has fallen by 55 per cent. Since 1989 consumer prices have gone up more 1200 per cent, whereas wages have gone up only by 370 per cent. Both exports and imports have fallen by over 50 per cent.

Nothing could be more symbolic than Yeltsin's proposal to give Russian economic resources to the West in return for reduction or cancellation of the Russian debt. Western leaders are dangling the carrot of a £24 billion injection of capital, but in return they demand rapid privatisation and liberalisation of the economy.

## Bankruptcy law

The key to this proposal is a new bankruptcy law, and the cutting off of state credit from 'unprofitable' enterprises. In effect this would mean the destruction of hundreds of Russian factories and the creation of mass unemployment.

So far unemployment in Russia is estimated to be about 130,000. This has been achieved by keeping the factories open, even if they do not produce and workers are sent on 'holidays'. But the state enterprises are floating on a tidal wave of debt, and would collapse without the state subsidies.

Yeltsin fears the social and political consequences of this course, and it is being resisted not only in the working class, but among thousands of managers of state enterprises who see their power and privileges being destroyed.

The process of decomposition of the ex-USSR continues. The Commonwealth of Independent States is just a temporary phenomenon in the inevitable process of decay into separate states. But neither are the various republics themselves stabilised, with ethnic conflicts and wars of secession breaking out in many areas.

Who is in power in the republics? In fact the governments of most of them consist of recycled bureaucrats; they are new nomenklatura governments.

There is the growth of a new middle class, often based on small-scale trade and various kinds of corruption. Sections of the bureaucratic elite have been busily enriching themselves through the theft of state property. But the big bastions of Soviet industry remain in state hands.

Yeltsin is having enormous difficulty in carrying out the December 1991 decree on privatisation. There have been privatisations of small enterprises, but small firms remain on the margins



Russian masses blocked coup attempt last year

# A Chilean solution?



Yeltsin - from hero to villain as economic crisis grows

of the economy. In the absence of substantial foreign investment to buy the big firms, different schemes, including issuing vouchers to the population, as has happened in Czechoslovakia, are being discussed.

Between January and April there was

a strong strike wave among public sector workers, especially teachers and health workers. 300,000 working days were lost and there were 170,000 strikers. But the unions remain very weak, and the 'Spring Offensive' of the official trade unions in 1991 petered out.

However, it can be predicted with certainty that if the bankruptcy law goes through and is applied, there will be an enormous wave of struggle against the ensuing redundancies. The question is what kind of political solutions could emerge in the middle of such a struggle.

## Chilean turn

Many Yeltsin advisors are talking darkly of the necessity of a 'Chilean turn' - an analogy with General Pinochet's brutal 1973 coup. 'Chilean' in this context has a dual meaning: first a rapid liberalisation of the economy, and second an authoritarian political solution. The banning of strikes as a first stage is being widely canvassed in government circles.

'Democratic Russia', the broad political movement around Yeltsin, has broken up into a thousand warring factions. Inside the government Yeltsin's deputy Rutskoi is in persistent political conflict with his boss, making himself the champion of Russian nationalism.

Where is the left in this situation?

The main force coming out of the Communist party is a broad coalition called Trudovia Rossia (Russian Labour). Within this coalition the main force is the Communist Workers' Party of Russia, which claims 150,000 members; it probably has something like 75,000 and many fewer activists.

## Stalinism

But the Communist Workers' Party combines unreconstructed Stalinism with strong nationalist, authoritarian and even anti-Semitic strands. While its members stand daily vigil beside Lenin's tomb, it has also participated in demonstrations with the fascist *Pamyat* organisation.

The other major significant force is the Socialist Workers Party of Russia, which claims 50,000 members, probably a vast exaggeration. This body, which has no connection with the British SWP, has as its best-known figure the old Communist dissident Roy Medvedev. It bases itself on Gorbachev's reform programme and has strong social-democratic leanings.

The non-Stalinist left is very weak, and probably weaker than it was a year ago. The grouping which aims to form a Party of Labour, led by Boris Kagarlitsky, has only around 100 members of different political persuasions.

In addition there is a significant anarcho-syndicalist and anarcho-communist movement, as well as various Marxist workers' clubs, especially in the Urals.

