



**Students against the Tories**

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**Don't leave Labour!**

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For socialist renewal!



For workers' liberty!



**What is Stalinism?**

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**Columbus — maker of Liverpool**



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# SOCIALIST NHS:

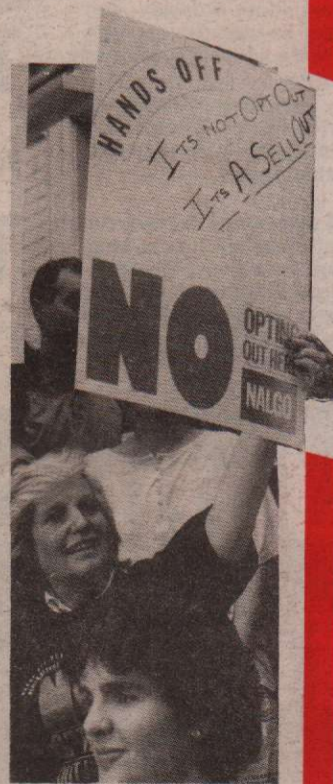
**ORGANISER**

*Unite the left!*

# The Tories



# are liars!



**Yes, they do want to privatise!**

**H**e would, wouldn't he? Health service boss, Duncan Nichol, says that the NHS is safe with the Tories. Nichol is the man who fronted

the Tories' resistance to the ambulance workers' pay campaign. He is a well-paid, hard-nosed, worker-bashing manager. No wonder he is happy with the Tories. And no wonder that Nichol's

new NHS "trusts" are gagging ordinary Health Service workers, threatening them with the sack if they speak out about cuts and com-

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**Tories out! Fight for a Labour victory!**

# A deathly silence

By Mick Ackersley

In World War One, when soldiers went out from the trenches into the machine gun fire of the enemy a deathly eerie silence would fall, the big guns grown silent before the men went over the top and battle began.

That was the atmosphere at Labour Party conference this year!

Little stirred. In terms of real political debate, there was a deathly silence — except for one moment — broken only by the drone of say-nothing speeches.

The labour movement is concentrating on one thing right now with grim determination: the coming General Election battle with the Tories.

The momentary exception was the leadership defeat on defence cuts.

It was as if all the pent-up frustration of the delegates with the blandness and banality of Kinnockism had to be compensated for by one kick of the old Labour Con-

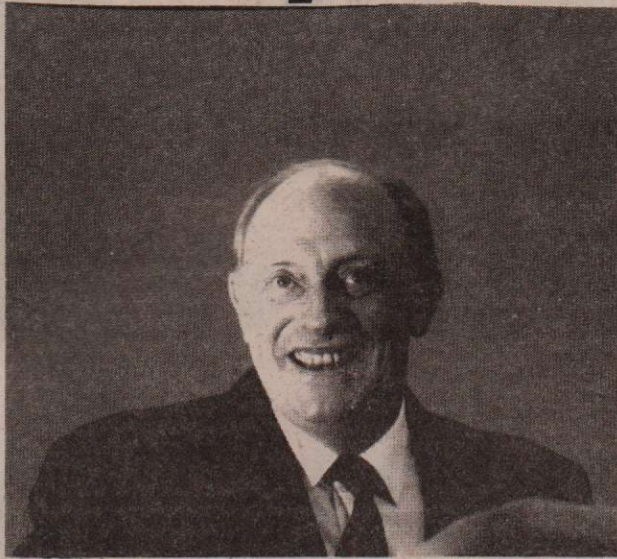


Photo John Harris

ference spirit.

The vote also allowed expression to the delegates fears for the future and, perhaps, their uneasiness at the effective blank cheque Prime Minister Kinnock will have from the Labour Party at the beginning of a Labour government.

Even old incorrigibles of

the left, like Tony Benn, kept their heads down.

The Tribune Rally was dominated by ex-leftist witch-

hunters, people like Clare Short and Richard Caborn.

Militant's candidacy in the Walton by-election allowed these sell-outs to feel righteous.

The best speech there was that of Barbara Castle, the one-time leftist who tried to bring in anti-union legislation for the Labour government in 1969, and who has since not been welcome on the left — until now.

She gave the rationale for the whole business: the General Election is the last chance to stop the Thatcherite counter-revolution from being irreversible.

Another military picture, a famous saying, suggests itself for Mr Kinnock and the witch-hunting ex-leftists at the conference: they made a wilderness and called it peace.

Win or lose, that peace can not last much beyond the General Election.

## Justice for the Tottenham Three!

Several hundred people smarched through North London last Saturday (5th October) to demand the release of the Tottenham Three, Winston Silcott, Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghip, wrongly jailed for the murder of a policeman during riots in Tottenham in 1985.



Many members of Terry Fields' Broadgreen Constituency Labour Party were surprised to see Barry Navarro pop up at last week's Labour Party conference as "their" delegate.

Navarro was at one time close to the Militant tendency. He does not live in Broadgreen constituency but in Mossley Hill constituency.

In the local elections last May he was imposed in the Netherley ward as the official Labour candidate after the local Labour Party selected a candidate who was not on the panel. Navarro

lost. In the Walton by-election in July Navarro earned the nickname of "Biro Navarro" — he was the loyal toady who toured the constituency noting down addresses which displayed a Lesley Mahmood poster in their window.

Broadgreen CLP is currently suspended. It was thereby deprived of electing a delegate representative of the views of the CLP. Instead, in return for services rendered, Navarro was selected by local party full-timers as the delegate, in order to do a hatchet job on Terry Fields.

A number of officers of Broadgreen CLP went along with this manoeuvre, and should be called to account by the CLP.

## The parasites' party in Blackpool

By Robert Arthur

The Tory faithful gathering this week in Blackpool think they have much to celebrate.

They will congratulate the Tory hierarchy and

themselves for replacing an unpopular leader with a bland, inoffensive one, and for ditching the poll tax.

They will celebrate their victory in the Gulf war, where 200,000 Iraqis were slaughtered for the West's lust for imperial power and oil profits. They will cite Eastern Europe as "proof"

that the free market is superior to economic planning. Only the threat of a right-wing revolt on Europe will spoil the Tories' party — that, and the nagging fact that the electorate does not and will not believe that Tory government will do anything but wreck the health service, education, and the prospects

for jobs.

The Tory party represents the interests of the wealthy. That is why the gap between rich and poor has widened while John Major sells the myth of a "classless society". The Tories' greed has pushed them to privatise state-owned industries, creating huge pay-offs for their friends, while thousands of young people sleep on the streets of the cities of Britain.

The Tories cannot be trusted with the NHS or the state education system because the class they represent does not use those services. It has its own schools and its own hospitals from which the working class is excluded. Over centuries the rich have erected a powerful network to protect their privileges, all glossed with the slogans of "choice" and "freedom".

The Tories' biggest success has been to shackle the unions and to put their ideological imprint firmly on the Labour Party. The Labour leaders' timidity throughout the '80s has let Thatcher and now Major get away with their cheap demagoguery.

To beat the Tories we must tackle them head on. The Labour leaders must articulate and fight for the interests of the poor and the oppressed with as much energy as the Tories show in their class interests. Anything less is a betrayal.

## NHS: the Tories are liars!

From page 1

mercialism in the hospitals. For Nichol is lying and the Tories are lying.

An opinion poll last Sunday showed a 62% to 25% majority saying that the Tories are lying and they do intend to privatise the NHS if they win the next election. The evidence is clear.

Already many hospitals have been hived off into "trusts" run by local business people. Those hospitals are not owned by the NHS and their workers are not employed by the NHS.

GPs are being encouraged to set up private companies as "budget-holders", competing with local Health Authorities as buyers of health care in the NHS "internal market".

The new "trust" hospitals have cut jobs and services to make themselves more "competitive" in the "internal market". Special queue-jumping facilities have been offered to win "business" from GP budget-holders, and at the same time, North East Thames Health Authority has announced it will refuse to provide some sorts of treatment — operations for varicose veins for example.

It will be easy to slot in some private hospitals alongside the "trust" hospitals in the new market, and not much more difficult to let private health insurance schemes in, buying their "customers" forms of treatment refused to NHS patients or shorter waits on other treatments.

Step-by-step — if the Tories get their way — the health service will be privatised and commercialised, transformed into a system where private health insurance buys preferential treatment for the wealthy and what's left of a public health service gives only pauper charity provision for the poor.

A recent survey has shown that Britain spends much less on health, as a proportion of national income, than any comparable state. Not only are the Tories chopping up the NHS; they are also bleeding it, driving it down to poverty.

The end of that line is a health system like the US's — where vastly more is spent on health than in Britain, but huge amounts are wasted on administration and on unnecessary (and even harmful) treatments carried out by profit-hungry doctors. A million people each year in the US are refused medical treatment because they can't afford it, and infant mortality is higher than in any other advanced industrial country.

To save the health service, we must work for a Labour victory in the coming General Election — and fight to commit Labour to reverse all the Tory cuts in the NHS.



## The lie machine

The election date has been put back, but electioneering is already intense.

Here you have British bourgeois democracy in action.

Everybody with any sense knows that the health service is being run down, and that a two-tier health service has been created.

But the Tories do not dare admit it openly. So they lie impudently, with barefaced assertions of untruths.

They lie statistically, with trick figures. They lie continuously — through their tabloid press.

If democracy depends on an informed electorate, here you have the millionaire press diligently poisoning the wells of public information to help their government get re-elected.

# Join the Alliance for Workers' Liberty!

Tsarist flags on the streets in Moscow; mass renaming of streets and squares in Italy named after Marx, Lenin or Gramsci; a chorus from the media saying that socialism is dead. For sure, the struggle for a cooperative commonwealth is not fashionable these days.

It's goodbye to the "trendy lefty". Former "left intellectuals" are swinging to the right as fast as Marxists

Today and the Sunday Times can take them.

But working-class people are not so easily convinced that the future belongs to capitalism. Tucked away in a corner of the Guardian on 19th September was an opinion poll result showing a 30-38% majority — in the population at large, not just among Labour voters — for the proposition that "more socialist planning would be the best way to solve Britain's economic problems". The poll shows a shift in favour of socialism since the same question was asked a

year ago.

And, West and East, the class struggle continues — as indeed it will always continue, until capitalism is overthrown.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty was set up in May this year. It declared then: "We need a crusade to clarify and restate the ideas of socialism, free from all taint of Stalinism, and to help the political reconstitution of the working class".

That crusade is even more urgently needed now. The AWL is supporting the Stand Up for Real Socialism

campaign launched by Socialist Organiser. It strives to tie together work in that campaign with daily activity in the trade unions and workplaces, in anti-poll tax groups, in colleges, and on the streets; and to link all that activity with a drive to educate ourselves politically and organise a stable, cohesive, alert contingent of Marxists.

It's time to stand up and be counted for socialism. Contact the AWL c/o PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

After Brighton: why the Alliance for Workers' Liberty is organising

# Prepare for the battles to come!

What message did last week's Labour Party conference send out to the labour movement as it prepares to fight the General Election?

Labour, the only possible trade-union-based governmental alternative to the Tories, will appear in the election as a mild defender of what is left of the National Health Service.

It will appeal to the electorate for a mandate to run a government which — the Labour leaders promise — will be a little more humane than the Tories, a little more willing to have the Government intervene in the economy, a little keener on Europe, and a little more concerned ("if resources allow") with the well-being of the less well off.

On not one thing is Labour pledged to roll back the Thatcher counter-revolution. On not one thing are the Labour leaders pledged to thoroughly undo the victories which Thatcher's government won for the rich over the working-class movement and the poor.

They will not scrap the brutally illiberal anti-union laws. They will not even try immediately to restore the Health Service. They will do it, they say, over the life of a parliament, four or five years.

The Tories have wreaked havoc with the achievements it took the reformist labour movement many decades of heroic effort to win. Kinnock and his friends propose to put the mask of a human face over the hideously greedy and cannibalistic face of the British capitalism in which the Thatcher-Major years have recreated all the atavistic savagery that Kinnock's political ancestors told the workers had been rooted out forever.

With radical changes going on in Europe and the world, with the US and the USSR scrapping big parts of their nuclear armouries, Kinnock does not dare advocate even comparable cuts for Britain. When Labour Party conference — wondering, perhaps, how a Labour government would pay for a restored NHS without cuts in military spending — voted for arms cuts, hero mutant turtle Kinnock boldly announced that he would



not accept the decision.

That is the message that Labour's conference and Labour's leaders flashed from Brighton to the labour movement around the country.

The conference itself was very much a pre-election conference. People were on their best behaviour, determined to rock the boat as little as possible, keeping their fingers crossed that Kinnock may pull it off after all and have the Tories out of Downing Street in the New Year.

Delegates were muttering in the bars that Kinnock "had gone too far this time", but in public they gave him the ritual party leader's standing ovation.

Order reigns in the Labour Party. All the long history of labour movement struggle ends here with Ramsey Kinnock, the Tories' "trusty", in secure possession of the emaciated and enfeebled carcass of a labour movement battered and bled into amnesiac submission by Thatcher and the Tories over a dozen years.

Socialist sectarians pronounce the political labour movement dead and — like a demented echo of the misguided German Stalinists who crowed "after Hitler, our turn next!" — they find in that verdict grounds for optimism.

It is altogether more complicated. The labour movement has not ceased to be concerned with the welfare of its members just because most of its activists have been cowed by defeat and are hypnotised into political stillness by the hope that Kinnock's Labour Party will manage this time round to break the elected dictatorship of the Tory Party.

The labour movement has not ceased to hate and resent what the Tory pigs in office have done to the working people. The labour movement is not blind to the savagery unleashed and the degradation cultivated in our cities by the Thatcherites.

