

NS 3

# Socialist OUTLOOK

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# APRIL 12

# MARCH

**For**

# SOCIAL JUSTICE

The London dockers' support committee, with the support of the Liverpool docks shop stewards have called a march for social justice on April 12. This second London demonstration in the 18 month dispute will be led by the striking Liverpool dockers.

A wide appeal for support is going out. The organisers are confident that it will exceed the previous successful demonstration.

The dockers' support group has also forged links with the Euro-March campaign. April 12 is the Saturday before the start of the furthest legs of the Euro-March in Tangier, Morocco and Marbella, Spain.

The Moroccan leg of the Euro-March is an important reminder that the marches are international in character. They will protest about unemployment and exclusion wherever it exists. The decisions of the Intergovernmental Conference of the EU will have an impact far beyond the member countries of the EU.

The support of the dockers themselves for the Euro-march is a natural extension of the tremendous internationalism they have displayed, and which in turn has helped to sustain them with solidarity action by dockworkers throughout the world throughout their dispute.

The decision that publicity for April 12 will include coverage of the Euro-march gives that campaign an important new opportunity to reach campaigners and activists who have not heard of this initiative but who support the dockers' struggle. This is vital to ensure that the important work done to build the Euro-march amongst the unemployed and trade unionists is complemented by reaching into new networks amongst the homeless, environmental activists, anti-racists and all those wanting to fight for social justice.

**12 noon, Kennington Park  
(Oval Tube), Sat April 12**

**Bridgewater  
Three  
released  
Fight  
goes on  
for  
victims  
of  
British  
"justice"**



The celebrations will soon give way to anger at four lives destroyed by a cynical police frame-up

**Veronica Fagan**  
The release of the Bridgewater Three is an important victory for civil liberties campaigners and especially for their families. Journalist and socialist

Paul Foot who has done much to bring the case to public attention deserves a special mention at this time. While their freedom is not formally secure until the appeal

hearing the weight of the evidence together with public opinion and press coverage will make it difficult for the courts to reimprison them. At the same time as celebrat-

ing, socialists should not only remember Pat Molloy, who died in custody heartbroken that his confession had been dragged from him by police brutality and that he was branded for a crime

he did not commit. While the issue has been absent from the press, we have to ask whether the four men would have been as likely to be fitted up if they had not been Irish. Nor should we believe the press when they tell us that this is the last great miscarriage of justice case. Roisin McAlliskey is still held in Holloway prison, Danny McNamee still rots in jail and countless asylum seekers are imprisoned for the "crime" of seeking refuge in this country.

**Self defence**

Satpal Ram is one of many black people imprisoned for self defence against racist attacks and despite recent victories many women still languish in jail after defending themselves against violent partners.

Many others have doubtless been framed but their cases have not come to public attention.

Socialists must support these battles against injustice both in the name of the misery caused to the individuals framed and to those close to them - but also to demonstrate the biased and twisted nature of the so-called "justice" system.

**Anti-racism after the election  
Bigger Assembly sceptical  
of New Labour plans**

**Simon Deville reports**  
THE THIRD annual meeting of the National Assembly Against Racism on March 1 was larger and more upbeat than previous years, with around 200 participants.

The reason for this was obvious from most contributions from the platform and in the workshops a cautious optimism about the change in the political situation following the forthcoming general election.

**Influence**

Recurrent throughout contributions was an understanding that it will not be sufficient to simply elect a Labour government, but that the anti-racist movement will be far better placed to influence a Labour administration.

The Assembly was entitled Fighting Racism - What the next government must do: but the extent to which the Labour leadership can expect a honeymoon period amongst black communities was questioned, as speaker after speaker discussed what we should do if Labour fails to deliver anything.

**TGWU affiliation**

Bill Morris announced the affiliation of the Transport and General Workers Union. The central importance of the Assembly is that it has by far the widest support among the official Labour movement.

A joint statement agreed by the NAAR, TUC, National Black Alliance, the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns and others addressed asylum rights, deportations, stop and search, ex-

clusions from schools, racist attacks and unemployment.

The hunger strikes by asylum seekers locked up in Rochester meant that the repeal of the Immigration and Asylum Act and the closure of detentions were placed high on the agenda.

The widespread publicity around the murder of Stephen Lawrence had the effect of not only highlighting the racism within the police and the legal system, but had quite clearly pushed many people to the left.

In the workshop 'Confronting racial violence - It must be a crime', the overall consensus was that the central problem was not insufficient legislation but the lack of political will to pursue the perpetrators of racial violence and intimidation.

**Experiences**

A number of participants related their own experiences of appalling levels of harassment and how the police, Crown Prosecution Service, the courts and local authorities had refused to act. Mal Hussein told how a solicitor had told him in court "If you are racially abused occasionally you might take offence, but if you are racially abused every day you become accustomed to it and can't take offence."

Despite the decline in the fascist BNP, the assembly acknowledged the urgent need to organise anti-fascist campaigns around the elections in every seat they contest.

The level of 'official' labour movement support, the broad agreement around central aspects of racism and the positive nature of the Assembly place it on a firm

footing to become a central force in anti-racist struggles after the election.

To develop tactics and strategies of how to take forward the struggle against racism will require the establishment of an inclusive and democratic structure through which all opponents of racism can unite - this is an opportunity that must not be squandered.



There are laws, but there is also police racism and indifference

**Citizens Advice urge rights for everyone - except their staff!**

**Jennie Twydell, Secretary MSF St Pancras branch**

THE NATIONAL Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux - well known for its championing of rights at work - has sacked Glenn Sutherland, a leading trade unionist who has worked for the organisation for 19 years.

Union members at NACAB believe that Glenn has been victimised because of his union activities over the years. MSF, the union which represents staff at NACAB, is organising a ballot of members with a view to taking industrial action.

MSF St Pancras branch, of which Glenn is Chair, has unanimously passed a motion of support, as has the MSF London Region.

A spokesperson said "All staff are disgusted by the way Glenn has been treated and I have no doubt that there will be an overwhelming vote for strike action.

People are fed up with the hy-

pocrisy of an organisation that preaches to others about how to behave and then does this to someone who has worked for them for 19 years.

This is the first time there has been a ballot for an official strike at NACAB - that shows how strong the feeling is. We are all very pleased that MSF is giving Glenn their full support."

**No notice**

Sutherland was sacked without the twelve weeks paid notice his long service at NACAB had entitled him to. NACAB management said that they could do this because he was guilty of 'gross misconduct'. His 'offence' was that he had used a photocopier to do some personal photocopying - union and other political material - without asking for permission.

At the disciplinary hearing management admitted that they did not have a policy on personal use of photocopiers. One manager described personal photocopying as "a

free for all".

MSF conducted a survey to find out what current practice was and every single respondent said that they had used photocopying facilities for personal use. NACAB management has decided to ignore this and to single out Glenn. This is one of the reasons why his colleagues believe that he is being victimised - punished for his union activities at NACAB.

The cost of the photocopying was £12.48 and Glenn had offered to pay this. What price 19 years service!

Chris Smith - Glenn's MP - has expressed concern at NACAB's actions and said that he is taking the matter up with NACAB's Chief Executive.

Letters of protest should be addressed to Ann Abraham; NACAB Chief Executive, 115-123 Pentonville Road, London N1 9LZ

Copies and messages of support to The Secretary, MSF St Pancras Branch, 80 Pembroke Street, London N1 0DP.

# Post-Wirral syndrome

THE WIRRAL by-election has sounded Major's death-knell. The wake on May 1 will be deserted, as his fellow Tories gear up for the next stage of the already open battle for his successor.

Stephen Dorrell's breach of party line in commenting that Britain will definitely not join European Monetary Union in 1999 is the latest salvo in that war. He demonstrates a disregard for the impact on his party's electoral showing, despite the fact he is supposedly the Prime Minister's favoured successor.

Major himself has publically admitted that 'if opinion doesn't change we are going to have a Labour government'. The official party line is that the 17.2 per cent swing to Labour was the result of 'byelection culture', but the desperate tone of their statements suggests even they do not believe this.

They know fine well that the electorate in the Wirral have delivered a guilty verdict against this government which will be repeated across the country come

May.

While Labour certainly cannot count on the same margin of success in the General election itself, their victory does seem a foregone conclusion. Of course Prescott and the others tell us not to be complacent but the champagne has already been flowing.

## Summer budget

Major's attempts to point out supposed differences between Blair and Prescott, and his focus on Gordon Brown's intention to hold a summer budget seem fated to as little impact as the expensive Tory poster campaign attacking Labour's tax plans had at Wirral.

Nor is it easy to imagine Major pulling a Falklands war rabbit from his sleeve at this stage in the proceedings.

If the Tories' fate is sealed, what then have the rest of us to look forward to under a Blair government.

The negative Labour campaigning in Wirral gives us little cause for optimism. The gymnastics over grammar schools - with Labour pledging that abolition would only go through if existing parents with



No more happy returns to No. 10

children at those schools wanted it - gives the lie to the idea that Blunkett and his team care even one hoot about the future of education.

We have also been told that assisted places won't be phased out "straight away". If this is a priority area for Labour it is not one in

which the reality of working class children's lives can expect much improvement.

This pathetic performance on education mirrors so much that has been spewed out by the New Labour machine. In every area of life, over jobs, benefits and services the Labour leadership is intent on making clear that Blair in Number 10 will signal few changes.

Despite the fact that there is little or no indication that the Millbank crew will reverse the ravages of the seemingly countless years of Tory destruction, the need for socialists to actively support the election of a Labour government remains vital.

Those in the trade unions and the party who have opposed struggles, hiding behind the fig-leaf of arguing that all struggles must be subordinated to that goal will be disarmed in the face of new attacks that will then follow.

Those that have been conned and cowered into following them will be much more open to discuss new ideas and strategies for defending their interests both at work and in the community.

Despite Blair's successes so far in taming the party, the key battle over the NEC proposals to further neuter the party and unions - and behind that, the even more crucial war over the whole existence of the trade union link - remain to be decided.

## Hatred

Wirral demonstrated the hatred of millions of people for the Tories. Small left parties, like the Socialist Labour Party, who made a rather poor showing in Wirral, are likely to be very squeezed in this climate.

Only where they have a genuine and significant local base will they be able to achieve the task that is vital along with the election of a Labour government - the preparation of the basis for a real fightback against the new attacks that we will face.

Over the coming weeks in the run up to the General Election *Socialist Outlook* supporters will do all in their power to build those campaigns and actions that can best fulfill this task. We call on all socialists to join us in that fight.

## A humiliation too far?

# Labour plans provoke public sector union fury

AS THE seemingly inevitable Labour victory looms closer, it is becoming ever more obvious that the new government will be locked from day one in a conflict with the trade unions, most notably those in the public sector.

The Labour response to Tory plans to "phase in" pay review body awards to teachers and NHS professionals - effectively slashing the value of this so-called "inflation-busting" settlement - was predictable: Gordon Brown, as on almost everything else, will stick to Tory policies.

This announcement produced the first sign of any resistance from an otherwise supine trade union leadership, who have for several years (it seems decades) abandoned any other policy but waiting for a Labour government.

They chose their words carefully, but UNISON national officers and General Secretary Bickerstaffe made it clear that they will be demanding the full settlement of the review body increases regardless of which government gets in.

The only concession that has

been offered to the NHS unions by New Labour is the scrapping of the costly and ineffective system of local pay bargaining Trust by Trust. But it is clear that one of the main reasons for this policy switch has been pressure not from the unions, which pay millions each year to sustain the Labour Party, but by the right wing Royal College of Nursing, which is not even affiliated!

## Councils

The same union leaders are under pressure in local government, where cuts totalling hundreds of millions are being pushed through by Labour-led councils obediently following orders from Frank Dobson and Blair's merry Millbank crew to keep their heads down and wait for the election.

But they also know that Dobson has told them forcefully that Labour will stick to Tory "capping" limits on council spending, and will carry through with Kenneth Clarke's cuts for the next two years.

This means thousands of jobs will face the axe in the what ought to be the 'honeymoon' period for a

Blair government.

Worse still, one of the consequences of the spending cuts, if Kent's Labour-led council is anything to go by, could be a growing drive towards the privatisation of social services, implying a massive loss of public sector jobs and a wholesale reduction in the range and quality of services for the most vulnerable people.

Add to this the shameful Labour U-turn over the Tory Private Finance Initiative which could result in mainstream NHS hospitals being owned and run for profit by private firms (see page 6), which reveals New Labour as a softer touch for profit-seeking City consortia than even the Tories.

Rumour has it that Shadow Health Secretary was less than happy at being called upon to ditch the Party's principled opposition to PFI: but this is little consolation for leaders of unions such as UNISON, which has just reinforced its line of opposition to PFI - encouraged in this stance by the abysmal failure of the scheme to deliver any of the promised new hospital buildings.

Smith personally may not like the new line on PFI, but his views don't really matter. He appears to be just the latest of a succession of Shadow Health Secretaries who didn't want the job and doesn't want to take over from Dorrell after the election. Again the rumours are that the job might go to high flying Blairite Tessa Jowell - who is sponsored by the RCN!

## Ridiculous

On every front, the public sector union leaders are being made to look ridiculous by Blair's team in front of their members and the wider public. They clearly don't like it. Never before have national union officials been so scathing about the prospects on offer from Labour in the run-up to an election.

They also have a sense of real foreboding. They know there is a good chance that their humiliation will be compounded at this year's Labour conference, if Blair opts to strike while the electoral iron is still hot, and cut the party's links with the unions.

As UNISON's London Conve-

nor Geoff Martin has summed up "The "give and take" relationship between the party and the unions means that the unions give Blair the money and Blair takes the piss".

Although they may be excluded by New Labour, sooner or later the unions will have to face up to the need for their own political voice. The millions in political funds offer the opportunity to fight politically for the interests of union members, irrespective of the pressure from Blair's barmy army in Millbank. Among the policies that will demand attention is a turn back to socialism - a socialism more scientific and serious than Clause Four.

The expected Labour honeymoon has not yet been completely written off, but it has already been scaled down. It is vital that this year's union conferences keep the heat on the bureaucrats who have been so publicly shafted by Blair, pressing for policies to defend jobs, union rights and living standards.

That, after all, is why millions will be voting to kick out the Tories.



Stalingrad O'Neill

# An ideal time for a fighting lead from Women's TUC

Marian Brain

LIKE LAST year's Women's TUC, this conference will be split into two parts, one in which affiliates submit resolutions and amendments for voting, and the other with a free discussion.

Last year's discussion was around how unions recruit and organise women workers. Following on, this year's discussion is on how, having recruited women, unions can become more relevant to them, and on what ways can be

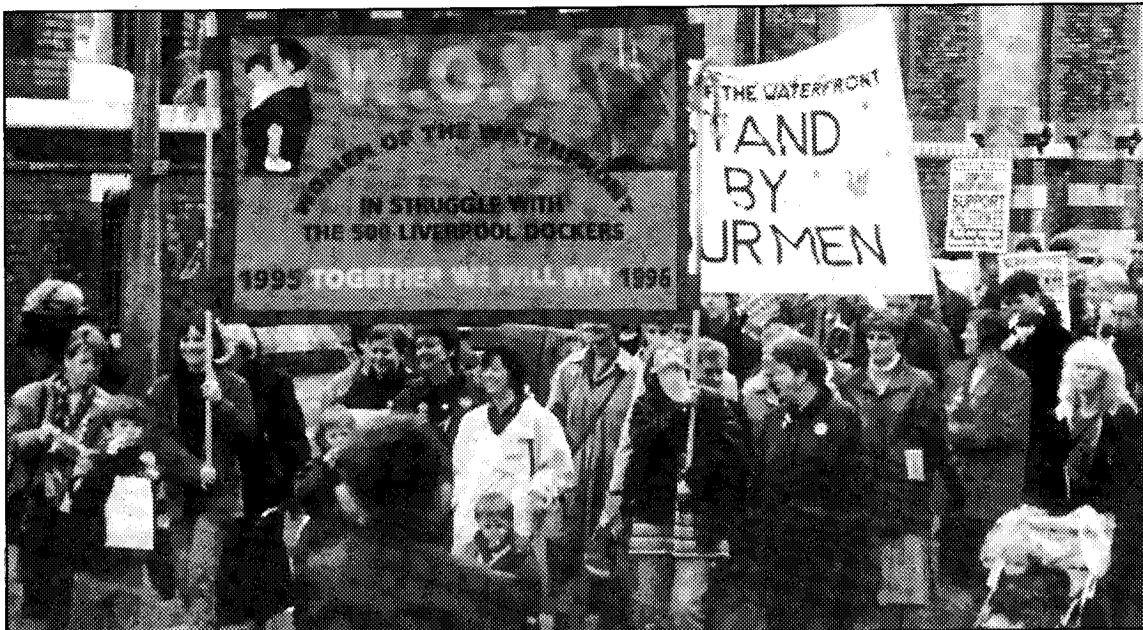
**The 67th Women's TUC Conference, on the theme of Women in the Unions: the Road to Growth, takes place in Scarborough from March 12 -14.**

used to make them more effective.

Although in theory it is a good idea to have some free discussion, it would have been better if the conference had been extended by a day, rather than restricting the resolution based part of the conference.

There are resolutions on most of the main issues facing working women, including:

- \* equal rights at work, childcare, bullying and violence at work, workloads, working hours, the balance between work and family life, homeworking, the recruitment of agency workers, feminisation of the teaching profession
- \* women's representation at the Trades Union Congress
- \* women's rights
- \* the double disadvantage of black women
- \* disability
- \* the welfare state, benefits, the NHS, women's health, transport pension rights for women and casualised workers



Andrew Ward

\* domestic violence, child abuse and protection, women's experiences in the criminal and family court systems

\* fair trade, internationalism  
NATFHE has submitted an important resolution opposing the "family values" moral postures adopted by both major parties, and the repercussions this could have for women workers, and also lesbian and disabled women.