## Unemployment

The overall pattern of development in the CIS can be summed up in three phrases - economic collapse, disintegration and conflict in the republics, and the growing danger of authoritarian political solutions.

So far the working class has had to endure great hardships through the ending of state subsidies, price rises and the disintegration of national planning.

However, because of the continued state subsidies to the big firms and factories, really mass unemployment has not arrived.

If Yeltsin and the IMF have their way it soon will; the withdrawal of credit to state firms would create in one swoop perhaps 20 per cent unemployment.

This would be the greatest assault on the social gains of the Russian working class, and a crucial test of its short-term ability to forge an alternative to capitalist restoration.

# Ireland: talking back to... 1972

By David Coen

IN MARCH 1972 the Tory Government abolished the Northern Ireland Parliament at Stormont, ending 50 years of Unionist rule. Twenty years later the declared aim of the current talks on the future of the North is 'a devolved parliament' in Belfast.

Stormont was abolished because it was incapable, even with 30,000 British soldiers, of keeping the lid on an insurgent nationalist population which began by demanding civil rights and ended up challenging the existence of the Orange state itself.

## Incapable

That the statelet was incapable of granting such as one person, one vote, was not primarily due to the bigoted and reactionary nature of Unionism. It was built in at its foundation in 1921, when partition was imposed against the will of the majority of the Irish people.

The map was drawn to ensure a built-in Unionist majority in the Six Counties and a great deal of effort went into ensuring that the population balance remained. Behind the Unionists and the bigots of the

Orange Order stood the British Government.

When in 1969 the people of Derry threw back the combined assault of the RUC, the B Specials and the Orange Order, Harold Wilson's Labour Government sent in the army. The protests against internment reached such a pitch in late 1971 that the Orange State shook to its foundations – and the British response was to shoot unarmed demonstrators on Bloody Sunday.

## Sunningdale

The Mayhew (formerly the Brooke) talks are by no means the first attempt to restore Stormont. In 1974 the Sunningdale Agreement led to a 'Power Sharing Executive' which gave some influence to the Catholic SDLP. But the Paisleyite wing of Unionism was excluded and proceeded to wreck the agreement by strike action in key industries.

The current talks, from which Sinn Fein are excluded, could make some headway because the British Government is stronger and the Unionists weaker than in 1974. They are the culmination of a process which began with the 1985 Anglo Irish Agreement. Meanwhile the Republicans are politically at their weakest for at least 10 years.

The crucial battleground is

the South. Having got a bad fright in the early 1980s, when the economic crisis threatened to fuse with the national question after the Hunger Strikes, the ruling class is now more strongly anti-republican and economically weaker.

It wants a deal, but doubts the ability of the Brits to deliver and so looks to the EC for a solution. The end of the economic border in 1993 lends weight to their argument that the political border will become less important. But the price of influence in the North, however limited, is to drop Articles 2 & 3 of the Southern Constitution, which define the national territory as the whole island.

The British are opposed to any significant EC involvement for fear of encouraging nationalist upsurges elsewhere in the British State. For that reason they are unlikely to negotiate a 'solution'. But they would settle for any agreement which deflects international criticism and helps to marginalise the Republicans.

Meanwhile the economic apartheid designed to maintain British rule in the North continues. After 20 years of direct rule and much legislation, Catholics are still 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed than Protestants – virtually the same figure as during Stormont rule.



Starting the process – Thatcher in 1985 talks

## A euro-fighter in search of a target

By Patrick Baker

DAY BY DAY the headlines are filled with lengthening dole queues and new wars erupting across Europe. So what is the Euro-powers' answer? To relaunch the Cold War.

£20 billion is to go on the new European Fighter Aircraft (EFA), brainchild of NATO in the early eighties. Designed to halt the Russian hordes as they swept across Europe, the fighter they have already eaten up billions.

But a slight hitch has come up – the Cold War ended. As the leading German writer *Der Spiegel* said 'We don't have the East-West confrontation any more, and we must save money'. And their government agreed – unless there's an about-face, Germany will be pulling out.

## Namby-pamby

There's been no such namby-pamby nonsense from Malcolm Rifkind, the Tories' latest Defence supremo. Britain is to go ahead with EFA, target or not. In fact we're to have 250 of them.

The reasoning? Well, we have to protect jobs, Malcolm explained – in line with the Tories' usual concern for protecting jobs in threatened industries by state investment, of course.