The labour movement will expect

a Kinnock Labour Government, no matter how moderate it is supposed to be, to do something about all this, and at least begin to do it quickly.

**"The labour movement has not ceased to hate and resent what the Tory pigs in office have done to the working people"**

A Kinnock government would immediately be confronted by a hungry mass of demands and expectations.

The defeat of the Tories would at the same time remove many of the defeat-bred inhibitions of the labour movement. The demands and expectations, and the desires to undo what the Tories have done, will affect and change — perhaps slowly at first — the attitude that the labour movement will take to the Labour Government.

Working-class industrial militancy will begin to revive — slower, perhaps, in these slump conditions, than we would like, but it will revive. The left in the Labour Party will begin to revive around demands on the Government and, most likely, resistance to the Government.

The ruling class is right to be alarmed and distrustful of a Kinnock government. Kinnock and his team may be their men and women on the Opposition front benches, but they know Kinnock cannot guarantee to control the labour movement.

A Kinnock government would probably have more control over the labour movement, in the initial stages of the government, than we would like. But from day one, the inevitable antagonism between that government, managing capitalism, and the interests of the labour movement and the rank and file, would begin to undermine the control of the bureaucrats and the parliamentary leaders.

Right now the will of the organised labour movement is concentrated on one thing only: getting the Tories out and putting Labour in. That achieved, both the new possibilities and the disappointments that result will begin to revive the labour movement.

That is why any socialist who does not now place the defeat of the Tories and the victory of the Labour Party in the General Election at the centre of all their efforts is hopelessly disoriented and hopelessly out of step with both the thinking and the needs of the broad labour movement.

And yet the Labour Party is now very hostile territory for socialists, and close to uninhabitable. Not only is *Militant* — which is withdrawing from the Labour Party and planning to stand anti-Labour candidates in the General Election — being hounded. So is *Socialist Organiser* — in Sheffield, where 15 Labour Party members face expulsion, and elsewhere.

That is what happens when a frightened right-wing clique, made up in part of renegade ex-Stalinists, is in control, with an intimidated rank and file. It makes life difficult for socialists; it does not change the basic relations of the labour movement, which should determine what socialists do, or the political situation facing the working class.

In May this year a meeting of some 250 labour movement activists in Caxton House, London, set up the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. Its politics are those of *Socialist Organiser*. Its members are active in

the trade unions and, where possible, in the Labour Party.

It makes independent propaganda for socialism, and takes initiatives for socialism, in its own name. It is of the labour movement, but not bound by the mini police state rule of the bureaucrats.

It binds socialists together to fight the working-class struggle on three great fronts: in the trade unions, in the political Labour Party, and in the field of ideas.

The work of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, in the Labour Party and outside it, is of central importance in the fight to beat the Tories now and return a Labour government, and also in the fight to prepare the revival of the working class.

That work is especially urgent now in face of the spread of the distemper of sectarianism across the left, in a self-defeating socialist response to Kinnock. It will be central if Labour wins the election, and central if Labour loses, too.

*Socialist Organiser* supports the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. So, if you reject both Kinnock and the politics of the sectarian deserters from the mass labour movement, should you. Join the Alliance for Workers' Liberty!

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

*Socialist Organiser*  
PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA  
Newsdesk: 071 639 7965  
Latest date for reports: Monday

Editor: John O'Mahony  
Published by WL Publications Ltd,  
PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA  
Printed by Trident Press, Edenbridge  
Registered as a newspaper at the  
Post Office

Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of *Socialist Organiser* and are in a personal capacity unless otherwise stated

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## To break or not to break?

Elsewhere in this paper we carry reports on the new "breakaway union" being formed by workers in the offshore oil and gas industry. What does history have to teach us about such breakaways?

In the Transitional Programme of 1938, Leon 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 making a powerful rank and file movement bow down to entrenched bureaucrats. We are against sectarian breakaways, and we are also against making a fetish of unity.

The clearest example of a progressive breakaway was in the USA in the 1930s. The American Federation of Labour was a business-type trade union movement, 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. 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. Eventually the miners' leader John L Lewis walked up to a prominent representative of the craft unionists at an AFL congress and hit him on the jaw. It was a signal for a break from the AFL.

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

Stalinist tactics in the 1930s give an example of the opposite. 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. The main enemies were not fascists or capitalists or monarchists, but the social democrats.

The Stalinists tried to organise their own "red" trade unions. In countries like Germany and Britain it was disastrous. In Britain the CP created a small miners' breakaway in Fife and a clothing workers' union in East London and Leeds. That was the extent of their ability to create independent unions, but their orientation was utterly destructive for the rank and file movements in the mass trade unions. It very quickly gave way a few years, around the mid-'30s, to the CP forgetting all about fighting the bureaucrats and instead burrowing within the bureaucracy.

Another important case history is the British docks in the '50s. The TGWU had a closed shop, and it was effectively a half-share employer of the workers it was supposed to be representing. Highly bureaucratized and very right wing, it took on the job of policing the docks. There were never official strikes.

In 1954-5, some 16,000 dockers — beginning in Hull, then Liverpool, then Manchester — broke out of the TGWU. They attempted to join a small dockers' union which already existed in London, the NASD or "blue union". They struck for six weeks to win recognition for the "blue union".

The strike was defeated. The "blue union" then tried to expel the 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 then expelled by the TUC, in 1958.

Was the breakaway right or wrong? It led to a split among the dockers and even to a certain amount of non-unionism, though not enough to undermine militancy. The breakaway movement was defeated. After such a defeat it is easy to say that the workers should not have fought. But 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 to change the TGWU, which by the late '50s was beginning to loosen up and move to the left.

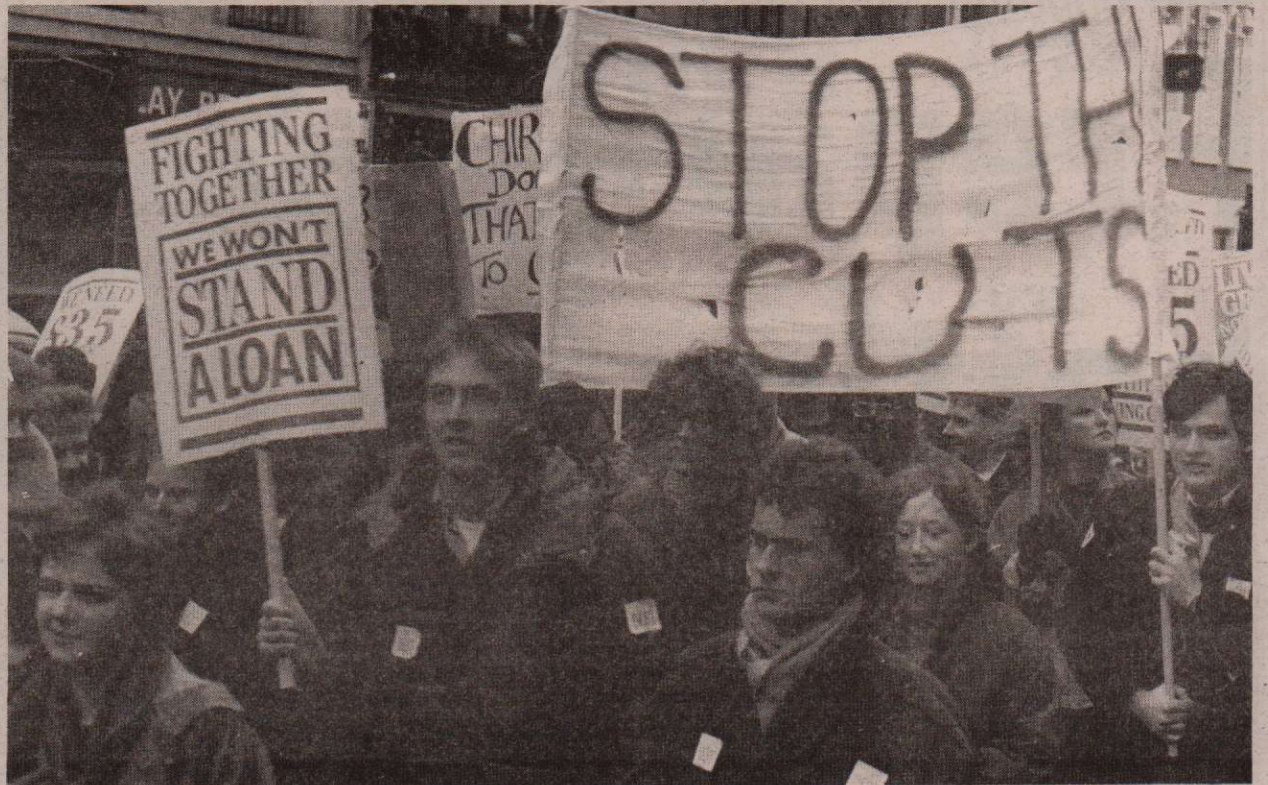
As Rosa Luxemburg put it, the union does not create militancy, militancy creates the union. The union exists for the working class or it exists for nothing at all. We go by the interests of the working class, not by the interests of the union officials.

### INSIDE THE UNIONS



By John O'Mahony

## Students against the Tories



Labour thinks education is an issue that can help win the General Election for them, but will Labour deliver?

### Education in crisis

# Fight for Labour to reverse the Tory cuts!



By Alice Sharp

Education is an issue that the Labour leader believes can help win the General Election. Considering the Tories' record since 1979, that's probably true.

In further and higher education, students and staff alike will be expecting much from a Labour government.

Listening to Neil Kinnock, Tony Blair and Jack Straw, at last week's Labour Party conference, you could even start to believe that Labour is set on transforming post-16 education from top to bottom.

Several resolutions were passed, all of which socialists could support, but how Labour acts on them is something different. And a number of "difficult" issues are as yet unresolved.

Flicking through Labour's latest sixty page statement of policy "Opportunity Britain" (complete with Union flag) your average student would be less than happy.

Labour says it will replace loans with "a fairer system of student grants". And support will be given to people on access courses, mature students etc. "as resources allow". But what is a "fairer system of student grants"? Labour should pledge itself to bring grants up to 1979 levels as a first step to implementing a real living

grant, but it has made no such definite promise.

There is no promise to restore housing benefit either. Jack Straw has said there will be a fixed amount of something like £10 million to cover this. Labour student activists will find it hard to present these policies as convincing to the potential Labour voter on campus.

Elsewhere, Labour falls short on concrete commitments. Take 16-18 education and training. The scheme is well known for a dire lack of quality training, low pay and bad job prospects.

Most recently, the Tories have introduced Training Enterprise Councils (TECs) to run training on a local basis. In effect, the government have turned over training to business, without regulation or accountability. What does Labour say? Very little.

A minimum grant of something like £75.00 is needed for all students at 16, and

all those on training should receive trade union rates of pay for the job they do. Labour says it will "reform" TECs. Instead, they should be abolished, and education and training placed under the democratic control of local authorities, central government, trade unions and student unions.

How will Labour address the attacks on arts and humanities courses, and how far is it going to allow market criteria decide what is taught in schools? And how will Labour double the numbers in higher education over the next 20 years? Jack Straw isn't saying.

The Kinnockite-led National Union of Students (NUS) is attempting a difficult balancing act. They do not want to embarrass Labour, but they do not want to lose credibility with students. Activists are quickly realising that all the good policy NUS has is being made irrelevant by studied evasions.

NUS calls for grants at 16 and repeal of loans — without demanding a concrete figure. It realistically asks for targets to be set for childcare and calls for "adequate, affordable housing". It does call for restoration of benefit rights. But generally, NUS is letting Labour off the hook by not pressing for the resources students need.

The education system reinforces, reflects and reproduces the class, and other, inequalities and divisions of capitalist society. We fight now for the best deal for students — and aim to transform society from top to bottom.

Only by establishing a socialist society can "equal access" and such other demands have any real meaning. That aim is something that neither the Labour Party nor NUS leaders are up to.

## Why we need Left Unity



By Steve Mitchell, NUS Vice-President Further Education

Students need an organisation that fights to make NUS campaign and that can take a lead when it

doesn't. Twelve years of Tory rule, and ten years of right wing leadership of NUS are proof of that.

In April 1989 over 200 activists met to build such an organisation. Its name is Left Unity. Left Unity was formed to fight the drift to the right in NUS and to pull together those on the left who were serious about organising the rank and file in colleges, challenging for leadership.

Locally, Left Unity has been at the forefront of building the anti-poll tax, grants not loans and anti-Gulf War campaigns. Nationally, we have fought for an alternative to the do-

nothing Kinnockite "New Directions" leadership in NUS.

Our clear-cut views on campaigning and democracy in NUS and our socialist politics have won us support at a time when NUS as a whole is moving rightwards. We now have five supporters on NUS National Executive including Janine Booth, the Women's Officer, and Steve Mitchell, the Vice-President responsible for the further education sector.

For more details about Left Unity, write to 56 Kevan House, Wyndham Road, London SE5 or ring Jill or Paul on 071-639 7967.



1954 the dockers were right to break from Deakin (left). Are the oil workers right to break from Jimmy Airlie today?

# Ten reasons why students should support Socialist Organiser



By Janine Booth, NUS Women's Officer

**S**ocialist Organiser is a revolutionary weekly paper for workers, youth and students.

Socialist Organiser is anti-capitalist and anti-Stalinist, and advocates international socialism made by and for the working class.

As the first term of the new academic year begins, Janine Booth, the National Union of Students' National Women's Officer, explains who we are and why our ideas are worth fighting for.

## 1

Every year for the past six years, people associated with Socialist Organiser have been central to the organisation of the first student demonstration of the year.