### Single mothers

The resolution opposes policies which attack single mothers, assert the superiority of the heterosexual monogamous nuclear family at the expense of all other alternatives, and undermine women's rights to full-time paid employment.

It stresses the need to campaign for properly funded nursery education and after school provision, the implementation of TUC policy on

carers, to resist attacks on abortion rights, and to campaign to simplify, strengthen and extend equality legislation and to outlaw discrimination against women on grounds of their sexual orientation.

There are also resolutions on the welfare state and education, but what is lacking so far is an understanding that if we are to be able to defend and extend the welfare state, we need to develop a different line than that of the TUC leadership towards Maastricht and the single currency - acceptance of the Maastricht process and the convergence criteria for the single currency means acceptance of cuts in the welfare state.

The Women's Committee report to Women's Conference mentions a 1996 resolution noting the increasing dependence on casual, temporary and freelance contracts.

It also states that the TUC has made job insecurity and employment rights priority issues for campaigning, and highlights the 1996 TUC labour market report *Women on the Edge*.

The TUC's document on how to maintain women's trade union membership and encourage women to be active stresses the importance of campaigning around issues relevant to women, e.g. defence of hospitals and other social services, and opposition to closures.

Yet the current TUC leadership has opposed the European Marches, and supported the Maastricht process and the moves towards a single currency.

The Europe of the bosses is imposing huge cuts in welfare and job losses, with a damaging impact on women's lives. Defending women workers' rights means opposing the offensive of the capitalist class.

# Straw of comfort to lesbians and gays

**Peter Purton, Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights (personal capacity)**

**Jack Straw, shadow home secretary has delivered an important speech on Labour's pledges on lesbian and gay law reform to a cross-party meeting called by Stonewall to commemorate the third anniversary of the vote which came close the equalising the age of consent for gay men but instead reduced it to 18.**

On February 20 Straw promised that Labour would repeal Section 28, would hold an early free vote on the age of consent and would incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into British law as a vehicle for tackling discrimination.

For lesbians and gay men, the first hurdle on the road to equality is a legal system which consciously and deliberately discriminates against us in almost every sphere of life.

Under the Tories, government action has made the position worse. The infamous section 28 of the 1988 local government Act, introduced to ban councils from promoting lesbian and gay equality by enshrining our second class status in law is only the worst example of many.

The new Sex Offenders bill will - unless successfully amended - place a gay man 'guilty' of completely

consensual 'offences' with another man of 17 on a register of dangerous sex offenders.

This legal oppression both results from and reinforces the social oppression of homosexuality. Challenging prejudice and discrimination goes hand in hand with changing the laws which encourage them.

For the lesbian and gay communities the question of who forms the next government and what they will do when they are elected is more than usually critical. For the first time in 18 years there is a chink of light.

### Welcome

Welcome though these commitments are, they would still leave many discriminatory laws and practices in place. Labour retreats on many other previous pledges give further cause for concern. By contrast the Liberal Democrats have a far more comprehensive platform of reforms and they have a wide following amongst our communities as a result.

The level of political consciousness among lesbians and gay men is not very high as a result of the absence of significant progressive struggles in recent years and the barren consensus of parliamentary politics.

For socialists to argue then that despite greater benefits promised by the Liberal Democrats lesbians and gays should vote Labour "because it is the party of the working class" is a vain approach doomed to failure.

Yet the need to elect Labour is

pressing and the commitments made by Straw do offer the platform for winning this approach.

The Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights which has been responsible for winning far more advanced and detailed commitments from Labour Party conferences (five times since 1985) is running an election campaign around these pledges.

The key is the motivation offered by Jack Straw and on other occasions by Tony Blair himself.

Straw said in his speech that with the new Clause 4 New Labour was committed to oppose prejudice. Coupled with the detailed policy which has been argued and won across wide sections of the Labour movement in the last fifteen years, the door is open to push a Labour government to broaden and develop these basic commitments into comprehensive legislative reform.

### Outlaw discrimination

There will be few new bills which cannot be made to touch on some aspect of discrimination. The most important are measures to outlaw discrimination in employment, housing, education and services something which the European Convention, on its own, manifestly fails to do.

There will be other new bills too, which will actually worsen our position unless countervailing steps are included: increased powers for the police under 'zero tolerance' for 'low-level' crime will not help us (as Straw claimed) unless the laws under which the police and courts



Is all the campaigning and struggle about to pay off?

currently hound us are themselves removed.

As a result of years of campaigning inside and outside the trade unions and Labour party there is now widespread support for lesbian and gay equality as an elementary human right.

This support has now even per-

meated the ranks of Labour MPs. Old and New Labour can agree on opposing prejudice. Jack Straw's public commitments offer a prospect of winning real and vital legal reforms in the next period.

But the extent of change will depend on continued campaigning from all supporters of equality.

## Defiance of Magnet strikers “We will come through – and win!”

Trade unionists at Magnet in Darlington have been on strike for seven months now. Pete Firmin for Socialist Outlook talked to IAN CRUMMOND, secretary of the strike committee, who represents 340 workers sacked for taking industrial action against the company.

### SO: What is the current state of the dispute?

IC: We are still mounting a 24-hour picket line, 7 days a week, but we are down to 180 on strike. We have a strong picket line and a good delegation team, though we could do with more people. Our national support is really starting to take off.

Locally it is still at a low level — hopefully that will improve after the support conference on March 1. We are leafleting most of Magnet's major retail outlets, asking people not to buy Magnet kitchens until we get reinstatement.

### SO: Tell us about the women's support group?

IC: The women's support group is modelled on the Liverpool Women on the Waterfront and the miners' women's support groups. They wrote to Beresford's shareholders about the dispute and went down to London to lobby the AGM of Beresford — the publicity from that has been brilliant. They are organising a local leafleting campaign. They play an active part in the day-to-day work of the strike committee, gathering informa-

tion, writing to people, talking to people, and so on.

### SO: What support have you had from the different unions involved?

IC: There are four unions involved — TGWU, GMB, UCATT and AEEU. Early on they played a low key role. Unions are there to settle disputes by negotiation. When one party won't negotiate they are at a loss as to what to do. They took a back seat and didn't take any initiative in support of the dispute. They paid strike pay, but information and support in general were of a very low standard. Now things are getting a lot better.

The TGWU is giving us full support. They pay strike pay, have donated £10,000 to the strike fund, set up delegation work, and provided an us with an office in Middlesbrough.

The UCATT regional official initially took a high profile on the picket line, but that gradually died off.

UCATT is financially very poor, but we have had some good physical support. We have been up to UCATT meetings in Scotland and UCATT has a strong membership in the Hull and York areas. A UCATT support group in Sheffield has put on benefits for us and organised meetings.

As regards physical support, UCATT has been the best union, they have done a tremendous amount of leafleting and meetings. Their support outside the retail outlets has been very important and very much appreciated.

The GMB branch has been very helpful financially and physically.



Forging links with different unions and disputes, the Magnet strikers have an eye to prospects for strikes to come

I don't want to get into a slanging match, but the union nationally has not been as supportive as it should have been. We came out in support of their members, and really the support should be greater than it actually is. The individual members of the GMB have been very supportive financially, but it is the union hierarchy that is one of the problems.

The AEEU was least represented among the strikers. There are — to my knowledge — only a couple of AEEU members still on strike. Support from the AEEU has been very low key, both financially and physically. The full-time official does attend the picket line every Sunday with sausages and refreshments, but he doesn't do anything to tell AEEU members nationally about the dispute.

We have tried to maintain the strike committee with all four unions involved on an equal basis, but at the moment it is top heavy with those who were going to get a pay rise and had no real need to be out on strike.

Any strike needs primarily two kinds of support — financial and physical. We can stand outside with a collecting bucket forever and not get anywhere, we need the physical pressure on the company to force them to negotiate a fair return to work.

UCATT and the TGWU, are starting to get themselves more into the habit of helping. We are struggling a little bit at the moment, but we will come through and we will win.

### SO: What support have you had from other Magnet factories and outlets?

IC: It's been very poor. We've been very disappointed with those union members in the other Magnet factories who have not supported us, basically because they've got a job. They got a pay rise of 3 per cent, the same as what we wanted, they accepted it just as we would have done. I have no problem with that. The problem is their lack of physical and financial support for us. It should be there as of right that any trade unionist that

works for a firm gets the support of the members who work for the same firm. We understand they are worried about their jobs, but 340 of their colleagues need their support. There are four other Magnet factories, they are collecting money on an irregular basis, we would like them to put on a regular levy, then we could maintain the picket line on a regular basis. We are not condemning them or blaming them, but we need their support, and we are putting pressure on them to give it.

### SO: Would you tell us about the links you have built up with the Liverpool dockers and the Hillingdon hospital workers?

IC: We linked up with the dockers early on in the dispute. We hadn't heard about the dockers or the Hillingdon workers until just before we went on strike.

The dispute I feel most angry about is the Hillingdon workers. We came out for a pay claim, the dockers came out in defence of their sons' jobs, but the Hillingdon workers were sacked for doing nothing — not asking for a pay rise, not wanting to change their working conditions — they were sacked for merely refusing to take a pay cut.

They are 53 Asian women not used to standing up in public, but they decided to come out and say "you're not going to do this to us, you're not going to take away our jobs". It's brilliant, and they've become more and more confident over 17 months.

The way they've been stabbed in the back by UNISON is shameful, no trade union should do that to its members. We support them, we always mention them when we speak, and will continue to do so whether they are official or unofficial.

We have a very close affinity with the dockers, they've been on our picket line and we've been on theirs, we've supported their mass pickets and demonstrations (unfortunately we turned up late after the demonstration, so we did the route on our own!) and they've turned out on ours. We will be at the march for social justice on April 12 with our brand new banner, which is brilliant.

Those in dispute must get together and support and help each other and this is one of the reasons for our conference on March 1.

It's important that information is shared and networks set up that can provide support for large and small disputes that come after us.

# Don't let the right wing exploit CPSA merger!

by Shaun Cohen, branch secretary, Department of Transport CPSA, North and North Wales, personal capacity  
Negotiations are currently taking place between the Civil and Public Service Association (CPSA) and Public Tax and Commerce, with a view to merger next year. If the merger goes ahead it will create a civil service union with about 270,000 members.

As part of a run up to the merger ballot expected in the autumn, members had a ballot on a document called 'Aims and Values' foisted on them.

This document appeared just after Christmas with no prior warning, and members were asked to endorse it. This apparently has been agreed by the membership, although as yet no voting figures have been released.

The aim of the document is to lessen the existing democracy, in favour of a "union which is democratic and member centred, efficient in the use of resources, and above all strong and effective on your behalf ... you will have an equal right to vote in key union elections and on major changes to the union's policies or rules."

Quite clearly, the leadership wishes to impose some kind of one member one vote system to supposedly make the union more democratic. Likewise, elections to the NEC and conference will become biennial.

### "Moderates"

These are changes that the right wing (so called moderate) leadership have attempted to introduce before without success. They are now attempting to use the merger ballot as a means to sneak in a new rule book which will in the end work against the interests of members.

The merger negotiations are, of course, taking place against a backdrop of continued attacks on the

public sector. Since 1992, nearly 70,000 permanent civil service jobs have disappeared due to privatisation and cutbacks. In the same period, the number of staff on temporary contracts has increased on average by 41.5 per cent.

At the same time, figures recently published by the government's own Efficiency Unit show that market testing/contracting out have saved an estimated £240 million, not £544 million as previously claimed.

Roger Freeman, the minister with responsibility for privatising the civil service, has further admitted that two fifths of that figure were achieved by "non-competitive techniques" such as internal restructuring.

While government difficulties are to be welcomed, jobs are still under threat in all departments. For example, the Employment Service is threatened with the loss of 1750 jobs, the Department of Transport is currently losing jobs, as is the recently privatised HMSO, and the list goes on.

While fine words are said about how strong a new union would be,

and the need to protect jobs and services, no strategy to achieve this is forthcoming. CPSA leaders claim to have led a whole host of actions in defence of jobs, yet these have all remained isolated and departmentalised.

### No strategy

Since the national strike of November 1994, there has been no clear strategy to combat privatisation other than in-house bids.

Unfortunately, the election of a Labour government is not going to be the panacea some thought. While the immediate threat of privatisation might be lifted, we are left doing more work with fewer staff, with a continuing decline in real wages.

So where do we go from here? Quite simply, we must urge all members to vote against the document "Building a new union".

We are not opposed to a merger with PTC, but it is unacceptable on the terms presented to CPSA members.

# As desperate Tories try to railroad through Tube privatisation New line needed to defend railways!

**Greg Tucker (RMT National Executive)**

TRANSPORT policy is shaping up to be a major issue in the run up to the general election.

As the privatised South West train services have descended into farce, with lack of drivers leading to mass cancellations of trains, and passenger complaints have doubled, the Tories have responded by proposing to give away the one remaining public sector railway to London Underground.

Labour's policies offer no alternative. Having abandoned any thought of renationalisation, they make vague promises about "acting tough" with the existing franchise holders, and their solution to the investment crisis on LUL - a version of the Tories' discredited Private Finance Initiative - is no solution at all.

PFI is far more expensive than conventional investment by government, is complex and time consuming and simply will not produce the goods for the essential work needed on track and signalling.

The answer lies in the action of rail workers themselves. South West Trains now faces further disruption as the RMT ballots its members in a dispute over management imposition of new contracts for its cleaning and maintenance staff.

Other rail workers in the south east have scored a notable victory without even firing a shot. AMEC, the recently privatised track maintenance company, has been forced to back down after its attempt to impose worse conditions provoked a united response from RMT members.

## Attacks

Both these instances show the reality of privatisation: the only way new rail companies can make money is by launching attacks on the workforce.



Going for a song? Only a bargain basement price will attract private bidders for the decrepit Tube network.

Rail privatisation was a complex, drawn-out affair, with the system broken up into many fragments. What was one public service, British Rail, is now made up of well over 100 interlinking private companies.

But a new shape is developing. On the one hand, a handful of major players dominate. On the operating side, bus companies are taking a lead, Stagecoach, National Bus, Virgin and Connex (the French Generale des Eaux) between them running most of the network. On the track maintenance side, roadbuilding companies such as Balfour Beattie have taken over.

On the other hand, they are doing so with ever more and smaller contracts. Rail workers were moved from BR to the new companies, but felt protected by the fact that they were still part of major workforces with some muscle.

Now they find themselves being moved around between companies, depending on who wins relatively short term contracts for small sections, sometimes of under 20 workers. New management techniques are being applied with a vengeance.

An industrial strategy which is capable of responding to this new situation is needed. Unfortunately, the three main unions have opted for widely different solutions.

## Anti-union laws

ASLEF and the TSSA have entered into deeper and deeper collusion with management, and in the process have been forced to become company agents spearheading the attacks on their own members. The RMT has tried to resist but has yet to find a way of unifying its membership in the face of the anti-union laws which

keep every dispute isolated.

ASLEF has played on its craft roots to try to negotiate special deals for drivers.

## 11-hour shifts

In practice, this has meant sacrificing hard won rights at work and massive extensions of work time (shift lengths up to 11 hours a day, average 46 hour weeks) in exchange for huge increases in basic pay.

But the small print, huge sickness and attendance penalties etc, mean little pay gains at great expense in lost conditions. The only winner is ASLEF HQ, who at least make a profit out of union subs linked to basic rates.

The TSSA has opted for single union deals to exclude any competition, and kowtowing to management at every turn to keep them sweet.

At AMEC, 1,000 RMT members found themselves derecognised in favour of the TSSA, who then proceeded to agree a deal which cut wages and worsened conditions. It soon became clear that the workforce would not accept this.

Only a handful were prepared to sign new personal contracts and nearly 300 workers switched to the RMT when it launched a ballot for industrial action. Seeing the strength of feeling, AMEC were forced to back down, recognise the RMT and withdraw the proposed changes.

Last summer the RMT's campaign for better pay and conditions for guards was successful in most companies, but even then, the attempt to build a unified campaign floundered in the face of the law. Balloting restrictions and other legal problems meant that the battle had to be fought in each company at its own pace.

In Scotland, the dispute still continues. While the major demands have been met, activists were victimised and the demands are now for their full reinstatement.

This is the RMT leadership's main problem. While it is prepared to fight for action in defence of its members, it has proved unable to go beyond the legal restrictions it faces. Action has had to be taken

only one company at a time. The responsibility for negotiation has devolved from the national leadership to regional lay officials who often lack the confidence to stand up to their new managers.

It is vital that we rapidly develop a strategy which develops confidence and unifies the membership.

Partly, this must be achieved by putting forward common demands which respond to the realities rail workers face.

## Conditions

For instance, in the face of increasing demands from management for more flexibility and increases in the working week, we should be posing the demand for a 35 hour week with no loss of pay for all rail workers, and for agreement to a core set of conditions across every company.

At the same time we need to find an answer to the transfer of work between companies. The union is being threatened with massive fines because workers from one company have been refusing to take on more work (with no extra jobs) formerly done by workers now in another company.

While we should keep disputes legal where possible, the union has to be prepared to act outside the legal straitjacket where necessary.

## No discussion

Development of such a strategy is urgent. But it is hampered by the lack of real discussion between activists in the union. The leadership barely manages to keep its head above water, having to lurch from crisis to crisis.

And so far, attempts to resuscitate the old Campaign for a Fighting Democratic Union have floundered in the face of obstruction from key left players. This must be changed.