But unfortunately this is not just a case of Tory macho posturing. Something more sinister is involved. As the

International Security Information Service said 'EFA's dual capabilities... would make it an ideal tool for supporting NATO's Out-of-Area commitments. Operations in the Persian Gulf is a recent example of such a role.'

## Power

Here is the reality of the project – the cutting edge of the drive to make Europe a world military power in its own right. EFA could be used both as a ground-attack aircraft, a fighter and potentially a nuclear bomber.

But in a recession-led climate, the Tories' arguments have already seduced some on the left. Correspondents in the *Morning Star* have recently argued that their members' jobs have to come first.

Ignoring the EFA would be a dangerous error for the left. As NATO pursues its drive to impose the new world order – and Euro-powers try to ensure they get a slice of the action – the EFA could become a dangerous new powder-keg in the West's military arsenal.

It is also, of course, a colossal waste of resources. Trade unionists who plead that their members' jobs must be defended at all costs need to be reminded that the weapons industry is one of the worst job-providers around.

If the billions were to be invested in Britain's ailing construction industry, the beneficial effect in the shortening the dole queues would be dramatic.

**Socialist Outlook residential summer school 1992 – North Wales**  
**Rhagolwg Sosialaidd ysgol breswyl haf 1992 – Gogledd Cymru**  
**SATURDAY 29 AUGUST –**  
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The last two years have witnessed the break-up of the Soviet Union, the carnage of the Gulf War, and that rare event in Britain, a general election! These events have raised new issues which the marxist movement must discuss.

Socialist Outlook's Summer School aims to provide an opportunity for our supporters and sympathisers to discuss these wider issues in an open and relaxed atmosphere.

The venue, close to the beaches of Ynys Mon and the mountains of Snowdonia, gives plenty of opportunity for leisure activities as well as the discussions and workshops of the school itself. Accommodation is in self-catering flats, and a creche and a bar are provided.

The programme for the week is divided into three themes: History of the British labour movement, Women's liberation and Imperialism and colonial revolution. There is also a course on Basic Marxism. Nearly 50 workshops range from Chartism in South Wales to Sexual relations and the class struggle, from Muslim fundamentalism to Latin America and the collapse of Stalinism.

The cost for the week is just £85 waged, £35 unwaged. This includes accommodation, registration and background reading, breakfast and a packed lunch. **Send this form as soon as possible with your cheque to: Summer School, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU**

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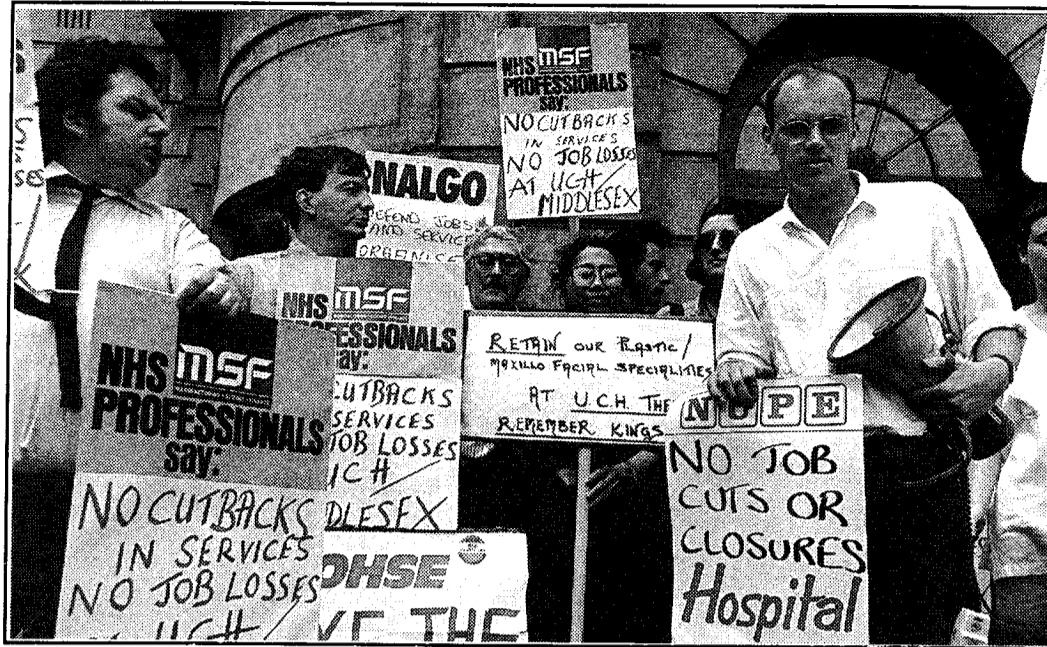
# As Tories prepare NHS beds blitz Strike to stop the cuts!

