

# SOCIALIST

## ORGANISER

### Support the Khola Mayekiso tour

Khola Mayekiso, wife of South African metalworkers' leader Moses Mayekiso, is on a speaking tour of Britain.

Khola will be talking about the trial of Moses and four others who have been charged with treason for their part in the struggle in Johannesburg's Alexandra Township.

The trial is of vital importance for the South African and the international workers' movements. If Moses and his comrades are jailed, then the apartheid state will have won an important victory.

Support Khola's tour and the international campaign for Moses' release. For details of meetings, see page 2

# 25 to hang in apartheid frame-up

The apartheid state is set to hang 25 people in the biggest legal frame-up in South African history. The Uppington 25 (26 if you include one of the accused who doesn't face the hangman's noose) are all faced with the same charge of "Common Purpose" which was used against the Sharpeville Six.

Their only crime is to have been in the same place as a policeman who was killed after police opened fire on a peaceful meeting called to protest against higher rents and police patrols in Paballelo township in November 1985.

And many of the defendants were not within a mile of the killing!

The police just seized people at random, who were later 'identified' by hooded witnesses. The defendants have been beaten, and an elderly woman in her sixties has been forced to sleep on a painfully thin mattress and refuse the right to see her doctor.

Most of the defendants have been in prison since April 1988 after an 18 month hearing. The accused are aged between 21 and 64. The youngest, Xoliswa Dube, was 17 at the time of her arrest. She has since given birth to a baby girl whom she has called Innocentia.

All of the defendants' dependents are in dire financial need. But little support has come from the usual sources of prisoner aid, such as the South African Council of Churches. And although the trial has received extensive coverage in the South African press, little or nothing has yet been done in Britain.

It would be criminal for the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain to ignore this case. The Uppington 26 should be at the centre of the international campaign against apartheid.

Currently the 26's lawyers are in court pleading extenuation and mitigation of the sentencing. When this phase of the legal process is over, it will be essential to mount the strongest possible campaign between then and the appeal against the sentence.

Support the following resolution: "This organisation notes with alarm the case of the Uppington 26 the largest group ever to face the gallows in South Africa. They have been convicted on the same charge as the Sharpeville 6. We call on Anti-Apartheid and South Africa the Imprisoned Society to launch a campaign like that which saved the



The apartheid state is making black workers pay for the township uprisings. Photo: Maris Zmi (Reflex)

6 from execution behind the Uppington 26".

Letters of protest should be sent to:

The Minister of Law and Order, Union Building, Pretoria, South Africa.

For more information about the campaign in support of the Uppington 26, write to: The Farm Worker, c/o

SACHED, 5 Church Street Mowbray, Cape Town, South Africa.



# Why Greece's jails are filling up with capitalists

Ian Swindale reports from Greece

With elections now less than four months away the political crisis in Greece continues unabated. At the centre of the crisis remains the Coscotas scandal. Coscotas, it will be remembered, bought the Bank of Crete and then embezzled it of some 30 billion drachmas.

The PASOK (ruling party) majority on the Parliamentary fact-finding committee investigating the scandal refused to call witnesses demanded by opposition parties, refused to send a delegation to America to question Coscotas (who is in jail awaiting extradition proceedings) and finally voted to proceed immediately to preparing its report.

This provoked the withdrawal of all the opposition parties from the committee and widespread accusations that the government was trying to cover up the scandal and protect leading members of PASOK and the government.

Eventually Coscotas himself said that he wanted to testify to the committee, so after twice voting not to go to America, the PASOK majority has changed its mind and a delegation is now preparing to leave for America for three days of questioning in a Boston courtroom.

In the meantime, an Athens newspaper published what it claimed was a letter from Coscotas to the Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, dated 28 October 1988, in which Coscotas informed the Prime Minister that the investigating authorities were getting closer to discovering the scandal and offering advice on how they should proceed.

The government denies ever having received the letter, which, with its "Dear Boss, what shall I do now tone", is acutely embarrassing for Papandreou.

Other evidence offered to the Parliamentary committee by the editor of Ethnos — the paper which first campaigned to expose Coscotas — seems to suggest that in his quest to attract foreign capital to Greece — a personal crusade of Papandreou — he was willing to turn a blind eye to the serious questions raised about Coscotas.

The next blow suffered by the government came when a close friend of Papandreou, George Louvaris, was charged with receiving stolen goods after a bodyguard of Coscotas testified to the public prosecutor that he had driven Coscotas to Louvaris' house and had seen Coscotas take a 'Pampers' box full of 5,000 drachma notes into the house.

The Coscotas scandal is threatening the positions of many top people in state enterprises. First of all, many state enterprises deposited large amounts of money in the Bank of Crete because, in its heyday, it offered a higher rate of interest than other banks. But in a number of cases the extra interest is suspected of finding its way into personal accounts of financial directors of these enterprises.

One top manager of the Greek Post Office has been remanded in custody charged with arranging to deposit Post Office money in the Bank of Crete with an undeclared rate of interest. Part of the interest finally paid by the Bank of Crete is alleged to have found its way into an account in his wife's name.

More serious still, however, is the fact that when the Bank of Crete began to run into liquidity problems last autumn a number of state and semi-state enterprises made large interest-free deposits in the Bank to the detriment of their organisa-

tions.

This emerged from the Bank of Greece investigation into the Bank of Crete and on the basis of these findings charges have been laid against top managers of 16 state enterprises including OTE (the phone company), ELTA (the Post Office), DEI (the electricity board), Olympic Airways and others.

Some of them have in turn sought the prosecution of the Bank of Greece investigator, Chalikias, for making the accusations, and the public prosecutors involved in the case have been accused by the eccentric head of OTE, Theofanis Tombras, and by a junior government minister of serving the political requirements of the Conservative 'New Democracy' party.

As if one major scandal wasn't enough, a second, potentially more serious scandal emerged just before Christmas. Deputy Defence Minister Stathis Yiotas resigned from the government and issued a statement containing a number of serious allegations which are currently being investigated by the public prosecutor.

It emerged that two state-owned arms companies PYRCAL and EVO had been involved in the illegal sale of arms to the governments of Paraguay and South Africa as well as to the warring governments of Iran and Iraq.

It was also alleged that millions of dollars had been paid to foreign



Chemical workers protest against the PASOK government

arms companies to smooth the way for this trade.

Stamatis Kabanis, former President of EVO, a Canadian Greek who came to Athens to take over EVO in the early '80s, has been charged and remanded in custody while investigations continue into the scandal.

It is ironic that after eight years of 'socialist' government during which nothing remotely resembling a socialist policy has been introduc-

ed, the jails of Greece are slowly being filled with capitalists.

Apart from Coscotas himself, Argyris Salierelis, the businessman whose private jet was used by Coscotas to flee to America, remains in custody. The vice-president of the Bank of Crete, P. Vakalis, has also been remanded in custody and two directors of PYRCAL have also been jailed while allegations against them are investigated.

The response of Papandreou and PASOK is to accuse the opposition parties of scandal mongering because they have no alternative policies to offer the Greek people in the elections. But the whole mood in Greece is that the crisis will only be resolved by the elections in June and that in the meantime the country is effectively without a properly functioning government.

Next week: the political parties and the elections.



BTR strikers perform a play about the struggle, 'The Long March'

## Busting the union-buster?

### WORLD BRIEFS

Frank Lorenzo, boss of the Western world's biggest airline and union-buster who makes Rupert Murdoch look like a kindly old gentleman, may get his come-uppance.

All flights have been halted on the Eastern Airlines subsidiary of his Texas Air corporation. Pilots have refused to cross the picket lines of striking mechanics and baggage handlers.

The mechanics' union has withdrawn its plans to picket other airlines and railways after a court order, but pilots on other airlines are beginning a work-to-rule.

The dispute began because Lorenzo wanted to halve the mechanics' wages. He achieved the same thing at his Continental Airlines subsidiary in 1983 by declaring the company bankrupt and tearing up all union agreements.

Three million unemployed? Nightmarish. 250 million unemployed? Unimaginable.

Yet it's possible in China over the next ten years. The shift to a more free-market economy has set a vast army of displaced peasants looking for work.

In Canton about thirty thousand homeless people are camping in the railway station. Another 10,000 job-hunters arrive in the city each day.

We don't have any freedom of speech or any freedom of publication, and there's no freedom of the press," says Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of Burma's main opposition party.

Martial law also bans any public gatherings of more than five people. Yet the country's military rulers say they are restoring democracy, and promise elections in May 1990.

It's all a show to get foreign aid restored. The military have however relaxed the tight administrative regulation of the economy in force since 1962, and moved to a more free-market system.

Last week black South African trade unionists engaged in the long running battle with British multinational BTR had an important boost.

The Supreme Court has squashed an earlier Industrial Court ruling which said the company was justified in sacking nearly 1,000 workers after a strike for union recognition.

The Industrial Court deputy president who made the ruling had "misapplied himself" because at the same time as sitting on the BTR case he had been giving talks to an industrial relations symposium organised by the firm that acts as BTR's industrial relations consultants!

This means that the whole BTR case will now have to go back to the Industrial Court for a new hearing.

BTR strikers and their supporters plan to picket the BTR shareholders' AGM this April in London.

## Khola Mayekiso tour

8th March: Merseyside TURC, Hardman Street, Liverpool. 7.30pm

9th March: TUC Women's Conference, Blackpool.

11-13 March: Glasgow (and STUC international forum, Edinburgh).

14 March: Newcastle-upon-Tyne. TUC North region.

15th March: Newcastle Polytechnic.

16th March: TUC Yorkshire and Humber region.

17th March: public meeting Sheffield.

18th March: public meeting Barnsley.

18th March: TUC East Midlands region.

19th March: Nottingham International Community Centre, Mansfield

Rd 1.15pm and Derby Indian Community Centre 7.30pm.

20-21st March: TUC West Midlands region.

22-23 March: TUC East Anglia region.

24-25 March: NUT Conference.

27-29 March: Wales and South West TUC regions.

29th March-1st April: London area (South East region TUC) including

30th March public meeting, Beth Town Hall, Brixton.

2 April: Depart for USA and Ireland.

For details of meetings, phone NUMSA UK on 0926 315220 or TUC 01 636 4030 or Terry Bell (Friends of Moses Mayekiso) 086 038 0543.

## Palestine picket

Campaign for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (CIPP) supporters joined in a picket of the Wilbraham Road synagogue in Manchester last Monday, 6th, when the Israeli ambassador came for a question and answer session with members of the Union of Jewish Students.

Inside, the ambassador came out with the same old clichés — Israel will never talk to the PLO, the Intifada is an act of

terrorism, etc. CIPP supporters made the point that prominent Israelis are advocating a dialogue with the PLO, but the ambassador refused to respond.

Towards the end, a young left-wing Zionist tried to give the ambassador four red carnations, each symbolising a hundred of the four hundred Palestinians killed since the beginning of the uprising, but was shouted down from the platform.

Nevertheless, CIPP managed to make its presence felt with a leaflet which generated some discussion.

## Northampton organises

### POLL TAX

By Pat Markey

About 70 people met at Northampton's Guildhall recently, for the inaugural meeting of the Northampton Anti-Poll Tax Union.

The local branch of the Socialist Workers' Party should take credit for

most of the organising and mobilising. There were no church worthies and precious few Labour councillors present. Northampton has a Tory council, but two of the Labour councillors who were present did their best to scupper the whole event.

It was left to a Socialist Organiser supporter to propose the best ideas on how to take the campaign forward: get a contact list together, elect a small co-ordinating committee to organise the next meeting to contact Labour Party wards, trade union branches, tenants associations, community groups, student unions, and to ask these organisations for support and donations.



# Yugoslavia: the socialist alternative

## EDITORIAL

**W**hat is going on in Yugoslavia? Last week saw the end of a week-long general strike in the autonomous province of Kosovo, against Serbian chauvinism which has been growing over the past year.

1500 zinc miners occupied their pit, students staged sit-ins in support, shopkeepers and transport workers brought towns to a standstill.

The federal authorities secured an end to the strike by agreeing to the removal of three Serbian 'stooges' from the local administration. But now it seems that the three officials are to be reinstated.

Within a few hours of the end of the strike the Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, addressed a rally in Belgrade attended by 500,000 Serbs, promising "no surrender".

The state is now conducting a severe clampdown on the ethnic Albanians. 800 shopkeepers have had charges brought against them for closing their shops in support of the miners.

Three leading ethnic Albanian officials have been detained for their part in the protests. The state has 30 days in which to conduct investigations and bring charges.

It is likely that they will be charged with "counter-revolutionary" activity, endangering the country's social order — a crime carrying a minimum 10 year jail sentence, and a maximum of death.

The military are conducting exercises in the countryside surrounding Kosovo's capital, Pristina, and are in a state of "battle readiness". The commander of the army corps there has said "we cannot and we shall not allow anyone to play a game with the destiny of Yugoslavia." Military rule in Kosovo is a real possibility.

The events in Kosovo are not just part of an isolated regional conflict — they are a symptom of far more fundamental problems in Yugoslav society.

Yugoslavia has been a pioneer of "market socialism" since the 1950s. Today it has rocketing inflation, 30% unemployment in some areas, and a huge foreign debt. Ethnic divisions in society are heightened by regional economic inequalities — Kosovo is the poorest part of the country, and the south is generally worse off and less economically developed than the north.

The bureaucrats' attempts to manage the crisis have meant a debt-rescheduling agreement with the IMF, a severe austerity package and attempts to centralise the economy, and reduce regional autonomy.

In Slovenia, Yugoslavia's most prosperous and western-oriented republic, some people want to cut the region adrift from Yugoslavia and find a new home in Western Europe. Yugoslavia's market experiment has failed and the result is complete political breakdown, open splits between different regional Communist Parties, and communal violence.



Albanian miners in Kosovo after a stay-down strike

The only solid, centralised national institution in Yugoslavia is the Serbian-dominated military — and it looks increasingly likely that they will step into the breach if the political and economic situation deteriorates much further.

The events in Yugoslavia and the current situation in Hungary, show the failure of "market socialism". The alternative to bureaucratic tyranny and economic stagnation in Eastern Europe is not to introduce the discipline of the market, but for the working class to organise for its own solution — full political and economic democracy, and a society based on the needs of the producers, rather than on the interests of profit or of a bureaucratic elite.

## Avoiding illegality? Or avoiding a fight?

**I**f you made £13 million by putting some spare money you had knocking around into a sure-fire City swindle, you'd be pretty pleased with yourself.

But for Hammersmith and Fulham council it's all ending in tears and outraged Tory denunciations.

The Tories are being utterly hypocritical. The party of the City slickers has no right to condemn a council trying to plug the gaps left in its budget by the government's cuts.

Tory councils have indulged in far more speculation in the stock market and have lost money, and haven't been 'told off', never mind threatened with surcharge. The District Auditor, hot in pursuit of scandalous waste, hasn't even caught up with Westminster Council for their '5p a cemetery' land sales.

But there is something wrong with what Hammersmith and Fulham have done.

Since 1985 when Labour councils ducked out of the fight against rate-capping and the cuts this brought upon them, they've told Labour activists again and again that it would be made to do anything illegal.

Yet they have done a lot of things that proved illegal: delaying setting rates, unauthorised use of capital receipts, failure to pay interest on 'capitalised revenue' and now the possible illegality of interest rates.

All these devices have been as illegal as a fight against the government, a fight which would involve refusing to increase rates, increase rents or make cuts. What the Labour councils have avoided and shunned is not illegality, but struggle.

We might well defend the Labour councils' 'right to fiddle', but we'd rather they fought back and defended the communities they were elected to serve.

## PRESS GANG

### Rushdie rats break cover

By Jim Denham

**I**t had to happen: you could almost see it coming; the rats have begun to break cover. For the first month or so of what has become known as the 'Rushdie Affair', the editorials and letters columns of the press (especially the 'quality' press) were dominated by voices raised in defence of Rushdie.