The recent development in organisation of the right in the union, in the name of the "Fightback of the Centre Left" (a group which is wildly misnamed as it neither fights nor is of the centre left, but is a semi-secret electoral machine which was able to make some gains in this year's Executive elections) is a warning of the danger if this lack of debate continues.

## Smith signs blank cheque for discredited Tory scheme

**By Harry Sloan**

**MORE INDICATIONS of conflicts to come between a 'New Labour' government and public sector unions have been revealed following an astonishing letter from Shadow Health Secretary Chris Smith to Tory MPs, embracing the Tories' controversial Private Finance Initiative (PFI).**

The essence of PFI is that by financing, building and running major hospitals and facilities which would be leased to NHS Trusts, the consortia of banks, building firms and contractors providing support services would drive a massive wedge of private ownership deep into the fabric of our health services, for the first time since Labour nationalised the hospitals in 1948.

Labour's initial reaction to PFI was to reject and oppose it, one of the few useful positions argued by former Shadow Secretary Harriet Harman.

However Chris Smith, in line with his front bench colleagues, was

quick to retreat from this stance, and by December of last year was treading the difficult tightrope of ridiculing the Tory failure to get any PFI-financed hospital projects off the ground, while pledging Labour to "welcome joint public/private initiatives for the designing and building of hospitals".

## Embrace

But this ambiguous line has degenerated into an enthusiastic embrace for the PFI - Tory warts and all. Smith chose to announce the latest policy not to the labour movement, or even the general public, but in a letter to Tory MPs, assuring them that a Labour government would honour any PFI deals signed between now and the general election.

This gives the green light to companies and NHS bosses struggling to complete dodgy deals involving tens or hundreds of millions, with potentially disastrous long-term revenue costs for NHS Trusts.

Worse still, Smith went on to assure staggered Tories that where contracts had not yet been com-

pleted, Labour would "be seeking new ways of speeding up the process."

Smith's offer to underwrite any scheme anywhere, whatever the cost to the NHS (and Gordon Brown's revered "taxpayer") could trigger a succession of flawed and costly schemes for which Labour will take responsibility while the consortia pocket guaranteed long-term profits.

But Smith's latest turn brings him into conflict with the biggest public sector union UNISON, which has just reinforced its own campaigning opposition to the principle of PFI, issuing a new campaign pack to health branches as well as detailed briefing material.

It now seems that only the rickety finances of NHS Trusts and the cash shortages in local health authorities stand between us and a new network of privately-owned hospitals being run for profit within the NHS.

**The UNISON Clipsheet (No 17) is available from its Communications department.**

Unions pull back from winnable battle to defend jobs

# Halewood: the missed opportunity

Andy Kilmister

THE AGREEMENT reached by the TGWU with Ford over job losses at Halewood is a massive missed opportunity.

For the first time in recent years there was united opposition among all British plants in a major company to closure plans, which could have led to national strike action. Yet union negotiators threw this chance away and accepted a deal which still involves almost 1000 redundancies, only 300 less than originally announced.

The new 'people carrier' model offered for Halewood was already planned before the negotiations. The promise of a new van, which would secure production at Southampton is a real gain, it is true.

However, this just shows how much could have been obtained if the union leadership had been more resolute, and had built on the historic achievement of unanimous votes to ballot on action at all Ford UK plants.

That achievement itself was the result of initial strong leadership by the union, a positive development which was all too quickly reversed. The commitments to future production are merely paper promises.

This deal is even more unacceptable when the vulnerability of motor manufacturers, with their new 'just in time' management systems, to strike action is taken into account.

## Quick victory

Last year in the US a relatively small strike of maintenance workers at General Motors spread rapidly through the company involving 20,000 workers in a couple of weeks.

The strikers' demands over outsourcing of work were met, at least in part. The same kind of outcome was perfectly possible at Fords, with their densely integrated European production network. Industrial action at Halewood could have sparked a European campaign over job losses in the company, and in the motor industry more generally.

Such a campaign would have been especially significant and necessary now. European car workers are currently facing the likelihood of a new set of management onslaughts over jobs, working conditions and productivity.

The *Financial Times* of November 14 1996 reported that Peugeot and Renault were in discussion with the French government over proposals to cut thousands of jobs. Some reports put the figure of possible job losses as high as 40,000. Similar cuts elsewhere are on the

cards.

There are a number of reasons for these developments. Firstly, demand for cars in Europe is stagnating, owing to slow growth and high unemployment as countries struggle to meet the Maastricht criteria.

But secondly competition is increasing. Under the Single European Market rules all limits on Japanese car imports to Europe and on the sales of Japanese transplants in Europe are to be removed in 1999. Slow sales growth in Japan as the country struggles to escape recession is encouraging Japanese companies to look abroad.

## Moving In

But Japan is not the only source of new competition. Increasingly South Korea and Malaysia are moving into Europe. The South Korean company Daewoo has begun a massive export and investment drive. In particular they have taken over the FSO car plant in Poland, in one of the biggest car industry investments in Eastern Europe, after Volkswagen's purchase of Skoda.

Last November the Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad described plans to launch a big export programme, particularly directed at Europe. His projection was that by the end of the century Malaysia was likely to be producing up to 1 million cars for export.

The UK sports car and engineering company Lotus, bought by Malaysia's 'national' car manufacturer Otomobil Nasional Berhad (Proton) last Autumn, is to provide the technological expertise to back up this project.

Equally important is the restructuring which European manufacturers are currently undertaking. Part of this involves the shifting of production to low cost production locations in Eastern Europe - the Czech Republic, through Skoda, for Volkswagen and Poland for Fiat and General Motors/Opel. There have also been substantial cutbacks and job losses in Western Europe, for example in Volkswagen's Seat subsidiary in Spain.

Another strand to this competition is constant bargaining over subsidies with national governments and the European Union. Volkswagen has recently concluded a lengthy dispute with the EU over German government subsidies for its plant in Eastern Germany, in Saxony.

The new Rover/BMW engine plant announced for the Midlands in November was apparently dependent on about £45-£50 million of government aid.

The Halewood agreement also

involved government assistance. The jobs provided by these subsidies are not 'new'. The grants simply represent a way for companies to get taxpayers to pay for investment which they would have carried out anyway, by using the threat of relocation - to Spain in Ford's case, to Austria in BMW's.

Finally there is the impact of the increased strength of US car manufacturers in their home market after years of wage restraint and the introduction of new management techniques. Ford, for example, is now highly profitable in the US but is losing both money and market share in Europe.

The plan there, as in other companies, is to make European car workers undergo the same attacks on jobs and conditions that US workers have faced over the last decade.

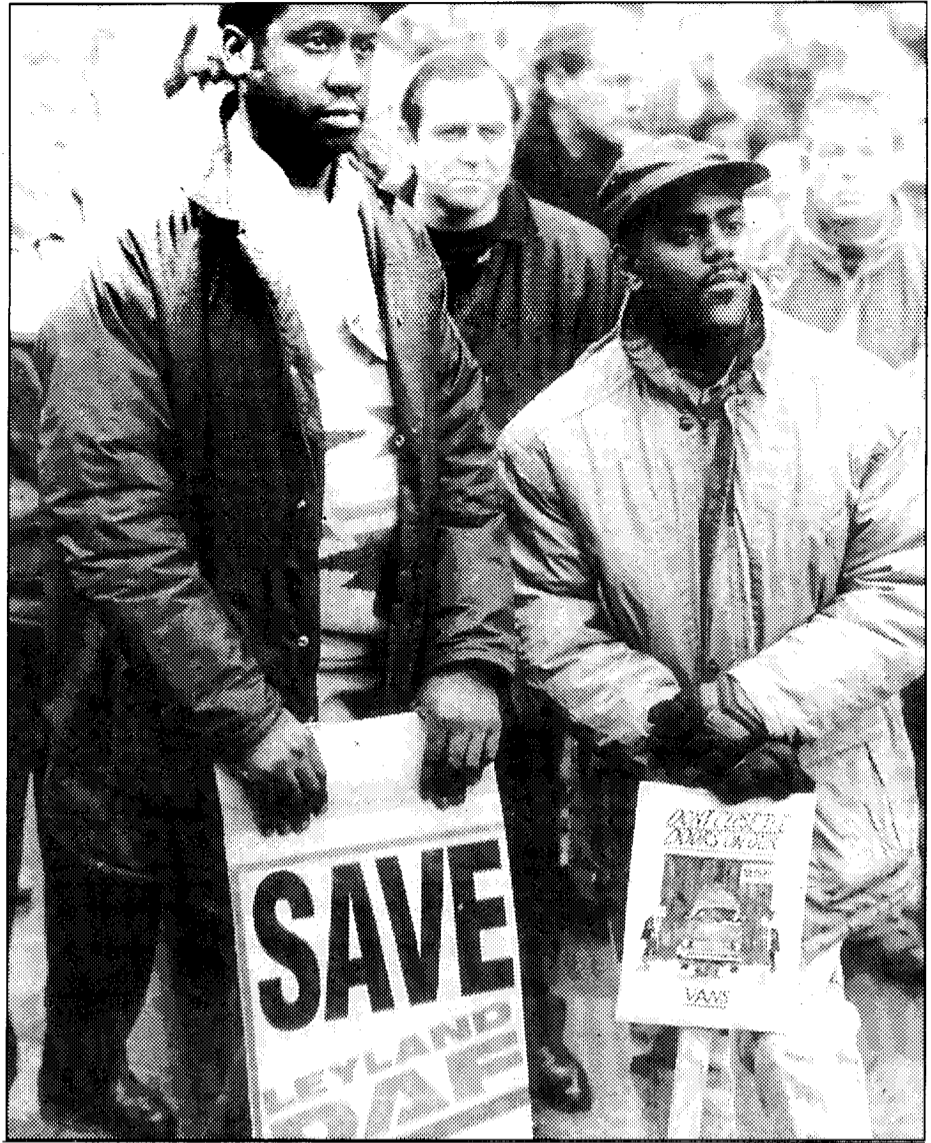
Both European and American manufacturers are increasingly turning their attention towards producing in, and exporting to, what are seen as growing markets in China, Latin America (especially Brazil) and East Asia, and away from the European market

which is growing more slowly.

In this situation there is no alternative to united action by workers in the industry, both within and between European countries. Any attempt to safeguard the position of a plant by making concessions has been shown to be hopeless by the case of Halewood.

## Doubled

Since 1990 productivity has almost doubled there, while wages remain low by European standards. The cost position of a particular plant is no longer the crucial thing. Both Valencia and Saarlouis, where Ford plans to produce the new model to replace the Escort, have higher costs than



Up against the laws of the market. Workers from Leyland DAF were bailed out from redundancy by a last-minute takeover. Now the promised new Ford van will herald a new battle for markets with firms like LDV.

Halewood.

The key issue is now the overall restructuring strategy of companies, their centralisation of production in key locations and the integration of production networks. Bargaining away rights is no protection against this set of factors.

Only cross-company action to enforce an alternative logic to the logic of restructuring, one that respects the rights of workers and the communities around car plants, can have any effect in resisting the current offensive.

This is why the agreement at Halewood is such a setback. However, we can be sure that Halewood will not be the only place where these issues are raised in the European car industry in the coming period.

# Council cuts: the silent misery

LABOUR councils throughout the country are 'preparing for government' by pushing through cuts in basic services, axing thousands of jobs - while unions stand idly by.

Councillors are under strict orders from Tony Blair's Millbank HQ to make cuts rather than 'rock the boat' by raising council taxes or by campaigning for more cash in the run-up to the election.

The same pressure has clearly been brought to bear on national union leaders, who have raised not a bleat as social services, education, leisure services and road maintenance jobs are slashed to balance the books of borough and county councils.

Liverpool is cutting £6.9m from its £120m social services budget. North Yorkshire is cutting £5m from a social service budget of £70m: but the campaign to defend front-line services is being led not by the unions but by a coalition of voluntary agencies.

In Wakefield, however UNISON is balloting members for action in



protest at cuts which threaten 650 jobs across the council, with £3.5m (8%) to be hacked from social services.

Newcastle social services department is warning that it will be cutting back services to the bare statutory minimum, while it axes a children's home, increases charges and cuts ten social work posts.

East Sussex, facing a £7.3m deficit on social services, is warning that community care will be available only to those in the

most extreme need.

One of the biggest cuts packages is in Oxfordshire, where the potential £20m-plus shortfall is so vast that even the Tory group joined forces with Labour to endorse a budget £6m above John Gummer's 'cap' - making it apparently the only county to challenge the government's budget squeeze.

But with the prospect of a Labour government carrying out its threats to uphold Tory spending limits, the county faces the probability of £4m cuts in education, £3.2m in social services, almost £1m from museums, art and leisure, £1m from road maintenance and £1.6m from environmental services.

A vigorous local campaign linking public sector and other unions with voluntary organisations is pledged to battle the Oxfordshire cuts up to and after the General Election. But without more sustained campaigns in other affected areas, the chances of success are limited.

# National Education Week Raising the pre-election stakes on education funding

**John Lister**

A UNIQUE coalition of teaching and staff unions, parents and governors' organisations, and campaigns and pressure groups will battle for the future of education in National Education Week (March 10-15).

The initiative, first proposed by the Fight Against Cuts in Education (FACE) has achieved the seemingly improbable task of bringing together rival teaching unions (including NUT, NASUWT and the head teachers' NAHT) and a genuinely broad range of national organisations (including the Association of County Councils) to ensure that the spotlight is turned on government funding of schools, nurseries and colleges in the run-up to the election.

The campaign is targeted at all

three major parties in all constituencies: but it is clear that in demanding increased cash for schools the supporting organisations are challenging existing government policy — and throwing down a challenge to Tony Blair's "New Labour", which has embraced Tory spending limits.

40,000 posters and thousands of FACE information packs have been distributed through over 20 mailing lists across the country, in an effort to coordinate campaigning activities, with each day in the Week highlighting a specific issue in education funding.

FACE is still compiling a national diary of planned events, stunts and photo-opportunities, but it is already clear that the Week will span the country.

Monday March 10 will focus on

buildings and backlog maintenance.

"£3.2 billion must be spent over the next five years just to keep existing buildings open.... over 600 primary schools still have outside toilets ... well over 25,500 classes are being taught in temporary classrooms every day ... for 765,000 children school is a hut or a mobile classroom". (From Local Authorities Association *Capital Expenditure on Schools*, April 1996)

Tuesday March 11 will target nursery education

The Campaign Against Vouchers in Education (CAVB) have calculated that the cost of administering vouchers for 650,000 4-year olds would pay for approximately 1,000 qualified classroom teachers.

Wednesday March 12, the topic is class size.

Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Norway and Scotland have legislation to enforce a maximum permitted class size. England and Wales have no maximum class size.

Thursday March 13 spotlights special educational needs.

Chief schools inspector Chris Woodhead has stated that special needs coordinators are now only effective in less than half of all schools. Most schools do not have enough money to implement the government's legislation on the provision for special educational needs.

Friday March 14 will look at funding in general.



The Association of County Councils estimate that they will need an extra £785 million if they are to implement the new legislation being imposed by the government on education, over and above the cuts in funding they have suffered in the last few years.

Saturday March 15 will see a

conference of school students discussing "Education Beyond 2000".

\* For more details of National Education Week and the activities in your area, contact FACE on 01203 311013, or your local education campaign or teaching union.

## Capital crime

**CAPITAL funding on schools has halved in real terms over the last 20 years, plunging from £1.82 billion in 1974/5 to £964m. Britain spends only 5% of its education budget on capital projects, compared with an average of 9% in OECD countries.**

**The consequences are clear enough to see. A 1994/5 report from the Chief Inspector of Schools found:**

\* 51% suffered crumbling

roofs or ceilings

\* 47% had rotten or faulty

windows

\* 88% said local schools had overcrowded classrooms

\* 92% said schools had temporary classrooms

\* 36% still had outside toilets

\* 72% were inadequately heated

\* 81% suffered from poor furniture and equipment.

## Campaigners step up fight to kill off "Project Work"

**Paul McGowan**

**THE TORIES' election pledge to extend Project Work nationwide shows their desire to make unemployment a major issue at the polls. How they can flaunt their appalling record as a vote winner staggers belief until one considers Labour's failure to offer a clear alternative to government policies.**

A windfall tax on public utilities will provide new schemes for the young unemployed, but the miserable and miserly Gordon Brown is promising not a penny more to reduce the jobless total. Actually Labour risks increasing the dole queues if Brown sticks to Tory spending limits and seeks to meet Britain's targets for European Monetary Union.

Although the Labour leadership has declared its opposition to Project Work, it is looking closely at other slave labour schemes. Many Labour Councils have now agreed to boycott Project Work, but few have raised their criticisms in public.

They appear paralysed by fear that speaking out in support for the un-

employed is not in tune with Blair's efforts to play to the prejudices of Middle England.

Also they are embarrassed by their own sorry record in increasing the jobless figures through pursuing their dented shield policies.

It is certain a New Labour government would like to keep aspects of the JSA and toy with workfare, yet efforts should be made to demand it takes a different road. With pressure, it could immediately scrap Project Work.

In East London, the largest pilot area for Project Work, Waltham Forest Council is the first Labour authority to privately agree to boycott it.

### Domino effect

Campaigners against unemployment will use its example to create a domino effect amongst other Councils in the area. We want a public statement by Waltham Forest to encourage private employers to take no part.

We are demanding the Council withdraws funding from bodies financed by them should they use Project Work. Local Labour MP, Harry Cohen, has already agreed to

our request to argue that workfare is unacceptable in talks with the Health Authority.