This year, Richard Love, NUS Area Convenor in Manchester and a supporter of Socialist Organiser, is pulling together the mass demonstration in opposition to student debt set for Wednesday 30 October.

Two years ago, ten thousand students marched against student loans on Manchester Area's last demonstration. We have helped fill a gap which national NUS has always (deliberately) left at the start of the first term.

The right-wing Labour

leaders of NUS know the value of starting the year with a big demonstration: if the new first year students see their local student union taking part in a militant demonstration in the first weeks of the first term, they will be more likely to get permanently involved in the union. But that is why they never organise demonstrations at the start of the year.

Socialist Organiser argues for building strong, active student unions — and the paper and its supporters play a big role in doing that.

## 2

A number of people associated with Socialist Organiser are NUS Area Convenors. One of their particular concerns, encouraged by the paper, is to build students unions in Further Education colleges.

The NUS right wing are aware of the danger that youth in Further Education colleges pose to their passivity — and jobs — and they oppose, wherever they can, policies to draw the FE sector into action. For instance, they recently opposed opening the doors of NUS to sixth form students — "too expensive".

Socialist Organiser's policy is to work for a united and powerful student movement. It mirrors our strategy for the labour movement. We have no interests separate from and opposed to the mass movement.

## 3

Some political currents — like the Labour right — have their activists occupying only the "top" positions in NUS: the National Executive and the sabbatical posts in the university student unions.

Such people are terrified of

mass action and mobilisations of the rank and file. They want a peaceful time "at the top" before they go on to £20,000 a year jobs.

Their mirror-image opponents — Socialist Worker — advocate rank and file action "to stuff the Tories". That is fine, as far as it goes.

But it does not go far enough: rank and file action from student activists must be tied to a strategy to transform the student movement. Old, right-wing leaders must be replaced by people willing to lead a fight; the union must develop policies that are capable of winning.

Together with other currents, Socialist Organiser has been central to developing most of NUS's domestic policy. Policies developed in the columns of Socialist Organiser on the Poll Tax and loans have been passed at NUS conferences. Those policies have been ignored and sabotaged by the right wing. They have been fought for by Left Unity, an activist organisation which Socialist Organiser supports and promotes. Left Unity fights (as its name suggests) for a non-sectarian NUS left.

## 4

The General Election is coming. It is now very important that students work to kick the Tories out and for a Labour victory.

Electing a Labour government — even led by sell-out Kinnock — would be a big boost for the labour movement. New possibilities will open up as the labour movement is brought into conflict with a Labour government, and those battles start to find expression inside the Labour Party. Despite Kinnock, the Labour Party is still the political wing of the mass labour movement.

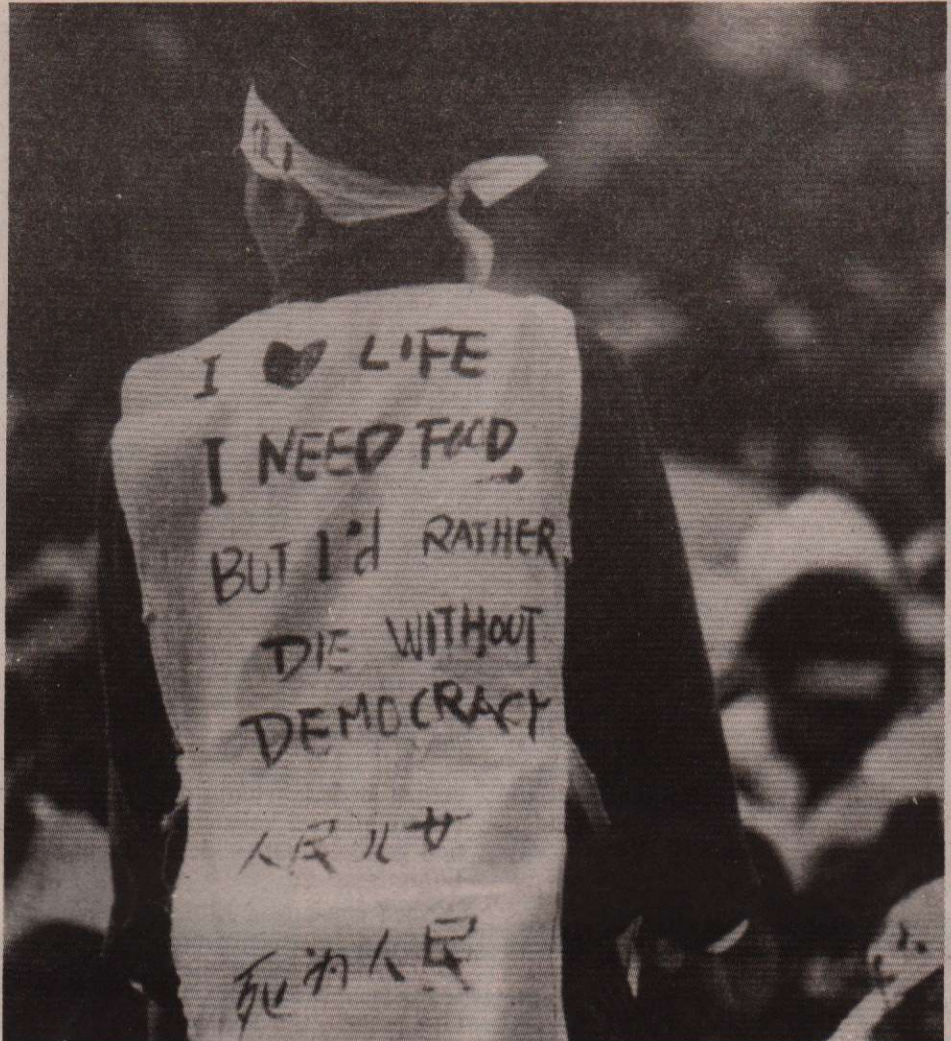
That is why Socialist Organiser argues that student activists should join the Labour Party and campaign for a Labour victory.

Inside the Labour Party, Socialist Organiser supporters argue for socialist policies. Because we are revolutionary socialists, Kinnock and the right wing have banned our paper. In a number of areas our supporters are under threat of expulsion. Kinnock recognises the danger which a vocal Labour left will pose to a pro-capitalist Labour government.

But we have refused to buckle under to the right wing. We responded to the banning of Socialist Organiser by increasing the size of the paper and organising a drive for new sellers.

## 5

Socialist Organiser is not a sectarian paper. Yes, it is often polemical or forceful about putting ideas across! But our aim is always the development of the movement as a whole. Our columns have more lively and open debate than any other



The Chinese student revolt of 1989 fought the power of the bureaucrats. Socialist Organiser stands for a workers' revolution all over the world

left paper.

unexamined for years.

## 6

What is SO controversial and polemical about? What is special about its politics?

We believe that socialism comes from below. Socialism comes from workers acting in their own interests.

Many groups see liberation as given to workers by the action of the Russian army, a Labour government, or a socialist group standing way above the class. We stand for the liberation of the working class by its own efforts and for a renewal of socialism and socialist ideas.

In other words, SO is a Trotskyist paper.

## 7

When the Soviet tanks rolled into Afghanistan in 1979, Socialist Organiser was one of the very few Trotskyist papers in the world which demanded a Soviet withdrawal.

On issues such as Ireland, the Middle East, and the USSR, our editorial line is completely different from the rest of the left. And the range of our debate on such issues is much wider, too.

Which other left paper has open debate? Which other left paper has actively sought to develop Marxist ideas in the late 20th century?

The unfortunate fact is that papers like Militant and Socialist Worker are content to mix a common anti-Toryism with low-level politics that have remained

## 8

As the great Polish-German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg put it: democracy is always for the other person, for the one who disagrees.

We believe that socialism needs democracy. Stalinism was and is not any form of socialism, but an alternative form of class exploitation. We are for free speech, free association, and consistent democracy in relations between nations and communities.

When Militant supports the Rumanian government crushing peaceful demonstrators (last year), or Socialist Action claims that East Europe's democratic revolutions of 1989 were "the biggest defeat for the working class since World War 2", we should call their politics by their proper name: degenerate.

Such ideas are Stalinist, not Marxist. We stand for workers' liberty.

## 9

Oppression by nation, race or gender is linked to, but not identical with, class oppression.

For instance, capitalists benefit from women's domestic labour. Working-class men also benefit marginally from the subordination of women.

How do we begin to tackle all the suffering in the world, all the world's oppression and misery?

Socialist Organiser argues that one of the main lessons of history is how complementary and interlinked the struggles of workers and other oppressed groups can be. For instance, during the British miners' strike, Women Against Pit Closures helped the male workers' struggle but also furthered the cause of women's liberation by demanding women's equality. Their battle proved that men's sexist ideas could be successfully challenged.

Socialist Organiser is for a workers' revolution which is also a "carnival" of all the oppressed — a liberation of all the oppressed.

## 10

The bottom line is this: we live in a stinking, unequal, unfair world. It is a world which needs utterly remaking in the interests of working people.

That will take a revolution against all the entrenched power of the capitalists and Eastern bureaucrats. They have many weapons at their disposal: an army, police force, prisons and judges. A whole system is moulded by their interests and wishes.

The British capitalists also have a stable and reasonably plausible set of ideas rooted in their system. They say they are the champions of democracy and that the system is basically fair.

Activists need a socialist paper to expose, analyse and cut against their ideas. And the paper needs activists. Read, sell, contribute to, support Socialist Organiser!

## Labour students plan conference

By Allison Roche, NOLS National Committee

"We must not allow democratic inequality to continue", said Alison Ryan, chair of the National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS), in the debate on Proportional Representation at Labour Party conference.

Fine words, but not a principle that Alison and her colleagues ("comrades" is out of vogue in the Party these days) apply in the organisation she heads.

Rigging and undemocratic procedures are routine in NOLS. Privately, and even not so privately these days, NOLS leaders admit that the rules are broken when need be and made up as they go

along. The real governing principles are that "Trots" (i.e. anyone to the left of Robin Cook) don't have any rights to speak of, and the Party needs to defend itself against the left taking over NOLS. If the majority of NOLS members want rid of the existing leadership, that's just tough.

In June of this year, Manchester Polytechnic Labour Club organised a conference on NOLS democracy. Labour activists from over twenty colleges attended and decided to launch the "Campaign for Democracy in NOLS". A newsletter has been produced, and a recall conference is set for 19 October in York.

For details ring Allison Roche on 071-639 7967 or contact York University Labour Club.



## Brighton blunder

### GRAFFITI

The funniest show in Brighton this autumn? Try the *Militant* fringe meeting. Highlights included:

- Socialist Organiser is an irrelevant sect on the outskirts of the movement (this perennial favourite was not diminished by the fact that only 40 were at the *Militant* meeting).
- Lesley Mahmood helped Peter Kilfoyle win the Walton by-election by attracting all the media flak.
- The witch-hunts against *Militant* are irrelevant in the context of the fight against council cuts.

Meanwhile, you could not find Dave Nellist or Terry Fields on conference floor, let alone Lesley Mahmood. However, the Tory who stood against Labour in Walton was there as an observer. Well, one does have to keep the right company.

### Packaged police?

Brian Johnson, Chief Constable of Lancashire, has just become president of the Association of Chief Police Officers.

The ACPO's role is to ask for so many more police on the streets, new riot gear and other high-tech "law enforcement aids" that even Roy Hattersley would blush at, although the long day of the organisation when it acted as the centre of a national police force in waiting are long gone. Chief Constable Johnson is much concerned to protect the British bobby's image.

"If we're going to package ourselves to the extent that someone goes around with a stop-watch to see what a PC does, we will soon lose that friendly policeman's image."

Quite. Far better to frame, beat up suspects, shoot innocent people, and generally dispense "justice" without too many people seeing.

### Pseud of the month

The October issue of *Briefing* contains an article on "The Revolutionary Meaning of August 1991", by Chris Knight, *Briefing's* idiot savant. Excerpt: "It therefore seems important to emphasise a paradox. Despite the reversed political flags and symbols, and the reversed economic and foreign policies, the Second Great Russian Revolution of August 1991 echoes not only the national emancipatory themes of England in 1640 [eh?] and of the French Revolution of 1789, but also the internationalism of October 1917. "This latest revolution's championship of 'the market' strikes a chord in Russia precisely because, whatever the exploitative consequences, to be 'in' this market at least means being 'in' something international."

### Border's boys

Australian cricket captain, Alan Border, has started a crusade against racism in the team.

"I just want to make sure that there are no dramas between the sides because of just a couple of silly things that might be misconstrued, especially if we're playing the Indians, Pakis or West Indians".

Rumours that Alan Border was to be appointed race awareness officer to the South African side were hotly denied by Pretoria last week.

### Short half

Speaking at the Tribune rally at Labour Party conference, ex-left winger Clare Short opened her tortured heart to all that would listen. On the current witch-hunt against the left in the party and her support for it.

"The Trotskyist entrism project (sic) damaged the left. It has been an enormously painful journey for some of us to deal with. But Walton did it."

In fact, Clare arrived at her "painful decision" somewhat earlier than she claims. Last August she wrote in *Tribune* that the banning of *Socialist Organiser* was correct on the grounds that "if fascist groups came into the Labour Party, I presume there would be no dispute that membership of such groups was incompatible with Labour Party membership".

Clare Short has long supported witch-hunts of the left. The "Walton did it" argument is just the latest in a litany of excuses to deny democracy in the party. Clare Short also noted in her speech, "We should be having a vibrant discussion. Where is it?" Answer on a postcard to Clare Short.

### Life at the top

"I would rather be a worker than a boss..." complains long-suffering fashion millionaire Giorgio Armani. "...and I dress accordingly", he continues his speech about his spartan lifestyle.