**By John Lister**

AMID an unending series of press headlines detailing the cuts, closures and redundancies being imposed by crisis-ridden London health authorities, workers are fighting back

Technical support staff organised by MSF in Riverside have voted a second time, by almost two to one, for a three-day strike against management proposals to axe at least 500 jobs.

The strike on August 4, 5 and 6 will be the most sustained strike action so far, and offer a new focus for the struggle against an unprecedented round of cutbacks in the capital's hospital services.



Fighting together - MSF, NUPE, NALGO and COHSE rally in defence of Bloomsbury jobs

MSF activists are urging maximum support on their picket lines at Charing Cross and Westminster Hospitals from trade unions and community organisations.

Meanwhile MSF members at the opted-out Royal London Hospital are balloting on strike action against the threat of 600-700 job losses as management grapple with a £4-£7m shortfall, and resistance - mainly led by NUPE and COHSE - is continuing against cuts in jobs and services at the Middlesex and University College Hospitals.

This pressure may well have helped persuade NE Thames Regional health chiefs to allocate one-off payments extra cash from a London slush-fund to the embattled Bloomsbury & Islington health authority (£9.6m), with smaller amounts to reduce the deficits faced

by the flagging Barts Hospitals and Royal London.

## Cash crises

Even with the extra money, each of these units remains deep in crisis, and cash problems are escalating throughout London's NHS.

The newly opted-out Ealing Hospital Trust, which announced one week that it was £1 million in the red, revealed a week later that the figure was £2.8m - and rising. Part of the problem is that incompetent managers forgot to include staff National Insurance and pensions payments in the Trust's budget!

But there is more misery in the pipeline. Following through the vicious King's Fund proposals for the axing of 5,000 hospital beds in the capital, the government's own inquiry

headed by Sir Bernard Tomlinson is due to report in the autumn, and is certain to recommend wholesale closures.

Now Health Secretary Virginia Bottomley has announced the creation of a special unit which will ensure that Tomlinson's closure plans are implemented "decisively and rapidly" - before any large-scale opposition can be co-ordinated.

It is essential that socialists and trade unionists in the capital get ready to resist this new, frontal onslaught on our health service: Labour MPs must be called upon to take a clear stand in opposition to the King's Fund report and to Tomlinson's secretive 'inquiry' and its rigged findings.

Meanwhile the widest possible solidarity must be built behind every section of health workers that takes strike action in defence of our NHS.

# Birmingham social services Walk-out pushes grading claim

**By Tim Davis, Birmingham NALGO shop steward and Pete Bloomer**

A ONE DAY strike by Birmingham social services workers was overwhelmingly supported by NALGO members, with unionised social workers refusing to cross picket lines.

The action, to press regrading demands, closed three area offices completely, with a further 24 offices and outlying social work teams picketed. Administrative staff showed their important role, as social services fieldwork offices were brought to a near standstill.

Administrative staff grades have not been reviewed for twenty years, and in that time staff responsibilities and skill requirements have massively increased.

## Highly skilled

Computerisation and the increasing complexity of social service work means that they are highly skilled workers - but start on just £7000, and less still if they are under 21.

Birmingham NALGO circulated a questionnaire last year to staff members to describe the actual work performed. This was compared to job descriptions and subsequent demands placed for regrading.

In this process Birmingham NALGO showed the importance of union membership and membership participation, leading to a majority for strike action.

For 14 months management have ignored demands for regrading, then making tiny offers to less than 12 workers.

A ballot has been won for a work to rule by admin staff, undoubtedly creating havoc as they show their collective strength in pursuit of decent pay.

NUPE members are now supporting NALGO's lead, and further action is likely and necessary since management seem determined not to pay up.