Many unions have begun to frighten their employers into providing no placements and charities are being contacted to leave it alone. As well as continuing our leafleting outside jobcentres, campaigning against low pay will be stepped up.

The excellent links between local CPSA branches and unemployed activists has even come to the attention of Barry Reamsbottom, the Blairite General Secretary of the CPSA who is attempting to witchhunt a local CPSA activist for contact with Groundswell.

These links are increasingly essential. Despite the extra workload of Project Work, the management in North East London wish to shed 10 per cent of Employment Service staff. CPSA members have held indicative votes for strike action and hope soon to disrupt Project Work and prevent redundancies.

Through broad based campaigns like in East London we can kill the pilots for Project Work. By also focusing demands on Labour we can once again make a 'Workfare Free Britain'.

## Fighting on to stop more council cuts

**BIRMINGHAM** anti-cuts campaigners organised by Birmingham Community Conference mobilised a successful lobby on February 10.

The Labour-led council was debating how best to carry through Tory cuts of £35 million in revenue, and massive cuts in capital spending.

Parks and Neighbourhood Offices have been high on Labour's chopping list, and they were well represented among those who turned out to lobby against the budget cuts. The full council are

due to vote on the final cuts package as we go to press.

Birmingham Community Conference has now been running nearly three years, and has produced 13 issues of its 4-page bulletin *Public Service*.

\* ANTI-CUTS campaigners in Camden notched up a significant victory, when under pressure from demonstrators led by a 12-year old local schoolgirl, councillors voted to drop a package of £4m cuts in education spending.

## Hospital cuts threaten East End misery

**AS WE go to press, news has broken that the Royal Hospitals Trust in East London is proposing to close Queen Elizabeth's Hospital for Children in Hackney and half of Bart's Hospital, to save money.**

The Queen Elizabeth closure, which would take effect by the spring of 1998, would leave Hackney without any children's hospital beds or specialist children's casualty services, forcing parents to travel with their children to the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel — a long and awkward journey by bus in a des-

perately deprived area with well below average car ownership. QEH handles over 20,000 child casualties a year: the local Homerton hospital has no children's unit, and is only planning to provide out-patient and day surgery.

While these cuts claim to save up to £9 million a year, the Royal Hospitals Trust is still attempting to carry through a ruinously expensive £310m rebuild of the Royal London, financed by private cash. The latest rumours however suggest that this scheme is near to collapse, leaving only the closures intact.





## GMB backing for boycott of sweatshop Disney products

by Elkie Dee

THE SUCCESS of the recent remake of 101 Dalmatians has encouraged lots of people to rush out and buy sweatshirts and other Disney merchandise.

The film portrays Cruella de Vil as a ruthless career woman, interested only in making money and in fashionable clothes made out of cruelty to cuddly animals. She is also shown as a cruel and mean boss. Nothing like Disney's bosses, of course!

Through licensing merchandising, Disney makes huge profits out of the exploitation of workers, both adults and children, in other countries. The company has admitted that Haitian workers are paid 4p to sew a sweatshirt which is then sold in Britain for £12. There is evidence of the use of child labour in Haiti and Indonesia.

In the US, activists have campaigned for Disney to stop doing business with subcontractors who refuse demands for higher wages, clean drinking water and other improvements in conditions, genuine collective bargaining and an end to indiscriminate layoffs and the victimisation of union activists.

Now in Britain the GMB has called for a boycott campaign against Disney stores here, and written to Michael Eisner, chief executive of the Walt Disney Company, protesting against slave labour conditions in Haiti. Members of the GMB and Haiti Solidarity Campaign together with actress Julie Christie launched the campaign in Britain with a picket of Disney's Regent Street store on February 13. Other trade unionists and socialists must join them in raising the issue.

For further information contact: Disney/Haiti Justice campaign, PO Box 755, Fort Washington Station, New York NY 10001; (212) 242-0986, e-mail soho.ios.com



# Learn lessons of FN victory in Vitrolles

Samy Johsua and Geoff Ryan

(Adapted from an article in the February 13 Issue of Rouge, weekly paper of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International).

MILITANTS must now draw up a complete balance sheet of what happened at Vitrolles. Not because the victory of the FN [National Front] has dramatically changed the party's position in French national political life.

Its electoral progress remains limited and partial and in some places is even declining. But its victory in Vitrolles reveals a danger that is becoming more and more threatening.

Anglade, outgoing Socialist Party mayor, got roughly the same number of votes (7,397) as in 1995 (7,466), when he won.

The FN increased its vote from 7,113 in 1995 to 8,169. A switch of votes by some people who normally vote for the traditional right-wing parties gave Megret, the FN candidate, her victory.

Some right-wing voters clearly feel closer to the FN than the mythical 'Republican Front' put forward by the leaders of the traditional right-wing parties. If this phenomenon, familiar in the Provençal region, were to spread throughout France the dangers would grow enormously. That is the first lesson of Vitrolles.

Victory at Vitrolles allows the FN to build on its strengths: the ability to bring together people with very different motivations. Megret won

both because of and despite a campaign of violence that called to mind the far-right in France before the second world war.

Hardened fascists freely indulged in their activities; semi-fascists could give vent to obscene verbal attacks on foreigners, young people, 'delinquents' and 'degenerates'. Others preferred not to see any of this and voted for the only party that appeared to promise a way out of the problems that are making life more and more unbearable for them.

Unless we reverse the momentum, they will espouse, sooner or later, the fascist ideology that runs deeply through the FN.

One of the specific features of fascism is to bring whole layers of the working class into the embrace of an ideology totally hostile to their interests. That, unfortunately, remains possible today. That is the

second lesson. candidates untainted by corruption, with close ties to the masses and who reject clientalism. This is particularly true of the Socialist Party, at least in the Provençal region. That is the third lesson.

The anti-FN campaign was based on grass roots organisations in Vitrolles. Initiatives from women's groups and trade union meetings were very successful. The anti-fascist organisation Ras l'Front, which started out with only a handful of activists, became a rallying point for young people and led many initiatives, including a powerful street demonstration. This investment will not be lost for the struggles we now need to engage in. But it was insufficient.

The mobilisations ran up against the central political question - which people, on what programme?

Socialist Party and Communist Party leaders Jospin and Hue came

**"The anti-FN campaign was based on grass roots organisations in Vitrolles. Initiatives from women's groups and trade union meetings were very successful. The anti-fascist organisation Ras l'Front, which started out with only a handful of activists, became a rallying point for young people ..."**

second lesson.

For the left the verdict of Vitrolles is bitter. Moral discourses, however legitimate and necessary, are inadequate as a way to deal with the issue. It is even clearer that humanist appeals are not very effective when they come from people who justify the same liberal economic system that pushes voters into the arms of the FN.

Unfortunately the left is increasingly incapable of offering honest

to tell us to reclaim the market squares, to go out and meet people. All well and good, but what do we say to them? How do we respond to the distress of the unemployed, faced with an appalling life in the cities and no prospects on the horizon?

To fight the continual slide of sections of the population towards the FN in some places (and perhaps others tomorrow) we have to put forward alternative policies.

For many white French people the FN appears to offer an alternative. In the councils it controls it does deal with issues of housing and unemployment. FN leaders declare their support for pensioners and visit old people's homes.

For the moment Le Pen is even playing down his racist and anti-immigrant rhetoric in favour of social questions. The left cannot ignore the very real, material reasons why sections of the French working class have been attracted to the FN.

This is even more important because the right-wing government is attempting to undermine FN support by adopting even harsher anti-immigrant laws. On February 15 over 100,000 people marched through Paris in protest against these measures. This is a magnificent step forward, which will be followed up by a demonstration against the FN conference in Strasbourg on March 29.

In the fight against the FN nothing should be neglected. We should continually denounce them, alongside supporting the struggles of immigrants and women. We need anti-fascist and anti-racist unity and more demonstrations. But all this indispensable work will count for nothing unless the left puts forward a new alternative at the political level.

We have to put forward answers to the problems of unemployment, homelessness and poverty which have driven sections of the French working class into supporting the FN. Moral appeals are not enough.

We have to find ways to resolve this issue, despite the difficulties. This is indispensable if we are going to stop the progress of the FN. This is the fourth and most important lesson. It brings into focus our own responsibilities.

# Brussels success boosts Euro-march campaign

Alan Thornett and Terry Conway

SIX HUNDRED people, over half of them unemployed, drawn from 16 participating countries attended an exciting conference in Brussels on the weekend of February 22-23 to launch the next stage of the Euro-marches. Eleven main marches are now confirmed and the first stages will start on April 14.

The conference noted that the delegation from France was smaller than it might otherwise have been due to the huge anti-racist demonstration taking place at the same time in Paris to protest the new racist laws being introduced as well as to mark their concern at the recent electoral success of the Front National.

Representatives of the Liverpool dockers spoke in the opening plenary stressing the need for an international struggle against employers who were increasingly organised at an international level with a globalised economy. They received warm applause.

Christophe Agiton from the European Secretariat of the campaign and from AC! in France explained that we were fighting for a 'Europe of full employment' in which everyone who wants to work is able to do so. If we only mobilise within our own countries any gains will be more short lived if an international campaign has more

strength.

He argued that we had to respect the ideological differences between the different strands present which meant focusing on broad demands that allowed unity to be maintained.

The importance of this approach was demonstrated throughout the weekend as discussions developed and it became clearer the diverse traditions which were participating. In itself this is already a major achievement.

The task of concentrating on our common objectives, of fighting the issue of unemployment and the myriad different forms of exclusion must not be undermined by trying to introduce issues that go beyond this already broad sweep.

## Strengthened

It was too early to discuss precisely what should happen after the final demonstration but there is a clear intention of ongoing co-ordination. The project will strengthen existing organisations and begin to put in place a network that can link them together.

Other speakers spoke of the unity that had developed in France between the organisations of the unemployed and trade unionists in struggle during the massive battles of late 1995.

Two million people in France have no income at all, and we were told of the important victory of the unemployed through the campaign

strengthen our hands in fighting back.

The workshop focused around a number of key themes which could play a unifying role - while recognising that in particular countries each would be given different emphases or expansion.

The demand for a reduction in the working week with no loss of pay must be accompanied by an increase in social spending for the provision of child care etc so that women are not pushed into the home.

The need for free public services - transport, child care provision including after school activities, school meals.

Equal pay - this being especially important where unemployment benefit is based on wage levels.

Full time rights for part time workers - opposition to the introduction of part time work where this has the effect of driving down conditions.

Rights for and autonomy within their communities of immigrant and black women.

A brother from Norway explained that the Norwegian



Christophe Agiton

of occupations of job centres at the close of last year.

A speaker from 'Droit à Logement' (Right to Housing) in France described the current struggles of the homeless and the continuity and differences with battles throughout the century.

He argued that an important focus of the campaign was the revival of use of a law introduced by De Gaulle which allows the repossession of empty buildings for use as housing. Later discussion in the housing workshop explained that similar laws existed in other European countries.

A delegation of 60 attended the conference from Britain, including Liverpool dockers, Magnet strikers and representatives of unemployed centres from across the north of England and from Scotland.



On the same wavelength: 600 delegates from 16 countries managed to make themselves understood

Others attended from trades councils and union bodies and activists from campaigns defending the welfare state, for the rights of asylum seekers and in opposition to the JSA.

Most delegates could find workshops which dealt with their special interests and involvements from anti-racism, housing, the welfare state, unemployment and the effects of European integration on women.

The British delegation organised a successful workshop on flexibility and the unions and the unemployed.

The conference confirmed that support for the marches is building rapidly across Europe and sessions on the practical organisation took it all a step further.

An impressive report was given on the Mid-June events in Amsterdam itself. Current estimates of the final demonstration are 30,000.

The French campaign expects to take 5,000, for example, and the Dutch campaign has pledged to match the numbers which come from abroad.

This is no mean promise in a country where support for the European Union has traditionally been very strong - but of late cracks are beginning to open, and the campaign is beginning to gather significant support.

The 'Committee for a Feminist Europe', part of the 'Coalition for a

Different Europe', the organisers of the counter-summit, are calling for women attending the demonstration to wear white as a sign of the continuing discrimination against women.

The counter summit itself is becoming a major event which will run from June 12 until June 16. Each day it will take as a theme a major issue involved in European integration: racism, unemployment, homelessness, an ecological Europe, women in Europe and culture.

Both those on the marches and those travelling to Amsterdam for the demonstration are invited to attend these events.

The conference heard that the European TUC had been pressured into calling a continent-wide day of action on May 28. Several speakers argued that it was vital that our campaign reached out to this initiative which will give us access to a broader layer of trade unionists.

There was a debate over the weekend (in a commission open to all delegations) on a new Euro-march manifesto submitted by the organisers which would go alongside the original Florence declaration.

In the end only part of it was agreed as an addition to Florence, the rest was submitted for further discussion by the campaigns in the various countries. The new texts will be available shortly.

## Women fighting back against Euro-austerity

Susan Moore

A LIVELY discussion took place at the Brussels conference as to a set of common demands that could unite women as part of the overall campaign and take up our specific needs.

The workshop provided a useful forum to exchange experiences and emphasised the need for more work to be done to explain why, within the common offensive against us all, women in different groups of countries are affected in different ways.

For example in France between 52-54 per cent of the unemployed are women and 13.8 per cent of women but 9.5 per cent of men are unemployed.

In Britain on the other hand 7.4 per cent of women but 11.4 per cent of men are jobless. In this sphere it seems that Britain is exceptional within the European Union.

Undoubtedly these disparate patterns are a result of the distinct patterns of work and of women's employment going back many decades - but more information would

women's movement raised the demand for a reduction in the working day - to 6 hours - rather than a reduction in the working week.

This is because large numbers of women currently work 6 hour days but because unemployment benefit is linked to wages then suffer when they are out of paid work.

Catherine from Denmark explained that women in Nordic countries have been more sceptical than their male counterparts about the European Union.

One reason for this is the fact that in most countries of the European union social insurance is linked to having a job and sometimes a full-time job. Women who are married to a man who is working gain insurance this way.

This leaves single women, women who work part-time or under the counter particularly vulnerable. In Scandinavia there has been a universal welfare policy which does not discriminate against women in this way.

The European Commission has launched a major campaign to change women's minds. Not only have they tried to use the record of



Women delegates are determined to keep profile high in campaign

the European Court, in which women have won some important victories, but also have argued that Nordic women are being selfish in not helping their more oppressed sisters in the south of Europe!

Much debate took place as to how the campaign should relate to black and immigrant women. This discussion particularly reflected the different experiences of self-organisation black communities throughout the continent. There was concern that we should not be seen to impose cultural hegemony on women from very different traditions.

Women from France explained how women had been organising separately within the 'Sans papiers' campaign and sisters from Britain talked of the need to take up the cases of women facing deportation who had also been subject to domestic violence.

Participation in the workshop certainly stimulated women from Britain who attended to begin to make more concrete plans for ensuring that our profile as women and our demands are given prominence within the campaign here.

# TUC bid to sabotage Euro-March solidarity

THE TUC has had a busy week. As well as pledging to minimise industrial disputes, they have issued a circular which aims to reverse the groundswell of support for the European March for Jobs and against Exclusion.

The Euro-March has been winning tremendous backing both from trade union organisations and unemployed centres.

That this should provoke a hostile TUC circular comes as no surprise to those who understand the craven failure of the TUC leadership to defend workers' rights and its insistence on ignoring the detrimental effect of the Maastricht convergence criteria on jobs and services.

Indeed we might have expected that the TUC sabotage would come earlier, before the Euro-march campaign had been able to build up such a head of steam.

In any event, while this intervention may sharpen political debates where the campaign for the marches is raised, with those who have illusions that the paper tiger of the Social Chapter will bring an end to all evil given new confidence, we should by no means despair.

Answering those who defend the Maastricht criteria will allow us to reach a broader audience still.

We print here the response to the TUC's circular agreed by the Euro-March campaign in Britain, which not only exposes its inaccuracies but also, more importantly, answers its political stance.

March 1st 1997  
To: John Monks,  
TUC General  
Secretary

WE WRITE regarding the advice issued by the TUC Executive to Regional TUCs, Trades Councils and unemployed centres not to support the European marches against unemployment and social exclusion, which begin across Europe in mid-April and converge at the IGC of the EC in Amsterdam in mid-June.

There appears to be a serious factual error in the advice you have issued. You say that in opposing participation in the marches you are following the lead of the European TUC who, you say, have already taken such a position.

We have been in contact with the ETUC and they say that this is not true. They have never discussed the marches let alone take a decision on them one way or another. There is a personal letter from Emilio Gabaglio saying that he feels that the ETUC should "keep our distance" from the marches. You imply an official position of opposition to the marches, which is a very different thing.

The substance of your objection to the marches however, is a far more serious matter. You say that the marches are "anti-Maastricht" and cannot be supported for that reason.

It depends what you mean by "anti-Maastricht". The basis of the campaign is not against the Maastricht Treaty as such but against the social effects of the Treaty as it exists, most importantly through the convergence criteria for the single currency (EMU) and the racist provisions of Schengen and Fortress Europe.

Within the campaign are those

who are against the Treaty in principle and those who are not. We are united in opposition to the effects of the Treaty in its present form, principally its effects on employment and the welfare state.

You will be aware of the implications of the convergence criteria. To enter the single currency, each member state must reduce its public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) to below 3% of GDP.

Once inside the single currency, each member state must maintain its PSBR below 3% permanently or face massive fines through the "Stability Pact" agreed in Dublin. It goes without saying that the only way these requirements can be met is by cutting state spending in all its forms: health, education, pensions, welfare and benefits.

In this country it means billions of pounds of cuts just to get into the single currency, more to meet its rules once inside. UNISON has estimated that this will mean the loss of 100,000 jobs.