"I have a personal valet to look after my clothes and also a butler, cook, porter and driver to regulate my life in the Via Buorogonovo and the same complement of staff at my country house".

Er, yes, very proletarian. In case you are thinking that large sections of the bourgeoisie don't live in the real world, Giorgio sets the record straight: "Even if there is nothing on television, I like to have the set switched on; it is a way of introducing reality into my life." Presumably he has a servant to operate the remote-control.

## GRAFFITI

# A malicious, obsessive, right-wing loonie

### PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

Just in case you hadn't noticed, Auberon Waugh has a book out. This news may come as a surprise to anyone who never reads the Sunday supplements, doesn't listen to Radio 4 and has no TV set. The rest of us are already suffering from a certain Waugh-weariness.

For such an apparently dif-

fident fellow, Waugh is a tireless self-publicist and shameless devotee of the freebie/book-plugging circuit. And by accident or design, the launch of the book coincides with the thirtieth birthday of *Private Eye* — an event that has spawned a cottage industry in media "tributes", all featuring you-know-who.

I've never known whether to take Waugh seriously. Or whether he takes himself seriously. His columns and reviews (at one time in *Private Eye* and the *New Statesman*, more recently in the *Spectator* and the *Telegraph*) have been no more than sounding-boards for an endless stream of irrational prejudice and personal vendettas: Shirley Williams, for instance, was accused of doing "more harm to this country than Hitler" and remains an obsession long after her political demise; Harold



Auberon Waugh

Evans and Lord Gowrie were targeted for no other reason than having won the affections of women Waugh himself fancied. Other personal objects of vitriol include Roy Hattersley, Esther Rantzen, Archbishop Warlock, Nora Beloff, the royal family, old-age pensioners, the Arts Council, the police, northerners, and (of course) the working class, "advancing with great boots over the whole of England".

In the late 80s, Waugh even turned against Mrs. Thatcher, calling for the forcible removal of the "increasingly demented... nannying tyrant" for two or three years before Geoffrey Howe and Michael Heseltine finally summoned up the courage to plunge their knives.

Inevitably, Waugh has

dropped some enormous clangers over the years: when the hated Anthony "Toady" Shrimley (political editor of the *Sun*) was seriously injured in a car accident, Waugh gloated openly in his *Private Eye* diary. Shrimley died shortly afterwards and the anthology of the *Eye* diaries omits this entry. Waugh was in China when the Tiananmen Square rebellion began: on his return, before the massacre, he wrote in the *Sunday Telegraph* that this was a "minor distraction", of "no great significance".

The sheer variety of Waugh's prejudices and the arbitrary, personal malice that lies behind his choice of targets, would seem to suggest a man who does not intend himself to be taken seriously. He's a gad-fly, a professional iconoclast, a bourgeois anarchist who could write as well for *Class War* as he does for the *Telegraph* and *Spectator*.

Waugh is probably not more reactionary than (for instance) John Junor, Woodrow Wyatt or Richard Littlejohn. But unlike them he makes no pretence of being a "voice of reason"; Waugh *knows* that he is a malicious, obsessive, right-wing loonie. As you've probably guessed, I quite like some of his stuff, but a little goes a long way.

## Thatcher's sexist sons



### WOMEN'S EYE

By Liz Millward

The Tory Party conference almost went ahead without a prominent woman speaker this week. I say almost because apparently the organisers have noticed the "oversight" and will probably remedy it before the press takes them to the cleaners — well, we can hope! The fact is that with Thatcher gone the Tories have no woman with the status of the grey men, and

they have to cast around for women to include in the minor reaches of government.

I am not surprised that the Tories have not promoted women — their policies are almost uniformly anti-women. Mrs Thatcher was an aberration in Tory ranks — a woman who achieved power and prominence through her own efforts. No-one, not even her supporters, expected her to win the election for Party leader, but once she had, they were stuck with the consequences. Her election as Prime Minister was not the result of any thought out policy of encouraging women to get on in politics, but rather an accident which turned out rather well (for them). Once she was gone it was back to business as usual.

Some people may have been fooled by Thatcher's insistence that she was only an ordinary housewife (who just happened to be married to a millionaire), and voted for her as a woman "like them". Some of these people may have gone on voting for her once it became obvious that she was very far from being an ordinary housewife! But apart from her own position which was, I suppose evidence that a woman can be Prime Minister, Thatcher did nothing to promote women's liberation.

Had Thatcher been any sort of a feminist, she would have made efforts to encourage other women to follow in her footsteps. Instead she pulled the ladder up behind her — and not

only to stop other women. Her ambition could not tolerate any rivals.

More than that she made efforts to turn the clock back for the women who were not in politics, by policies which reduced the availability of childcare for working women, which introduced schemes like YTS and ET which have discriminated against young women from the word go.

Thatcher introduced "care in the community" — a good idea which was deliberately perverted and underfunded so that the burden of care fell on women. As *Socialist Organiser's* front page so graphically illustrated last week, the Tories' policies since Thatcher came to power in 1979, have hit women hardest.

Tory ideology has also been dangerously anti-woman. The emphasis on the family and family values, and the failure of the family to regulate society is based on the notion of women as mothers and homemakers. The failure of the family is seen as the failure of women.

The fragmentation of society (and the traditional family) is blamed on single mothers, on girls who have sex before marriage. Of course these ideas are not openly stated but they underlie propaganda about the family. Such ideas are not new, whatever Marxism Today would have us believe — which is why they do not have to be openly stated.

It is this tradition which John Major's government has slipped so effortlessly into. Thanks part-

ly to Thatcher's prominence in world politics, and thanks also to the fact that the world has moved on, despite Thatcher, Major's women-free Cabinet gets noticed. But if he does promote women and find a prominent speaker for this week's conference, it will be a token gesture for the press, not part of a long-term goal to lift the burden of women's oppression.

Major is part of a tradition which sees women in terms of the reproduction of the labour force — however charming they may be to individual women, and however much they protest about equal opportunities.

When disentangling the propaganda from the truth, it is useful to ask the question "Who benefits?" For example who benefits in the erosion of maternity rights? Women or employers? Who benefits from the increase in casual and part-time work in the "service sector"? Women or big business? You don't need a Marxist calculator to work out that the current rise of unemployment will be joined by an increased emphasis on family values ie. an attempt to make women feel guilty for taking jobs.

John Major would like the reserve army of labour to return to barracks, where, he hopes, they will not claim welfare benefits. The changes of the last decade will not prove to be so easily reversed. Women want and need the jobs they have won (for all that those jobs are inadequate) and will not docilely return home.

## The colour of racism

### RACE AND CLASS

By Gail Cameron

When West Indian Rea Albertie applied for a job as a cab-driver for Ace Mini Cabs in Bow, East London, she was turned down.

The boss, Clive Lang, claimed that although he

employed black drivers and was in no way a racist, he would not employ someone with "skin as dark" as Rea Albertie's!

Rea then took her case to an industrial tribunal. At the tribunal Lang denied that his decision was racist: "I didn't discriminate on grounds of race. It was only on the colour of her skin because she was very black. I explained the situation to her." He thinks of himself as a righteous man.

"I tried to be fair about it", he added.

There was, he said, too much racial tension in the

area at the time Rea Albertie applied to give her a job. Many customers don't want black drivers. Some black drivers had been threatened and he — a considerate man — had to replace them with white drivers!

What did the tribunal think?

Rea won her first hearing at industrial tribunal. The case then went to appeal and was referred back to the tribunal to reconsider the amount of the compensation.

The original award, for loss of earnings of £600 was cut by £200. The compensa-

tion for distress arising from racial discrimination was cut from £750 to £500. Overall, the total compensation was then cut from £1,350 to £900.

The reason? The tribunal chairman, Francis Davies, said that they didn't believe Rea's claim that it was the first time she had suffered from racism. "We have to say we find it hard to believe that in the East End of London the applicant had never come across racism before".

Her feelings couldn't have been all that hurt: surely she was used to it?

# Democracy is coming to the Teamsters

## Bureaucrats face direct elections

The 1.6 million-strong International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) is the largest union in North America. It is also the most bureaucratized. Long infiltrated by organised crime, this union, which organises truckers, warehouse workers, parcel drivers, dockworkers, and all kinds of semi and unskilled factory workers, is dominated by the most arrogant gang of labour bureaucrats in the world.

They award each other multiple posts and salaries while denying their own membership the right to reject key national contracts. The president of the union has the facility for unlimited, all expenses paid, holidays for himself and his family and staff, while rank and file dissidents have had to face intimidation, violence and — in the past — death.

Shouts filled the cavernous convention hall: "R.V., stand up! R.V., stand up!" Was this a dream? Could this really be happening?

This was, after all, the Teamsters convention. A large majority of the delegates were on their feet, voting to more than quadruple strike benefits. And they were screaming at RV Durham, the anointed heir to the Marble Palace throne, demanding that he abandon the leadership's opposition to the increase.

Only five years ago, at the previous Teamsters convention, when members of Teamsters for a Democratic Union proposed a much more modest hike in strike pay, it was hooted down, with delegates hollering "Too Dumb to Understand", one of the favourite epithets for TDU.

Boosting strike pay was only one on a list of reforms adopted in Orlando. Indeed, TDU's Ken Paff told reform delegates before the convention opened, "At past conventions, the question was how many rights of the rank and file can they take away. The question this time is how many the rank and file can win."

Before the convention was over, the incumbents had even proposed, and the convention unanimously agreed, to sell the union's air force — a fleet of five jets that reformers say is an example of the luxuries showered on top Teamster officials.

Added to this was the sight of Teamster reform candidate Ron Carey delivering his acceptance speech from the podium of the convention hall with none of the boos and jeers reformers have come to expect at Teamster gatherings.

Strange things happening... Why? The scene had some of the flavour of Eastern Europe — where the first crack in the leadership and whiff of democracy led to a quick collapse of the ruling bureaucracy. While the parallel is too extreme for the Teamsters union — the reformers lost plenty of votes and some sessions still had the flavour of past conventions — the changes are nonetheless dramatic.

Take, for instance, the case of Jack Mogelson, a Minneapolis of-

But now things are starting to change in the Teamsters.

As a result of federal legal intervention in the form of an anti-racketeering law suit, and the activities of the 10,000-strong rank and file-based reform movement "Teamsters for a Democratic Union", the IBT is to have its first ever one-person-one-vote leadership election this December.

In fact, things have changed so much that one delegate to this year's IBT conference complained: "One thing we're wondering now is why hasn't the union told us how to vote. Usually it's all set ahead of time. But this time we got stuff in the mail from all the candidates...It's not like it used to be..."

Jim Woodward reports.

official who in past conventions charged that TDU was a tool of the employers working "to destroy the foundation of this organisation". Such statements always brought down the wrath of the convention on the hapless reformers. This time the reformers were grinning as boos and jeers rained down on Mogelson himself when he rose to defend the leadership's position of refusing to allow votes on regional contract supplements.

What made such a turnaround possible? First and foremost is the 15-year history of tireless organising by members of TDU. The late nights producing newspapers and newsletters, the early mornings talking and leafletting at workplaces, innumerable local elec-

**"At past conventions the question was how many rights of the rank and file can they take away? The question this time is how many the rank and file can win?"**

tion campaigns, yearly conventions, volunteer lawyers, and a dedicated staff have built a 10,000-member organisation that helped create the political climate for change and the troops necessary to take advantage of the new situation.

Although TDU kept a low profile at the Orlando convention, working to support the Carey campaign, TDU members are in fact the backbone of that campaign.

Second, the consent decree which settled the government's racketeering lawsuit against union leaders provided a quick infusion of democratic practices which allowed the Carey slate to elect nearly 300 delegates. And the upcoming rank and file vote for top officers, which the consent decree mandated, has made the incumbents care what the rank and file think of them.

Not that the reformers were en-



Leroy Ellis, Teamsters Reform candidate for Vice-President in the deep South

thusiastic about the government's intrusion. "The day the racketeering suit was brought against the union my heart broke just a little because I wanted us to take care of [cleaning up] this union," said Canadian Diana Kilmury, a vice presidential candidate on Carey's slate. But they all agreed that they would not have made nearly so much progress this year had it not been for the government intervention.

Finally, the split in the Teamster establishment between Durham and Shea has helped the reformers in several ways. At the convention, several reforms were adopted that may have failed if the entire leadership had been united.

Moreover, by making the election a three-way race, this disunity at the top greatly increases Carey's chances in the December voting.

It's important to understand how and why the democratisation of the Teamsters union is coming about because the very forces which long opposed democracy are now claiming to champion it.

Durham, whose campaign slogan is "New Directions" — a slogan used by the reform movement in the giant United Auto Workers union (UAW) and taken up by other rank and file groupings — told reporters at the end of the week that "the open convention has been good" for the union.

But those who have spent years fighting to change the union — and enduring abuse and sometimes threats and violence from the officials and their hangers-on — are having none of it.

JC Thomas, a Memphis truck driver, TDU member and delegate from Local 667, doesn't believe the promises of democracy from the officials.

"All these people now say, 'We can walk on water. We can do all these things,'" Thomas said. "Well, they've been in there for 35 years and they haven't done it."

Thomas and the other reformers are fighting to ensure that 35 years is all they get, and they're convinced that their candidate, Ron Carey,

has a serious shot at winning this year.

Both the Shea and Durham campaigns have centred on the union's national, regional and local officers. At the convention, where most of the delegates are officers, it is not surprising that the two establishment candidates were well ahead of reformer Carey. But the convention was probably the high point for both of their campaigns.

Carey, in contrast, has spent the last 18 months campaigning among the membership. He ran two petition campaigns, gathering more than 100,000 Teamster signatures, to qualify for space in the *International Teamster*. (Shea also launched a petition campaign but failed to collect enough signatures.)