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# NUT attack on Ian Murch Under fire for speaking out

IAN MURCH, national treasurer of the National Union of Teachers, who has been suspended by the union's executive, is under a further attack.

His six-month suspension was imposed after he had spoken out against the union leadership on television.

Left-winger Murch was elected on a platform of tighter supervision of the union's finances, including expenses of executive members.

On 18 July the union executive decided to fill his vacant post for the full two-year period, without an election. The new incumbent is a supporter of the 'Broad Left', which in the NUT is the main right-wing grouping.

Murch told Socialist Outlook that his original case had been heard by the Welsh district, despite the fact that neither he nor the person who complained against him come from

that district.

The suspicion must be that this was arranged because this district was politically 'safe' for the Doug McAvoy leadership.

Ian Murch said: 'My original suspension was really hypocritical. I was accused of saying in the media things the leadership didn't like.'

'But at the 1990 conference resolution for a national campaign against redundancies was passed, which I moved.'

McAvoy immediately went on the TV and radio denouncing all this as the work of the Militant tendency, and calling on members 'to ignore this democratic decision.'

'The NUT is still the teaching union with the best trade unionists in its ranks. But the Doug McAvoy leadership must be changed if we are to succeed in defending our jobs and the education service.'

# Tommy Sheridan released

**By Campbell McGregor**

POLL TAX movement leader Tommy Sheridan was released from Edinburgh's Saughton prison on 1 July.

He had served four months of a six-month sentence for contempt of court, after refusing to comply with a court order banning him from the vicinity of poll tax warrant sales.

He was greeted by a crowd of supporters at Glasgow's Queen Street station. Next day he

spoke to a Scottish Militant Labour rally with expelled Labour MP Dave Nellist.

Sheridan described prison, especially his two weeks on the remand wing at Saughton, as dehumanising and brutalising. But he made no apology for having 'shown contempt' for the court order.

He also thanked the 6,000 people who voted for him into office as a Glasgow councillor; the first time, he said, that someone in Scotland has been elected from a prison cell.

# Islington teachers in 3-day walk out

By Valerie Coultas

ISLINGTON teachers struck for three days this month in protest against compulsory redundancies imposed by the borough's Labour council.

The council is making a huge £4m cut in its education budget; cuts include reducing career and adult education, chopping spending on under-fives and adventure playgrounds, and reducing subsidies to school meals. In addition 24 permanent supply teachers are to be sacked.

These decisions sparked a huge protest. The strike ballot produced a 92 per cent turnout, with 85 per cent voting for strike action. During the three-day action no teaching took place at 37 of the borough's 41 primary schools, nor at any of the secondary schools.

One thousand teachers and

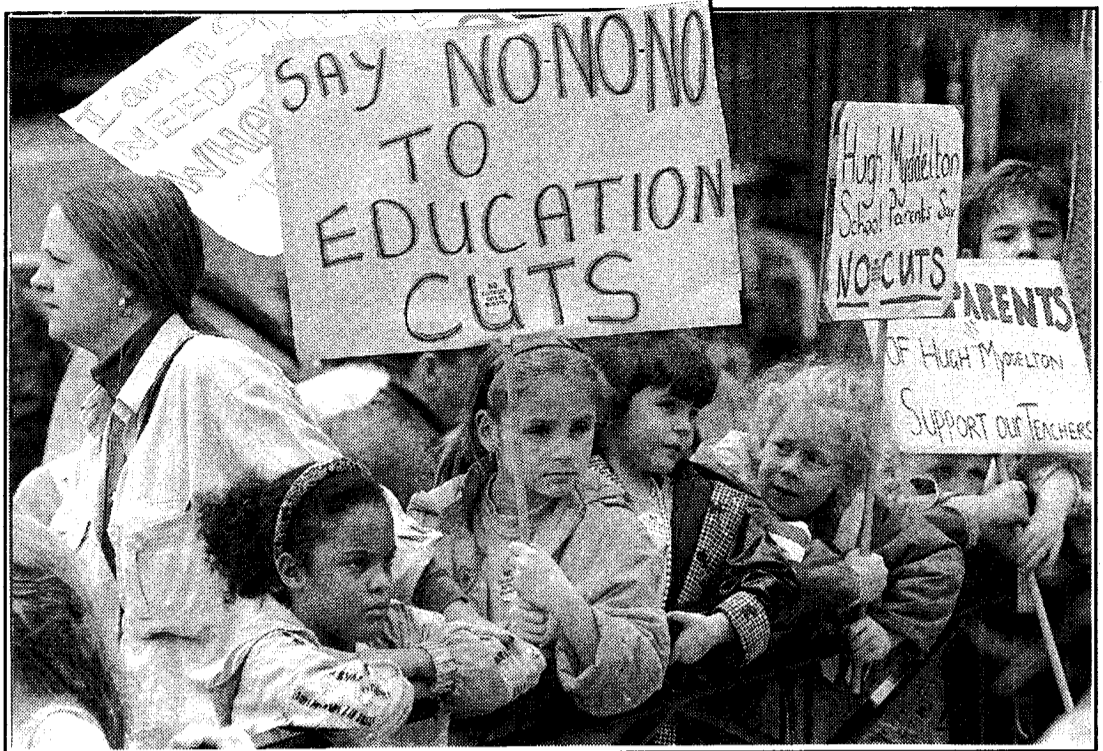
parents lobbied the council education committee meeting on 2 July, the first day of the strike. Strike rallies also attracted 750 teachers and a lobby of the DES was held.