It has to be said that not all Rushdie's champions (eg. the Murdoch papers) have exactly exemplary credentials on the free speech issue themselves. But at least everyone agreed that any suggestion of banning books (let alone threatening the lives of their authors) simply because religious fundamentalists find them disagreeable, is intolerable.

Peregrine Worsthorne in the *Sunday Telegraph* was the first to break the consensus. In a characteristically perverse editorial (largely devoted to gloating over the confusions that the affair had forced upon sections of the 'liberal literati' and the 'multi-cultural lobby'), Worsthorne concluded that perhaps there was a case for "curbing pens".

Since then a motley and unattractive crew of fainthearts, crackpots, cynics and reactionaries has emerged in the pages of the national press. Few, if any, of this inglorious brigade, have gone so far as to support banning the 'Satanic Verses' — let alone bumping off its author. But their bleatings make pretty nauseating reading nonetheless.

John Berger in the *Guardian*, suggested that Rushdie should now voluntarily cease further publication of the book. This would not compromise the principle of free speech, of course: it would simply be a sensible response to the suffering and loss of life that the book (not, you note, religious leaders or politicians) had caused.

All too predictably, there were *Guardian* readers ready to write in supporting this proposal. Meanwhile, over at the *Times*, a letter from Roald Dahl accused Rushdie of being a "dangerous opportunist" who had deliberately engineered the row in order to boost sales of his "indifferent book".

No doubt the Ayatollah Khomeini is really in the pay of Penguin's PR department. Mr Dahl's wacky letter was closely followed by another, from the Chief Rabbi Jakobovits, suggesting that all books that "inflame the feelings or beliefs" of any section of society should be banned. The Chief Rabbi says, however, that he did not support calls for the murder of Mr Rushdie.

Worse was to come: "Perhaps the real debate," wrote Auberon Waugh in the *Spectator*, "is not so much whether Rushdie should be executed for having insulted the Prophet Mohammed, but just how much we should exert ourselves, as deeply stained white imperialists, to protect him from his own people."

This peculiarly unpleasant line of argument was continued by Bernard Levin in his *Times* column last Saturday. Apparently outraged by a speech in defence of Rushdie, given by Norman Mailer in New York recently, Levin asks: what exactly Mailer meant by urging writers to be "willing to suffer, even die, for our ideals." I would have thought, in the context of the death threat now hanging over Rushdie, it was fairly obvious what Mailer meant, even if he pitched it a little melodramatically. But no, objects our witty columnist: "I can hardly mean that if Mr Rushdie is killed, Mr Mailer and his fellow writer will be willing to be buried along with him like Cetawayo's wives. Nor, surely that they would at once start writing books calculated to give mortal affront to Muslims, and thus put themselves in to the same danger as Mr Rushdie is in now. Nor, I take it, that they should grow wispy beards and paint themselves pale brown."

Now that Geoffrey Howe and M Thatcher seem to have woken up to the fact that the 'Satanic Verses' contain quite a lot of criticisms of the present British government (though it does not compare present-day Britain to Nazi Germany as Howe claims) they too have started making strange bleating noises about how "offensive" the book is. In this atmosphere we can expect more displays of cowardice, hypocrisy as thinly veiled racism in the press as the Rushdie ratpack breaks cover.

Timothy Garton Ash put it quite well in the *Independent* last Friday: "Wat out for 'the curious silences', the weak words — and worse."

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

Karl Marx  
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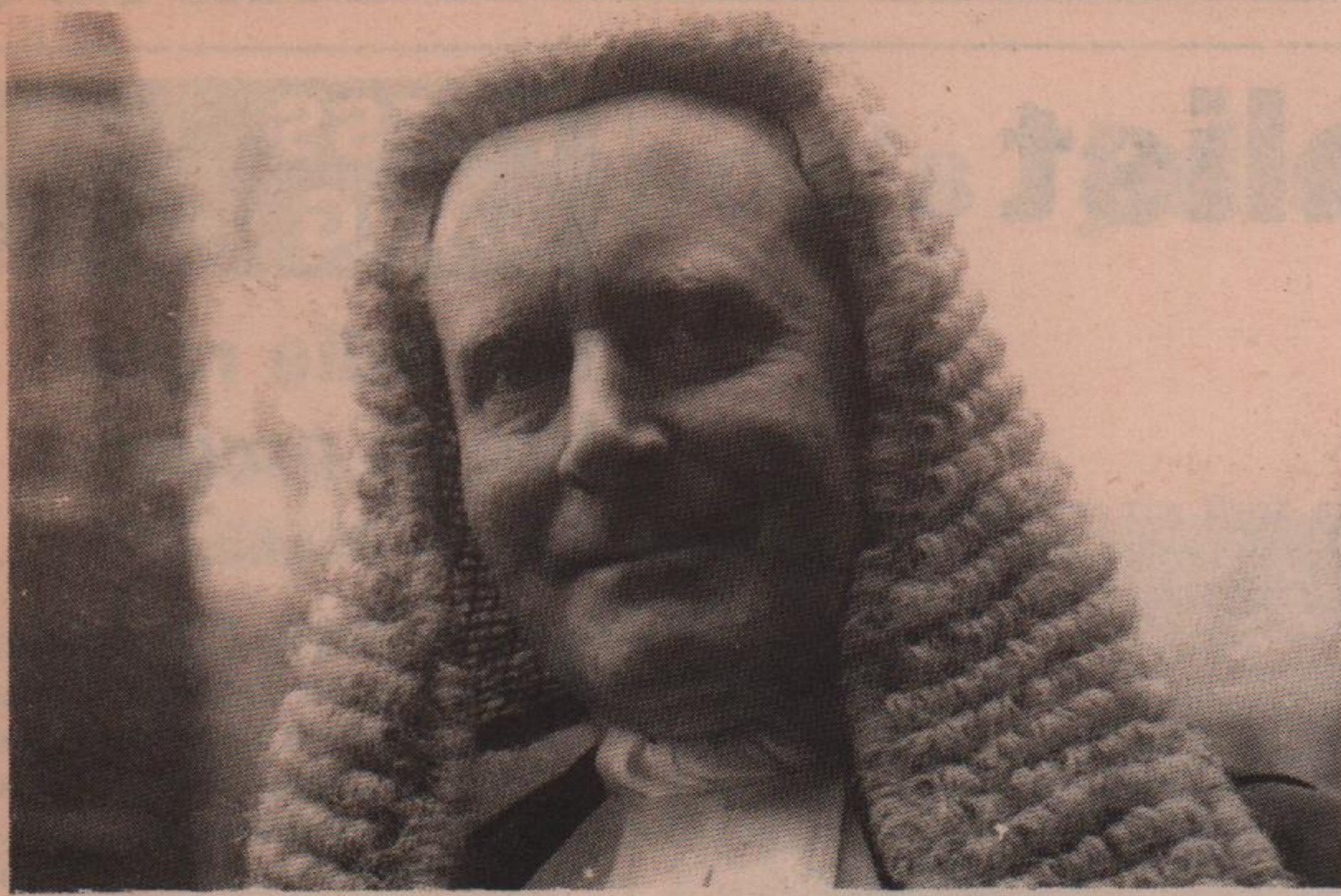
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## Racist judges

### GRAFFITI

A senior judge has been reported to the Commission for Racial Equality after making an after-dinner speech in which he twice referred to black people as "nig-nogs".

Several guests at the dinner described the comments made by Sir James Miskin QC, the senior Old Bailey judge, as "totally unacceptable".

One guest, Michael Pritchett, has written to Miskin, and sent copies of the letter to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Lord Chancellor. The Lord Chancellor has also demanded an explanation.

Miskin, clearly embarrassed that his comments have become public, has said that it was a "silly expression" and he "regretted" having said it.

During the speech Miskin also called for the return of capital punishment for premeditated murder, attacked the parole system, and called for an end to the right to silence for all people once charged.

Miskin apparently concluded his speech with comments about "murderous Sikhs" involved in a case he was hearing at the time.

Black people are clearly not going to get a fair hearing from this judge. A report by the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NACRO) published last week found that nearly one in ten black youths faces jail by the age of 21 — double the proportion of white youth. Not surprising if they are at the mercy of racist bigots like Miskin.

There are, apparently, moves underway to combat race bias in the judicial system. Any review could start by sacking Miskin and his ilk.

Hooyay Henrys and Henriettas attending this year's Henley Regatta have been warned to be careful with their waterside frolics.

The River Thames has been severely polluted by overflowing sewers, and anyone falling in the river is at risk of developing the fatal Weil's disease, which is carried in rats' urine.

I suppose it's not the best way of getting rid of the ruling class but...

EEC auditors have uncovered a massive racket involving farmers, meat dealers and distributors.

Over the past eight years around £17.25 billion has been swindled out of the EEC, by abuse of the Common

### Agricultural Policy.

Common swindles included selling goods, then claiming they had been destroyed, in order to claim compensation and exporting beef to countries with zero-refund rates, then claiming that the beef had, in fact, been exported to countries such as Yugoslavia or Egypt with high refund rates.

In Naples the Mafia made £80 million a year in olive oil subsidies — the olive groves did not even exist.

The EEC are tightening up monitoring procedures in order to prevent such abuses. But clearly they are not going to attack the biggest swindle of all — keeping billions of pounds worth of food off the market in order to keep prices artificially high, whilst millions starve.

Polytechnic directors have entered the debate around the government's student loans plans, arguing that employers should pay back half of any loan taken out by a graduate who comes to work for them.

The Committee of Directors of Polytechnics are in favour of changes to student financial support, but consider the government's proposals unworkable.

They say that any loan should not exceed 40% of student income, with the other 60% coming from the state. The total value of loans and grants should be restored to the 1979 level and should be index-linked.

The government's White Paper on loans has been widely criticised not only by students but by banks and the universities. It looks like we have a real chance of strangling the loans scheme at birth.

Britain's richest 1% have seen their unearned income rise by 89% since the last budget — and all because of the Tories' taxation policy.

Tax cuts for the rich have meant an extra £100,000 each over the last year to the richest 1%. That is £2,000 a week, against 92p a week for the poorest 2.5 million taxpayers.

The government has sold its tax cuts as providing work incentives. But many of the biggest tax cuts have been on unearned income. Inheritance tax cuts have meant £110 million to the top 1,000 estates — that is £110,000 per person.

The figures, based on official government statistics, were unveiled by Shadow Treasury Minister Gordon Brown, launching the Fair Tax '89 campaign.

The government's policies are making Britain into a tax-haven for the filthy rich. Meanwhile, for the poorest in Britain, benefits are being cut and loan sharks are making a killing.

## Unfair to Heffer

### LETTERS

Clive Bradley was unfair to Eric Heffer (SO 391). It wasn't a matter of Heffer responding in a political dispute by arbitrarily bashing Tony Cliff over his bourgeois or petit-bourgeois head with Heffer's own working class credentials. It was Cliff, not Heffer, who brought all that into it, with his crude vulgar-Marxist reductionism.

According to Cliff not only are the politics of boneheaded, time-serving, meat-and-potatoes right-wing Labour MPs to be explained by the material advantages of being an MP — an idea which does not take proper account of the complexities of the real world or the teachings of Marxism — but so also are the politics of such a long time Marxist as Eric Heffer!

Cliff attacked Heffer by name. He grossly misrepresented him too: an MP who — for example — calls on the labour movement to defy the law as Heffer did to help the embattled seamen last year, deserves better treatment than Cliff gave Heffer in his introduction to the book about the Bolsheviks in the Tzarist 'Parliament'.

Why shouldn't Eric Heffer point out the absurdities and the contradictions in such an attack on him by an organisation which has always had a high proportion of rich and sometimes very rich people in it and in its leadership, and most of whose members are middle class?

When I was on the National Committee of Cliff's organisation c.1970, that committee contained at least half a dozen very rich men, some of them probably millionaires.

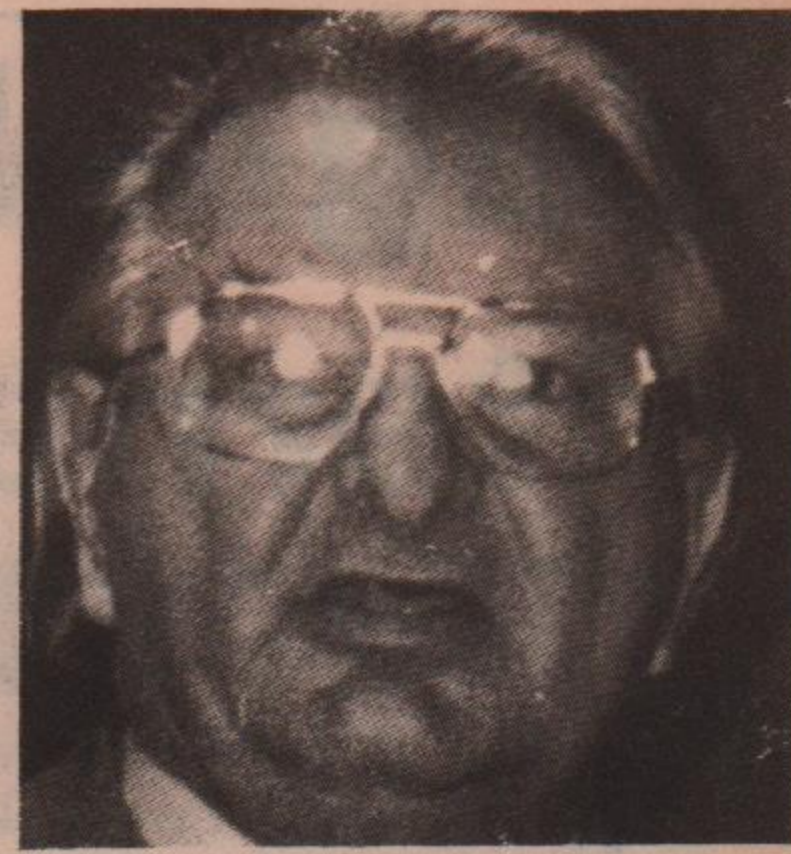
It is to the great credit of such people that they find their way to the socialist movement and devote time, energy and money to the cause of liberating the proletariat

from wage slavery.

If someone were to say to a well-to-do SWP'er that s/he had no right to an opinion because well-off socialists are merely inferior to proletarian socialists and should behave with proper humility towards them, then that would be a case of someone attempting to be "prolier than thou". Such things are common enough on the left — in the Militant for example.

Long-time readers of SO will recall the uproar in our paper and at our meetings caused by the demands of Alan Thornett and his supporters who are now in Briefing and Socialist Outlook that everybody else should defer to Thornett, the self-designated 'Worker Leader'. No doubt Clive Bradley, like the rest of us remembers it with loathing and contempt and is sensitive to any hint of it.

But that is not what we have here.



Eric Heffer

It is Cliff in his own oblique way — ludicrously! — attempting to be 'prolier' than Eric Heffer, reducing political differences to cruder — ascribed — sociology. Cliff presents himself as a political proletarian whose proletarian status derives from the SWP, the self-designated future leadership of the working class.

It is perfectly reasonable, therefore, that Eric Heffer should have responded in kind.

John O'Mahony  
London

## Why 'Russians out' was right

Socialist Organiser has not, as Frank Anthony alleges (SO 391), just "woken up to how reactionary the Afghan muslims are". We never doubted that the mullahs (though I'm not so sure about every single muslim!) were reactionary.

What we opposed was the notion that the USSR's army of occupation could be a progressive alternative to those mullahs — or, to be more precise, to the majority of the Afghan people.

Take an analogy or two. We are opposed to the regime in Iran, which is made up of pretty reactionary mullahs. But we would oppose a Russian invasion of Iran — even if Iranian leftists were crazy enough to call for such an invasion.

We would have opposed a USSR invasion of Pakistan under Zia — another regime claiming to base itself on Islam, also reactionary.

The alternative to a reactionary regime in Kabul is not Russian

occupation. First, Russian occupation proved unsuccessful in quelling the Afghan rebels: to be successful it would have needed to be more brutal, more extensive, even than it was. Frank Anthony and co-thinkers should face up to this fact. If you want the Russians to deal with the mullahs you want more or less to depopulate Afghanistan, either by mass murder or by driving refugees across the border.