The threat represented by the convergence criteria is not just something recognised by campaigners in Britain. Across Europe it has provoked the biggest wave of industrial action for decades. There have been general strikes or mass actions in the majority of countries of the EU directly opposed to the social effects of EMU.

The European marches directly reflect that opposition. We do not support the nationalist opposition to Maastricht as expressed by the Tory right, but neither can we allow them to set the agenda.

The convergence criteria represent a massive attack on the working class right across Europe and there needs to be a working class response right across Europe. This is reflected in the European day of action called by the ETUC on May 28th, which the Euro-marches will fully support, as well as in the Euro-marches.

Our problem with the advice you



Andrew Ward

Busy week stopping things happening: TUC General Secretary John Monks

**"You say that in opposing participation in the marches you are following the lead of the European TUC ... We have been in contact with the ETUC, and they say that they have never discussed the marches, let alone take a decision on them one way or another. ... You imply an official position of opposition to the marches, which is a very different thing."**

are giving on this issue is not just that you oppose the European marches but that you appear oblivious to the dangers involved in the convergence criteria, in fact you don't even mention them.

This is a big problem since it is hard to defend jobs and services unless you recognise where the attack is coming from. It is even harder to defend jobs and services if you are in favour of European integration and in favour of a single European currency under the conditions it is currently on offer, which seems to be the burden of TUC policy as adopted at last year's Congress.

The marches have gained wide

support in Britain and will go ahead. We call on you to reverse your decision on them; firstly because your interpretation of the position of the ETUC is wrong, and secondly because the basis of the European marches is not anti-Maastricht per se.

Most importantly the TUC should support the marches because we should all be united on the basic aims of the marches: the defence of jobs and services against unacceptable convergence criteria.

Glenn Voris

For the British Euro-marches committee

## Dockers launch new Peoples' Charter

AS WELL as marching for social justice on April 12 the dockers together with Women on the Waterfront are launching a 'People's Charter for Social Justice', which they are publishing for discussion throughout the labour movement and among all their supporters.

The Euro-march organising committee in Britain fully supports this initiative. Many of the demands raised are the same as those we want to highlight and focus on through the marches across Britain and Europe

### The Peoples Charter for Social Justice

WE, THE PEOPLE, demand social justice:

1. Immediate reinstatement with full trade union rights of the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers, the Magnet workers, the Hillingdon hospital workers and all other unjustly sacked workers.

2. The right to join a trade union, to strike, to respect picket lines and to take solidarity action. Immediate repeal of all anti-union legislation.

3. The right to work, and to job-security. Reversal of the policies of casualisation, privatisation and deregulation. Democratic planning to secure full employment. No compulsory overtime. Acknowledgement of the value of low-

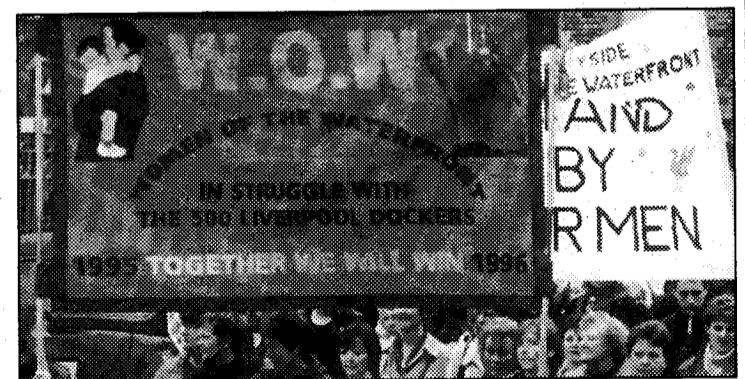
waged and unwaged work: equal pay for work of equal value.

4. The right to recreation and to assembly: repeal of the Criminal Justice Act.

5. Defence of the Welfare State. Abolition of the Job Seekers' Allowance. Free education including nursery and university provision; free health-care; adequate pensions and benefits for all. Equal rights and social provision for people with disabilities, the sick and for all minority groups.

6. The right to a home. Emergency measures to house the homeless, including occupation of vacant or under-used properties. Defence of the rights of travellers.

7. Repeal of all discriminatory legislation. Defence of the right of asylum. Equal rights for all, regardless of ethnic origin, nationality,



gender, sexuality or creed. The right of community self-defence against racist, sexist, or other violence.

8. The right to citizenship within a democracy. Abolition of the Monarchy and the House of Lords. Withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. Repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

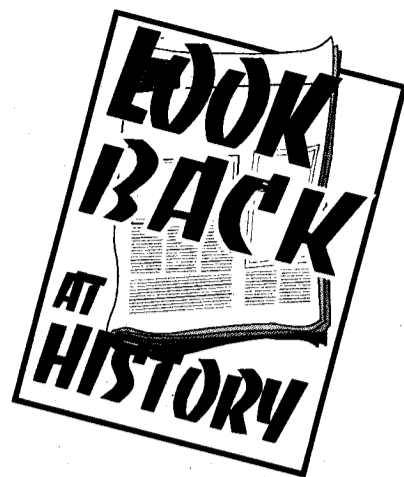
9. The right to a future for our children. Emergency action to reverse national and global pollution and devastation of the planet's resources. Action to curb the private car and road lobbies and to reclaim

our streets; implementation of an integrated public transport system. The right to clean air, water and food. Abolition of the nuclear power industry.

10. The right of workers to organise internationally to resist injustice and oppression, to reclaim the planet and to put an end to war. Abolition of the nuclear weapons industry. An end to all trade in arms and instruments of torture.

HOMES! JOBS!  
A FUTURE!

# A call to battle for women's liberation and socialism



The pamphlet International Women's Day was written in 1920 by Alexandra Kollontai as part of a campaign to teach women about the history of the working class movement and the struggle for women's equality, about the gains of 1917, how they must organise and fight to establish the new society which would guarantee their liberation.

Kollontai was the Minister of Social Welfare in the first Bolshevik government, and was the only woman to hold such a post. Born in 1872 into a wealthy family and brought up in comfort and seclusion, Kollontai nevertheless became involved in the political questions of the time.

Involved both in the international women's movement and in the organisation of working women in Russia, Kollontai had always been concerned with analysing the position of women under capitalism, their relationship to the revolutionary movement and the struggle for socialism. The oppression of women is a complex and many sided oppression, and Kollontai was therefore involved in discussing the family, the education of children, maternity and personal relationships.

Kollontai, in 1920, would probably have thought that by now life would be organised in such a way that a "Working Women's Day" would have no point. But working women have yet to win this new life. They have yet to win a world where society relieves the working woman of material cares and leaves her time and strength to take part in the life of the community.



Launching the Revolution: the demonstration of women through Petrograd in March 1917: the banner calls for support from workers and soldiers

## International Women's Day

By Alexandra Kollontai

**A militant celebration**  
Women's Day or Working Women's Day is a day of international solidarity and a day for reviewing the strength and the organisation of working women.

But this is not a special day for women alone. The 8th of March is a historic and memorable day for the workers and peasants for all the Russian workers and for the workers of the whole world. In 1917, on this day, the great February revolution broke out. It was the working women of Petersburg who began this revolution; it was they who first decided to raise the banner of opposition against the tsar and his associates. And so Working Women's Day is a double celebration for us.

### How and why was Women's Day organised?

Not very long ago, in fact, about ten years ago, the question of women's equality, and the question of whether women could take part in government alongside men was being hotly debated. The working class in capitalist countries struggled for the rights of women workers: the bourgeoisie did not want to accept these rights.

It was not in the interest of the bourgeoisie to strengthen the voice of the working class in parliament, and in every country they hindered the passing of laws that gave the vote to working women. Socialists in North America insisted on their demands for the vote for women with particular persistence.

On February 28 1907, the women socialists of the USA organised huge demonstrations and meetings all over the country, demanding political rights for working women. This was the first "Women's Day". The initiative in organising a women's day thus belongs to the working women of America.

In 1910 at the second International Conference of Socialist Working Women, Clara Zetkin brought forward the question of organising an International Working Women's Day. The Conference decided that every year, in every country, they should celebrate on the same day a Women's Day under the slogan "The vote for women will unite our strength in the struggle for socialism".

But in the last years before the war the rise in prices forced even the most peaceful housewife to take an interest in questions of politics and to protest loudly against the bourgeoisie's economy of plunder. "Housewives' uprisings" became

increasingly frequent, flaring up at different times in Austria, England, France and Germany. The working women understood that it wasn't enough to break up the stalls at the market or threaten the odd merchant; they understood that such action doesn't bring down the cost of living. You have to *change the politics* of the government.

And to achieve this, the working class has to see that the franchise is widened. It was decided to have a Women's Day in every country as a form of struggle in getting working women to vote

### The first International Day

It was decided to hold the first International Women's Day on March 19 1911. Our German comrades picked this day because of its historic importance for the German proletariat. On the March 19 in the year of the 1848 revolution, the Prussian king recognised for the first time the strength of the armed people, and gave way before the threat of a proletarian uprising. Among the many promises he made, which he later failed to keep, was the introduction of the vote for women.

Efforts were made in Germany and Austria to prepare for Women's Day. During the week before it two journals appeared: *The Vote for Women* in Germany and *Women's Day* in Austria.

The first International Women's Day took place in 1911. Its success exceeded all expectation. Germany and Austria on Working Women's Day were one seething trembling sea of women. Meetings were organised everywhere - in the small towns and even

in villages. Halls were packed so full that they had to ask male workers to give up their places to the women.

This was certainly the first show of militancy by the working women. Men stayed at home with the children for a change, and their wives, the captive house-wives, went to meetings. In Austria there was conflict with the police. During the largest street demonstration in which 50,000 were taking part, the police decided to remove the demonstrators' banners: the women workers made a stand. In the scuffle that followed, bloodshed was averted only with the help of the socialist deputies of parliament.

In 1915 International Women's Day was transferred to March 8. This date has remained the working women's day of militancy.

### Women Workers' Day in Russia

Russian working women first took part in "Working Women's Day" in 1913. This was a time of reaction when tsarism held the workers and peasants in its vice-like grip. There could be no thought of celebrating "Working Women's Day" by open demonstration.

But both the legal newspapers of the working class - the Bolsheviks' *Pravda* and the Mensheviks' *Looch* - carried articles about International Women's Day: with portraits of some of those fighting and taking part in the working women's movement, and greetings from foreign comrades such as Bebel and Zetkin.

In those bleak years meetings were forbidden. But in Petrograd, at the Kalashnikov Exchange,

those women workers who belonged to the Party organised a "Morning Teach-In on the Woman Question". Entrance was 5 kopecks.

This was an illegal meeting, but the hall was absolutely packed. Members of the Party spoke. But this animated "closed" meeting had hardly finished when the police, alarmed at such proceedings, intervened and arrested many of the speakers.

It was of great significance that the women of Russia, who lived under tsarist repression, should somehow manage to acknowledge International Women's Day. Russia was waking up and that the tsarist prisons and gallows were powerless to kill the workers' spirit of struggle and protest.

In 1914, both the workers' newspapers concerned themselves with the "Women Workers' Day" celebration. Our comrades put in a lot of effort but because of police intervention, they didn't manage to organise a demonstration. Those involved in the planning found themselves in tsarist prisons, and many were later sent to the cold North. The slogan of "struggle for the working woman's vote" had become in Russia an open call for the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy.

### Women's Day during the Imperialist war

The first World War broke out. In 1915 and 1916 "Working Women's Day" abroad was a feeble affair - left wing socialist women who shared the views of the Russian Bolshevik party tried to turn March 8th into a demonstration of working women against the war.

In 1915 only Norway managed to organise an International demonstration on women's day; representatives from Russia and neutral countries attended. There could be no thought of organising a Women's Day in Russia, for there the power of the tsarism and the military machine was unbridled.

But then came the great year of 1917. Hunger, cold and the trials of war broke the patience of the women workers and peasants of Russia.

On March 8 (February 23), Working Women's Day, they came boldly out into the streets of Petrograd. The women - some were workers, some the wives of soldiers - demanded "Bread for our children" and "The return of our husbands from the trenches".

The protest of the working women posed such a threat that even the tsarist security forces did not dare take the usual measures against the "rebels", but looked on in confusion at the stormy sea of the people's anger.

On Working Women's Day the Russian women raised the torch of proletarian revolution and set the world on fire. The February revolution began on this day.

### Our call to battle

Working Women's Day was first organised ten years ago as part of the campaign for the political equality of women and the struggle for so-

cialism.

In the Soviet Republic working women and the peasants don't need to fight for the franchise and for their civil rights. They have already won these rights. The Russian women workers and peasant women are equal citizens - in their hands is a powerful weapon to make the struggle for a better life easier - the right to vote, to take part in the Soviets and in all collective organisations.

But rights alone are not enough. We have to learn to make use of them. The right to vote is a weapon which we have to learn to master for our own benefit, and for the good of the workers' republic. In the two years of Soviet power, life itself has not been absolutely changed. We are only in the process of struggling for communism and we are surrounded by the world we have inherited from the dark and repressive past.

The shackles of the family, of housework, of prostitution, still weigh heavy upon the working woman. Working women and peasant women can only rid themselves of this situation and achieve equality in life itself, and not just in law, if they put all their energies into making Soviet Russia a truly communist society.

### The new tasks of Working Women's Day

The October revolution gave women equality with men as far as civil rights are concerned. The situation is very different in the capitalist countries where women are still over-worked and under-privileged. In these countries the voice of working women is weak and lifeless.

It is true that in various countries - in Norway, Australia, Finland and in some of the states of North America - women had won civil rights even before the war. In Germany, thirty-six women entered parliament - but not a single communist! In 1919, in England a woman was, for the first time elected a Member of Parliament. But who was she? A "lady". That means a landowner, an aristocrat. In France, too, the question has been coming up lately of extending the franchise to women.

But what use are these rights to working women in the framework of bourgeois parliaments? While the power is in the hands of the capitalists and property owners, no political rights will save the working women from the traditional position of slavery in the home and in society.

Only the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Soviet Power will save them from the world of suffering, humiliations and inequality that makes the life of the working women in capitalist countries so hard.

Working Women's Day turns from a day of struggle for the franchise into an international day of struggle for the full and absolute liberation of women, which means a struggle for the victory of the Soviets and for communism.



Andrew Ward

A job and a decent minimum wage would make a useful start

# What do women really really want?

AS ANOTHER International Women's Day approaches and the general election loom, socialists and feminists should pause for reflection .... just what DO women in the nineties want, and what do the traditional and new electoral parties offer?

Here GILL LEE draws up her own personal manifesto for women. The next issue of Socialist Outlook will look at the manifestos of various parties standing in the general election to see how they measure up...

### THE RIGHT of women to organise collectively around demands they have democratically decided on.

We need the right to organise autonomously within the trade unions and at work to discuss together what our problems are and how to resolve them.

This is hampered by laws which restrict trade union rights and by the Criminal Justice Act - they must be abolished.

We need free high quality childcare available round the clock to enable women who so wish to participate in meetings and other activities, including full time work.

Paid maternity and paternity leave with no loss of job security are also crucial.

A minimum wage would give working women can achieve some dignity in their lives and allow working men to work fewer hours and play more of a role in housework, relationships and childcare. We want full time rights for part-time workers.

Massive investment in the welfare state to improve the pay and conditions of those who work in it and the lives of all those who depend on it. For a change in the way the welfare state works so that communities who use it are more involved in running it eg for the right of people with disabilities to collectively discuss and be involved in controlling the kind of services they need.

All contraceptive, abortion and fertility treatment should be freely available on demand on the NHS. An educational system which is

anti-discriminatory in form and content. For a positive anti-sexist and anti-racist curriculum and for a full programme of sex education for boys and girls.

A massive programme of house building would allow women choice about how and with whom they live.

We need reliable, frequent public transport systems which will allow women to travel safely and without damage to the environment. This service must be easily accessible to people with disabilities and those with young children.

### Job creation

A massive scheme of job creation to give the right to work for those that want it. End the rotten social security system that aims to humiliate all forced to rely on it.

Benefit payments should be set at a level that allows people to live in dignity and the abolition of all means tested benefits especially the JSA. The end to co-habitation rules.

The right to retire at 55 for all. Restore the index linking of pensions and end discrimination against women.

Abolish all immigration controls which separate families against their will and lead to the forced

families. End state racism and the harassment of the Black community by the police. Justice for black people who are victims of crimes and an end to judicial frame-ups

Discrimination against lesbians and gay men must be ended. Abolish Clause 28, reduce the age of consent for gay men and end discrimination against lesbians for example in the provision of fertility treatment and in custody cases.

The rearing, social welfare and education of children should be seen as the responsibility of society rather than the burden of their individual parents.

Stop scapegoating young people for social problems which are not of their making. All laws which give parents property rights over their children should be abolished.