Through the delegate election process, Carey has built strong organisations in many locals. His volunteers are enthusiastic and hard working. Shea and Durham loyalists, at the convention at least, lacked the same energy and passion.

Thus, as the focus of the campaign shifts from the bureaucracy to the membership, Carey's strength will become evident. It's likely that the race will come down to Carey vs Durham, with Shea trailing. Shea's presence in the campaign will benefit Carey for the most part by taking votes from Durham, though it also allows Durham to paint himself as the "moderate" between the "old

line" Shea and the "dangerous radical" Carey.

Besides the loyalty of one or another section of the bureaucracy, Durham and Shea have several things going for them. One is money, which is much more readily available from the multiple-salaried incumbents, 154 of whom earn over \$100,000 a year. Durham, for example, raised \$140,000 in only one of the three fundraisers he held during the Teamster convention.

Another advantage is apathy. Carey has always said that membership apathy is his main opponent. Teamster militancy is down this year, compared to other years when the membership rejected many of the national contracts their negotiators brought back.

But Durham and Shea have a big millstone around their necks. As JC Thomas said, they're the guys who've been in there and responsible for the state of the union. Durham and Shea will get few votes based on their vision of the future, their charismatic leadership, or their ability to inspire the membership. Carey will get those votes, but only if he is able to convince the rank and file that change is possible and that they can make a difference.

That's what the campaign comes down to, and as of now it's an open race.

Taken from Labor Notes. Contact 7435 Michigan Avenue, Detroit, Michigan USA, MI 48210

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# Socialists should not leave the Labour Party!

**Those who stood Lesley Mahmood against Labour in the Walton by-election last July claimed that they were the "true heirs" of Eric Heffer. Heffer's thinking on socialists and the Labour Party is established in this discussion he had with John Bloxam and John O'Mahony last year.**

**W**e've reached the stage where we have to reassess not just our labour movement here, but throughout the whole of the capitalist world.

It's not happening just in Britain. We aren't even the first. It began immediately after the war in West Germany, then France, Belgium, Italy and — after the Franco dictatorship — in Spain, the Spanish Socialist Party.

So what do we do? Some believe the answer is to fight within the Labour Party and if we do, then in a few years' time the party will swing back our way. I don't really know, but I think there will be change in the Labour Party, and I think there will be a move back to more left-wing concepts.

We have to begin to renew not only the party but the movement as a whole. I think it has to be done almost from scratch. We've got to go out again and begin with a lot of things. We've got to start socialist educational groups throughout the entire country.

I think we've got to have socialist education on a big scale, such as we've not had for a long, long time. We have to produce more and more pamphlets — discussion pamphlets which don't deal just with the immediate issues, though obviously they have to be related to immediate issues, but which have an underlying socialist message.

This is what has got to be done. We've got to work in the Labour Party, but we've got to

work outside the Labour Party as well. I think there is a movement out there. I don't particularly like every aspect of it, but I think we have to be in it.

I'm thinking of the Socialist Movement. Some of it is just pure straightforward academic elitism, but nevertheless, I think it does attract people. We've got to get involved in it, and discuss with them. Possibly something will emerge out of that. Possibly.

We've got to have a look at what we've been arguing for over the years. We've got to learn the lessons of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. We must argue very strongly for the democratic control of industry by the working people themselves. But — and I think this is fundamental — there has got to be a much greater effort towards a basic socialist educational message if we are ever going to be able to rebuild a powerful mass socialist movement.

*You seem to believe that there was a "Golden Age" when the party was bigger, more socialist, with more workers in parliament. Now you seem to say that the roots are being cut away.*

No, I've never thought there was a golden age of Labour Party socialism. The Labour Party was created not as a socialist organisation, but as a broad working-class organisation. At the first conference, in 1900, the Social Democratic Federation moved that the party should be socialist. That was defeated. It was decided that Labour should be a party for working class representation in the House of Commons. That was carried because it was the trade unions that created the Labour Party.

Yet, when you read the speeches and listen to the arguments, there's a very powerful socialist influence in the Labour Party. In 1918 the party got a more or less socialist constitution. It was always a reformist socialist party; but it did have socialist perspectives, and not just the idea of bureaucratically nationalising everything through the state. It talked of social and

public ownership in varied forms.

The idea of a vast bureaucratic state-run society came from Fabians like Beatrice Webb and Sydney Webb. It was no accident that when the Webbs went to Russia in the '30s they came back and wrote a book praising Soviet society as "a new civilisation".

When I was young I couldn't understand how those Fabian reformists and intellectuals could so praise the Soviet Union. Later I realised that Stalinism appealed to them because they too knew what was good for the workers, whether the workers wanted it or not.

So, no golden age. But I think there was a better age.

*But what happened was not that the Labour Party became socialist in 1918 with the adoption of Clause Four and the reorganisation of the party. Even right-wingers declared for "socialism", but only to head off a far more left-wing drive, stimulated by the war and the Russian Revolution and seen in such things as the very representative Leeds Convention of July 1917 which called for Soviets in Britain.*

That is largely true, but the party itself was also affected. Even the Fabian Society, with its "New Fabians" like GDH Cole, was preaching workers' control. All right, it was reformist. But there was a real difference, and it did affect the party.

You could see it in the party members when I first became involved. OK, yes, they thought everything was done through parliament, but you only had to be in their company for ten minutes to realise that they were real socialists. Their whole attitude was different.

I recently saw an article in a magazine about Jackie and Billy Charlton, which illustrates my point. Jackie Charlton said: "When I was young I could argue strongly for the Labour Party and Labour politics. Now I don't know what they believe in. And I can't argue that any more."

Charlton would have been brought up in the North East, an area where they are very loyal to the Labour Party. Whatever the leadership said, they did. But on the North East coast you found the mass of workers loyal not just to the party but to concepts which were basically socialist, to working class solidarity. That, I think, is the difference.

*Why did that loyalty dissipate? Why did so little come of it? Why did the right wing always get away with faking. There's always been a "faking culture", hasn't there? You said yourself that people come into the House of Commons reflecting their party, and then when the pressure is off they don't carry on with the same opinions. That is a faking culture. Why did all that generally socialist working-class consciousness lead to what it has led to?*

In the last 20 or 30 years there's no longer been the educational effort that there used to be. Speakers used to come regularly and talk about the labour movement and the unions, and about socialist ideas. It was accepted as part of the life of the union. That's died away.

The National Council of Labour Colleges was absorbed into the TUC and killed stone

dead. The Labour Party has not had any proper educational programme for 25 to 30 years. The Communist Party no longer has an education programme. It used to have various programmes, and issue pamphlets on wage labour and capital, on how you seized power, and so on. They educated a layer of workers. I'm in favour of all the socialist papers, because they help to keep the flame alive. But there is so much confusion! With so many competing socialist groups, people don't know where to go.

There's been no education. But it's not only that. Circumstances have changed. With the growth of the welfare state, a lot of the pressure on workers to build a new society was eliminated — not entirely, and it needn't have been at all if there had been a movement capable of giving a continuous working class education.

I think those are some of them, but I don't claim to know all the reasons why the movement dissipated.

*So you'd say that with the attacks on the workers' living standards, the conditions are now being recreated for a working class resurgence and opportunities for mass socialist activity?*

Yes, I think so.

*What do you say to those who conclude that because of the right wing's victories, socialists should leave the Labour Party?*

This is not the time. I'm not saying that at some time in the future there won't be a new socialist party. But this is not the moment. We have to organise the left for socialism, but within the Labour Party.

That doesn't stop us collaborating with people in the Socialist Movement and others who are not in the Labour Party. It's rather like what happened after 1931 when the Socialist League was created, and Socialist League worked with the Independent Labour Party throughout the period from 1932.

*Isn't there a competition for resources. For example, the SWP say "leave the Labour Party".*

Well, you're always going to get that. I don't think there's any answer. If you created a new party, you'd have all sorts of small organisations becoming part of it in order to win people from the party to their organisation. It has ever been thus.

**"I don't think we should be advocating that people leave the Labour Party. We shouldn't be calling for a new party. We should concentrate on building up a good, genuinely left wing movement within the Labour Party"**

*Of course we are socialists, and we have fought for socialism in the Labour Party. But isn't it true that the reason for being in the Labour Party has never been because of its doubtful "socialism", but fundamentally because it is the mass party of the class linked to the unions? Isn't that the fundamental thing? No matter how far it has moved formally from socialism now, it remains the mass party of the class because of its trade union roots. Serious socialists should never voluntarily abandon the mass party of the class to the right wing. Isn't that the essential argument?*

If they marginalise the unions in the party, then it's no longer the mass party of the working class.

*And you think that's what is happening?*

It's beginning to happen. It's not just the conference block vote. Some of the trade union leaders are quite happy to see the trade unions set aside, without any real influence. If they get away with that — and they're moving in that direction — then it is no longer the mass movement of the working class.

*So why should we stay in the Labour Party?*

Because there's an awful lot of people like us in the Labour Party who've got to be organised to work together. I don't think you can run before you can crawl. We have to



Eric Heffer at the Labour Party conference rostrum



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

Hugh Gaitskell (above) ran a tightly-controlled right-wing regime in the Labour Party 30 years ago, during the last long period of Tory rule.

Then, too, academics speculated about the "bourgeoisification" of the working class and the end of class politics.

An MP like Michael Foot, whose colour was never exactly flaming Trotskyist red, could be expelled from the Parliamentary Labour Party in 1961 for abstaining on

Tory defence estimates. Labour voted for.

By the early '60s the big left-wing tide of the '50s, centred on Aneurin Bevan, had ebbed away. Bevan was dead, but not before he had made his peace with Labour's establishment.

When Labour lost the 1959 General Election, the Gaitskellites immediately launched a drive to do what the German Social Democratic Party had done that same year at Bad Godesberg and drop all commitment to public

ownership from the Party constitution. The move was defeated but it was clear that the Gaitskellites controlled the Party in all essentials.

However, tensions were bubbling below the surface. From 1958 (above) the Aldermaston marches focussed a growing campaign against nuclear weapons.

The left won a victory at Scarborough in 1960 when the giant block vote of the TGWU, led by Frank Cousins, carried a decision

committing Labour to the unilateral abandonment of Britain's nuclear bomb.

The Right fought back and won a clinching victory for a pro-nuclear Labour Party at the subsequent conference, in Blackpool in 1961.

But in 1963 Gaitskell died — and the Tories began to look like losers. Labour won the 1964 General Election, and the labour movement entered a period of fierce struggles.

take a step at a time. Maybe in the end we'll get chucked out anyway. In that case it'll be solved for us. It would be far better to be thrown out, if we are going to be thrown out, as an organised force of people working together for basic socialist ideas, than to go out as individuals one at a time with no perspectives.

But you know the history of the Marxist movement. You mentioned the SDF at the founding of the Labour Party. They had come along with their programme to a conference which was dominated by Liberal trade unionists. They made a motion that it be accepted and when, predictably, it was not accepted, they walked out. Isn't it true that Marxist tradition in this country has been a heavily sectarian tradition? The consequence is that we've left the mass movement to the right wing and the soft left. Isn't that the dominant trend? Isn't that one of the problems we have to face now — a resurgence of self-defeating sectarianism in response to Kinnock?

Yes. I think I've made that clear in all the books I've written. Had the SDF remained in the Labour Party it might have been a dif-

ferent party.

Isn't that sectarian tradition also to be found in the Communist Party in the '20s when they didn't want to stay in the Labour Party? Formally they wanted to stay, but in practice they didn't.

It was very different circumstances. The Soviet Union was coming into existence, and the Communist International.

But the Labour Party was a mass movement which varied very much ideologically. There was pretty free political competition within it. You had Christian Socialists, Marxists, and Fabians — and the serious revolutionaries outside, largely because they excluded themselves.

Because it was a wrong tactic then, it may not be the wrong tactic always.

No, but there is this powerful sectarian tradition.

Yes. It is quite clear that the ILP made a mess of it in 1932 in coming out. But then the ILP had a lot of strange people in it.

It wasn't just one tendency. It is a common

thread through to today. For instance, you mentioned the great struggle in the Labour Party in the '80s. Lots of sectarians chose to stay outside when they could have been immensely valuable inside. The SWP is the clearest example.

I suffered with that in the '50s. I was involved in setting up the Socialist Workers' Federation which was to try to attract people from both the Communist Party and the Labour Party.

I'm not being pharasaical. We've made sectarian mistakes as well, in the late '60s, with criminally stupid attitudes in relation to the Labour Party during the attempt to bring in anti-union laws in 1969 and after. But we do have to establish that there is in this country a tradition, a persistent tendency to sectarianism. Of course, you are right, the world is changing. We may all be expelled. We may have no choice.

I don't think we should be advocating that people leave the Labour Party. We shouldn't be calling for a new party. We should concentrate on building up a good genuinely left wing movement within the Labour Party.

## Open letter to Clare Short

### THE POLITICAL FRONT

By Martin Thomas



You've made yourself a new role in recent months. You have become a sort of unofficial TV spokesperson for the NEC on the purge of the *Militant*, explaining to cameras month after month why you support expulsions. And you were the only NEC member to attempt — in *Tribune* — a written justification of last year's ban on *Socialist Organiser*. No doubt the party managers reckon that your reputation as a bit of a rebel makes you more effective in the role of justifying purges.

You say that there is no option but to purge *Militant* supporters after they have stood against Labour in Walton and the Liverpool council elections, and declared their intention to stand against Labour in the future.

It is true that there is no way of stopping *Militant's* leaders breaking away from Labour if they want to. But this is the "good reason" for the purge, not the real reason. Left-wingers were being purged long before Walton. Left-wingers are being purged now who have no connection at all with *Militant* or the Walton affair — *Socialist Organiser* supporters, for example.