Second, the political results of the USSR's occupation has been precisely to strengthen the most reactionary elements of Afghan society.

How anyone can believe the USSR's balance sheet in Afghanistan has proved "progressive" is beyond me.

So it is not the case that "effective" defence of the Afghan cities logically requires the presence of Russian troops. Every day the Russian troops remained in Afghanistan strengthened the hand of the rebels. And the political cost — to socialism throughout the regime — would be greater than the benefit.

Clive Bradley  
Peckham

## Till the judge do us part?

### WOMEN'S EYE

By Lynn Ferguson

"Till death us do part" is by no means the prospect for many marriages, judging by recent divorce statistics. A half of all marriages in the United States today, and a third in Britain, will end in divorce rather than death.

How you interpret such statistics depends very much on your point of view. Some put the prevalence of divorce down to 'consumer society' — people 'nowadays' are just after instant gratification, they simply do not work at relationships any more. Divorce is too easily available — if only it were made more difficult, then couples would have to make their marriages work.

How can anyone apply these sort of imperatives to relationships beats me. After all, sexual relationships surely are voluntary — if you simply do not get on anymore, then why on earth should you feel obliged to carry on living together?

'For the sake of the children' is one argument we hear a lot. Statistics abound on the damage divorce can do to children. For sure

a messy split up is bound to be a traumatic and damaging experience for all concerned — but what of the emotional effects on children whose parents stay together in a cold, miserable or downright violent marriage? We don't hear too much about that.

And why do we tolerate a social system where children's lives are so dependent on the economic fortunes, mental state, and emotions of their parents? Why isn't childcare organised as a collective social responsibility?

Divorce publicity has very little to do with the 'staying power' of individual couples. Far more important are changes in society — including such things as life expectancy.

'Till death us do part' was much more achievable when life expectancy was lower. With many people now living into their eighties, a marriage ending with death can easily last 60 years. That's a hell of a long time with one person.

A study of American marriages dissolved by divorce and by death between 1860 and 1900 showed that dissolution by death fell steadily. The slack was taken up by divorce — the dissolution rate over the century remained almost constant. Even today on average marriages last more years than in the great days of Victorian values.

It was after 1960 that divorce rates rocketed, outstripping any

changes in the mortality rate. What began to change in the 1960s? Well, women began to achieve more economic independence.

During the recent referendum on divorce in Ireland one woman is quoted as saying "A woman who votes for divorce is like a turkey voting for Christmas". For a long time this had some truth.

Marriage was the only guarantee of economic security a woman had when her educational possibilities were limited, and a 'career' was out of the question. Since the 1960s we have seen a massive opening up of possibilities for women. No longer is marriage and motherhood the best option.

It is possible for women to go into higher education, to become doctors, teachers, journalists, lawyers. When women have a degree of economic independence there is less reason to stay in unhappy marriages.

Conversely women without access to well-paid work are far more likely to stay in bad marriages — how will they feed and clothe the kids if they don't. If some women fear divorce it is less for moral reasons than for economic ones.

Monogamy is no more 'natural' than heterosexuality or women's oppression. It is basically an economic institution. Marxists see socialism as a society where love and sex are not tied to economics. All sorts of relationships will be possible.

On the Anniversary of the outrageous frame-up convictions of Mark Braithwaite, Engin Raghup and Winston Silcott for the killing of a policeman during the Tottenham Rebellion in 1985:

### March for Justice!

Saturday March 18th

Assemble 12 Noon

Tottenham Green, Tottenham Town Hall

Tube: Seven Sisters Buses: 243, 123, 279, 259, 149, 73, 41, 76.

Rally: with Irish in Britain Representation Group, 3pm, Duckett's Common

Tube: Turnpike Lane Buses: 123, 221, 41, 67, 29.

With Speakers including: Bernie Grant MP, Unmesh Desai, and relatives of the framed prisoners.



# If you want a closet Tory clown, vote Cosmo

## SOCIALIST STUDENT

In the election for National Secretary of the National Union of Students this Easter, 'Cosmo' Hawkes is standing as the allegedly non-factional, non-political bread-and-butter-unionist candidate against Labour Party and Socialist Student member Liz Millward. Dave Barter reports on the truth about Cosmo.

**C**osmo Hawkes claims to be an honest student unionist. The truth is rather different: Cosmo is a self-seeking, dishonest, and factional thug.

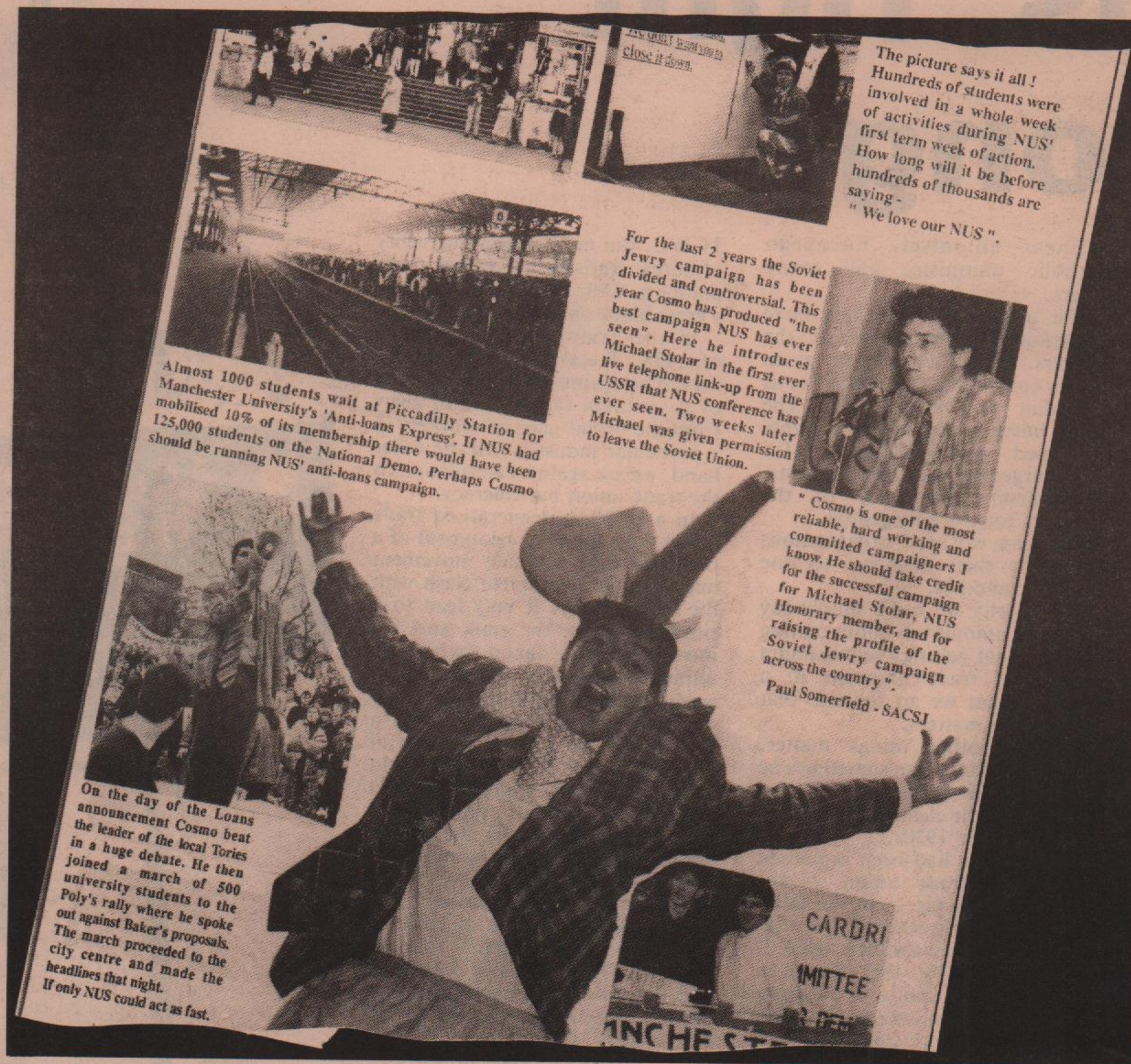
Now that students at Manchester University have realised how he took them for a ride he wants to use the National Union of Students as his vehicle for self-publicity. He is standing for National Secretary at NUS Easter Conference.

Cosmo's manifesto for National Secretary tries to present him as hardworking, against factionalism and wanting to run real student campaigns. He lays claim to the credit for campaigns that have been run in Manchester.

**C**osmo claims credit for the 500 strong march that took place on the day of the loans announcement last term.

He neglects to mention that he argued for the previous three weeks against a local march, ignoring the wishes of every union campaign meeting and abusing the rank and file students who did organise it. Cosmo joined the march in an attempt to prevent it going to plan.

Cosmo claims credit for the march hitting the headlines that night, neglecting the reason it



gained that publicity: the marchers joined students from local FE colleges in an overnight occupation in Manchester Polytechnic. Cosmo's role was to break into the occupation to try to force the students out, violently abusing the women from a local FE college who had led the occupation.

**C**osmo claims credit for the turnout of Manchester University students on the 24 November demonstration in London.

In reality the high turn-out was achieved by the attention gained by Manchester's local action, the work done by rank and file students and the genuine anger of ordinary students at the loans proposals. Cosmo's involvement was an attempt to win glory for himself to help his NUS election.

Cosmo opposed the local action that took place on 1 February and opposed spending any money on transport to the second national

demo on 25 February.

**C**osmo's third claim is the success of a 'We love our Union Week' at Manchester University (an alternative name for a week of action, avoiding any implication that any action will actually take place).

In fact that week was an exercise in teaching students devotion to their union sabbaticals, and of course Cosmo himself in particular. The real action that did take place that week Cosmo did not support.

He refused to allow a rally organised by students fighting closure of their department to be associated with the 'We love our Union Week' — it did not fit the image he was trying to present. A real student campaign had to take second place to Cosmo's exercise in self-publicity.

**C**osmo's manifesto claims opposition to the "carving, dealing and backstabbing"

that is destroying our national union. But it is well known in Manchester that it is Cosmo's childish enjoyment of precisely that carving that has kept him in student politics so long. Cosmo is in his third sabbatical year.

Cosmo takes it further than most. In the recent executive elections at Manchester University his attempts to stop the Women's Group candidate for Women's Office taking office included everything from interfering in the Women's Group selection process to threatening the woman candidate with physical violence: "I'll hit you so hard in the face you won't know what's hit you".

Cosmo is well known for his sexist abuse of women students, his claims to rig ballots in union elections, and his banning of political societies that stand up to his corruption (SSiN was banned at Manchester University last term). NUS should know the truth.

Any democratic movement is susceptible to hi-jack by self-seekers and egotists. Manchester University students union fell prey to one such self-seeker in the wake of the defeat of the miners' strike and the failure of the 'Democratic Left's' bureaucratic rule to involve or win the demands of ordinary students.

Cosmo stood as a joke candidate — anti-student union and anti-NUS. But it didn't take Cosmo long to settle in the bureaucratic carving that dominates NUS politics.

His reputation now in Manchester is increasingly one of a corrupt bureaucrat who uses the resources of the Student Union for his own gratification, and uses corruption, intimidation and huggery to get his own way.

Students at NUS Conference should take heed of the warning from Manchester — the place for people like Cosmo is behind bars, not on NUS National Executive. Real student unionists will be voting for Liz Millward, the SSiN candidate for National Secretary.

## Three factions emerge

**T**hree or four splits have emerged in the dominant 'Democratic Left' faction of Labour Students. They are partly defined by their orientation to the National Union of Students (NUS).

• *Student Labour First* is the student wing of *Labour First* — a Hattersleyite witch-hunting outfit. Its 'leading yobbo', Derek Draper, has in his time been slung out of Labour Students conference for sexual harassment.

*Student Labour First* has quite accurately discovered that the 'third road' between revolution and reform — to which the DL was supposed to be committed — doesn't exist. They want Labour Students to be more firmly anti-revolutionary, and to orient towards the Labour Party and away from the National Union of Students.

• The soft-left DLers who currently dominate at NUS HQ want a continued orientation towards NUS.

• Then there is an amalgam of two groups under the banner *Labour Student Action*.

One wing is politically similar to the NUS leadership, but wants a move towards building the Labour Party and getting Labour elected at the next election at the expense of some of NOLS's work in NUS. They describe what they want as "partial withdrawal".

They say Labour Students could continue to influence NUS by building a bigger bloc inside NUS HQ with the "many forces inside the National Union that will continue to put forward progressive politics", ie. the Communist Party and 'independents' from the liberation campaigns.

This faction dominates among the people who run Labour Students from Labour Party HQ at Walworth Road. It is sellotaped together with a group of DL 'lefts' from Scotland. The Scottish group is Stalinist, nationalist, and 'left' on questions like the Poll Tax.

They are openly critical of the DL's record. Of the NUS leadership, they write: "These people are primarily concerned with NOLS work in NUS and maybe getting themselves or their friends elected into a position within NUS."

"The DL was successful in maintain-

## 'Soft left' falls apart

Emma Colyer reports on the Labour students conference

**T**he first weekend in March was the Conference of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS).

It might conjure up a picture of a big conference of Labour activists discussing different political ideas and how to take forward campaigns in NOLS. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

What we had, was a conference of about 100 people, a third of the Labour clubs having been ruled out prior to the event. It was probably the smallest NOLS Conference for a long while.

What happened? Well, apart from members of the dominant soft-left faction falling out among themselves, and Zoe 'Tyson' Sharma bopping Sarah Adams on the nose and ruining Ruth Middleton's glasses, all in the name of political discussion, the left did have some significant victories.

The debate on Labour Party democracy saw the disintegrating 'Democratic Left' (soft-left) faction — or is it DS? or Labour Action? who knows? losing their position that calls for constitutional changes and modernisation as the only way to build a mass party with genuine involvement.

What was passed was a commitment to radical democratisation of the party — and bold socialist policies to build a mass membership.

However the left lost the call for non-implementation of the poll tax and a policy was passed for mass non-payment alone. Non-payment is not the be-all and end-all; it cannot be seen as an alternative to non-implementation.

The Conference was indicative of the bad state of NOLS and the NOLS leadership. In the context of what is happening around us, such as the action last November against loans and anti-poll tax unions being built up, NOLS should be growing massively, bringing in these new activists to the ideas of socialism and leading these campaigns.

Instead we are faced with NOLS that has little interest in building and discussing socialist ideas, a NOLS that has little interest in campaigning and a NOLS that is falling apart.

What socialists in Labour Students should be doing is calling for left unity on a number of issues:

• Democratise NOLS. There must be no more with-hel membership cards, no more Labour Clubs that can't get inaugurated and no more motions eaten by the dog.

• Turn to the Further Education colleges. It is absurd that we have people such as Carol Judge talking of mass membership, when the majority of students are faced with every barrier possible to join NOLS. We have to open up NOLS to Further Education Students ensuring that they have the same rights in NOLS as the rest of us.

We want to see a NOLS that fights for socialism. Not a populist modernised pseudo-socialism, Kinnockite world that will guarantee all good NOLSies a career, dispensing drops of benevolence to the working class but socialism based on work class self-liberation and struggle.

Where was NOLS last year in health workers dispute? The F Office dispute? Nowhere to be seen.

We must have a NOLS that is geared to the labour movement, fighting Thatcher not one gearer careers and sectarian antics but put before the movement.



# Breakaway unions: right or wrong?

**Socialist Organiser has opposed the creation of the EPIU, a small left-wing electricians' union formed by a breakaway from the right-wing EETPU. We have argued that this breakaway takes militants away from a fight among rank-and-file electricians which is still possible and still necessary.**

**But should socialists always oppose breakaway unions? John O'Mahony looks at the history.**

**Are we for or against breakaway unions? In general, we're against: but the issue can't be dealt with abstractly.**

Trade unionism is about unity. We are in favour of the maximum unity. We want to overcome sectionalism and parochialism, to unify the workers for a serious fight to defend themselves.