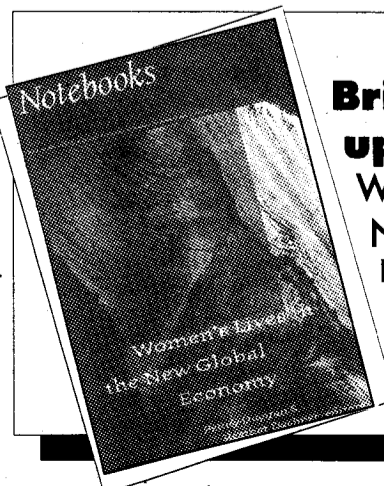
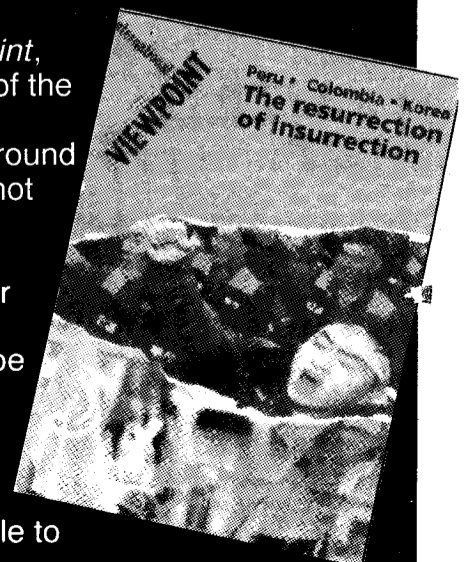
Most child abuse happens in the family - this should be recognised. There should be strict laws against abuse of children. All sex offenders should be treated to reduce the danger they pose to women and children.

Domestic violence must be treated by the police and courts in the same way as any other crime of violence.

We need centres, independent of the police, to counsel and support women and children who are victims of abuse.

## Get the facts, from around the world

International Viewpoint, monthly publication of the Fourth International, carries all the background information you cannot find in the bourgeois press. IVP's normal selling price is £2 per month, but British readers can subscribe jointly to IVP and Socialist Outlook for just £25 per year. Send your details and a cheque payable to Socialist Outlook to PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.



### Bring the picture up to date!

Women's Lives in the New Global Economy Notebook for Study and Research

£4 including postage from Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU



# It's the same the whole world over

• • •

**Women's Lives in the New Global Economy (Notebook for Study and Research), edited by Penny Duggan and Heather Dashner**  
Reviewed by Terry Conway

**THIS COLLECTION** of essays reflects the diverse reality of women's lives and the attacks on us in a series of countries from Turkey to South Africa, from India to the United States.

It is framed within an understanding that whatever those diversities the ruling class offensive has a particular impact on women and depend for its success on the continued oppression of women.

The introductory text argues that there has been a contradictory proletarianisation of women on a world scale "forcing them into the work force and at the same time using their role in the family and in society to justify job insecurity and casualisation" as well as attacks on welfare provisions.

The effects of the European Union and the Maastricht criteria in particular are increasingly familiar to women in this country. Less familiar are effects of the North American Free Trade agreement (NAFTA) which has for example challenged pre-existing environmental laws as "unfair trade practices" in a situation where toxic waste causes both cancers of women's reproductive system and severe birth defects.

But as the text explains "the formal trade blocks, with their goals of downward harmonisation" of economic and social policies to remove barriers to the free movement of capital the search for cheap labour

and the maximisation of profits simply codify and deepen trends already well under way".

Carmen Valdez Prez gives a damning account of the effect of the "maquiladora" factories on Mexico's northern borders. Half a million workers, 70 per cent of them women, work on semi-finished manufactured goods imported duty free for processing, final assembly and re-export to the US. This industry was launched from a programme in 1965 and a key aim of NAFTA agreement is to extend these conditions to the whole of Mexico.

The working day is between 12 and 14 hours. At some factories women have to present doctor's notes proving they are not pregnant and many are forced to take contraceptives including unsafe injections.

Such free trade zones are used by multinational corporations to carry out low skilled and labour intensive work throughout the Third World. The goal of the bosses is to create such zones on a broader regional basis.

Other highlights of this valuable work for me include Trupti Shah and Bina Srinivasan's piece on India in which they explain that the increased violence against women in Indian society particularly with the growth of dowry death and abortion of female foetuses is a new modern phenomena not a "return to traditional values". While such an analysis is common to many Indian socialist feminists it is not understood by many in the west.

On a different note, and closer to home, Eva Nickell tells of the death of the "Swedish model" and explains why women in the Nordic countries are more hostile to the European Union than their male counterparts.

A greater understanding that women the world over are facing similar battles to our own can only strengthen our campaigning. A timely text to read or re-read for International Women's Day.

# Has capitalism found the elixir?

Tony Smith, IIRE  
1994, £3.50, \$5.25.  
ISSN 0298-7902

REVIEWED by  
Michel Dupont,  
leading member of  
the LCR, activist in  
the ACI movement  
against  
unemployment

IN THE "NOTEBOOK" series of the Amsterdam-based International Institute for Research and Education (IIRE), Tony Smith offers us a well-documented critique of the theses that "lean production" makes it possible to overcome, in a lasting way, the contradictions between capital and labour.

This is high quality work, based on a deep familiarity with the international literature on this subject.

Tony Smith uses the conceptual tools of Marxism in a very pedagogical way, in order to show how these innovations in no way abolish the structural contradiction between capital and labour. Instead, "lean production" re-creates these contradictions, in a new form.

The result is a remarkably clear and well-documented text, which reviews contemporary developments. It is highly recommended, and stimulating reading, and an excellent synthesis for the non-specialised reader.

The problem is that lean production theory can be demolished using the critique which Marxists make against capital, whatever the historical period. Curiously, Smith seems to have missed the target. Nowadays there are very few writers who claim that lean production makes it possible to go beyond capitalism.

The thesis we ought to be attacking is the suggestion that lean production could make it possible to launch a new period of long term capitalist growth.

Although Smith mentions Ernest Mandel in his bibliography, he doesn't refer to the Belgian Marxist's work on long waves of boom and slump.

Indeed, Smith avoids the very concept of long waves. He explicitly rejects all "regulationist" approaches.

This is a common attitude among excessively "orthodox" Marxists.

Frightened of suggesting that a reformist alternative might be possible, they don't want to even consider the possibility that capitalism could be capable of regenerating itself and rebuilding viable social structures which will permit continued accumulation.

Since he refuses to ask the question, Smith can hardly convince us that the answer is no. This obviously weakens the impact of his critique.

Could lean production be the support for a new long wave of expansion?

Capitalism has regained a historically high average rate of profit. A new model for the extraction of surplus value is being introduced. In that it reinforces control over la-



"Capitalist Bastard, Capitalist Bastard..."

bour while simultaneously partially liberating labour's capacity for initiative, this model is more efficient than Fordism. So, given all this, why is there no new dynamic of durable growth?

To answer questions like these, you need to stop concentrating on the sphere of production, and look at the global configuration of the new regimes of industrial and financial accumulation, and the relationship between private accumulation and the public sphere.

As you do so, you begin to realise that neo-liberalism, even when reinforced by the most innovative forms of lean production, does not offer the possibility of credible, long term growth.

On the contrary, the persistence of neo-liberalism goes hand in hand with the aggravation of social contradictions and conflicts.

But to prove this to people we need to go beyond generalities about the capitalist mode of production, however true they are, and bite into the question of specific modes of capitalist production, in their historical context.

Let's hope that, in his future work, Tony Smith touches on this.

## Tony Smith

### replies...

**I am very grateful to Michel Dupont for his generous review. I would like to acknowledge that much of the credit for whatever is of worth in the monograph goes to comrades working of the front lines of the struggles against lean production, especially those associated with the newsletter Labor Notes.**

Certain criticisms made in the review are well taken. The monograph does not examine the global dynamics of contemporary capitalism, the political strategy of neo-liberalism, nor the role of the financial sector. My only defence is that it was not possible to talk about everything in a relatively short work.

I am less sure about other objections. Dupont asserts that I "missed the target" because no one today believes lean production goes beyond capitalism. But as he elsewhere notes, my target was not the claim that lean production transcends capitalism, but the quite different thesis that lean production is

a form of capitalism with the potential to abolish many antagonisms between capital and labour, capital and consumers, and among units of capital. And this thesis is still being proclaimed in the popular and scholarly business press, the bourgeois academic community, and in factories and offices where lean production is being introduced.

Dupont claims that my account is incompatible with long wave theory, and lumps me with "orthodox" Marxists who have difficulty appreciating capitalism's ability to regenerate. This is puzzling, given statements such as the following in the Notebook: "The epoch of Fordism appears to be coming to a close. We now appear to be in the midst of a transitional period, in which a new variant of capitalism is gradually taking shape."

It is completely consistent to accept criticisms of the regulationist school and still hold that capitalism develops in long waves in which technologies and forms of social organisation holding sway in one wave give way to new technologies and social forms.

The most important issue raised in the review is whether lean production could in principle be part of a solution to low growth rates. In a manner perhaps in tension with his criticism of "orthodox" Marxists, Dupont denies that this could be the case.

I am not so sure a definitive judgement is yet possible. As Ernest Mandel argued, the start of an expansionary wave does not depend simply upon the availability of new technologies and forms of social organisation; a myriad of contingent factors play a role as well, especially those connected to class struggle.

Among these contingencies is the extent to which the ideology of lean production infects the working class and its allies. This is why I thought it worthwhile to establish that the promises proclaimed by advocates of lean production can only be fulfilled in socialism.

But Dupont is correct to insist that this is part of a much bigger story, and that much remains to be done in response to the restructuring of capital.

**\* To order Lean Production: A Capitalist Utopia, send a cheque for £4.00 to Outlook International, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. (Michel Dupont's review was of the French edition)**

# Get Clinton's hands off Cuba!

By John Lister

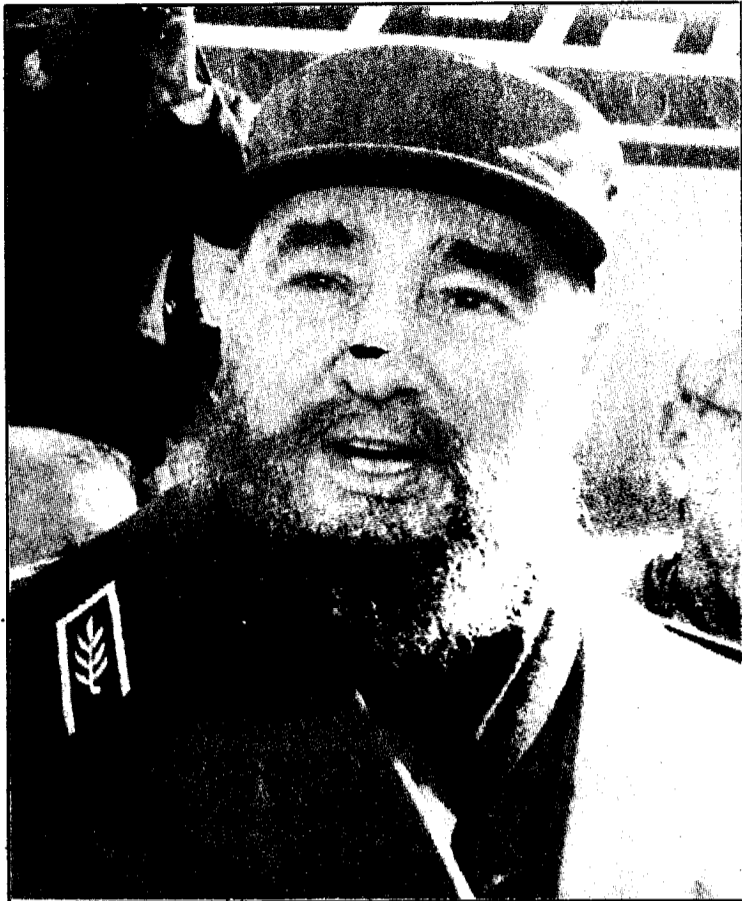
OVER \$1 million was reportedly raised at the highly-publicised dinner in Havana to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Cuba's elite Cohiba brand cigar.

But far more important for Fidel Castro's beleaguered regime was the fact that as many as 200 top US business leaders defied intensifying threats of legal retribution from the State Department and accepted invitations to attend the dinner, making another high-profile breach in the American effort to isolate Cuba and starve it into submission.

The gesture comes at a crucial time for US President Clinton who is under pressure from the Republican-led Congress and many of his own virulently anti-communist Democrats to implement a new escalation in the trade embargo, first imposed in the early 1960s in response to Castro's sweeping nationalisation of US-owned industries. For the last five years the United Nations General Assembly has each year declared its opposition to the US embargo.

The Helms-Burton Act, authorising private action through the US courts against foreign companies doing business in Cuba, was passed into law in March of 1996 with Clinton's support.

The legislation gives the President the discretion to delay its full implementation for six months: but it was due to come into full force at the end of February, amid a storm of angry opposition from the USA's main trading partners and competitors.



After 38 years, Castro is still US public enemy number one!

The resistance to Helms-Burton has been led by the European Union, but also supported by the USA's partners in the North American Free Trade Area, Canada and Mexico.

A furious Canadian government, annoyed at being press-ganged into

fighting the USA's battles, has threatened to open up the floodgates of litigation by obstructing the implementation of US court judgements and allowing retaliatory lawsuits against US companies.

The EU has called for the World Trade Organisation to set up a dis-

pute panel to rule on the legality of the US measures, with the near-certainty that the Helms-Burton law (described by the *Financial Times* as "silly and indefensible") would be thrown out.

The US, recognising its weakness, has refused to co-operate with the WTO panel, claiming that its vendetta against Cuba is necessary for US national security!

The worry among top European business chiefs is that if the world's most powerful nation cocks a snook at the fledgling WTO, the entire structure set up out of the years of GATT negotiations could rapidly collapse.

But at the same time, increasing sectors of European capital have been attracted towards investment in Cuba, bringing a significant turnaround in the country's economic fortunes in 1996, after years of deprivation as a result of the loss of subsidies and favourable trade deals with the former USSR and Eastern Europe. Cuba's two-way trade plunged from \$13.5 billion in 1989 to \$3.3 billion in 1994. The loss of hard currency, coupled with the intensified US blockade, brought dire shortages of medicines and medical supplies.

But from 1993, Cuba resorted to a number of economic changes which opened up the possibility of joint ventures, and in 1996 it declared that it would create low-tariff free trade zones. European and Canadian firms are not happy to surrender guaranteed profits from tourism and other ventures in order to assist the USA's rabidly ideological onslaught on Castro's regime.

Clinton's aim, reinforced by Helms-Burton, is to isolate Cuba diplomatically, politically and economically. Indeed Section 104 of Helms-Burton makes clear that the US is opposed to Cuba being allowed access to the International Monetary Fund or any other financial institutions for at least six years, with strict conditions attached to any grants or loans.

The US objective goes much further than toppling Fidel Castro and imposing a new regime favourable to the USA. The administration floats the idea of making certain grants and loans available to a post-Castro government to "train journalists", fund "democratic political parties", fund "long-term advisors", and assist in "transforming" Cuba's armed forces to make them acceptable to the USA. Clinton's document is effectively a manifesto for the recolonisation of Cuba.

The obvious divisions that have opened up among the ranks of the world's capitalists offer short-term hope that Cuba can survive this fresh attack on its independence.

But the cringing reluctance of the British and EU governments to confront their rival imperialists in Washington underlines that the only long-term defence of the gains of the Cuban revolution hang on the solidarity and support of the working class internationally.

British trade unions should be demanding that Tony Blair, allegedly so close to Bill Clinton, step in and tell him to get his hands off the Cuban people, scrap Helms-Burton and lift the 35-year old blockade.

# Dayton deal no solution for Bosnia

Geoff Ryan

FIFTEEN months after the Dayton Agreements supposedly brought peace to Bosnia the changes are far from dramatic.

Of course there is no longer warfare on anything like the scale prior to Dayton. For most Bosnians that is, no doubt, to be welcomed.

Milosevic has also abandoned the Bosnian Serbs as a means to getting UN sanctions against Serbia lifted.

Radovan Karadzic no longer holds any official positions within the Bosnian Serb Republic. Although Dayton clearly stated that no-one indicted at the Hague for war crimes

could hold office it still took over six months before he stepped down. His replacement, Biljana Plavsic is an associate of the mass murderer Arkan and was closely allied to Karadzic. Hardly a significant improvement.

Ratko Mladic has also been pushed out of command of the Bosnian Serb army while Nikola Koljevic, the architect of the destruction of Sarajevo, committed suicide in January.

Both Karadzic and Mladic are supposed to be arrested on sight by NATO's S-For (formerly I-For) troops. They appear to have little difficulty in moving around, including passing through S-For checkpoints.

By and large NATO troops simply ensure they keep as far away as possible from them.

Nor have NATO troops done much to allow people to return to their homes - another aspect of Dayton. In Sarajevo they stood by whilst Serb nationalists burned down houses to encourage Serbs to leave the city for the Bosnian Serb Republic.

## Mostar

In Mostar right-wing Croats continue to expel Muslims from the western half of the city. Early in February over 100 elderly Muslims were driven from their homes, watched by NATO troops. The only protection S-For offered was to Muslims wanting to collect a few belongings from their home before fleeing to the east Mostar.

In Prijedor 97 Muslim families applied to return to their homes. They gave their names to the international officials, who passed them on to the police. Within 48 hours every one of the houses had been destroyed. At least four members of the Prijedor police have been indicted for war crimes by the Hague tribunal but continue to hold prominent positions.

NATO has now postponed for a year a decision on whether Brcko should be part of the Croat-Muslim Federation or the Bosnian Serb Republic.

Brcko was one of the first towns to be 'ethnically cleansed' by paramilitaries from Serbia at the start of the war in Bosnia. Muslim owned houses have continued to be destroyed though no-one has ever been apprehended. The council, courts and police are all in Serb

hands.

Fifteen months after Dayton it is clear that the only parts of the Agreements that are being implemented are those which provided for the division of Bosnia into the Muslim-Croat and Serb entities and the creation of a Zone of Separation between the two armies. All those parts which were supposed to bring about the reunification of the country are being ignored.

The effect of this is to increase the hold of nationalist currents amongst all three nations. The results of the September elections clearly demonstrate this - leaving aside all the problems of how genuinely democratic they were. The three main nationalist parties were clear winners in elections for the Presidency and for the House of Representatives.