And the NEC has double standards. The right-wing MP Frank Field publicly refused to support the official Labour candidate in the constituency next door to his at the 1987 election; he has advocated "tactical voting" for Liberal and Alliance candidates; and he has threatened to resign his seat, force a by-election, and stand against Labour. Far from being expelled, he has had the NEC intervening heavily against his constituency party when it was dissatisfied with him.

It's one law for the right wing and another for the left. If *Militant's* leaders are determined to break away from the Labour Party — or to put it another way, they have become so fed-up with the Kinnock leadership's harassment that they have given up — the job of any serious socialist in the Labour Party is to *minimise* the split. We should do all we can — and go easy on the strict letter of rules if necessary — to stop good left-wingers going with Lesley Mahmood and Peter Taaffe. The NEC has done the opposite.

It has used Walton to try to throw out or drive out as many good left-wingers as possible. You can see the results in Liverpool: *two* breakaway "Labour Parties" (the "Independent Labour Party" and *Militant's* "Real Labour"), and the official Labour Party reduced to a right-wing rump. No doubt the rump is easier for Walworth Road to control than a genuine, broad Labour Party.

Maybe you will say that excluding factions like *Militant* (and *Socialist Organiser*) is necessary in order to create a civilised Labour Party where people like you can voice constructive dissent on issues like Ireland. I've heard that argument before — 20 years ago when I and some others (a couple of whom are involved in *Socialist Organiser* today) were expelled from the SWP. SWP "loyal dissidents" said that they agreed with us "orthodox Trotskyists" on many issues, but our *approach* was wrong — too factional, too rough. Exclude us, and there could be a civilised democracy.

Within four years almost all those "loyal dissidents" had been excluded in their turn, and the SWP had been transformed into the lifeless, regimented sect it is today.

It's going the same way in the Labour Party. Jo Richardson threw in her lot with Kinnock. Was the right wing grateful? Not at all. This year they have pushed her off the NEC in favour of Gerald Kaufman. Are the right wing grateful to you for your services? Not at all. The EETPU is now out to get you deselected.

The purge now underway — if it is not stopped — will leave the Labour Party not as a civilised democracy but as a lifeless, stamped-down, one-faction party. No wonder a few left-wingers are looking to the SWP — be it a lifeless sect, it is at least a lifeless sect with some spark and militancy about it.

Some people on the NEC probably don't care. Ideas, debate, campaigning they can do without, as long as Hugh Hudson can turn out slick TV commercials and they get a chance of a job as a Minister. I hope you still think the Labour Party is about more than that.

# Columbus — maker of Liverpool

By Anne Field

**"C**hristopher Columbus — The Discoverer of America was the Maker of Liverpool", reads the inscription on the statue of Christopher Columbus erected in Liverpool's Sefton Park in 1903.

The statue is the scene of an annual wreath-laying ceremony on 12 October, the date on which Columbus sighted land on his voyage of 1492. This year 12 October will also mark the start of the "500 Years Of Resistance" campaign in Latin America, America, and Europe.

As the campaign's manifesto puts it, "For the indigenous peoples of America, 1492 marks the beginning of a genocide which has lasted almost 500 years... We rejected the celebration of 500 years of domination, sacrifice and destruction... We celebrate the 500th anniversary of the continuing resistance by women and men throughout the centuries".

**"When they have got rid of the cruel habits to which they have been accustomed, they will be better than any other kind of slaves"**

Columbus did not realise that he had "discovered" America when he sighted the Bahamas in 1492. He believed that he had reached Asia. On his second voyage all the members of his crew were obliged to swear an oath that Cuba was the mainland and the beginning of the Indian sub-continent.

In later years Columbus described himself as "the messenger of the new heaven and the new earth" who had discovered the "Earthly Paradise". The "Land of Grace" was situated in Latin America, and in the centre of it, Columbus said, was a protuberance like the small end of a pear which was Paradise itself.

He also believed that the world would end in precisely 155 years. In 1502 he wrote to the Pope that the wealth gained from his expeditions could be used to raise an army of 100,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry to "re-conquer" Jerusalem, and the events described in the Apocalypse could take place there.

In this world-view, the role of the native populations in the Americas was to serve the Christian peoples of Europe. "They should be good

servants and intelligent..." he wrote the day he landed in the Bahamas. "They are good to be ordered about, to work and sow, and do all that may be necessary". Later he noted: "When they have got rid of the cruel habits to which they have been accustomed, they will be better than any other kind of slaves".

**S**lavery was then the usual fate of conquered peoples. In Latin America the Spanish conscripted ever greater numbers of slaves to work in the gold and silver mines and on the new sugar plantations.

The terrible conditions in the mines and plantations — few workers lasted a single year in the great silver mines of Potosi — combined with the new diseases that the Spanish brought in to kill millions of the native population. In some densely-peopled areas the population fell by *ninety per cent*, in others the native peoples were wiped out altogether. The Spanish turned to importing Black slaves from Africa.

Estimates of the number of Africans who fell victim to the slave trade between the early 15th and late 19th centuries vary between 10 million and 40 million. As Marx wrote in *Capital*, "The discovery of gold and silver in the Americas, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginning of the conquest and plunder of India, the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of Blacks, are all things which characterise the dawn of the era of capitalist production".

If Columbus was "the maker of Liverpool", it was because he opened the way for the Atlantic slave trade. Liverpool became England's leading slave-trade port in the mid 18th century, and by 1800, with one in four of its ships involved in the slave trade, Liverpool had over 60 per cent of Britain's slave trade, and over 40 per cent of all Europe's.

"Beyond a doubt", wrote the historian Ramsay Muir, "it was the slave trade which raised Liverpool from a struggling port to be one of the richest and most prosperous trading centres in the world".

The slave trade helped other trades grow: shipbuilding, sugar refining, cotton spinning. Ten of the 14 major banks in Liverpool in the late 18th century had been founded with the participation of slave-traders.



The prongs in this picture prevented slaves from sleeping and were used to stop escapees fleeing through jungle

All Liverpool's 20 mayors between 1787 and 1807 financed or owned slave ships. The Liverpool traders led the campaign against abolition of the slave trade.

**T**hey lost. In 1807 Parliament outlawed British involvement in the slave trade.

But Liverpool merchants and industrialists continued to enrich themselves by dealing in the products of slave labour: cotton, sugar,

and tobacco. Liverpool ship-builders continued to build slave ships.

As late as 1952, a history of Liverpool declared: "We need not be unduly ashamed of our ancestors who sailed in the [slave ships]. They were no worse than their neighbours and in one respect they were better. For at least we know that they were men" (emphasis in original).

Another history, published in 1957 and sponsored by the City Council, argued that the slave trade "was to bring benefits in the long run, not least to the transplanted slaves, whose descendants have subsequently achieved in the New World standards of education and civilisation far ahead of their compatriots whom they left behind".

But the benefits were to the slave-traders and capitalists of Liverpool.

## Outrage on the letters page

### LETTER

**N**ot for the first time, I'm impressed by Liz Millward's ability to provoke anger and hostility (see *SO* letters page in recent weeks).

But a "column" should provoke, stimulate, outrage. It should try to come at the reader from an unexpected angle; it should try to subvert and turn over dominant assumptions (in this case, the conventional wisdom of the left and the women's movement).

The columnist should feel free to express personal bias and gut reactions. Otherwise there would be no point in a personalised "column" format.

So Lesley Smallwood's crack that Millward is "Jean Rook" struck me as an unintended compliment on that level. Madame Rook knew her columnist's trade. The difference between the Rooks and a columnist in an open paper like *SO* is, of course, that Millward has to take the counter-attacks in the letters page.

That is how it should be. It is a big part of what *SO* is about.

Millward may — and did — say in the all-provoking piece that unemployment

was one of women's biggest problems now — but that doesn't stop responses like Trudy Saunders' piece of vintage "left" invective denouncing her for not seeing that unemployment is the (only?) issue.

Liz Millward did, I think, generalise impermissibly from a couple of examples. She expressed it in terms of what she supposes is the psychology of some middle-class women.

Nevertheless, surely it is true that many women's lives are still shaped by the complex of attitudes and expectations that a woman will get married and then go out of the workforce, temporarily or permanently. The dominant ideas here do affect young women's attitude to training and so on, and surely that is still a factor in determining that many women are exploited at low-skilled jobs.

Why should such questions not be discussed? Is it blaming women? It is largely a matter of social conditioning. We can often undo such conditioning, and help women to slough it off, by analysing and discussing it at all its different levels, including the psychological. Surely women's oppression is internalised as well as externally imposed.

Some of the objections to Liz Millward's way of expressing anger at the parasitic attitudes of some middle-

class women suggest to me the approach of those who object to hurting people's feelings by saying certain backward countries are "backward". They seek euphemisms, and concentrate on blaming outsiders.

But we are in the business of telling the brutal truth about oppression and exploitation to its victims so that we can answer to dead-end ultra-exploitative jobs that women should organise to change things! We want a mass working-class-based women's movement.

Isn't there in some of the letters — underneath the outrage at working-class women being insulted — more than the hint of an attitude of defending all women, an idea of a vast cross-class common women's interest?

There are bourgeois women, too — not only the sort Liz Millward attacks, but, as a result of the expansion of formal equalities in the last two decades, which well-off women have been able to benefit from and working-class women have not, active bourgeois who are women.

Francis Higgins, South London.

### WHAT'S ON

Murphy

#### Wednesday 16 October

"Labour and socialism", SW London SO meeting. 7.30, Lambeth Town Hall  
"Socialists and the Middle East", Essex University SO meeting. 6.00. Speaker: John O'Mahony

#### Thursday 17 October

"The case for socialist feminism", Glasgow SO meeting. 7.30, Partick Burgh Hall  
"Arabs, Jews and socialism", Manchester University SO meeting. 5.00. Speaker: Dan Judelson  
"What is socialism?", York University SO meeting. 6.00, 1.15. Speaker: Mike Fenwick  
"Capitalism or socialism?", debate between Janine Booth and Tony Marlow MP. 5.00, Nene College, Northampton

#### Saturday 19 October

Demonstrate against the Poll Tax. Assemble 1.00, Caledonian Park, London N7. March to rally at Trafalgar Square

#### Monday 21 October

"Labour Party conference", Socialist Organiser London Forum. 7.30, Lucas Arms, Gray's Inn Road, London.

#### Thursday 10 October

"Is socialism dead?", Kent University SO meeting. 6.00, Keynes College  
"Crisis in South Africa", Merseyside SO meeting. 7.30, Hardiman Street Trade Union Centre. Speaker: Bob Fine  
"Stand up for Real Socialism", Leeds SO meeting. 7.30, Coburg pub  
"Can Kinnock win?", Northampton SO meeting. 5.00, Park Campus, Nene College  
"Where we stand", Manchester SO meeting. 8.00, Town Hall  
"Is socialism dead?", Liverpool Institute of Higher Education SO meeting. 12.45. Speaker: Gail Cameron  
"Is socialism possible?", Nottingham University SO meeting. 1.00. Speaker: Mark Sandell

#### Saturday 12 October

"The lessons of Cable Street", Anti-Fascist Action rally. 2.00, Davenant Centre, 179 Whitechapel Road, London E1

#### Monday 14 October

"Socialists after Labour Party conference", SE London SO meeting. 7.30, Two Eagles pub, Elephant and Castle. Speaker: Cate



The Commitments

# Soul, struggle and sex

## Cinema

Mick Ackersley reviews "The Commitments"

"The Commitments" is a miracle. Despite all the others, this tale of working-class youngsters

building up a band and trying to break into show business is neither banal nor stale nor trite.

In part the freshness comes from the Dublin setting and the cast of "unknowns" recruited after much sifting and auditioning by Alan Parker. The talented cast are people there and then living out the showbiz dream which possesses the characters they play.

The vitality of the film owes a lot,

too, to the screenplay by Dick Clement, Ian Le Frenais and Roddy Doyle (from Doyle's novel). Example:

*Derek:* So what kind of music are we gonna be playing, Jimmy?

*Jimmy:* You're working class, right?

*Outspan:* We would be if there was any work.

*Jimmy:* So your music should be about where you're from and the sort of people you come from. It

should speak the language of the streets. It should be about struggle and sex. An' I don't mean mushy shite love songs about 'I'll hold your hand and love you till the end of time'. I mean riding, fuckin', tongues, gooters, boxes — the works.

*Outspan:* Jaysis — what kind of music says all that?

*Jimmy:* Soul.

Go see "The Commitments".

# Tales of American labour

"The Jungle" by Upton Sinclair (1906); "The Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck (1939); "Homeboy" by Seth Morgan (1990)

Mark Osborn introduces three important American novels you should read

"The Jungle" tells the story of immigrant workers drawn to the US by the promise of a better life. Their hopes are dashed in the disgusting conditions of the meatpacking factories of

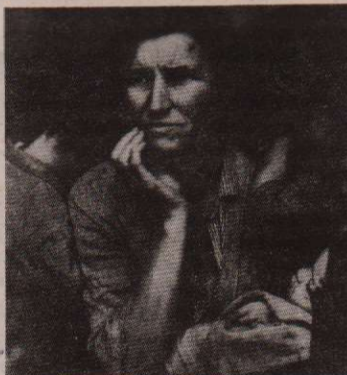
Chicago.

"The Grapes of Wrath" deals with an extended family of poor farmers. Like thousands of others they were thrown off the land during the crisis-racked 1930s. The Joads migrated to California from Oklahoma. They wanted to believe in a land where "if you reached out you could pick a peach". Instead, they found "Hoovervilles" — cardboard cities of homeless families — degradation and poverty.