That's why we're against breakaways. But it is only one side of the question.

In reality, trade unions don't unite all workers not even in a country like Britain. And the modern unions are not just straight workers' organisations. They are bureaucratised.

A layer of people — officials of the union — become abstracted from the workplace struggles of workers. They become specialists in bargaining. Their conditions of life are separated from the workers they represent. Their wages and conditions are not at all linked to their success or failure as representatives of the workers' interests. Over a period of time they develop all kinds of links with the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state.

There are many different sorts of trade unions and trade union bureaucracies — straightforward

business unionism, European Catholic unionism, and many others.

The unions are thus not mere reflections of the needs of the workers. Very often they act as an agency controlling the workers or as a conduit for bourgeois ideas. The union bureaucracy acts as a highly developed ideological agency for the bourgeoisie and for Stalinists, or sometimes by way of the Stalinists for the bourgeoisie.

We have workers' organisations that stifle their members to one degree or another.

That's why we can't simply say that trade unionism is about uniting workers, that getting the maximum number of trade unionists in a union is what we go for and that nothing else matters.

Lots of other things matter. Trade union unity can sometimes be a fetter on the workers.

Let's take the clearest example — the USA in the 1930s.

The workers had been organised in a broad trade union — the Knights of Labour — in the latter half of the 19th century, but that had been smashed and destroyed. It was replaced by the American Federation of Labour, a business-type trade union movement. The AFL was very conservative, concerned with craft unionism, very racist and very sexist.

In the 1930s there was a great wave of militancy with sit-down strikes. The workers wanted to organise.

They were stopped by the AFL. It was a block in their way. Sections of the AFL, in the first place the miners' union, began to reflect the drive of the workers. They wanted to organise industrial unions. So there was a split in the AFL.

The miners' leader John L Lewis — who was a gangster, scoundrel and dirty bureaucrat — walked up to a prominent representative of the craft unionists and hit him on the jaw. It was the signal for a break in the AFL.

It was a constructive break. It allowed the workers to create the Congress of Industrial Organisations, CIO, which became the most powerful section of the US labour movement. The split lasted to 1955.

For a long time many militants believed that 'one big union' was an answer to all the problems. That was the basic idea of the syndicalists in the years around the First World War. They helped to create big unions like the TGWU and Connolly's and Larkin's Irish

TGWU. But nevertheless the reality of bureaucratisation overtook these unions as well. The TGWU became a great block on workers' militancy.

In the Transitional Programme of 1938, Trotsky argued that we should be against breakaway unions of a sectarian type that pull away from the broad mass of workers in a particular industry. On the other hand, we are against capitulation to the trade union bureaucracy.

In a highly bureaucratised trade union the logic of development of a powerful rank and file movement may lead to a complete clash with the bureaucracy. It may lead to a situation where the rank and file movement is faced with an ultimatum from the bureaucrats to surrender or to break away. In that situation it would be to create a fetish to say that industrial unionism and unity is the main thing. Such an approach would leave the workers no option but to bow down before the incumbent bureaucrats — and the bourgeoisie.

So we are against sectarian breakaways — and we are also against making a fetish of unity.

In 1928, Stalin declared that the so-called Third Period of capitalism had started — the system was collapsing everywhere, and revolution was round the corner. Stalin's sidekicks worked out all sorts of daft theories. The main enemies were not fascists, or capitalist, or monarchists but the social democrats.

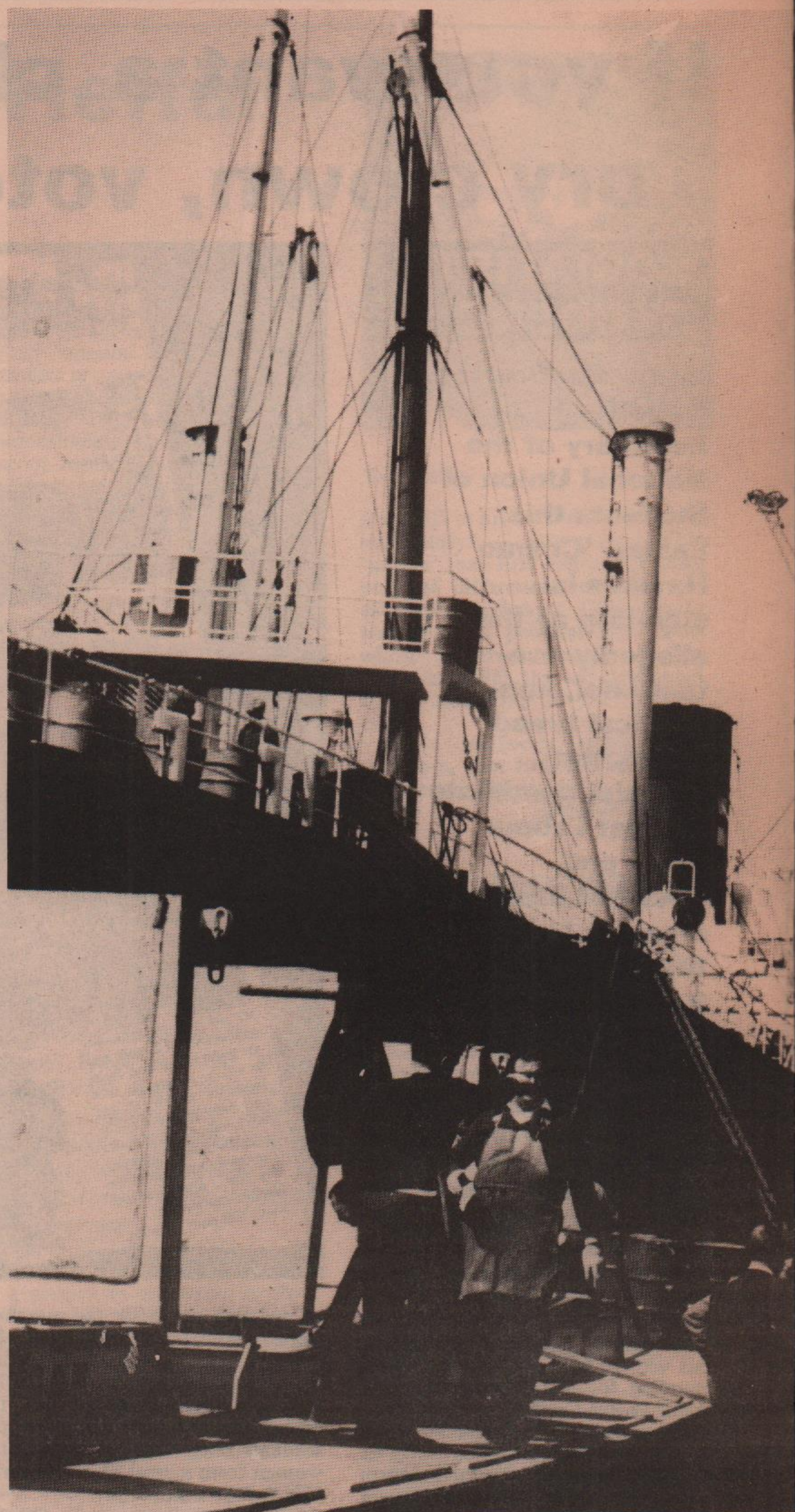
In Germany the Communist Party united with anyone against the Social Democracy, even sometimes with the Nazis.

The Stalinists also tried to organise their own trade unions. In some countries, like France, that didn't matter a great deal. The unions had already been split by the reformists after World War 1. Elsewhere there was a tradition of political parties having their own unions. But in countries like Germany and Britain it was disastrous.

In Britain in the '20s the CP led a powerful rank and file movement. — the Minority Movement — with a paper membership of about one million, in a trade union movement of about four million members.

The CP tried to form breakaway unions out of the Minority Movement. This utterly smashed the Minority Movement.

They created a small miners' breakaway in Fife and a clothing workers' union in East London and Leeds — mainly of Jewish workers, but that was the extent of their ability to create independent



unions.

That sort of politics is utterly and absolutely destructive. It very quickly gave way a few years later (1934-6) to the CP forgetting all about fighting the bureaucrats and adopting a policy — which they still maintain — of burrowing within the bureaucracy.

That is one type of experience. But there are many other examples of the opposite happening — of people being frightened to break with the existing machinery of the union and then blocking the class struggle.

The best illustration is the British docks in the '50s.

The TGWU was the great hope of the amalgamaters — those who wanted to build one big union in and around the time of the First World War. It became highly bureaucratised very early. It became involved in deals with the capitalists in the mid to late '20s.

It was involved in full scale collaboration with the government and with the state in World War 2.

In 1947 the National Dock Labour Board was set-up. It was an agency to employ dockers. Dockers were employed directly by the Board which then hired them out on a half day basis to the employers who would put them to work. If there were no employer the Board would be responsible for paying a minimum wage to the docker provided he turned up and got his book stamped.

The Dock Labour Board was 50% employers, 50% union representatives.

The TGWU had a closed shop and it was a half-share employer of the workers it was supposed to be representing. Highly bureaucratised, it took on the job

of policing the dockers.

It did the sort of job that maybe the Histadrut does in Israel, or the Stalinist bureaucrats who took over Eastern Europe after the war (except the TGWU didn't have a police state).

There were never official strikes. The officials would organise to break strikes. Union leaders could threaten militants who wouldn't toe the line, with the sack.

For example, the entire committee of the Manchester TGWU Docks branch were summoned to London to meet general secretary Arthur Deakin and he said: "Watch yourselves boys. If you don't toe the line I'll have you sacked".

In 1954-55, some 16,000 dockers — beginning in Hull, then Liverpool, then Manchester — broke out of the T&G.

There had already been a breakaway in the '20s which had a base in London and was recognised by the employers there for negotiations, the Stevedores Union (NASD). The TGWU was known as the white union and the Stevedores as the blue union because of the colour of their cards.

The 16,000 dockers attempted to join the 'blue union'. They described this as 'The biggest prison break in history'. But they failed. They struck for recognition for six weeks.

On the docks you had to negotiate pay according to the condition of each job, from day to day. Recognition was crucial to the whole business. You couldn't have a union that wasn't recognised.

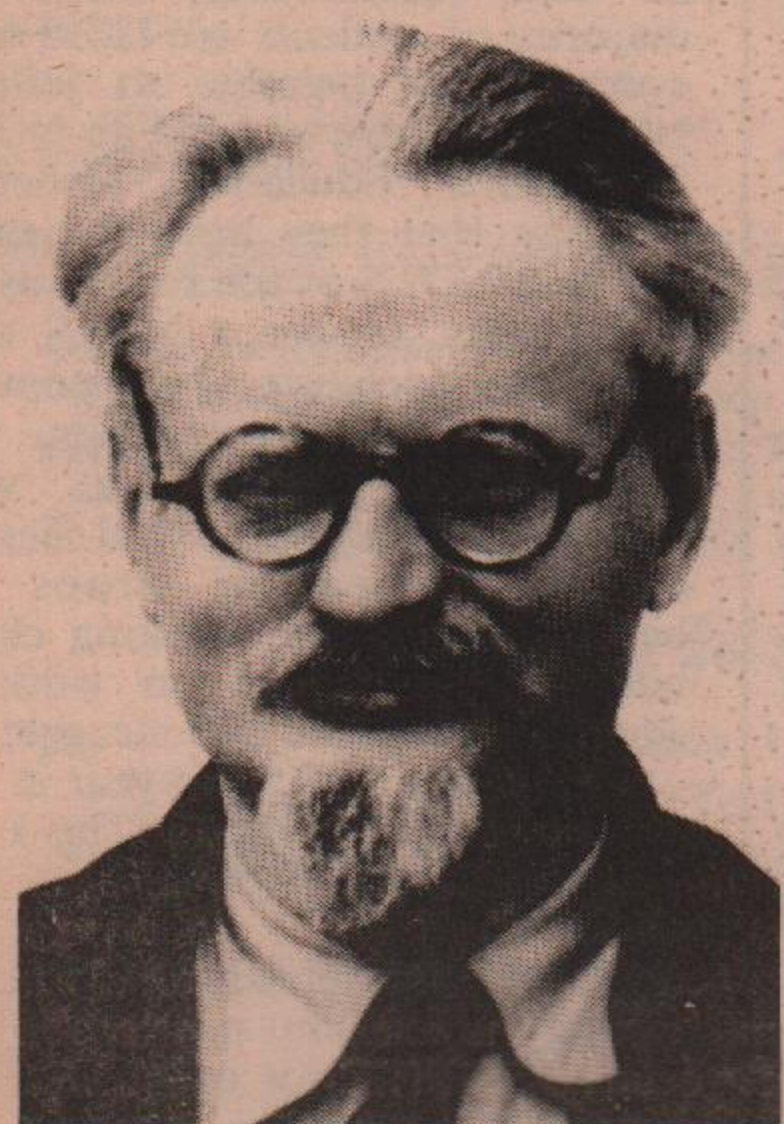
The Dock Labour Board stuck to its mates, the T&G, fought a bitter struggle against the breakaway and refused to recognise it.

## Trotsky's summary

**Marxists "should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organisations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society; and, if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions.**

**"If it be criminal to turn one's back on mass organisations for the sake of fostering sectarian factions, it is no less so passively to tolerate subordination of the revolutionary mass movement to the control of openly reactionary or disguised conservative ('progressive') bureaucratic cliques. Trade unions are not ends in themselves; they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution."**

Leon Trotsky, 'The Transitional Programme'





## A political movie without the politics

**Mick Ackersley reviews the new film about the Profumo Affair, 'Scandal'**

**'Scandal' is a political movie from which the essential politics have been removed — a sort of decaffeinated political thriller about the 'Profumo Affair'.**

In 1959 the Tory party won its third General Election in a row, with an increased majority. Within three years things started to go wrong. In 1963 the Profumo scandal took away what credibility the Government had left. The ailing Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, resigned. A year later Labour won its first General Election in 13 years.

John Profumo was a very rich Tory, and Minister for War. (Euphemisms were not as all-pervasive then as now). The press discovered that he had slept with a woman, a prostitute or semi-prostitute, Christine Keeler, when she was also sleeping with an attaché at the Russian Embassy, Ivanov.

The scandal broke in the press when Keeler disappeared when she was due to give evidence in court against a boyfriend who had gone berserk, threatening her with a gun. Bit by bit, in an atmosphere of prurience, hypocrisy, and outrage, a series of surprising social links were uncovered.

Keeler was close to Stephen Ward, an osteopathic doctor and portrait-painter to the upper class, including members of the Royal Family. She also had underworld connections, such as John Edgecombe, the man who wanted to shoot her. And she, like her friend Mandy Rice-Davies, had been sexually involved with a notorious rackrenting slum landlord, Peter Rachman, who had

recently died. And there was Profumo — and Ivanov.

The affair brought to public notice the corrupt world of the rich and privileged. The discovery that some of the rich did not obey the rules of public morality which they preached was socially traumatic.

Rumours of sado-masochistic orgies, perhaps involving a member of the Royal Family, fed the prurience of press and public. People were a lot more easily shocked then than today; and the mainstream media did not criticise members of the Royal Family — not at all.

The Establishment tried to put out the fires of rumour and speculation by putting Stephen Ward on trial and framing him for allegedly living off the earnings of prostitution. This was done, apparently, on the personal instructions of Home Secretary Henry Brooke.

Keeler appeared against Ward, as did others. None of Ward's highly-placed friends would so much as come to court to give him a character reference. Ward, a snobby outsider, was cast in the role of scapegoat, a public sacrifice to public outrage.

He killed himself the night before a jury found him guilty of 'living off immoral earnings'.

Minister of War John Profumo made a statement in the House of Commons denying any 'impropriety' in his relations with Christine Keeler. Soon afterwards he said he had lied, and resigned. Macmillan soon resigned too.

Perhaps decisive in this saga was the role of the Labour Party. Harold Wilson had taken over as Labour leader at the beginning of 1963, on the unexpected death of his predecessor, Hugh Gaitskell.