In the Federation the non-nationalist slate of former Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic won only 7.14 per cent of votes for the House of Representatives. Silajdzic did somewhat better in the vote for the Bosniac section of the Presidency, getting 13.62 per cent.

Silajdzic's vote is even more disappointing since he was at least allowed to campaign. In those parts of Bosnia under the control of the former Bosnian government opposition candidates were allowed access to TV and radio and an independent press exists.

In the Bosnian Serb Republic the nationalist SDS displayed Karadzic's portrait on its campaign material - despite this contravening electoral regulations.

The small opposition parties had virtually no access to the media. A similar situation existed in Herceg-

Bosna where the official Bosnian Croat media did not even sign the electoral Rules and Regulations and made no effort to give anyone other than the HDZ access.

The only other television information came from the HDZ run state service in Croatia. On the eve of the elections it ran a documentary on 'the dangers of Islamic fundamentalism'.

## Poor vote

Despite the relatively poor vote for non-nationalist candidates the very different conditions in which the election was fought in the Sarajevo controlled part of the Federation, Herceg-Bosna and the Serb Republic show that the three main nationalist parties are not the same. For all its faults the largely Muslim SDA does allow opposition forces to organise; the SDS and HDZ clearly do not.

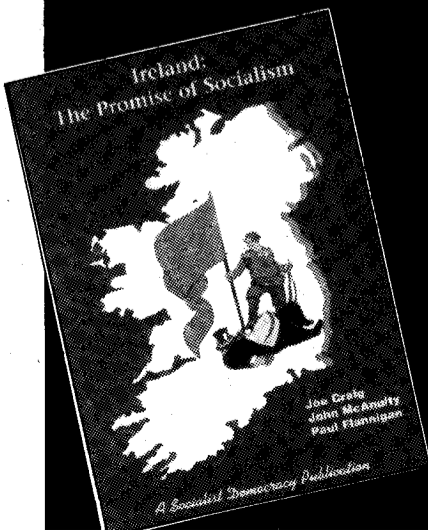
At the time of the Dayton Agreements *Socialist Outlook* warned that the creation of the two 'entities' would strengthen, not weaken, those who want to carve up Bosnia. The election results, the clashes over Mostar, Prijedor, Sarajevo, Brcko and elsewhere confirm that analysis.

Nevertheless, there is still hope. Despite a small number of attacks on Serbs who continue to live in the Croat-Muslim Federation, the majority of people in the federation still want to recreate a single, multi-national Bosnian state. The vote for the SDA was not a vote for an Islamic state.

Unfortunately the longer Bosnia remains partitioned the more difficult that will be.

## Ireland: The promise of socialism

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# Psychology and Marxism – strange bedfellows or a combination for change?

## It's psychology, Jim, but not as we know it ...

A review of 'Psychology and Society, Radical Theory and Practice', Edited by Ian Parker and Russell Spears (Pluto Press, 1996).

By Rod Marshall

PSYCHOLOGY and Marxism do not mix.

This is a commonly held view of many who have come into contact with psychology in many of its forms. For one thing, it is a science that is historically committed to the study of the individual human being and which eschews collective explanations or solutions.

Psychological theory and practice have been often trumpeted by the far right (eg. Eysenck's work on the connection between race and IQ) or have been used as heavy handed instruments of social control (eg. in the use of harmful drugs to contain psychiatric patients).

Freud, although seen by some as a liberal in breaking taboos surrounding mental illness or sexuality, also talked of gay people as being "victims of this one fatal perversion". The Institute for Psychoanalysis does not allow gay people to train as psychotherapists even today.

Against this generally reactionary grain *Psychology and Society* cuts with a blade sharpened on many decades of work by psychologists on the left. In this one volume, edited by radical psychologists Ian Parker and Russell Spears, are many and varied attempts to show that a radical, emancipatory psychology is possible, that a mix of the unmixables can be useful for both psychology and marxism.

Martin Roiser and Carla Willig from Thames Valley University highlight the history of working class psychology from the time of Marx and Engels onwards.

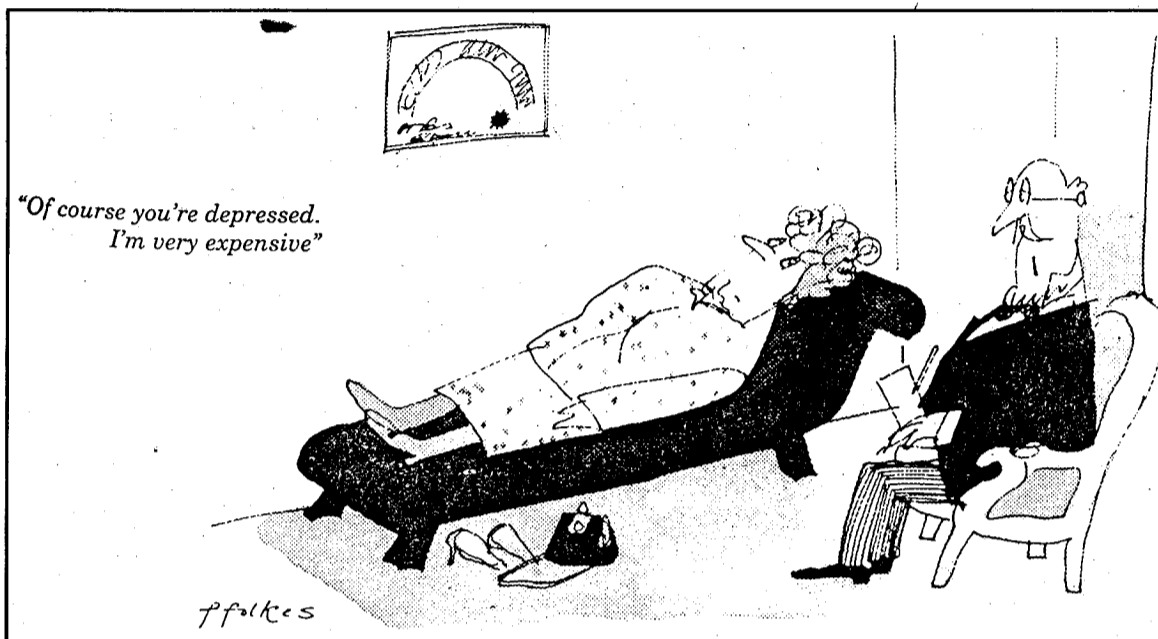
### Working class

This rich vein of pro-working class psychology was highlighted at the 1996 Conference of the Social Psychology Section of the British Psychology Society in a special session on Marxism and Psychology.

Research by Engels and Marx, for example, into the working conditions of the working class (eg. in *The Condition of the Working Class in England*) included a questionnaire for French workers entitled the *Enquete Ouvriere*.

Although most of the 100 questions were not "psychological", Roiser and Willig show how this links with Marx and Engel's work on class consciousness and alienation. This work was taken up and given an extra psychological dimension in the work of Kautsky and Bernstein and it was in Germany that the radical Frankfurt School was formed in 1922.

This School is best known for the work of Fromm, Marcuse, Weiss



and Adorno and includes work on the causes of fascism both at the level of the state and at the psychological level in terms of the individual 'authoritarian' personality (Adorno et al 1951).

The initial intent of the Frankfurt School was to explain the failures of German Social Democracy and this was done largely along Marxist lines, mainly untainted by Stalinism.

In portraying late capitalism as the cause of authoritarian personalities Fromm (in the famous *Fear of Freedom*) drew perhaps overly pessimistic conclusions.

Nonetheless the work on the authoritarian personality by Adorno et al in the USA became a highly influential in examining the nature and causes of prejudice, albeit one which tended to reinforce notions of individuality by focusing on personality differences.

Radical Psychology reappeared strongly in Germany in the 1960s, centring in the Free University of Berlin and led by the influential Klaus Holzkamp. This movement,

An important issue today is the extent to which the work of post-structuralist thinkers, like Foucault, can be used positively in developing a truly radical psychology (see Gane 1986, Shotter & Parker 1990). This issue is dealt with both directly and indirectly in *Psychology and Society* (for example the chapter by Kum-Kum Bhavnani and Angela Davis on strategies for women prisoners).

The truly remarkable aspect of *Psychology & Society* is its diversity. In nineteen chapters there are many more than nineteen psychological perspectives and more than nineteen types of Marxism to match them!

### New versions

It is not surprising that some of the versions of both would not be recognised as such by some of those who define themselves as either Marxists or Psychologists.

This is not a criticism, but is instead indicative of the many brave attempts to fuse Psychology and Marxism together found within the book.

**In nineteen chapters there are many more than nineteen psychological perspectives and more than nineteen types of Marxism to match them!**

as part of student uprisings across Europe in the 1960s, made a huge contribution in renewing a Critical Psychology, largely through rejuvenating the application of Marxism to Psychology. Sadly little of this work is in the curriculum of British undergraduate Psychology degrees.

More recently, the rise of post-modernist thought during the 1980s has allowed Critical Psychology to regain a foothold and to grow again after a barren period in the 1970s when many radical psychologists were forced out of universities in Britain. The stranglehold of reductionism, in the form of cognitive psychology, became ever tighter.

Ulman, for his part, prefers, as a "behaviourologist", to see selection (there is less mention of the "natural") as part of a "special dialectical law of the movement of living matter, from that of a single cell to a social formation composed of millions of people".

It is worth wondering how dialectical such a relationship might be if neither the cell nor the social formation is aware of the function of the other (which is still the case for brain function where location for function is still a mystery. Prozac works because of a chemical change, but what does this chemical change actually represent in human, social terms?).

After all, dialectical logic does not imply a dual determinism of the wooden variety that is favoured by empiricists. Ulman celebrates how "selectionism" has removed the focus from the internal cognitive states (such as memory and processing) but it is worrying that in doing so the concept of subjectivity may have been lost altogether.

The positive aspects of Ulman's approach involve the abandonment of Cartesian dualisms such as between the physical and mental and the Kantian interpretation claim which is critically discussed in the first chapter by Edward Reed (things in themselves can never be known, only there interpreted appearance. Hence the need for a cognitive system to do the interpreting).

These problems appear to bedevil the attempt by RD Hinzelwood to show possible convergences between psychoanalysis and Marxism. These centre firstly on the Marxist notion of alienation and Freudian ideas of depersonalisation.

Hinzelwood argues that the notion of surplus value (based on the circulation of workers' productive activities in the form of commodities) is similar to notions of social groups involving aspects of personal identity that are also being "circu-

lated".

This second convergence relies on the supposed dualism between the social and individual that has plagued attempts at a radical social psychology and also reinforces the internal – external dualism found in much psychology. While Hinzelwood has some fascinating insights into possible overlaps between Freudian and Marxist thought, the chapter is weakened by the fact that the anti-psychiatry movement of the 1960s, led by RD Laing, is completely omitted.

This movement is still present today (including in Laing's Philadelphia Association) and it has made real attempts to bring together aspects of Marxist and psychoanalytic thought (albeit with an existentialist thrust to it).

Almost inevitably it is possible to accuse Parker and Spears of leaving out certain critical traditions within Psychology.

Despite covering a vast terrain, it is a shame that Laing's contribution is not featured and that room was not found for the work of Tajfel and Turner on explaining the basis for prejudice and stereotyping.

The book does contain some excellent chapters on the contributions psychologists can make for social change (by Ben Bradley and Jane Selby) and on empowerment (by Mark Burton and Carolyn Kagan). There is even a chapter by Ian Parker on the contribution to a revolutionary psychology by Trotsky!

Parker and Spears arranged for Ernest Mandel to write a concluding chapter for *Psychology and Society*, a contribution which was halted by his untimely death in July 1995. The book is dedicated to Mandel and is a fitting testament to him.

The book gives no overall answer to the question of whether a marxist psychology and I suspect that any such Psychology, bereft of its formal logic and bourgeois conceptions would be psychology, maybe, but not as we now know it.

### Radical

Until that day and as a step to getting there, Steve Reicher concludes *Psychology and Society* by discussing the ways in which radical psychologists are already fighting back now both in developing theory and in the practical aspects of their work.

The organisation "Politics, Psychology and Resistance" is committed to fighting the oppressive uses of psychology and aims to "promote the development and dissemination of emancipatory psychologies in opposition to oppressive practices of all kinds".

These are aims that all Marxists should support in remembering that, in overthrowing capitalism we aim to create "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all" (Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*).



Such a limited rebellion by the newest female role models

# Spicing up old conservative values

By Kathryn Marshall

**INTERNATIONAL Women's Day this year coincides with international success for the Spice Girls. Their album and singles soar to the top of the charts, and discos and clubs up and down the country throb to their beat.**

They have recently achieved success in the US, and received two Brit awards, notably ones voted for by 'the people', not music industry moguls.

On the face of it, the Spice Girls phenomenon seems very positive for young women, that of an all-female band who display confidence and control of their lives. The music is loud, bouncy and virtually impossible to ignore. Their energy for life is enticing.

What lies behind this, though? Take the Spice Girls' slogan, "Girl Power". Does this "power" mean anything very much other than power to make noise and to assert yourself within the present system of relationships and families?

Their latest single, "Mama", endorses features of the family that are unhelpful and oppressive to young women, and to mothers. The words have the young women apologising for all the times they "crossed the line" and hurt their mothers by going to places they shouldn't have.

There's nothing wrong with mother and daughter having positive and strong relationships. But this song forges such a relationship

by having the daughter become subordinate to the mother.

It does nothing either to free the mother from her sole role as "carer" in the family. The Spice Girls end up trying to protect these roles from any attacks.

You might think young women want some freedom, and so do their mothers, they say, but actually we rather like things the way they are if we're being honest and soul-searching about it.

Their political statements corroborate this view of their music. Firstly, they were declared as Thatcherites by various newspapers. This has more recently been watered down to two of them being fans of Thatcher and believing her to have been the first "Spice Girl", while the rest either think they have no politics or a vague grasp of anarchy.

The idea that Thatcher was the first Spice Girl makes considerable sense. Her position as first woman Prime Minister in Britain, and her outspoken and assertive manner, led some to herald her as a feminist, or at least a successful woman.

But Thatcher did not support women's rights. She felt she had all the rights *she* needed to speak out in favour of the status quo, of women's oppression.

The Spice Girls also tap into this way of thinking. It is fine and easy for them to support the current organisation of the family, or indeed, of all relationships within it, be-



cause they have attained, through the music business, a temporary feeling of freedom from these constraints.

They are in a position now to be choosy about their partners and to be apologetic to their mothers, knowing full well that they will not be forced back into a relationship that can hurt and trap both parties.

There is a crucial difference, though, and one for the Spice Girls to be very wary of. Thatcher constructed much of her own career and became the puppeteer in control of many others. The Spice Girls are the latest in a long line of bands constructed largely by men in the music business to make money.

"Girl groups" in the fifties and

sixties were examples of this. Their careers were short-lived and we know little of what has happened to them since.

The former Shirelles talked last year of how one of their songs was just handed over to the all-male band, Manfred Mann, who had considerable success with it. The Shirelles were never acknowledged. All this was decided by backroom manoeuvres.

The Spice Girls were brought together to convey an image and an ideology not decided by them. Where will they be in the years to come, once the society and the system of relationships that they are endorsing have had their way with their careers?

And what of all their fans, longing for women to be really challenging and assertive in the music business? So often, the fans' perception of the band is way in advance of the band themselves.

It is necessary to promote music that is currently on the fringes, where women take control of their music, alongside their male colleagues, such as techno and dance music where new sounds are mixed and created from what has existed in the past.

Such music may not always be so easy on the ears, but in its very difference and its existence in a space quite other than that inhabited by the Spice Girls, it is at the very least a marker for change.

## Leeds Memorial Meeting for Bob Pennington

# "A bookie's runner – but a hell of a recruiter"

Bob Wood

"Our memorial is not a ritual remembrance of the past but a persistent challenge to face up to the demands inherent in our own share of a shared task" – Istvan Meszaros

IN EARLY February, more than thirty people gathered in Leeds for a memorial meeting in honour of the late Bob Pennington. John Archer spoke about Bob's period in Leeds in the fifties and Keith Sinclair took up the story in later years.

Archer explained that Bob had been a colourful, energetic and ingenious character, devoted to building the Fourth International. After a spell in the RAF, and then working in a coal-mine, Bob had come into contact with Trotskyism in Blackpool in 1949. He joined the Revolutionary Communist Party just before it broke up.

He moved to Leeds in 1951 and worked there intermittently until 1957. Bob was active in the Harehills Ward Labour Party. John recounted how, at a meeting in the

local park, Aneurin Bevan had defended the Chinese Revolution. "Has the Stock Exchange been abolished? Have they got rid of the landlords?" The audience had no alternative but to agree that these were positive achievements.

Although American imperialism had restabilised after the war, Bob (like many others) was confident that the revolutionary epoch had not ended and that eventually the FI would gain a mass base.

### 1953 split

At the time of the 1953 split in the Fourth International, Bob had helped to ensure that the majority of the Trotskyist "Club", supported James Cannon and the American SWP, and all those forces that went on to form the International Committee.

Using a striking image, John suggested that "1953 is in this room" and, later in the meeting, tentatively floated the idea that one of the legacies of the split was a lack of clarity in handling alliances.

Bob played an important role in the early and mid-fifties, helping to lay the basis of the Socialist Labour League and recruiting many to its

ranks.

He eventually parted company with the SLL in 1960. In John's view there were no obvious political reasons for this. Although he had fallen out with the "deeply insecure" Healy and had not been paid his wages as a full-time worker for the organisation, it was likely that there were also other reasons.