Sinclair's family of Lithuanian immigrants and Steinbeck's travellers fall lower and lower. At each step down it is hard to see how they can go farther.

But out of desperation comes struggle.

Sinclair's central character, Jurgis, wandering out of the cold, finds his way into a socialist meeting. He is amazed and shortly joins the Socialist Party of Eugene Debs.



This famous picture from the '30s shows a migrant worker in poverty-stricken California. She fed her children on stolen frozen food and trapped birds

In Steinbeck's book, the Californian fruitpickers strike. The Joads, from ignorance and from poverty, scab. Their friend, a union organiser is killed by the bosses' strikebreakers but is then avenged by Tom Joad.

The book closes with the Joads utterly destitute. Rose Joad breastfeeds a starving stranger — solidarity among the dispossessed.

"Homeboy" is of a different order. This is a type of thriller — and with quite a complex story. It is a book about the big-city underclass living from thieving, drugs and prostitution. Joe, the main figure,

fights for his life against the gangster barons.

The jacket cover reviews say this is a funny story. Well, I laughed a few times — but this is not a pretty story.

The climax — a prison riot — is the headless rebellion of US society's spat-upon. The convicts butcher each other in an orgy of violence.

There is very little room for solidarity here.

It seems the best thing to be said in 1990 — the final result of "Homeboy", is a victory for good and justice against the big villains. Hope lives on.

Millions of Americans now live in a similar underworld. They are the lowest layer of the 33 million below the official poverty line.

In a way, these three books chart the sad, downward path of the political life of our people, the American proletariat.

No one is saying that the American labour movement has been buried. But it has taken body blows.

**"It cannot last. The American workers will rise again. And after the workers move, up will come new Upton Sinclairs"**

In 1912 Eugene Debs, a campaigning left-wing socialist, got a million votes in the presidential election. In the 1930s, a labour explosion built militant, mass industrial unions.

The post-war stabilisation was accompanied by red-baiting and union-bashing. Without a mass workers' party or strong workplace organisation, the socialist and even trade union tradition has been marginalised. Class has been pushed to the edge.

It can not last. The American workers will rise again. And after the workers move, up will come new Upton Sinclairs.

## The blue rose of forgetfulness

"The historical memory of the bourgeoisie is in the traditions of its rule, in the country's institutions and laws, in the cumulative art of government. The memory of the working class is in its party: the [Labour] reform party is the party of poor memory".

Leon Trotsky

The Kincock rose is blooming now  
In Thatcher's shade it learned to grow:  
It signifies apostasy  
But circumstances change you see.

So raise Neil Kincock's standard high,  
Old principles we'll sell and buy,  
Though reds may flinch and Trotskys sneer  
Chameleon politics rule here.

His love was like a red, red rose

But disappointment changes those  
Who have the sense to learn from life  
Now Kincock plies the traitor's knife.

All capitalists he used to hate  
But Kincock changed and not too late.  
He's seen the truth, the market's tops,  
Those without bread can eat the slops.

Hot words were lightly spoken, Neil,  
But mind must bring the heart to heel.  
One must grow up and take one's stand  
With those who wield power in this land.

With values covered swear we now  
To circumstances we will bow,  
The homeless can grow stiff and cold,  
The sick will thrive when they have gold.

A rose by any other name  
Is still itself, remains the same,  
The climate shifts, but we stay true,  
Dear Margaret, we still fear you.

The Kincock rose is blooming now,  
In Thatcher's garden trained to grow,  
And 'ere young Ramsay Kincock's through  
That rose he'll tint a duck-egg blue.

So raise Neil Kincock's standard high,  
Old principles he'll sell and buy,  
Though reds still flinch and Trotskys sneer,  
Chameleon politics rule here.

An anonymous "young Labour MP" told  
Radio 4's "Today" programme last week,  
that the Red Flag should be rewritten as  
"The Red Rose"

# Cool and proud: Miles Davis

## Obituary

By Jim Denham

Miles Davis didn't sing. This may not seem a terribly significant point to make about a musician noted for his cool, smokey trumpet sound and constant experimentation, but I think it's of importance to an understanding of him.

Prior to Davis, all jazz trumpet players — Louis, Berigan, Eldridge, even Dizzy Gillespie — would burst into song at the drop of a derby mute. The arrival of non-singing Miles Davis can be said to mark the point at which jazz ceased to be "entertainment" and became "art".

Shyness and arrogance are often difficult to distinguish, and Miles possessed more than his fair share of both. He didn't just not sing, he often didn't even speak to an audience — or look at them. This was in stark contrast to the mugging and general hilarity that most people had come to expect of jazz musicians (especially black jazz musicians) by the 1940s.

Shyness apart, the reasons for this austere approach to "presentation" were clearly that he took himself very seriously as an artist and very seriously as a black person.

Like many other musicians of the bop generation, he regarded the antics of earlier generations as demeaning tommy.

Despite an avowed contempt for "ofay cats" and an apparent tendency towards black separatism, Miles often included white players in his groups and produced some of his best work ("Porgy and Bess", "Sketches of Spain") with the white arranger Gill Evans. Stranger still, his only acknowledged trumpet influence was the white dixielander, Bobby Hackett.

Miles was a bundle of contradictions and not without a sense of humour (or, at least, irony).

He first came to attention in the mid-'40s in Charlie Parker's group. Parker chose him because (unlike Dizzy Gillespie) he gave the altoist space: it was a quality that was to characterise all Miles' best work.

The early bebop of Parker, Gillespie *et al* was deliberately frantic and fussy. By the late '40s, Miles had set off in a different direction, pioneering "cool" jazz and a minimalist ("modal" approach) to chord structures.

For a while he had a serious heroin problem that interrupted his career (and probably hastened his death) but he returned to make more ground-breaking music with John Coltrane and Philly Joe Jones in the late '50s.

A liking for James Brown and Jimi Hendrix led him, in the '70s, to electric "fusion" music complete with all the trappings of a rock star — exotic clothes, heavy minders and a relapse into narcotics that once again halted his playing.

Of course, he came back in the '80s — his revamped appearance only adding to the cool image. Personally, I regard the electrical amplification and steam-hammer rhythm — sections of his later years as little short of a tragedy, obscuring as they did the sheer beauty of that trumpet sound. But he knew what he was doing, he was always in control and he obviously refused to put up with the shit that a lot of black musicians had thrown at them. And to the last, he never once rolled his eyes. Or sang.



1956: Hungarian rebels atop a captured tank

# What is Stalinism?

**T**he collapse of Stalinism in the Soviet Union has posed sharp questions for socialists.

This was the system which, for 60 years, almost everyone (from right and left) saw as the "actually existing" (albeit, maybe, deformed, bureaucratized, and mangled) embodiment of socialism. Yet it is now rejected by the workers of the USSR and Eastern Europe with almost unanimous hatred.

Was the system really

socialist or even any approach to socialism? Was it even, as most Trotskyists argued while calling for the revolutionary overthrow of the Kremlin elite, a "degenerated workers' state"?

*Socialist Organiser* has argued that it was not. Here we reprint an excerpt from the statement we published in 1988, when we finally repudiated the "degenerated workers' state" formula. We welcome other contributions to the new debate now necessary on the nature of Stalinism.

## The last 40 years

**A** number of facts are unmistakable from the evidence of the last 40 years, central to clear assessment of the struggles in the Eastern Bloc, yet obscured by or difficult to reconcile with the "deformed and degenerated workers' states" codification.

1. The position of the working class in the command economies is generally worse than in the market economies. Low rents and food prices, and fairly full employment, do make the poorest in the Eastern Bloc better off than in the West. Yet average working-class living standards are lower, even at the same level of general industrial development.

Work conditions, despite the sluggish pace of work in many Eastern Bloc factories much of the time, are worse. And — centrally — the ruling bureaucracies repress all independent organisation by the working class.

South Korea is a society based on ruthless exploitation and brutal repression: yet it has allowed some openings for trade unions to develop against the odds. North Korea has allowed no such openings. The contrast between the two Koreas reflects the general picture.

And this is not an extraordinary situation of acute short-term crisis — as the position in the USSR in the '30s could perhaps be viewed at the time. It is a stable pattern over 40, 50 or 60 years.

The command economies have built up large and powerful working classes, working classes which have shown tremendous socialist potential. In that sense they have created preconditions for socialism. But in their repression of the working class they are further away from socialism than many market economies.

2. The development of the productive forces may be progressive even if the immediate results for the workers are bad. Many post-1951 Trotskyists have let the goal of working-class self-liberation be obscured by the goal of national

economic development, because that national economic development is where the "workers' states" are supposed to display their superiority over market capitalism. Some command economies have indeed developed industry fast.

But so — since 1945 — have many market economies. The command economies can certainly show no general, clear superiority over the market economies in developing the forces of production. Indeed, relative stagnation in the USSR and Eastern Europe is now the starting point for Gorbachev's reforms.

The command economies are not a stage beyond capitalism in developing the productive forces. Rather, they have emerged from underdeveloped capitalist societies with a big load of pre-capitalist or colonialist dross, and done broadly the same work as capitalist development.

A cooperative commonwealth — a nationalised economy planned under workers' democracy — will produce more efficiently and distribute more equally than any market economy ever can. We have no reason to doubt that.

But the sort of nationalised economy that exists in the Eastern Bloc has no superiority in the conditions it creates for the workers, nor superiority in long-term development of the productive forces.

3. Outside the USSR, the ruling bureaucracies are not usurpers of the nationalised economies: they created them. They did not create them because mass pressure forced them to do so against their will. They created them according to their own wishes and designs.

The bureaucracies are not acutely unstable. For 40 to 50 years they have been stably self-reproducing organisms. If we do not call them "ruling classes", it can only be on a technicality.

Although sometimes when in power the bureaucracies seek to recruit individuals from the working class, the core of these bureaucracies is certainly not a segment or a product of the working

class. They come from the middle class. Perhaps nowhere is this seen more plainly than in Afghanistan, where a very large part of the middle class and the military and technical intelligentsia tried, in the 1978 coup and after, to transform themselves into a bureaucracy on the USSR model.

Trotsky spoke of the Kremlin bureaucracy as balancing between its social and economic base and the pressure of capitalist imperialism. Such a view is no longer tenable.

The USSR is the second world power. In Vietnam, China and elsewhere the bureaucratized revolutionary forces were able to defeat the old order and beat down the working class *simultaneously*. Even while they were revolutionary against the old order, they were *simultaneously* counter-revolutionary against the working class.

4. The USSR does not correspond exactly to Lenin's picture of imperialism in his 1916 pamphlet. But then neither does any other country today. Today we commonly use the word "imperialism" in a wider sense than did Lenin, for whom "imperialism" started only around 1898-1902. In that broader sense of the word "imperialism", the US, Britain etc. are imperialist — and so is the USSR.

Nearly 50 years ago Trotsky wrote: "The driving force behind the Moscow bureaucracy is indubitably the tendency to expand its power, its prestige, its revenues. This is the element of 'imperialism' in the widest sense of the word which was a property in the past of all monarchies, oligarchies, ruling castes, medieval estates and classes".

Today the USSR has in Eastern Europe an empire with over 100 million subjects. You can deny that the USSR is imperialist only by saying that imperialism is only the form of monopoly-capitalist imperialism described by Lenin, and nothing else. And that would be to deny the existence of the Athenian and Roman, the Spanish and Ot-

toman empires, or indeed of the British Empire for all but 70 or so of its 300-year life.

The conflict between the US and the USSR is chiefly about competition for spheres of influence and control, rather than a dispute of market economy versus nationalised economy.

It is time to reassess. It is time to examine the idea that the Eastern Bloc states are exploiting economies essentially parallel, as regards the development of the forces of production, to market capitalism.

We are for:

- Disbandment of the police and armed forces, and their replacement by a people's militia.
- Breaking up the bureaucratic hierarchy of administration, and replacing it with a democratic regime of councils of elected and recallable workers' delegates, with freedom to form many political parties.
- Workers' control in industry. Free trade unions.
- Abolition of bureaucratic privileges; reorganisation of the economy according to a democratically-decided plan.
- Abolition of the bureaucracy's monopoly over information; freedom for working-class newspapers, meetings, radio and TV stations, etc.

We are for nationalisation of the major means of production. But what exists now in the Eastern Bloc is no form of socialism. Nationalisation is a means to an end — working class liberation from economic exploitation of those who control the means of production. That is not achieved when the nationalised economy and the monopolising state are in effect the property of a ruling elite whose upper layers lord it over society as the aristocrats and capitalists do elsewhere.

We advocate the replacement of the system of nationalised economy under a state-monopoly bureaucracy with a socialised economy under the democratic control of the working class.

INDUSTRIAL

**Norwegian union pledges support for OILC**

From OFS, Norway

We are informed that the British Offshore Industry Liaison Committee, OILC, will announce its transition from being a rank-and-file organisation to becoming an independent trade union later today [Friday 4 September].

Let it be known throughout the British offshore industry that OFS, Norway's leading offshore union, is applauding and welcoming your decision.

We are organising 6,000 offshore workers on the Norwegian Continental Shelf; highly skilled engineers and technicians as well as utility and catering personnel; oil company employees on fixed installations as well as contrac-



OILC activists have the confidence of the offshore workforce and will be looking to organise around health and safety issues

ting personnel on mobile rigs. We are politically independent, with no party ties.

We recognise our own historical development as an offshore trades union in the struggle that the OILC is currently experiencing.

The issues that you have put on the agenda are strikingly similar to the problems we faced 15 years ago, when OFS was formed.

We shall follow your further development and growth with great interest.