Wilson and his team went after the Tories with vigour and skill. They hammered away at the supposed 'security' implications of the Profumo-Keeler-Ivanov chain. They agitated on the theme of

corruption in high society.

They used the scandal to expose the rackrenting system, and made Peter Rachman's name a synonym for slum landlordism.

Wilson was no socialist, and in office he was a disgrace to the labour movement. But in 1963 he wanted to drive the Tories from office, and he knew how to seize his chance.

'Scandal' tells the story, but with everything sifted. With a soundtrack of songs from the early '60s (and, surprisingly, one from the early '50s), much of it is a sort of 'Travellers in Time' trip back to the decadence of London's high and low society just on the eve of the birth of the 'permissive society'.

It presents the story as a romantic tale of doomed love between Stephen Ward and Keeler. Quite untruthfully as far as I know, it has Ward objecting in court, for example, when his barrister gets a bit rough with Keeler in the cross-examination.

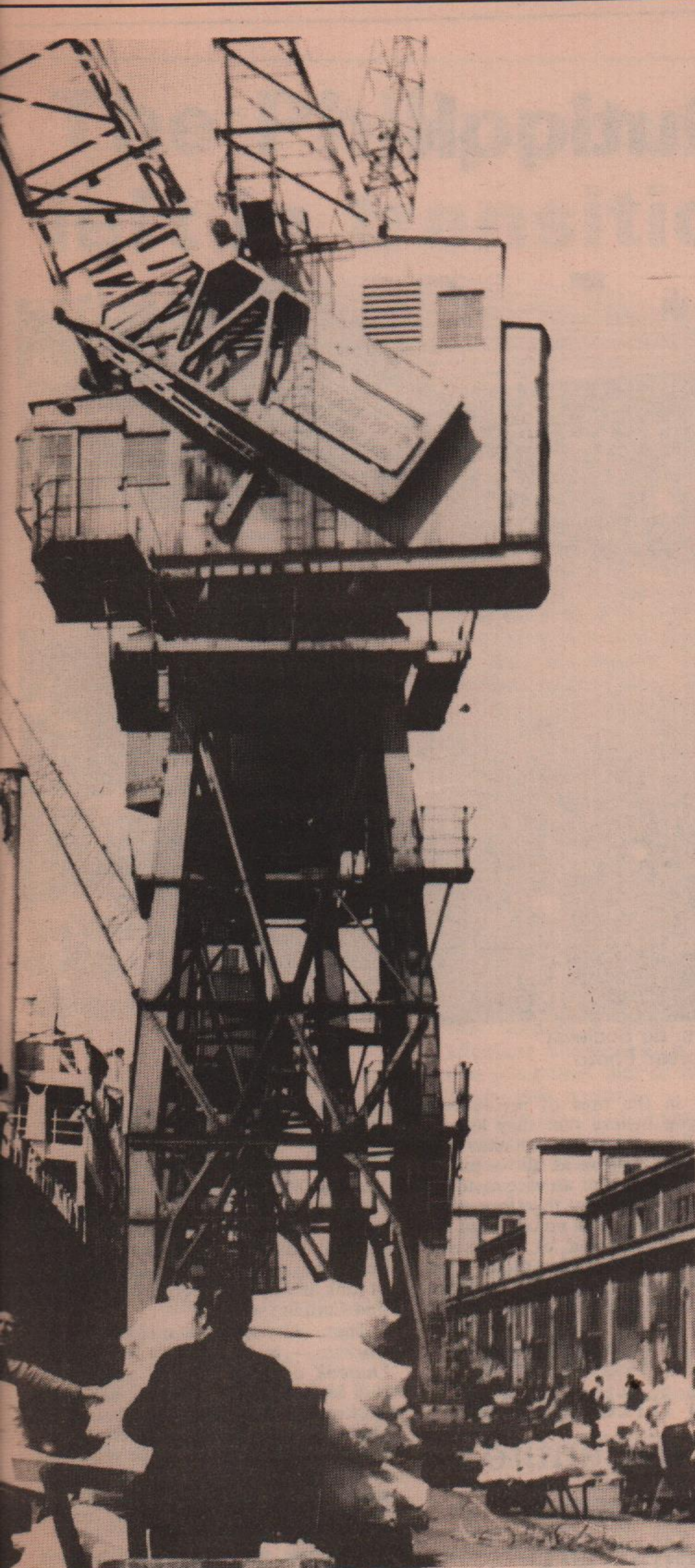
Most of the political issues are blurred. If you didn't already know who and what Peter Rachman was, you wouldn't learn from this movie. The party-political side of it is played down to near invisibility.

Dealing with a story that could have been from Zola or Balzac, throwing a sharp light on early-'60s British society, the movie simply doesn't seem to have a point of view.

It is blunt where it could be sharp — soft-focused, like a TV ad.

Essentially, it's an exploitation movie. Even the soundtrack is likely to be a money-spinner in the nostalgia market.

On balance, though, I think it's worth seeing. Joanne Whalley as Christine Keeler is only half-convincing. Bridget Fonda is far better as Mandy Rice-Davies, suggesting spirit and devilment. John Hurt is — inevitably — good as Ward, even though the script makes the character and his motivations unclear.



the Communist Party, after its away from being ultra-left in '20s and '30s, had begun to bow into the union bureaucracy. T&G in the late '40s had through the 'black circular' imposed a ban on the CP members holding positions, a ban which held place until 1970. But in London CP had the leadership of the workers. Their policy was to work away into the bureaucracy and bring favour by being good porters of the bureaucracy. So scabbed on the recognition.

London didn't come out. The movement was defeated. Blue Union then tried to expel dockers who had joined it in the northern ports. The dockers tried to stay in by taking the union to court. The blue union was eventually expelled by the TUC in 1947.

As the breakaway right or left? In retrospect it was a fiasco. It led to a split in the docks and a certain amount of non-unionism, though not enough to undermine militancy. Many Trotskyist groups opposed the breakaway. The Grantites (now Grantites) condemned it, the Healyites (now the SWP) condemned it, the Healyites (later SLL-WRP) were central to the whole development. They acted as the link between various ports. They had a leading role in the breakaway. Bob Pennington, a Trotskyite became a full-timer of the union in Liverpool.

Think the Healyites were right. At sort of prison break — a movement of militant workers which challenges the bureaucracy is a good thing.

The movement was defeated. After a defeat it is easy to say that you shouldn't have fought. But then when would you ever fight? You never have a guarantee of victory — the dockers could not have known in advance that they would be defeated.

In any case it was not a full scale defeat. It liberated the militants and it helped change the TGWU. Arthur Deakin, the T&G autocratic right-wing General Secretary, died in 1954. His right-wing successor, Tiffin, soon died too, and a left-winger, Frank Cousins, became general secretary.

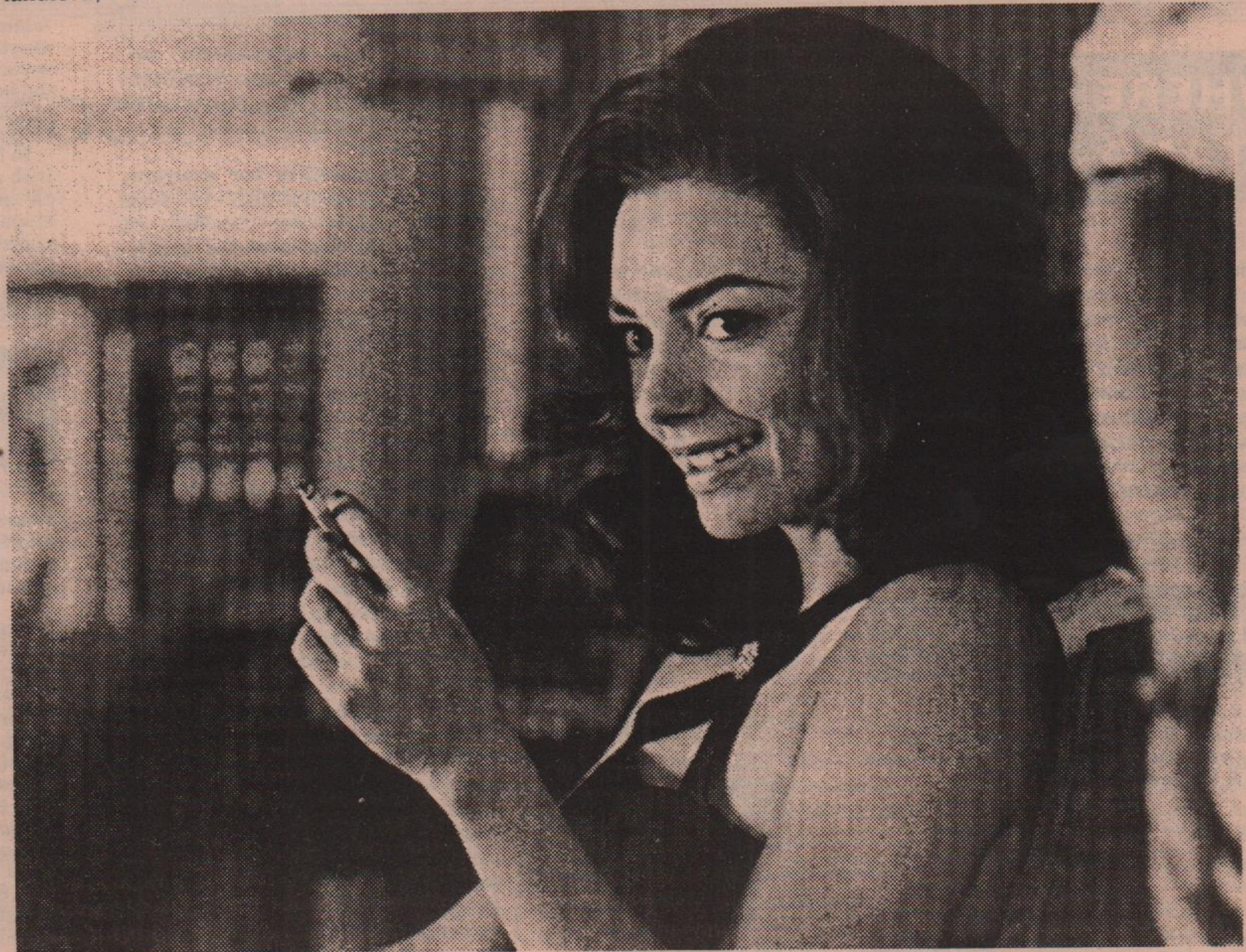
Frank Cousins was shaped not just by the bureaucracy but also by the breakaway and a big bus strike in the late '50s.

Unity is a good thing — but not the unity of the graveyard and of the apparatchiks. We have to analyse each situation concretely.

In any big struggle against the trade union bureaucracy there is a logic of split — just as in a big fight in the Labour Party. There is nothing that tells you that the anti-bureaucrats are going to get a majority, or that the union bureaucracy will be easily ousted. Faced with being defeated it can split the union. If that threat always makes us climb down and retreat, then we're paralysed.

As Rosa Luxemburg put it, the union doesn't create militancy, militancy creates the union. The union exists for the working class or it exists for nothing at all. We go by the interests of the working class, not by the interests of the union officials' shopkeeping.

*From a speech at the recent Socialist Organiser industrial school.*



Joanne Whalley as Christine Keeler



# An open letter to Socialist Outlook

Dear Comrades,

**A**t the recent Annual General Meeting of the Labour Committee on Ireland, you were the main force behind a motion calling, not for British troops, but British unions to leave Ireland. Although many of you were plainly embarrassed by the proposal, you voted for it as a body.

This bizarre episode in Irish 'solidarity' work shows you to be completely disoriented on the Irish question — so disoriented you cannot stand by elementary working class internationalist politics. And this from a group which, more than any other, insists that it is part of an international movement.

At stake is the relationship between socialism and nationalism. Where we support nationalist demands, and demands for the break-up of forced imperialist links between nations, we do so to further international working class unity and voluntary working class links between nations. If such voluntary working class links already exist — if working class organisations already exist that span the national division — the last thing we want is to break them up. On the contrary, we want more international union organisation.

Don't we? Your proposal for 'British unions out' calls into question the entire international socialist programme.

The theoretical underpinning for such a position must be the 'imperialist' character of British-Irish relations. Ireland is a colony, or semi-colony, of Britain. This fact overrides all other considerations, including those of class politics. Consciously or not, any British intervention into Ireland reflects this imperialism. British unions form part of the imperialist structure of power. We must insist on 'Brits out' — all 'Brits', troops and trade unionists alike.

James Connolly and Jim Larkin both arrived in Ireland as labour organisers from Britain — Larkin as the agent of a British union. You presumably would have had them on the first ship home. Brits out!

And what about those Irish Protestant workers who see themselves as British? Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein had the good sense at Sinn Fein's recent conference to note that many Protestant workers think that 'Brits out of Ireland' means a call to drive them out, too, for they see themselves as 'Brits': Adams called for political approaches to dispel this fear (not adequate ones in our view). You have no such good sense.

Your programme would sabotage not only Irish-British workers' unity, but, also, Catholic-Protestant workers' unity in Ireland. Some 36% of all Irish trade unionists are members of unions with HQs in Britain. 15% of trade unionists in Southern Ireland belong to British-

based unions — notably the TGWU, MSF, UCATT, AEU, NGA and NUJ. In Northern Ireland, fully 78% of organised workers are in British-based unions.

The bigger representation of British-based unions in the North is partly due to the fact that British public-sector employers — the National Health Service, for example — operate in the North.

Tens of thousands of Catholic, nationalist, Republican workers belong to British-based unions. There is, however, a bias making Protestant workers more likely to join British-based unions.

Between 1944 and 1959 the Irish trade union movement was split. The official reason why many (not all) of the Irish-based unions split away to form the Congress of Irish Unions was that the Irish TUC joined the "communist-dominated" World Federation of Trade Unions. But the real reason was national/communal tension, aggravated by southern Ireland's neutrality and Britain's engagement in World War 2. The CIU insisted on Irish-based unions only.

Until now all Marxists had considered the reunification of Irish labour a step forward. Those who objected were the Protestant bigots of Northern Ireland, who have picketed all-Ireland trade union conferences and demanded a separate Ulster TUC. Now you come forward as the mirror image of the ultra-Loyalists!