In the schools the argument over strike action was not an easy one. Seven years have passed since the industrial action over pay in the mid-'80s, and since then London teachers have taken many knocks. But the principle of fighting compulsory redundancies won the day.

The strike has put massive pressure of 'New Model' Labour authority Islington and its leader Margaret Hodge. Labour councillor Tony Maloney called on Hodge to resign at the 2 July council meeting, arguing the council was rudderless and out of control.

NUT membership has been boosted in schools; people join when they see something being done.

With Islington NALGO taking strike



John Harris  
Winning the youth vote - Islington teachers' protest

action, there is clearly the need for joint campaigning to stop the cuts.

Teachers across the country have been taking local action; but pressure is needed for a nationally-co-ordinated fight against cuts as Tory education policies bite.

# Islington NALGO steps up pressure

By Doug Thorpe

ISLINGTON local government workers have stepped up their campaign of strikes against redundancies, as the Labour council has continued its programme of savage spending cuts.

Thursday July 16 saw thousands of NALGO members take strike action, part of a rolling programme of strikes spread over a three week period.

## Bitter

The same day also saw councillors vote through a £12 million cuts package in the face of bitter opposition from the local community.

Protesters, including a busload of pensioners, were excluded from the council room. Instead of meeting their electorate the Labour councillors chose to call in the cops.

## Vows

But the anti-cuts campaign is spreading. Protesters vowed to return in greater numbers for the next council meeting, and the NALGO action is escalating every day.

Housing Advisers have now been joined by Benefits and Poll Tax workers on all-out, indefinite strike.

Lettings offices are expected to join the action in the next few days.

Speakers from/ messages of support to: Islington NALGO, 2 Orleston Rd, London N7. Tel: 071 477 4481.



Mark Salmon  
Fighting on - Burnsall strikers

# Sweatshop workers stand firm

THE WORKERS at the Burnsall electroplating factory in Smethwick, mainly Punjabi women, are continuing their strike for decent working conditions and equal pay for women.

Strikers told Socialist Outlook: 'The conditions at Burnsall's are terrible. Workers are not given protective gloves or masks, despite working with dangerous chemicals. Many workers have chest complaints.

## Industrial accidents

'When a worker injured his head in an industrial accident, he was just clocked off - no one was allowed to clock off to take him to hospital.

'Overtime is compulsory - ten hours a day, seven days a week is the standard time. This includes women. And women earn £20-£30 a week less than the men, despite doing exactly the same work.

The rules in that factory are crazy; for example you can't go to the toilet after 4.30pm, because your overtime starts then. You can't go off the floor to get a drink, you have to bring a bottle of water to put by your machine.

'And if you have an urgent telephone

call to make because of family sickness or something like that, then you have to clock off and go out of the factory and use a public phone.

'We organised our union secretly, but then one of the scabs grassed on us. Management wanted to know who the shop steward was so he could be sacked. But they couldn't find out.

## Last straw

'Then they eventually sacked someone for refusing to do the horrendous overtime. That was the last straw for us.'

Since the beginning of the strike on 15 June, management have been trying to use a small number of scabs to recruit new workers, so far without much success. The picket lines have been successful in turning back potential scabs and lorries making deliveries.