John recounted how Bob had lived in the Archer's attic for a while and had been very good to their two sons. Bob had once made a study of the *Daily Express* to learn how it could get across its ideas so clearly. Bob had combined what John described as Anglo-Saxon scepticism with a certain impatience with theory. He had a good sense of practicalities.

Keith Sinclair spoke first about Bob's assessment of the dockers' breakaway from the TGWU in the fifties to the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers Union (NASDU – the blue union), with which Bob had been closely involved.

In a 1960 article, Bob had taken an equal distance from the bureaucracies of both the TGWU and the NASDU, and argued only for the

building of rank-and-file committees.

But by the eighties his attitude to the blue union had changed. Noting in interview in 1982 that what became the SLL had been very cautious about the move to the blue, he concluded that nevertheless it had been right to leave the TGWU at that stage.

But when the 1955 NASDU recognition strike was defeated a few years later, he considered in retrospect that the dockers should have returned to the TGWU.

After a brief flirtation with the Solidarity group, Bob was linked by the mid-sixties with the International Group, the precursor of the International Marxist Group.

### Reassessment

He moved away from the positions he had held in the fifties. An article published in 1986 – "The fall and fall of Gerry Healy" – critically reassessed that tradition, writing of the opportunism, catastrophism, hyperactivity and anti-intellectualism that characterised Healy's organisations.

In the early eighties, during a period of serious factional struggle in

the Socialist League (successor to the IMG) he was one of the leaders of the tendency which emphasised the centrality of events in the Labour Party.

He always stressed the key importance of the labour movement, of the trade unions and the Labour Party.

Bob was a militant who made a contribution over a long period, with a leadership role stretching over decades. He continued to be active until the end of the eighties, and many of his articles in later years stand the test of time.

From the floor, Len Hodgson remembered Bob as a man of tremendous courage. He played cards and was well known in his local pub. At one time he had worked as a bookie's runner for a Leeds councillor. He had been a "hell of a recruiter".

The meeting was a fitting tribute to a fine socialist, with comrades mainly from Leeds, but also from further afield. After the meeting ended, most stayed to renew old acquaintances and exchange reminiscences of the man they had come to honour.

# McCarthy - Witchfinder General

**Brian Gardener looks at the background to Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible'.**

'The Crucible' was first produced in 1953. At the time the United States was in the grip of powerful anti-communist hysteria. This period is often summed up by the phrase 'McCarthyism' but appearing centre-stage only in 1950, the senator for Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy, was something of a latecomer to the drama.

By the end of the war, the US was in the throes of an unprecedented economic boom. However with eleven million servicemen due to return, if the country was to avoid another serious depression foreign markets had to open up to US trade and investment.

After suffering some twenty million casualties, the Soviet Union was in no state to go to war. Yet in order to justify its profitable military expansion, the US very much needed a new enemy.

The years following the war saw the U.S. experience the greatest number of strikes in its history. For American capitalists the enemy was not only without but within.

So began the Cold War both at home and abroad.

Truman and the Democratic Party's adoption of anti-communism was in many ways a knee-jerk reaction to the rhetoric of their Republican opponents. In 1946 the Republicans had been out of power for fourteen years. With few other weapons in their armoury they fell back on slurs that the Democrat administration was soft on communism.

In 1947, the Republican dominated Congress passed the Taft-Hartley act which outlawed strikes by government employees, banned the closed shop and required union leaders to swear they were not communists.

Truman established a federal loyalty programme and the Attor-



Art imitating life: a scene from the original production of *The Crucible* in 1953

ney General was authorised to compile a list of tainted organisations. Two thousand were sacked as a result. Evidence against an employee could amount merely to the existence of texts on Marxism on their bookshelves!

The administration established a 'Zeal for Democracy' in schools. The teaching of anti-communism became an important part of the curriculum.

For the members of Congress's House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), the communist conspiracy pervaded every area of American life. Many prostrated themselves before it, confessing to their former sins and naming their erstwhile comrades.

The actions of the committee gave free rein to others to carry out purges. Companies carried out their own investigations of employees and trade unions rid their organisations of suspected communists before the HUAC could get to them.

Many lost their livelihoods. Some suffered the worse fates of imprisonment and death.

In 1948, the committee's new boy, Richard Nixon, grilled the former State Department official, Alger Hiss after it was alleged that he led a secret communist cell inside the Roosevelt administration of the 1930s. Hiss denied the charges but was later sentenced to five years in prison having been convicted of perjury on oath before the committee.

In 1949, when the Soviet Union exploded an atomic bomb, the prevailing view was that they could not possibly have developed such a capability without having been passed secret information. In 1951, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were convicted of giving away atomic secrets and were finally executed in June, 1953.

The hysteria reached its zenith in February, 1950 when the previously obscure senator, Joe McCarthy made a speech claiming that 205 State Department employees were communists. Never able to substantiate the charge, McCarthy changed his story several times over.

Addicted to his own publicity,

McCarthy slung mud at any convenient target. If it didn't stick he quickly moved on to something else.

He was Witchfinder General to the many respectable and moderate Republicans who balked at getting their hands too dirty. His downfall came in 1954 when he made the mistake of investigating the army.

The military establishment counter-attacked with an accusation that he had sought preferential treatment for a recently drafted member off his staff. In the televised hearings he appeared both arrogant and deranged. Later that year the senate censured him for "conduct ... unbecoming a member of the United States Senate".

In 1947, before the onset of McCarthy the HUAC had investigated the motion picture industry. The Hollywood Ten refused to be interrogated on the grounds that such questions from a governmental body violated the first amendment of the constitution.

Every one of them was jailed for contempt of Congress and the studio bosses ensured that most of them were never to work in the film industry again.

In the fifties Hollywood increasingly injected anti-communist propaganda into its output. When as a young screenwriter Arthur Miller was pressured to turn the gangster villains into communists in his story about the Brooklyn waterfront, he withdrew the script. The following day the producer sent him a wire saying, "It's interesting how the minute we try to make the script pro-American, you pull out."

'Timebends', Miller's autobiography, describes his evolving feelings on the parallels between the events in Salem in 1692 and the contemporary political situation.

He says: "At first I rejected the idea of a play on the subject ... But gradually over weeks, a living connection between myself and Salem, and between Salem and myself was made in my mind... the

hearings in Washington were profoundly and even avowedly ritualistic... The main point was that the accuser make public confession, damn his confederates as well as his Devil master, and guarantee his sterling new allegiance by breaking disgusting old vows - whereupon he was let loose to re-join the society of extremely decent people."

Miller himself always doubted his own political conviction. Even as a young man who toyed with the idea of joining the Lincoln Brigade and fighting on the republican side in the Spanish civil war, he rejected the communist orthodoxy of the time, seeing himself as first and foremost a writer.

As perhaps the greatest American dramatist of the century, one of his enduring achievements has been in plays such as 'Death of a Salesman' and 'All My Sons' to expose the tragedy of the many people who buy into the American capitalist dream.

Some three years after the first production of 'The Crucible', Miller was himself summoned to testify before the committee. By that time, after the demise of McCarthy, anti-communism was not the political force which it once had been.

Perhaps recognising this and needing all the publicity they could get, the members of the committee seemed to attach more importance to being photographed with Miller's then wife, Marilyn Monroe, than they did to interrogating the playwright himself.

Pausing for a moment to examine the frame, it is tempting to think that throughout the late forties and into the fifties the House Un-American Activities Committee had been trying to evolve its own script of the time and could never decide whether the treatment should be comedy or farce, tragedy or melodrama.

In the closing moments there is a return to farce but whatever the style the effect is the same. The vast majority of the dissenters had been destroyed.

## New film still hits the target

**WITH A NEW screen treatment by the author, Nicholas Hytner's film of 'The Crucible' is conclusive proof that the forty-four year-old piece is more than simply a metaphor for McCarthyism.**

Certainly the events of the late forties and fifties in the states were the catalyst for the piece but in no way does Miller twist the historical facts of the seventeenth century to crudely represent those of the twentieth.

The theme is analogous to several other twentieth century events, not all of which had arisen when Miller wrote it - the Stalinist show trials of the nineteen thirties and Mao's purges during the cultural revolution for example. Perhaps this is one reason why 'The Crucible' is the most performed of Miller's works.

When the play was first shown some charged that any analogy with contemporary events was specious. The difference between witches and



44 years on - but still exciting: the new film version of *The Crucible*

communists was that whereas communism existed, witchcraft was a fantasy. But as with anti-communism in 1950's America, the charge of being in league with the devil trapped large numbers of those who dared to dissent from the dominant ideology of the society.

In the community portrayed by Miller it is clear that the distribution of wealth and property is undergoing a radical transformation. Once a society in which there was a considerable amount of equality, the society now has outcasts such as the vagrant Sarah Good - an easy target for the

accusers.

The whipped-up hysteria of Devil worship serves a nascent capitalist class extremely well. Landowner Thomas Putnam is more than willing to join in the accusations against Giles Correy, a farmer with whom he has dispute over land.

### Conspiracy

Those who oppose the hysteria are charged themselves with membership of the Satanic conspiracy. John Proctor's confrontation of those who accuse his wife and others leads eventually to an accusation against his own person. When at the film's climax he denies the existence of God, we see that the values he was taught to believe in have collapsed. For his accusers this is the final confirmation of his guilt.

Hytner opens up the film beyond the confines of the symbolic stage set. It is impressive however that we are still clearly within the parameters of a world which has definite boundaries. We see only its limits

and not what is beyond it. This physical narrowness act as a metaphor for the insular system of belief.

The film has two powerful central performances - from Daniel Day Lewis as the tortured Proctor and Paul Schofield as Judge Danforth, a man whose wrestling with his conscience can be detected in every small grimace and inflection of the voice. Both actors exude a kind of superior naturalism with material which with lesser performers could easily degenerate into melodrama.

A mere transference of the play to the screen would not have worked and would have resulted in actors giving very stagey performances.

Miller's new screenplay and Hytner's direction have combined to achieve an exciting and dramatic piece of cinema, the re-telling of a story which is as relevant now as it was almost half a century ago.

# Euro-state ahead?

I welcome John Laurence's criticism of my review of International Socialism. He rightly says that the SWP recognises the expansion of world trade.

I think the SWP still ignores two important things. Firstly, a "triad" - three opposing economic and political zones around the EU, the USA and Japan - is carving up the world market. Secondly, a single-currency "super state" will be established as the core of the European single market. These things are not cast in stone. However, the SWP is not responding to these.

The SWP should recognise this "triad", which increasingly rests on large multinational corporations. The revenues of the biggest 200 multinationals now equal one-quarter of the world gross product. They were built up by active political interventions by capitalist governments over 20 years. Circulating capital has rapidly concentrated in the "triad": 56 per cent of the world total was there in 1982; it was around 89 per cent in 1989.

The SWP must also admit that the EU is now a real world power. The European single market continually expands: the Czech republic and Slovenia will probably be next.

The World Trade Organisation negotiations showed that the EU is a real giant over world prices and the terms of trade. SWP leader Chris Harman still writes that such talk is "in the realm of fantasy".

John's account of British difficulties over European integration is quite true. However, that won't prevent a "hard core" of states using the Euro and unifying still further.

Labour will probably keep the UK outside the first round of the Euro. Nothing much may come out of the current intergovernmental conference in Amsterdam. Even so, only a massive renewal of Europe's working class organisations can prevent the establishment of that "hard core".

Today, the odds are against that radical renewal happening

In the short term. In order to change those odds, the Fourth International and the CGT in France are building the Euro-Marches. Shouldn't the SWP's comrades build them too?

Duncan Chapple,  
London N4



## FEEDBACK

Send us your letters on any topic, to PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. Letters over 400 words may have to be edited for length.

## It's glocal, not global!

Please note the following inaccuracies which crept into the edited version of my letter (February Outlook) on Duncan Chapple's review of Chris Harman's Globalisation article.

"...While European ones with smaller home markets are more "globalised" should read "glocalised". This wasn't a typo.

The point was intended to show that the Harman article recognised that there was an emerging European economic bloc, based mainly on France and Germany, but also the advanced European states like Belgium and Holland.

I wrote that "The economic policies of Thatcherism have produced a condition of 'weak cohesion' in the British economy". This was turned into gobbledegook as "economic politics".

I wrote that "Such solutions include local and industry wide strikes against cuts and services and the key sectors of manufacturing should be publicly owned and policies directed at the nationalisation of financial institutions".

This was again altered wrongly. While I could have expressed this more clearly, my point was that strikes against cuts are happening now, whereas nationalisations will require a struggle to rearm the labour movement politically.

Otherwise, I think you represented my letter fairly and in depth.

It is very important to develop a precise position on these issues for practical reasons. For example, on February 1 there was a very large meeting on Maastricht organised by the Lambertists at Central Hall with Benn, Corbyn, Alf Lomas, Bob Crow, Jimmy Nolan and Geoff Martin.

Probably 65 per cent of the audience was French, but they stole a march on the British left. Amongst their slogans were "For a people's Europe" and "No to a Single Currency".

I think such slogans need debating, along with the issue of exactly how the left relates to right wing Eurosceptics and differentiates itself from them.

John Laurence



The higher education dispute involved many more than just teaching staff

# Seeing a victory as a sell-out?

There are problems with the article headed 'Higher Education workers must reject degrading offer' in February's paper.

The offer, which has been recommended by all 8 unions, and so far formally accepted by unions representing non-teaching staff, gives 2.9% to non-manual staff, and 3.9% to manuals for this bargaining year, backdated to the various settlement dates for each bargaining group.

For the next bargaining year, starting very soon, the offer is 2.9% for non-manuals, and 3.4% for non-manuals - or the March RPI (plus .5% for manuals) - whichever is the greater.

This is nearly double the original "final" offer, and is entirely due to what the article correctly calls the 'historic' national strike by all the unions last November. It is much better than the stupid offer made just before Xmas which was also a 2-year deal, but forgot about backdating!

Importantly the offer agrees to maintain the national negotiating machinery on conditions of service, which the employers had said they intended to scrap.

The offer represents a victory for staff, the vast majority of whom either have agreed or will agree to accept it. The fact that it is weighted towards the low-paid is also a victory.

It would be absurd to seriously propose rejecting it. Obviously the offer comes nowhere near the huge amount required to restore the value of the pay of many sections of staff to what it was 10 years ago and more.

But this was never on the agenda, and would need massive injections of cash from government, as would ending the deterioration of higher education in general.

The offer allows staff to move on to campaigning for better funding and against attempts to step up the rate of exploitation, with the confidence gained from a

victory through militant action.

The attitude expressed in the article could not unite activists, and would leave them and us standing on the sidelines.

Other criticisms of the article are that it seems to be written from a purely teaching angle, with no idea of what was going on amongst non-teaching staff. The article does not spell out a goal to struggle for - what offer would be acceptable to Paul Urwin?

And crucially, though it should not necessarily be mentioned publicly, there was no relish among the collective membership for more strike action. It may have been possible to have had another united strike, but not to plan an escalating program.

Localised actions were increasingly being discussed; but across large groups of staff these have a demobilising effect, are long-term, and do not involve all members.

Mike Pixton and Andy Kilmister, Oxford.

## WHAT'S ON

**March**

Sat 2  
Keep the link campaign organising meeting, 11a.m.-2p.m., Red Bus Club, 121 Essex Street, London EC2A 4EJ

Monday 12  
Public meeting organised by Groups Out Movement: "The media and Ireland" - a discussion of the representation of Irish history and politics by Robert Rime. Speakers: Cahal McLaughlin and Bev Lailcock (film-makers) 7.30 Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London

Sat 15  
Welfare State Network conference "Say No to Workfare! Scrap the JSA!" 11a.m.-5p.m., Students Union, Manchester Metropolitan University, Oxford Rd, Manchester.

Sunday 16: Benefit for Dockers, London Palladium

**Sat 22 Dockers' demonstration (Liverpool)**

**April**

Sat 5  
Campaign Groups steering committee, 1p.m. Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Road, London WC1

Sat 12  
March for Justice, 12 noon, Central London

**May**

10-14 British legs of Euro-march

Sat 31  
Labour Left conference, London Welsh Centre, 157 Grays Inn Road, London WC1, 10.30a.m.-5p.m.

**June**

Sat 14 - Amsterdam demonstration

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## Education campaigners link up to demand

# Money! Money! Money!



*The message is coming over loud and clear from these Oxford protesters*

# Will Labour CUT school funding?



DESPITE the seemingly endless mantra from Tony Blair that Labour's priorities are "Education, education, education", there is no sign so far that they are prepared to come up with the necessary cash to tackle a mounting crisis.

Gordon Brown's announcement that a Labour government would stick to the spending limits imposed by the Tories in the 1996 budget means that Labour is set to push through disastrous cuts in local government finance in 1998/9 and 1999/0.

Kenneth Clarke mapped out plans for local authority spending to increase by just 1.2% in each

year, compared with projected inflation of 3%. To make matters worse, local authority capital funds are set for a cut of 9% in 1998/9 and a further 1.3% cut in 1999/0.

This issue will be brought to the forefront in this vital pre-election period by a concerted joint campaign for increased funds for education being mounted by teaching unions, campaigns and pressure groups.

Organised by Fight Against Cuts in Education (FACE) National Education Week (see page 8) has set out to put local and national politicians of all parties under pressure to make schools and

colleges a genuine financial priority.

It takes place in the context of another round of brutal cuts in local government spending, which is threatening more teaching jobs as well as a further increase in the backlog of maintenance in our crumbling schools. Those who vote Labour in the election have a right to demand a real change after the Tories are defeated.

The education lobby; which has done more than almost anything else to undermine the credibility of the Tories in their "middle England" heartlands, must lead the charge in the fight for progress.