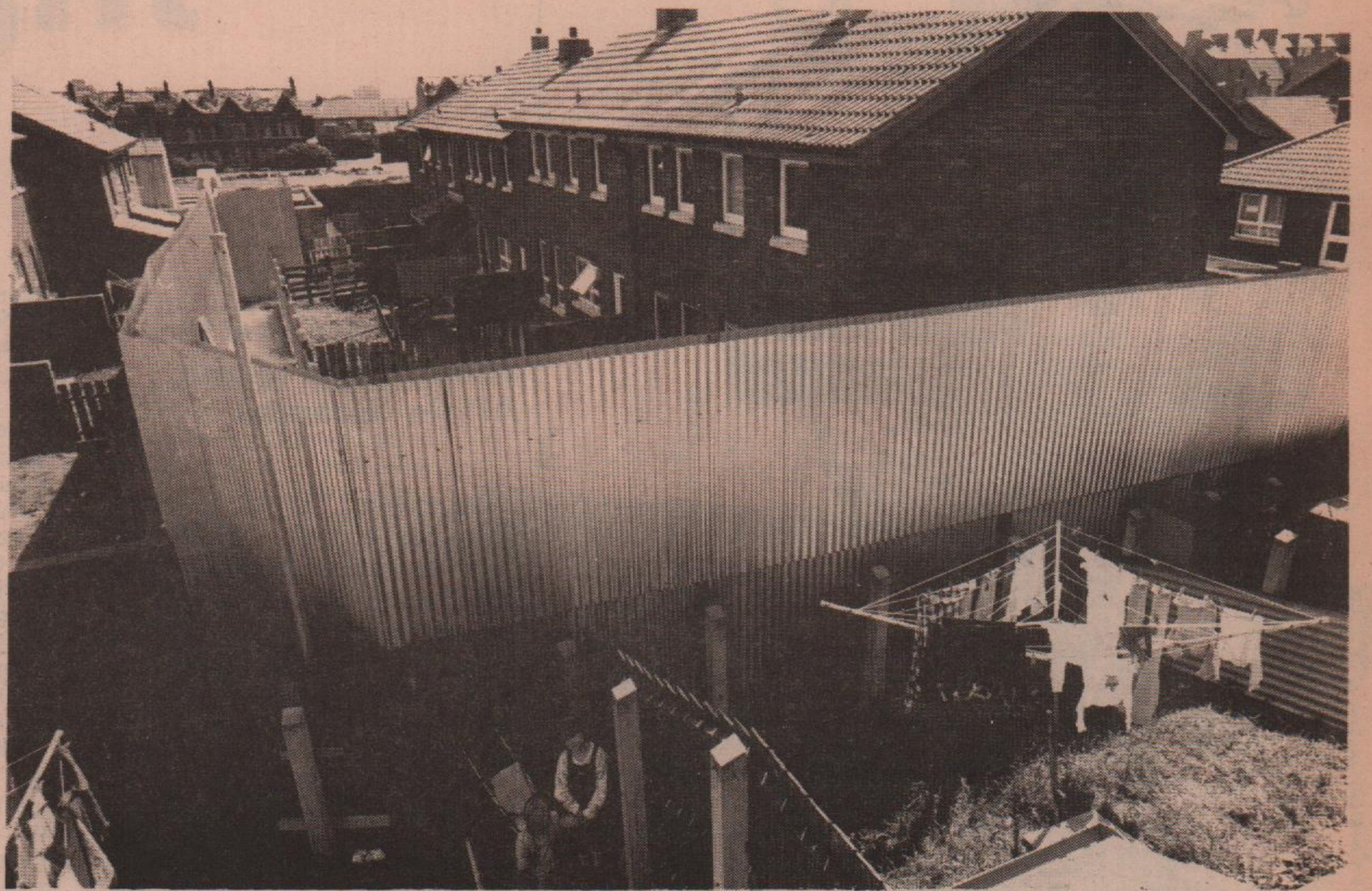
At least the CIU sought to persuade Irish workers to leave British unions. But you have not proposed — though it would be weird enough — that Irish socialists start a membership war between Irish and British-based unions. (Presumably you are in favour of it, and we await with interest your explanation of the possible consequences of such a policy should anyone be brain-fried enough to adopt it).

By voting for a British-based organisation to campaign for 'British unions out', you give the nationalist worker-splitting drive a new twist: the call is for British unions to get rid of Irish workers, presumably to expel them all.

Given your past attitudes to Scottish and Welsh nationalism, we can no doubt look forward to your extension of this call for a mass purge to all Scottish and Welsh members of TUC unions.

Very 'anti-imperialist'! But there is a further twist to the story. The discussion at the LCI AGM made it clear that a chief motive for the call for 'British unions out' was not to free Irish workers from reactionary British unions, but to free British unions from reactionary Irish workers. If they expelled their Northern Ireland Protestant members, British unions would more readily take positions you approve of on Ireland.

Rather than use our union links with those Protestant workers to try to con-



Wall dividing Protestant and Catholic workers: do Socialist Outlook want to make sectarian divisions worse? Photo Andrew Moore (Reflex)

vince them, you want to boycott them. It sounds pretty imperialist to us!

British trade union presence in Ireland is not merely an aspect of imperialist domination. It is a result of the long historical inter-relationship between the working class movements of the two countries. And it is linked to the division within the working class in Ireland, along communal lines, which lies at the core of the 'Irish problem'.

Britain has used, shaped and exacerbated the communal conflict. But the fundamental obstacle both to Irish unity and to socialism is not Britain, but the communal divide.

In your attitude to that communal divide you are utterly confused. You have no answer to it. At times you seem to believe it is not a problem. Your attitude to the Northern Protestant working class is at best ambivalent, and at worse a scandalous collapse of all your socialist pretensions into Catholic Irish chauvinism.

There will be no united Ireland, never mind a socialist revolution in Ireland, without the Protestant workers.

Or perhaps you believe otherwise? Perhaps you believe, with much of the left, that the Protestants are no more than a settler-colonial English outpost whose separate identity will be

destroyed in the fires of revolution? Perhaps you believe that they are — superficial appearances notwithstanding — not really workers at all — just a 'labour aristocracy' or an elite caste?

Perhaps you believe, therefore, that the Irish revolution will not only not require the participation of Protestant workers, but will be against them? That the Protestant working class will remain reactionary because its conviction that it

easily join an 'anti-imperialist' one instead don't really deserve unions at all, do they?

This is the opposite of a socialist approach. Most Protestant workers are reactionary. But a socialist approach is not a bureaucratic appeal to British unions to wreak 'anti-imperialist' vengeance on them. It is to build unity at rank and file level between Protestant and Catholic workers.

That unity should include British workers — in Britain. Or are *Socialist Outlook* opposed to Irish hospital or civil service workers striking alongside workers on the mainland? Should the Harland and Woolf workers (reactionary on many issues, to be sure) who struck in solidarity with the health workers last year simply be ignored (and victimised by their union bureaucracy to boot)?

Of course, trade union unity by itself is not adequate. A political programme that addresses the national question is needed, and the proposal for a united Ireland with federal rights of regional autonomy to the Protestants seems the most likely to succeed.

You have no programme. In your miserable failure to address the issue of the Protestant working class (and your implicitly bureaucratic solution to the problem as far as you have considered it) you are as bad, in the opposite direction, as *Militant*.

Your position at the LCI AGM defines you as criminally irresponsible nationalists, so explicitly nationalist indeed that even your erstwhile comrades in *Socialist Action*, not known for their restraint in such matters, opposed you.

Is this really the road you want to go down?

Clive Bradley and Martin Thomas  
Socialist Organiser

## 'Your position calls into question the entire international socialist programme'

is not Catholic Irish defines it as reactionary, and so it will always remain?

Perhaps you believe that the Protestants should — and can — just be conquered to bring about a united Ireland?

We accuse you of having not the faintest idea of how to answer these questions. You have blocked out the question of the Protestant workers in the hope that it (and they) will go away and leave the process of permanent revolution in peace.

In fact, your absurd proposal to expel Irish members of British trade unions is an encoded call to 'smash' 'Loyalist' unions. Irish workers who are so irremediably pro-imperialist as to join a British union (when they could just as

## WHERE WE STAND

Socialist Organiser stands for workers' liberty East and West. We aim to help organise the left wing in the Labour Party and trade unions to fight to replace capitalism with working class socialism.

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

workers' control. We want democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

Socialism can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers' struggles worldwide, including the struggle of

workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist states against their own anti-socialist bureaucracies.

We stand:  
For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. For a mass working class-based women's movement.

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

For a united and free Ireland, with some federal system to protect the rights of the Protestant minority.

For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion.

For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

We want Labour Party and trade union members who support our basic ideas to become supporters of the paper — to take a bundle of papers to sell each week and pay a small contribution to help meet the paper's deficit. Our policy is democratically controlled by our supporters through Annual General Meetings and an elected National Editorial Board.

## ACTIVISTS' DIARY

**Thursday 9 March**  
Sheffield SO, 'How to achieve socialism'. 7.30, University Student Union.

**Thursday 9 March**  
Merseyside SO meeting. 'Afghanistan: the USSR's Vietnam'. Wallasey Unemployed Centre, 7.30

**Saturday 18 March**  
Campaign Against Massacres in Iran, Iraq and Turkey. Picket at Turkish Airways, 11 Hanover St, W1. 1.00

**Monday 20 March**  
London SO education series: 'Early years of the British CP'. Speaker Tom Rigby, 7.00

**Monday 20 March**  
Benefit concert for 'The Cape Town Sixteen Campaign' with Iriel Dance Company and Rock to Rock Radio. Guest appearance by Linton Kwesi

Johnson. Albany Empire, Douglas Way SE8. Phone 01-693 333 for bookings. Doors 7pm. Tickets £2.50 unwaged, £5 waged.

**Wednesday 22 March**  
South London SO. 'Socialists and Ireland': speakers Martin Collins (TTG) and Martin Thomas. Walworth Town Hall, SE17. 7.30

**Saturday 25 March**  
Campaign Against Massacres in Iran, Iraq and Turkey. Picket at United Nations Info Centre, 20 Buckingham Gate, London SW1. 1.00

**Saturday 29 April**  
CLPs Conference on Party Democracy

**Sunday 14 May**  
Lutte Ouvriere fete near Paris

**Saturday 17 June**  
Socialist Conference Third Conference (two days). Octagon Centre, Sheffield

**Saturday 8 July**  
Workers' Liberty Summer School (two days), London

**Saturday 11 November**  
Socialist Conference 'Building the Left in the Unions', Sheffield

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# The Philippine left in transition

**In 1985 the hideous dictatorship of President Marcos in the Philippines was overthrown by a mass movement demanding 'people's power'. Corazon Aquino, a wealthy liberal opponent of Marcos was elected president. Yet poverty, inequality, violence — and huge US military bases — remain. This is the second part of an article by a Filipino socialist, Joly Macuja, which looks at how the left is organising.**

**T**he Philippine left spans various tendencies. The mainstream remains the underground complex of the 'Marxist-Leninist' (Maoist-inspired) Communist Party of the Philippines whose membership is claimed to be 35,000 cadres scattered across the archipelago and its army of 30,000 full-timers in the New People's Army which has been waging people's war since 1969, operating in 63 out of the country's 73 provinces, according to Jose Maria Sison, alleged chairman of the Party.

Its political clout among the population is mainly via the National Democratic Front which serves as an alliance of sectoral organisations of which the CPP is one. It is committed to the dismantling of the 'semi-colonial' and 'semi-feudal' order primarily via a protracted people's war in the

spirit of MaoZeDong's 'surround the city from the countryside'.

It sees a two-stage revolution. National democracy is the first stage — a mixed economy which promotes national capital via state ownership of the major industries under a 'Democratic Coalition (ie of various sectors) Government' towards (the second stage) a (largely unarticulated) socialist Philippines.

In official National Democratic propaganda 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is mentioned nowhere, apparently in a conscious effort to attract 'nationalist bourgeois' elements to the cause.

The open and legal mass organisations of the National Democratic Front express ideological kinship as far as the cause of 'national democracy' is concerned. Making these up are sectoral organisations under the national coalition Bagong Alyansang Makabayan or BAYAN (New Nationalist Alliance), formed originally in the summer of 1985. It was meant to be an alliance of all tendencies of the left against the US-Marcos regime, but failed to be that because it failed to allocate adequate representation to tendencies other than that of the national democratic segment.

Sectorally they compose a formidable network of workers (Kilusang Mayo Uno or May First Movement), peasants (Kilusang Magbubukid ng Philipinas or Peasant Movement of the Philippines), students (League of Filipino Students), community youth (Kabataan para sa Demokrasya at Nasyonalismo or Kadena-Youth for Nationalism and Democracy), teachers (Alliance of Concerned Teachers) and other sectoral organisations.

These organisations have a long track record of militancy and non-compromise. They chose to boycott the Snap Presidential elections which resulted in their isolation from the historic people's uprising sparked by rebel soldiers, led by the church and opposition in the person of populist leader Corazon C. Aquino, widow of the slain Philippine Senator, and largely participated in by the other segments of the movement. Such a decision was undeniably a political setback, a



mistake now readily and openly admitted.

The National Democratic bloc claims a membership of two million.

From a stance of wait and see vis-a-vis the Aquino government, it has moved to adopt a position of working to oppose the US Aquino regime, following the 1987 massacre of farmers on Mendiola bridge leading to the Presidential Palace, the proliferation of armed paramilitary organisations known as vigilante organisations guilty of many of the human rights abuses, and the murder of prominent leftist leaders (Alejandro, Olalia, and human rights lawyers among the many) as well as the continued militarisation that stalks the countryside, despite the new government.

The second dominant tendency within the Philippine left are the Democratic Socialists, which only recently last year forged a greater working unity spanning different organisations under the Democratic Socialist Coalition. Its roots, like the national democrats are from the student activist days of the 1960s

where groups of students were divided into two camps — the 'moderates' and the 'radicals'.

The 'moderates' formed the backbone of many of the underground democratic socialist organisations which continued to operate under martial rule, independent of the CPP — organising militias for self defense and at one time opting for armed struggle against the regime, efforts which were not particularly successful.

The Democratic Socialist movement in the Philippines revolves mainly around the theoretical work of groups such as the Pandayan para sa Sosyalistang Pilipinas (Anvil for a Socialist Philippines), the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (Philippine Democratic Socialist Party), and Kapulungan ng mga Sandigan ng Pilipinas (Assembly of Pillars of the Philippines).

They analyse the Philippine situation to be neo-colonial capitalist, and their primary form of struggle is the formation of autonomous people's organisations — trade unions, peasant organisations geared for extra-parliamentary ac-

tivities — and the establishment of centres of direct democracy apart from the state through these. They look to electoral struggle secondarily and aim to move towards a 'social-democratic' mixed economy with workers' participation in the management of enterprise as a transition towards a worker's participative socialism with a multi-party set-up.

The Democratic Socialists would identify in some senses with the Labour and democratic socialist traditions of the Western European parties, but would be critical of tendencies to see the parliamentary road to socialism as primary. They recognise that the limitations imposed by the bourgeois state in any socialist project has led to a de facto abandonment of the socialist agenda by many parliamentary socialists.

The tendency's philosophical basis is a mixture of Marxism, Christian humanism and liberation theology, so-called Authentic Humanism.

Continued next week

## A new voice for socialism

**This manifesto has been published by the Polish Socialist Party (Democratic Revolution)**

**T**he crisis of ideology reflects the impotence of the traditional political choices towards an irrational and inhuman model of development.

Contemporary capitalism has overcome successive barriers to growth and made economic development an end in itself. In the course of continual technological change, man has become an obstacle rather than the subject of the process.

Ever larger numbers of young people pay for this with unemployment and poverty. These phenomena, together with the informational and cultural expropriation of societies, lead to alienation, racism and chauvinism.

In the countries of the so-called 'Third World' — that is the countries of dependent capitalism — the social costs of this model of

development are incomparably higher. Absence of economic independence gives rise to political dependence. The alternative then lies between an authoritarian dictatorship and Stalinism.

The balance sheet of the communist governments consist of genocide, social apathy and economic collapse.

Post-Stalinist totalitarianism is seeking out new forms in order to survive. Free market processes, with the preservation of the nomenklatura authorities, have the effect of strengthening and deepening the mechanisms of exploitation and domination.

Conflict is increasing between the governing elite and the rich layers under its tutelage on the one hand, and the working majority on the other. The omnipresent state, which mediates all social relations, is trying to retain the initiative in the process of change. Despite the hopes of some influential circles, reform from above will not change the social consequences of totalitarianism. Society wants to reform itself and not to be reformed.

Socialists the world over struggle so that work may become liberation from poverty, domination and isolation. The experience of the

workers' movement shows that the take-over of the workplace and the creation of representative political bodies for society lead to a multi-sectoral economy, with a social security system, resting on the redistribution of national income.

In the conditions prevailing in Poland, of a state sector managed by the communist nomenklatura, it is necessary to depoliticise it, by severing the PUWP (Polish United Workers' Party) from economic policy and personnel appointment. The workplaces should be managed by the workforces and by a management team responsible to them.

The systemic alternative that appears in the course of this process opens new horizons for civilisation. It creates new forms of self-management and democracy. It permits society to emancipate itself in the search for cultural and informational sovereignty. It creates the chance for it to free itself from the control of the military industrial complex, for the restoration of the disturbed equilibrium between man and nature.

The present crisis in the socialist movement can be overcome by outlining perspectives for a common system for societies living under diverse systems of dependence and domination. This is

the kind of imagination and political courage that are required.