Workers from nearby factories have been regularly joining the all-day picket. More than £300 was collected for the strikers at the Socialist Movement Trade Union conference.

Speakers from/messages of support to: Joe Quigley, GMB, Will Thome Hse, 2 Birmingham Rd., Halesowen B63 3HP. Tel: 021 550 4888.

## Alcan strike

# A victory for union rights!

By Bob Smith

THREE HUNDRED metal workers have won a resounding victory in a seven week battle for pay and union rights.

The workers, from Alcan Plate in Birmingham, had seen their union derecognised and stewards sacked some nine months ago.

But after treatment from Alcan management - a part of the notorious Rio Tinto Zinc group - that was described as 'brutal' by TGWU convenor Noel Fennell, the workforce decided to take action.

They were met with a series of dirty tricks aimed at undermining the strike.

Office staff were put onto driving cranes and moving metal sheeting,

but the workforce remained solid and the plant stayed at a standstill.

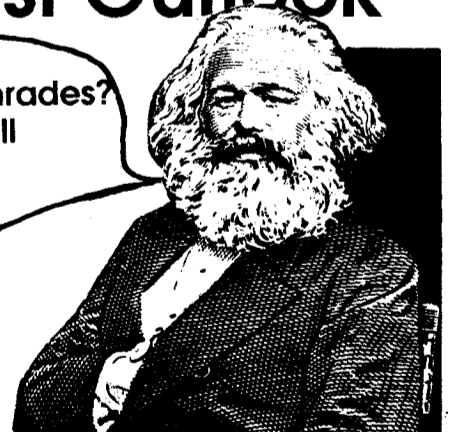
The strikers won on every front. Their union, the TGWU, is to be recognised; their stewards reinstated; they've won an 11 per cent increase; and management have pledged to end the abuse and harassment that had been a central target of the action.

Alcan have also conceded a demand put forward by TGWU organiser Dave Osborn and given facilities to a plant union committee modelled on BL Longbridge.

The successful struggle is an important reminder that with solid organisation and support from the local community and unions, action for union rights can still win against the Tory tide.

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# *socialist* OUTLOOK

**ARAFest August 1, Brockwell Park**

# Step up the anti-racist struggle!

TEN YEARS ago anti-racism and anti-fascism were seen as major issues by the left. Since then, the influence of the far right has declined, but racist attacks have sharply increased.

In Europe the rise of neo-fascism in France, Italy, Germany and Austria has shown what can result from complacency. Racism and fascism feed off each other – when the French government used racist rhetoric, Le Pen has reaped the profits.

But in Britain the Anti-Racist Alliance has learnt from the struggles of the late 1970s. It is a step forward that ARA has seen the leading role and self-organisation of black people as key to the anti-racist struggle.

Racist attacks are a key issue. These aren't carried out just by fascists, but fascists organise and provoke them – as we've seen with the 140 per cent increase in attacks in Welling since the BNP HQ moved in.

Police racism should be the second target, with not just the police, but the judicial system in general, more discredited by the day.

Now is the time to step up the pressure over police powers, their actions and the assaults they commit.

It is a disgrace that the murder of two black people in Manchester is not even considered a racist attack by police. With a police force saturated by racism, the labour movement must make no bones about supporting black people's



ARA stresses black leadership in the anti-racist struggle

right to self-defence.

Frame-ups must be exposed. Victories like the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, the Tottenham Three were won by the hard work of their families and a small number of campaigners. The freedom of the police to harass the black and Irish communities with impunity must end.

Fascists must be opposed wherever they appear. And we

must learn from past experience – divisions in the anti-fascist movement can be disastrous.

State racism also needs to be a constant focus for campaigners. The introduction of the Asylum Act is a central feature of the Tories' attack on the black community, part of the Maastricht anti-immigrant offensive.

These campaigns need to mobilise the support of the organised labour

movement. This means not paper support from union bureaucrats, but active participation from the rank and file.

A mass activist campaign is needed, based on local groups doing the essential groundwork. To get activists involved, these groups need democracy. A top-heavy movement that concentrates on the 'big names' and doesn't listen to the grass roots won't achieve the unity we need.

**INSIDE: 3-page special on anti-racist struggles**