Polish workers have broken the informational and organisational monopoly of the state. The turning point has been passed. In the period of the occupation strikes a consciousness was born, that the workers were becoming the actual proprietors of their factories. Alongside trade union consciousness the need for political activity became apparent. The dynamic of this movement ran into the resistance of post-Stalinist totalitarianism.

The irreformability of the system means that the only chance for working people is to become an alternative power. The function of that power is the socialisation of the state: the take-over of economic power in the factories together with the creation of a democratic form of representation for society: a commonwealth of producers and citizens.

In August 1980, at Brasow, Karabach and Jastrzebie, the elements of this same phenomenon were present, carrying forward what we regard as the democratic revolution, the passage from a totalitarian system to a democratic one, the socialisation of the economy and independence.

The destruction of totalitarianism can take place only from below, by the will of the workers, through the autonomous workers' movement, organised in the workplaces in conscious and purposeful activity. The Polish Socialist Party is taking an active part in the construction of an alternative power, with the aim of emancipating Polish society.

To this end we consider that the essential tasks are as follows:

1. The strengthening and development of Solidarnosc on a factory, regional and national level.

2. The taking of the initiative in management by the workers' councils and a struggle for new forms of self-management.

3. The creation of vertical and horizontal self-management agreements.

4. The creation of a form of self-management to represent the workers at a national level: the Chamber of Self-Management in the Sejm (Parliament).

5. Undertaking a campaign for democratic electoral rules for the Sejm and the People's Councils.

6. The struggle for the demilitarisation of the country.

This process, taken as a whole, can make society sovereign and lead to a free and independent Poland.



# Mystic in the mist

## CINEMA

**Belinda Weaver reviews 'Gorillas in the Mist'**

**G**orillas in the Mist' is structured like a Shakespearean tragedy: the heroine's own inner flaws bring about her downfall.

It's based on the real life story of Dian Fossey, an American who went to Africa in the '60s to try to carry out a census of the declining mountain gorilla population in the mountains of Rwanda in Africa. Only about 600 gorillas were left.

Fossey, a former teacher of handicapped children, had no anthropological qualifications or experience, but felt her training suited her for the job of trying to get close to frightened, vulnerable creatures. Despite her lack of experience, the Leakey Foundation, a kind of trust set up to protect endangered species, took a gamble on Fossey and financed her trip. There was no-one else they could send, the mountain gorilla was seriously in danger of extinction, so they responded to her desperate longing (never quite explained) to go.

It was love at first sight. To complete her census of the gorilla population, Fossey had been told to search for the night nests of these large, shy creatures, but this was too distant a method for her; she wanted to get close to the gorillas.

With her native guide, Sembegare, Fossey tracked the gorillas painstakingly, over many weeks, and was finally rewarded with a sight of a group foraging together. The film shows her conquering her own fears about approaching these occasionally aggressive beasts, and also how the gorillas came to accept her as a strange but not hostile fellow creature.

Her playfulness with the gorillas shows Fossey's gentle side; she could also be a virago. When the gorillas were threatened by hunters or kidnapped for zoos around the world, her rage could be terrifying. She resorted to the most violent measures to protect 'her' gorillas on 'her' mountain.

It is this increasing identification with the gorillas that sows the first seeds of tragedy. Fossey, isolated, cut off from people, fiercely protective of her beloved



animals, begins to lose her sense of proportion, her flexibility, her judgement, becoming almost fanatical. Having used publicity as a weapon to awaken public opinion, she now discovers it has been a very mixed blessing indeed.

The mountain is threatened by the influx of curious tourists who want to see the gorillas for themselves. Fossey, who can hardly bear the presence of other researchers, can't accept this invasion of her Eden. Tragedy strikes.

The film is based on Dian Fossey's own book of the same name. It's possibly quite accurate in its depiction of her as both gentle conservationist and virago, but it's not a very satisfying film. Fossey as she is played by Sigourney Weaver is too bull-headed, too imperious to be truly likeable, and

there's no-one else much in the movie. Her guide Sembegare is nice enough, but his character is never really developed; he's just there in the background to be supportive to Dian.

We never get to see what it is that drives Dian to make her home with the gorillas, why she's prepared to undergo the hardships of living in the cold, wild mountains of Rwanda, turning her back on love and friendship, fighting uncaring authorities and evil poachers.

In his speech that Dian hears at the beginning, Louis Leakey says he studies creatures like the gorillas because he wants to know who he is and where he came from. He says that the gorillas' habits are like the foraging habits of early man, that man can learn a lot from studying animals. We're meant to understand that that's a little of what

motivates Dian too, yet we're never shown it.

The film emphasises the playfulness of the gorillas, points up their cuteness, as if we couldn't be interested in them if they weren't frisky little creatures, gambolling about. It's almost insulting.

The mountain gorillas of Rwanda continue to multiply and thrive, which is largely Fossey's achievement. Without her, they might have become just another extinct species. Yet she's difficult to like. It's hard to identify with someone who can shut her eyes to so much human suffering, while remaining so acutely sensitive to the needs of animals. Fossey doesn't seem to have minded hurting people, even hurting herself, as long as her gorillas survived and thrived. She was a visionary. I'm not that comfortable with visionaries.

# A cautionary tale

## TV

By Vicki Morris

**U**ntil I watched them critically, I hadn't realised that TV detective stories, aside from plots of varying complexity, have moral themes.

I'd thought 'Bergerac' was merely an escapist tale of tax-exiles' security anxieties. But, at a second glance, I realised that the excuse for all those absurdly stereotyped one-dimensional characters cropping up this week, was experience: how well do you know your loved one?

Why else should the mugging victim be a stripper, except that we could then meet her father, the bishop, hurrying concerned to her hospital bedside to confront — and forgive — the truth of his daughter's sordid lifestyle? "Darling I never realised..."

The rich and powerful mayor had painfully to confront the reality of his feckless son as a debtor.

The sultry xenophobic Jerseyman had to confront the fact that his family had not been ruined by the evil machinations of the rich and powerful mayor, but by his own father's lack of business acumen. (No, it didn't seem that incredible to me either, but that Jerseyman had one hell of a chip on his shoulder.)

The last laugh was on Bergerac who, harbouring a secret resentment for the likes of the rich playboy and his overbearing father, had to confront his prejudices and accept that it was, after all, his glowering fellow countrymen who had sprayed gunk all over his vulgar classic car. The truth hurts, Bergerac. But not very much.

Compared to which, "Taggart" was like a long — very long — bad dream. On reflection I can't believe I sat through 2½ hours of cross-bow murders, attacks on women, grey scenes of Glasgow and the gritty — I contend, merely vile — Taggart.

It all sounds very different to mild-mannered Bergerac; but in fact the writer was possessed by the same moral concerns, as one marital infidelity after another was exposed. And in spite of its seeming realism "Taggart" ended every bit as absurdly: one unfaithful wife participating in the murder of her husband by her lover, in a copy-cat crossbow killing only to discover that her husband was the original cross-bow killer. It's called dramatic irony.

So, it's all very clever stuff really — not just car-chases, cross-bow killings and ID parades. It's gratifying to know that it takes a bit more brains to write one of those things than it does to watch one.

# Computer spies and vandals

## LES HEARN'S SCIENCE COLUMN



**I**t seems the espionage potential of 'hacking' (unauthorised entry into computers) is starting to be realised. Eight West German hackers are currently under suspicion of spying for the Soviet Union.

The advantage of computer spying is that you don't have to actually risk your neck by physically breaking into top secret establishments. You just get your computer (or the boss's or the university's) to dial up the target computer via the public telephone system and ask it for the information.

Well, it's not quite as simple as that. You need a password first but these are sometimes surprisingly easy to guess because people tend to choose combinations of letters that are easy to remember, like names. Once in, you search the files for key words, like "SDI".

The West German hackers are alleged to have passed on lists of passwords as well as blueprints for making the latest microchips to the KGB. They are said to have got into American military computers and those of armaments companies.

This problem was predicted and ignored two years ago. A group of German hackers, the Chaos Computer Club in Hamburg, said they had got into US and European space computers and warned that systems need to be made more secure.

Round that time, an American astronomer, Dr Clifford Stoll, noticed a discrepancy of 75 cents in his lab's computer bill. Realising that someone was gaining unauthorised entry, Stoll started watching what they were doing.

He found that they were trying to

find passwords by trial and error and that they were searching files for such words as "SDI", "nuclear" and "biological warfare".

Stoll told the FBI but they were uninterested so eventually he decided to set a trap for them, himself. He set up a phoney "Star Wars" file and, while the hacker was scanning its contents, Stoll traced the number he was calling from, in Hanover, West Germany.

The problem of hackers getting

## Full marks for effort

**T**he 'Shroud of Turin' was supposed to be the winding cloth of the dead Jesus, miraculously marked with his image at the moment of his resurrection. When carbon dating showed it to be not biblical but mediaeval in age, I jokingly said "It's a miracle".

One ingenious scientist, Thomas Phillips of Harvard's High Energy Physics Lab, then put forward (seriously, I suppose) a miraculous explanation for the apparent modernity of the shroud.

He proposed that Jesus' resurrected body not only gave forth a blast of light and/or heat which accounted for the image; it also gave forth a burst of neutrons which converted enough of the naturally occurring Carbon 13 to radioactive Carbon-14 to account for the shroud's apparent origin in the 13th

or 14th centuries. He didn't put forward an explanation, wisely, in my opinion, of how Jesus' body could have done any of these things.

But this theory is easily checked. The neutrons would have affected other atoms present and would in particular have given rise to isotopes of chlorine and calcium which do not occur in nature. This is because Carbon-14 is created high in the atmosphere where no calcium or chlorine is found (apart from that put there in the last few years by the CFC's that are destroying the ozone layer).

Phillips' theory is published in Nature, alongside a letter from one of the original carbon dating teams. This points out that there is no known way for the neutrons to arise and asks why that number should have been produced rather than a number sufficient to put the apparent date of the shroud way into the future. That would be a miracle!

## CLPs Conference on the witch-hunt and democracy

Saturday 29 April

AEU Hall, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool. 11am to 5pm Each CLP is entitled to three delegates at £2.00 per delegate. Visitors are welcome.

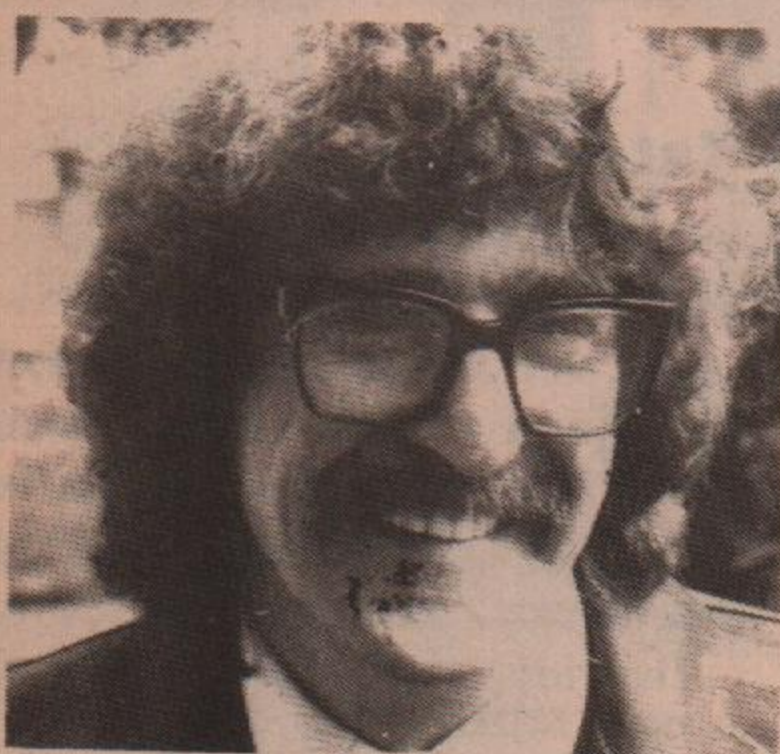
Contact: Lol Duffy, 11 Egremont Prom, Wallasey, Merseyside L44 8BG



# Five years after

## WHETTON'S WEEK

A miner's diary



It's the fifth anniversary of the start of the 1984-5 miners' strike.

We said then that if the Tories came for the miners then they would come for everybody else. That warning has certainly been borne out.

The tragedy was the TUC and the Labour Party sitting on the fence and not thrusting their full weight behind the miners. If we'd pulled our fingers out, if other sections of the trade union and labour movement had thrown more weight behind us, then the whole political scenario now would be completely different.

That strike was there for the winning. We could have done it — and if we'd done it then the tragedies that we've all seen since the miners' strike would not have happened.

The attacks on the other sections of the trade unions, the asset-stripping of this government, the attacks on the health service, the attacks on education and the attacks on housing, might still have gone ahead to some degree but it would have been nothing like what we've seen.

Now even if a Labour government were elected tomorrow with a firm commitment towards socialism, they would have to do such drastic re-

building that it would be years before anybody saw any benefit. To look forward from the present day is to be staring down a very dark tunnel indeed. I can foresee a lot of heartbreak and a lot of pain in the next few years.

Having said all that, I am sternly convinced that getting rid of the Tories is not a matter of bringing together some sort of conglomerate of the middle ground including the churches, the SDP and the Liberals and the rest of it.

I believe a firm commitment from the Labour Party to a programme of principled socialism would appeal to a great many. I don't think that we've got to convince ex-Liberals and wet Tories to come over and vote Labour. What we've got to do is to convince those that stay at home who should be voting Labour but believe that all politicians piss in one pot and therefore can't be bothered to turn out and vote. They're the voters that we've got to appeal to.

They need to see that we are going to carry out a radical transformation of society, putting it into the hands of those that create the wealth.

We need to show them that there is a future to look forward to, because many people are turning to attitudes of "I'm going to look after number one" and "stuff you Jack, I'm all right".

At my own pit, I went to do on Friday night celebrating the anniversary of the strike. Two or three people were incredulous and asked me why we would want to celebrate that. I had to point out to them the reasons why I thought it was important that we should remember.

The question of the sacked miners is a tragedy too. Many people are still surprised to find out there are sacked miners. Those that are aware of the fact are disillusioned by the fact that we can't seem to make any headway.

But the victimised miners continue to soldier on. They're absolutely magnificent. With their wives and kids, five years on, they're still prepared to campaign and argue. It is nothing short of miraculous.

What the strike was about was trying to protect jobs and protect pits and protect communities. We heard the warning all come true.

I believe that there is more to come, and we're not in a position to stop it unless we're prepared to grasp the

## New GCHQ-type union ban

By Trudy Saunders

Only days after the sacking of the last trade unionist at GCHQ, Civil Service bosses want to force a no-strike agreement on workers in the Customs and Excise department.

According to a report carried out by management and accountants Touche Ross, industrial action by the Department's 400 staff is "the most severe risk to computer services". They give two solutions to their 'problem': privatisation or no-strike agreements.

This has serious implications for trade unionism throughout the civil service. In the Department of Social Security (DSS) the right-wing Section Executive Committee of the CPSA, the union representing clerical, typing and secretarial grades, is set to "campaign vigorously" to get members to accept the bosses' computerisation programme

— involving 15,000 job losses.

But will the bosses then want a no-strike deal on Social Security workers similar to the one in Customs and Excise in order to prevent "risk to computer services"?

The Tories are determined to smash unions in the Civil Service. The CPSA has long been a thorn in their side. The banning of trade unions at GCHQ was only the beginning. No-strike deals are the next logical step.

The current right-wing union executive failed to lead or even allow a fight over GCHQ. Right-wing General Secretary John Ellis has stated he does not intend to fight privatisation. We cannot allow our cowardly leadership to throw away our basic rights as workers and trade unionists — the right to strike.

The left in the CPSA and NUCPS (union representing lower manager grades) must begin a campaign among the rank and file. The CPSA Broad Left must not sit back as it has done over so many issues — we must organise now.

## IN BRIEF

**breakaway cabin crew** members of 'Cabin Crew 89'. The pilots' union BALPA is still backing the breakaway.

The government has proposed local pay supplements for **NHS white collar** staff to deal with recruitment difficulties.

The threat of strike action at Britain's main **airports** has been called off. Fire officers have accepted a compromise formula over the break-up of national pay bargaining. A strike by fire officers could have closed major airports and quickly forced bosses to back down.

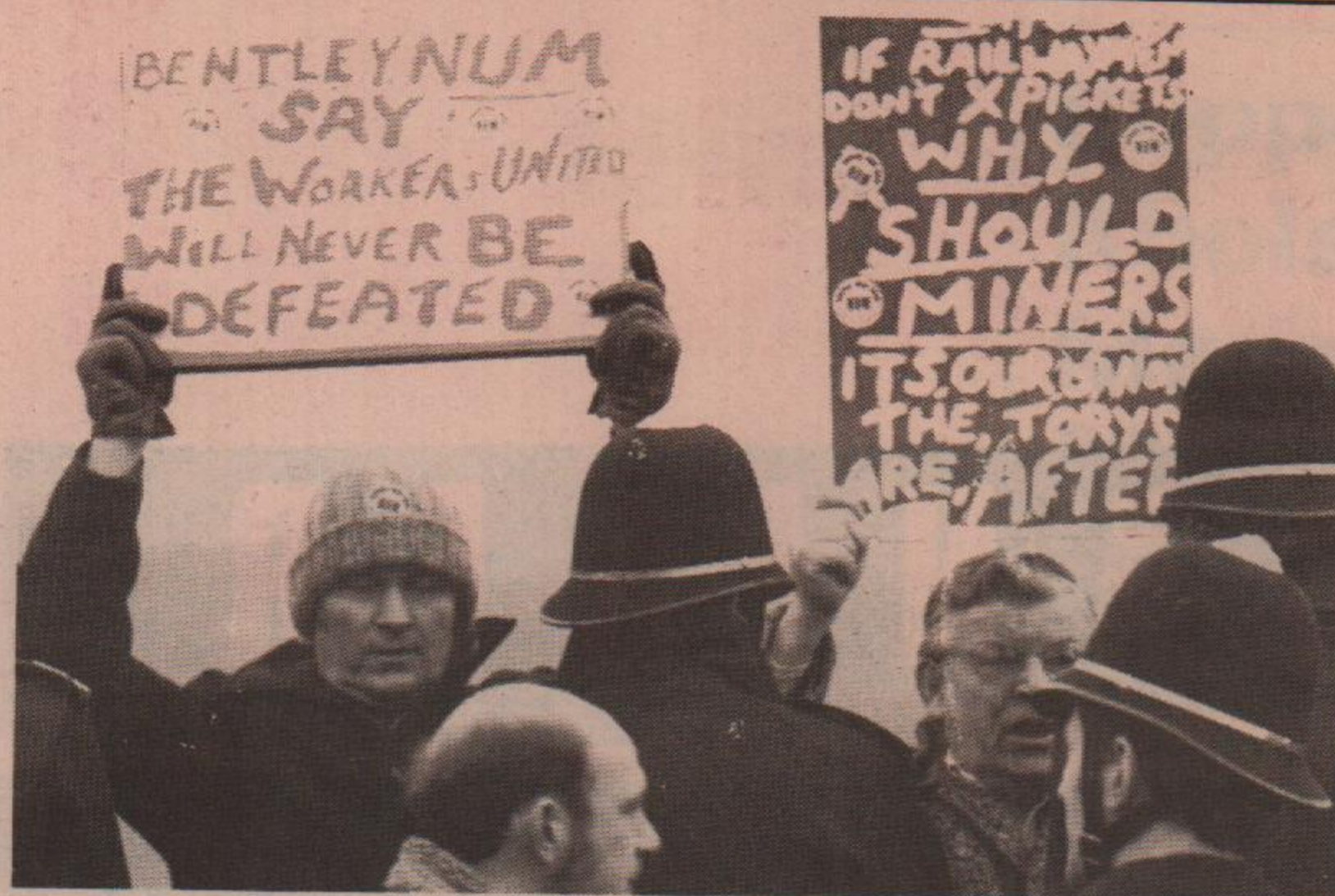
The Equal Opportunities Commission says **equal pay** legislation is letting women down. They still only earn, on average, three quarters of the male wage. Industrial tribunal cases — to dispute pay levels — last an average of 13 months!

Fishing boat owners at Hull have won a High Court battle authorising them to use 'unregistered' labour. This would lead to a breach of the **National Dock Labour Scheme** — and to a ballot for strike action under TGWU policy. The National Dock Labour Board is due to appeal against the decision.

**British Coal** is to impose a two year pay deal on the NUM.

As the lecture boycott of **university** exams threatens to bite, the lecturers' union leaders have said they are willing to accept arbitration.

TGWU members have threatened to strike if forced to work with



nettle.

The only way to stop the pit closures that are going ahead and the privatisation of the pits is direct industrial action. There is no way we can talk to the Coal Board or the Tory government. There is no way that a full campaign by the Labour Party is going to centre itself around the pits. I believe they've written off the pits as a lost cause and forgotten them.

The only language which is likely to stop pit closures or attempt to bring some sort of fresh look at the problem of privatisation is industrial action. A lot of people shy away from that, but I am afraid there is no alternative.

We lost in 1984-5. But I would personally rather have fought and lost than never fought at all. We can either lie back and get steam-rolled or stand up and fight. Even if we get steam-

rolled again, at least we've had a go.

The pay deal imposed on the UDM has now been imposed on the NUM too. It's exactly what we expected — and it's next to nothing when you look at other industries and in other sectors. The pay deal to the mineworkers makes us a laughing stock.

Until we get together, and by get together I mean recruit those UDM members back into the NUM we aren't going to make any headway.

We are going to have pay deals handed down to us and crammed down our throats whether we like it or not. That is going to happen whichever organisation you are in — the union of the bosses' sweetheart organisation.

Paul Whetton is a member of Manton NUM, South Yorkshire.

## Votes move against sell-out

The new pay deal stitched up by Post Office bosses and the executive of the Union of Communication Workers (UCW) looks like it might be kicked out in a national ballot. The result is due out soon.

The deal being voted on breaks down into two parts. There is an overtime package almost identical to one thrown out last year, though there are some positive proposals such as maximum pay for new recruits after six months.

And there is a pay supplement package for the South East and some areas where PO bosses find it difficult to recruit on such low basic wages. This is DRAS Mark Two.

The deal as a whole stinks. Originally the union executive wanted only the people who would get the extra payments to vote on them! They were challenged and the whole membership is voting on the full deal. Post Office management will not accept a 'no' vote

on supplements and a 'yes' vote on overtime. They are clear about pay supplements being central to the deal.

Even right-wing Bristol has kicked it out. Dave Chapple, chair of Bridgwater branch, spoke to SO: "First the executive tried to bribe a section of the membership who were to get pay supplements by only letting them vote. But this has backfired.

"Even in the West Country branches are kicking the deal out with overwhelming majorities.

"But the key branches are those around London which are due to get the extra payments.

"People are still confused about what will happen if it is kicked out. We desperately need a rank and file organisation in the UCW to tap into this militancy and direct it. I for one intend to find out more about the Broad Left and get in there to help turn it around before we start losing some of the best militants through sheer demoralisation."

## Haringey year zero?

The Labour council in Haringey (North London) has recently cut 600 jobs among its building workers. Now it faces a major new budget crisis.

It has a shortfall, according to council figures of £45 million if jobs and services are to be maintained at existing levels. The council already plans rent increases of £4.50 in April 1989, £4.50 in October and £4.50 in April 1990, but it still has to find another £45 million for the next financial year.

The council has known since early February that it would be about £13 million short — of £7.5 million on building works, £4.5 million from bed and breakfast accommodation for the homeless. Then it needs £8 million to keep up with inflation on the present level of services.

Over the last week the council have discovered that they have overspent by £6.6 million. And the main new item is the chickens of "creative accounting" shitting all over the council. The cost of servicing the Council's debt has risen to a staggering £21 million.

Council officials have been asked to budget for a 13% cut in services but they didn't know where to start. The scope of job losses would be huge. For instance, the cut in education would represent the equivalent of losing the whole of the primary school workforce.

For the first time since 1985 the council is not being rate-capped. They could go for a mixed 'package' of cuts and rate rises. A 30% rate increase would probably remove the threat of compulsory redundancies on top of those already announced for building workers. This would mean a re-run of the early 1980s, when the council

blocked with the unions to push through rate rises as a means of avoiding a fight with the government.

The unions must learn the lessons of that episode. The councillors will only support the unions as long as it is politically expedient.

Encouragingly the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee has decided to make a stand on the basis of no compulsory redundancies.

Now the Joint Committee must put out a regular bulletin keeping the workers up to date; it must demand the

## Dribbling militancy away

Union leaders at Jaguar have put off industrial action and called for a meeting with the bosses. This follows the second vote for strike action by Jaguar workers this year — by a majority of 22 votes.

The first strike vote over pay was won by a 54% majority. But immediately union leaders looked for further negotiations instead of organising action. Result: the bosses' second 'final' offer — the same 2 year pay deal of around 4½% each year plus an extra 50p per week!

Instead of throwing this out and calling action union leaders called another vote on this 'new' deal. Now the majority for action is down to 22 votes.

The pay negotiations have dragged on and on since last November. It was clear from the outset that the unions wanted a one year deal that matched inflation and that management wanted a 2 year deal amounting to a pay cut. Yet union leaders called vote after vote on variations of management's offer.

They were using these votes as bargaining counters with the bosses rather than as calls to action. Not surprisingly Jaguar workers have become more and more pissed off with the whole affair.

Suspending action leaves union negotiators in a weaker position when they go back to the bosses.

If strike action is not organised now then Jaguar workers will be forced to take what they're given by their increasingly confident bosses.

## Peugot-Talbot

4,500 manual workers at Peugeot-Talbot are voting on industrial action over pay.

The result is due on Wednesday 8 March.

They have already voted overwhelmingly against the two year pay offer of just over 16%. It was tied to attendance allowances and to moving the annual shutdown to fall into line with French car plants.

What is needed is short sharp shock action. The car market is buoyant, profits are high and inflation is fuelling pay militancy.

The lessons of nearby Jaguar show the dangers of dragging on negotiations and dissipating militancy.

## Labour council union-busting

Labour controlled Southwark council is declaring war on its trade unions.

Management want to impose performance related pay by 1 April for white collar workers. No one will be entitled to a yearly pay rise. Individual assessments will replace job evaluations. Council workers will have to prove they are performing well enough — or else face disciplinary proceedings.

The aim is to clear the way for sackings. Union activists, already an endangered species in Southwark Council, will be obvious targets.

The Council is also considering a package which includes closing a children's home.

The NALGO branch Executive has been slow to act. They have

council open the books, to see exactly what Tory policies and their ineptness have brought down on the workforce; it must campaign for strikes against any compulsory redundancies and support for workers who take action to defend their jobs or services.

Militants must also fight for these policies through their union branches or stewards' committees.

It is only from such a basis of strength that the unions can begin to dictate terms to the council, rather than being used by it as a political football.

called an "emergency" branch meeting only two days before the management offensive is due to start. And they intend to recommend no course of action!

Computer Services Division (CSD) have already called a shop meeting and voted for industrial action if the proposals go through. NALGO activists need to build for well-attended section meetings later this month to win the arguments for industrial action.

Labour Party activists should take the fight into the party — though both Peckham and Bermondsey CLPs have been suspended by Labour's National Executive.

These union busting tactics are the logical result of a Labour Council with Tory policies. Stop doing Thatcher's dirty work.



# SOCIALIST

## ORGANISER

# Venezuela: dicing with debt



Glasgow: the third rail disaster in three months

# Rail: profits before safety

By Laura Evans

**B**ritish Rail could be safer — if more money was spent on safety. That's the harsh reality, clear as day since the three terrible disasters of the last three months.

BR has several safety problems. The automatic warning system (AWS) sounds a horn in the driver's carriage as amber signals are approached. But on busy lines drivers have to switch off the horn at almost every signal. It becomes almost subconscious. Crashes dating back several years have indicated the weaknesses of the system.

Research into a better system was abandoned. Why? It would cost Network

South-East alone between £100 million and £200 million. And it would require more staff. But BR is cutting staff in its drive to raise profits and prepare for privatisation.

One-person operated trains, which will be introduced at Waterloo later this year, will put even greater pressure and responsibility on drivers. What's worse, drivers do long hours — sometimes up to 50 hours a week. This makes concentration difficult.

BR needs new warning technology. It needs to spend money. And it needs to listen to BR workers and trade unionists. At Purley, train drivers had been expressing concern about the position of signals before last Saturday's

disaster.

Profits first — safety a low priority. That's the problem in BR.

To get safety, we need an

integrated public transport system based not upon making money, but on providing the best possible service.

# Ceasefire in El Salvador?

**T**he right wing government of El Salvador last week called for a ceasefire in the nine year old war between it and the rebel guerillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

This follows FMLN proposals to participate in elections — if they are genuinely free and fair, and if they're held in September. The government of Jose Napoleon Duarte wants elections in April which the FMLN say will be rigged.

There is to be a meeting between the FMLN and the President.

Why sudden concessions from Duarte? One major reason is a decline in his support from the

peasantry, previously the regime's strongest base. As peasants move over to the guerillas, Duarte hopes that by presenting himself as a peacemaker he can win them, or some of them, back.

Of course there is a risk here, because if the peasants are allowed to vote, they won't vote for Duarte. This problem is thus brilliantly solved by allowing an election which won't be free and fair, which the guerillas will necessarily boycott. The guerillas can then be presented as the unreasonable ones, for refusing to participate in elections they were guaranteed not to win.

Quite reasonably, the FMLN has refused to swallow this bait. By

Kate O'Leary reports  
on Venezuela

**O**ver 300 people have died and 2,000 have been injured in riots in Latin America's longest standing democracy, Venezuela.

The riots began on 27 February as news broke of austerity plans — a condition of new loans from the IMF to Venezuela. Bus fares were to rise by 30%, price controls to be lifted, and interest rates to be raised.

The government reacted brutally to the rioters. A curfew was imposed, rights of assembly and free speech were suspended, and detention without trial introduced. The rioting was finally quelled by promises of retaining price controls on 18 basic products and by wage increases of £30 a month in the private sector and 32% in the public sector.

The IMF deal, and the riots, are the result of the debt crisis hitting Venezuela. Venezuela is a rich country, and throughout the 1970s the government borrowed hugely on the basis of expected income. But from \$19 billion in 1981, the value of exports dropped to only \$8 billion in 1988. Venezuela's government had massively overborrowed.

Both the IMF and the US government have promised new loans to Venezuela to help the government out of the crisis, and to avoid its political consequences. The IMF has said that interest repayments do not have to start until September. But when asked if he intended to delay repayments longer, President Perez said that would depend on the success of his economic programme.

Western banks are becoming increasingly worried that Venezuela will default on its debt repayments — and if Venezuela does that, with the highest per-capita income in Latin America, then what are the chances of other less well-off nations defaulting on their repayments.

Other Latin American leaders — Raul Alfonsin in Argentina, and President Sarney in Brazil — have warned the IMF that what happened in Venezuela could be repeated across Latin America.

A system that makes children starve to feed bankers' profits cannot be stable.

accepting the offer of talks but insisting that the election be fair, they have put Duarte on the defensive.

The war in El Salvador has been bloodthirsty even by Central American standards. Duarte, backed to the hilt by the freedom loving US of A (as a counterweight to the 'totalitarian' government of neighbouring Nicaragua — which was elected in a free and fair election, observers agreed in 1984), has presided over a regime of death squads and mass repression.

Quite likely, in genuine elections, the FMLN would win — producing a regime quite similar to the one in Nicaragua. It would be a big step forward for the Salvadoran people.



**WOTTE**

**S**ocialist  
**STUDENT**



**LIZ**

**MILLWARD**

**National Secretary**

**STEVE**

**MITCHELL**

**VP FEUD**