The potential for an offshore trades union of vertical character must be enormous in British waters. An organisation of top and bottom, left and right, will be a challenge to the industry, but — what's much more impor-

tant — it is the only answer to the everyday problems facing the offshore worker himself. Some of these problems are related to work-environment, safety, wages, work-hours, schedules, social dumping, and can only be solved by a strong and firm union encompassing all levels and branches of offshore workers.

Our support of the OILC must be real and practical. We look forward to visiting your organisation in the near future to discuss possible ways of establishing a formal cooperation across the British/Norwegian sector line.

We congratulate you with the new-born baby, and wish you all possible luck.  
The future is ours!

**A union for offshore workers**

**O** I.L.C. is seeking certification as an independent trade union for offshore oil workers. It is anticipated that the process will take up to two years to complete. However, OILC, for the purposes of Section 28 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act (TULRA) 1974 is already a trade union. Recruitment has commenced.

It is OILC's intention to base itself in its already well-resourced headquarters in Aberdeen. Our branch offices in Glasgow and Newcastle will remain open and we will open other offices as the need dictates.

OILC will provide a legal service to its members second to none. The new union will also build on its proven expertise on

offshore safety matters. This is particularly important in terms of the development of the post-Cullen reconstruction of the offshore regulatory regime.

Our first target for membership is 3,000. This will establish an income of approximately

£300,000 per annum. From that base we shall proceed by organising and recruitment. It is the intention to penetrate the United Kingdom Continental Shelf on a scale hitherto not achieved.

The Offshore Industry Liaison Committee

**Civil servants under attack:**

**Defend national pay bargaining!**

By a civil servant

Last week the Tories declared their intention to withdraw from six long-term pay deals covering 550,000 civil servants if the unions refuse to accept their fundamental revision. Yet at the time of going to press, they have not submitted their proposed form of amendments.

Nevertheless, the Tories' intentions are clear enough:

- an increase in performance pay as a proportion of take-home pay;
- 'freedom' for departments and agencies to negotiate their own separate deals;
- increased flexibility for departments and agencies which remain in the deals to vary them as they wish.

It's blackmail: if the unions do not accept fundamental inroads on national pay bargaining, and members' living standards, the Tories will abandon national bargaining altogether.

This latest assault meshes together the Tories' drive to break up the national civil ser-

**Attention CPSA, NUCPS, IPMS and IRSF members**

This all-members meeting of

Branch calls on the NEC to:

1. Immediately convene regular and frequent membership meetings to mobilise the membership to defend national pay bargaining and oppose any extension of performance pay;
2. Issue regular and frequent 'National Pay/Pay '92' bulletins to the membership;
3. Highlight the Tories' run-down of the public services;
4. Explain honestly to members that industrial action will be required to maintain national bargaining;

5. Explicitly link the campaign for national bargaining to a 1992 pay claim which will provide the membership with a real increase in their standard of living;

6. Urgently call a special pay conference to enable the membership to determine how to respond to this unprecedented attack;

7. Build for protest industrial action before the special conference;

8. Build a united front with the other Civil Service unions on the basis of a serious fight against the Tories, including industrial action.

vice, and with it the strength of the unions; the decision to reduce civil servants' living standards, holding the 1992/3 pay increase to 4.5% and the following year's to 3%; and the attempt — via the charade 'Citizens' Charter' — to blame public sector workers for the dreadful state of the public services in the run-up to the general election.

The national leaderships have long invited this attack by their consistent and craven retreats before the Tories. But this latest 'gun to the head' threat takes the fight onto a new plane. NUCPS General Secretary Leslie Christie, has rightly described the Tories' move as 'the most serious attack ever seen' on national pay bargaining.

**Liverpool NALGO call off action**

By a 4 to 1 majority, 1,000 striking members of NALGO in Liverpool, voted a week last Monday (30 September) in favour of a return to work.

The NALGO vote marks the final chapter in a dispute which began in mid-April with a 3-day strike by all Liverpool council workers in opposition to the council's plans to axe nearly a thousand jobs.

The initial all-out strike

was followed up by a series of "guerilla strikes", with different sections of the workforce being pulled out at different times.

Union leaders nationally made a point of sitting on the dispute — it coincided with the Walton by-election, and union leaders were determined that no escalation of the dispute occur, for fear that it might embarrass the Labour candidate in the by-election.

When GMB members in Liverpool were finally allowed by their national leader-

ship to have a ballot on all-out action the momentum had gone out of the dispute. The proposal for all-out action was heavily defeated.

Although the NALGO vote marks an end to the dispute begun in April, it does not mark the end of the

fight to save council jobs in Liverpool. The same day that 200 NALGO members returned to work, Liverpool City Council announced a further 180 compulsory redundancies amongst Liverpool street sweepers.

**A licence to fight**  
By John Moloney, CPSA DoE/DTP Section Executive

The DSS is not the only part of the civil service where under-staffing is a problem. In one of the Department of Transport's (DTP) Agencies, called DVLA, the staffing crisis has come to a head.

Owing to the recession, the number of cars being registered has slumped and this has, of course, had an effect on the regional network of offices, called VROs, which handle the registrations.

As income has fallen, so has the staffing numbers in the VROs. In many parts of the country, we have reached the

stage where there are not enough people to handle the existing workload.

In the last few weeks there have been work-to-rules and one day walk-outs in some VROs in the South East of England. The CPSA section covering DTP has collected information from all VROs across the country and is formulating a national staffing claim!

It seems certain that some sort of national industrial action will be needed. The section executive is due to meet this week. Activists should put two demands on the executive: members' meetings to be held at all VROs to explain the situation and to build up on the mood in the offices; and, secondly, the executive to draw up plans for industrial action. This must include plans for a national strike.

**It's the thought that counts**

LES HEARN'S



**SCIENCE COLUMN**

The Time and Space of Uncle Albert\* is about the adventures of a girl, Gedanken, and her Uncle Albert.

These adventures take place in the head of Uncle Albert or, rather, in the almost tangible thought bubble that hovers above his head as he sits in his favourite armchair.

What starts off these adventures is Gedanken's search for a subject for her school science project. Dinosaurs and volcanoes have already been taken and electricity in the home seems rather boring so Gedanken appeals to her uncle for suggestions.

The topic of light and its incredible speed crops up in conversation (as it would) and suddenly Albert has an idea. Gedanken can find out how light behaves for her project. For this she will need a space craft powerful enough to catch up a light beam. Is uncle joking? No!

He will think one up in his thought bubble and Gedanken can climb aboard and pilot it. All goes well and Gedanken finds herself "first captain" in "the largest spacecraft that has never been built", courtesy of Uncle Albert's powerful imagination.

A light beam goes past and Gedanken instructs the computer to accelerate to the same speed ie. the speed of light. The computer does the relevant calculations and the ship accelerates but it seems to Gedanken that the light beam is still travelling away at the same rate.

Why hasn't the ship got up to the speed of the light beam? She checks the speedometer. The spacecraft is travelling at 9/10ths of the speed of light relative to the Earth. Surely the light should have a speed relative to the craft of only 1/10th of the speed of light.

The computer puts the ship's engines on full power. After what seems an age, the light beam is still receding at the same speed relative to the craft though the speedometer is reading 0.999 of the speed of light relative to the Earth.

When Gedanken returns to Earth (ie. when Uncle stops thinking), she tells him of her strange and rather frustrating findings. To her surprise, Uncle Albert was expecting something of the sort. He explains to her that light is very special in that its movement is integral to what it is. There is no such thing as light standing still. An observer who was travelling at the speed of light would see light standing still and therefore no

observer can travel at the speed of light.

But the imaginary space craft had enough power to accelerate itself to the speed of light so why didn't it reach that speed? The answer according to Uncle Albert was that, as it went faster, it became more massive, taking more force to accelerate it. It could never reach the speed of light because that would mean it had infinite mass and required an infinite force.

Readers may find this starting to sound familiar and in fact this book is an extremely clever, because so simple, elucidation of (Uncle) Albert Einstein's theory of relativity. Other peculiar but true predictions of Einstein's theory covered in Gedanken's later voyages in Uncle Albert's thought bubble include the slowing of time and the shortening of lengths at high speeds, the relativity of motion (when someone is cycling along a road, are they moving or is it the rest of the universe? There is no absolute way of telling) and the relativity of time (events simultaneous for one observer may not be so for another).

Though written for children, this book has much to teach any reader about the bizarre nature of reality. Incidentally, "gedanken" is the German for "thought", Einstein's typical means of investigation being the "thought (gedanken) experiment".

Incidentally, Gedanken only gets a B for her project. Rather cheekily, she sets a test on it for her teacher which readers are invited to try.

I'm now looking forward to reading *Black Holes and Uncle Albert*.

\* By Russell Stannard, Professor of Physics at the Open University. Faber & Faber, £2.99. Suitable for readers of 10 years and upwards.

**Stop Jordan!**

The sovereign body of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) — the National Committee — is to be denied a say in the proposed merger with the electricians' and plumbers' union, the EETPU.

According to one Peckham Road insider, the issue of merger is to be put to a ballot before the rank and file based National

Committee can scrutinise the terms and conditions involved. That means a ballot before April 1992.

Rather than giving Jordan and Laird a free hand to destroy AEU democracy, the National Committee must be immediately recalled.

All discussions about merger should cease until the EETPU is prepared to rejoin the TUC on the basis of the AEU's existing constitution.

The left in the AEU must start campaigning on this issue now!

# SOCIALIST

## £10,000 for socialism!

ORGANISER

# Offshore workers form new union

By Tom Rigby

**"W**e've only been recruiting since last Friday and so far the response has been very positive indeed. The people offshore know us, I'm very optimistic."

That's how Ronnie MacDonald, Chair of the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee (OILC) summed up the tasks facing the committee just four days after they had made the momentous decision to form themselves into a new union for offshore workers.

"The decision was not taken lightly", explained MacDonald. For a long time now the OILC has been pushing for a unified bargaining approach from the North Sea unions. However, after praising OILC activists during the unofficial strikes of '89 and '90, the national officials of the TUC unions involved have returned to their old narrow, sectional concerns.

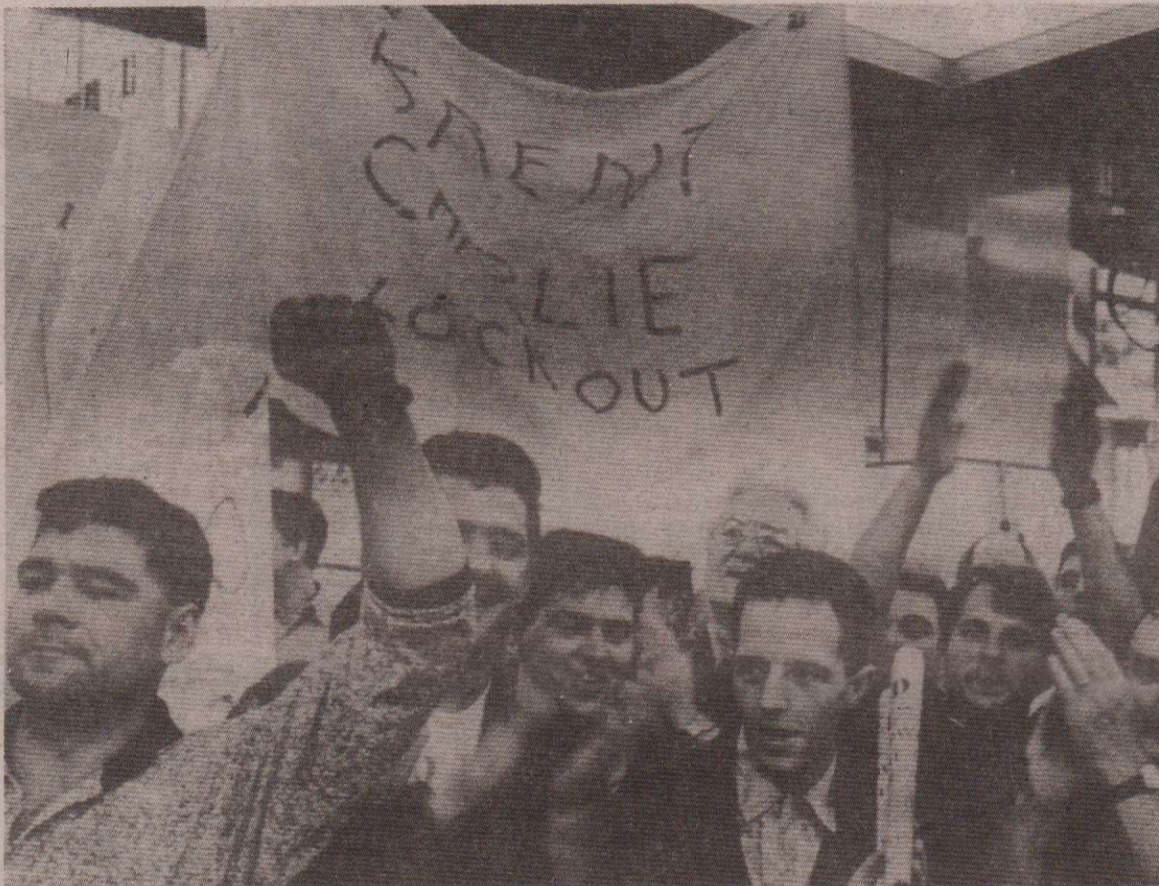
Anger against the officials reached a peak this summer with the signing by the AEU, EETPU and GMB of another hated 'hook-up' agreement.

This deal is for the period before oil starts flowing. It involves automatic de-recognition at a date determined by the oil companies and does not recognise the rights of stewards to bargain over health and safety at any time.

Just 2,000 people are covered by this deal. That amounts to one-eighth of the offshore workforce. And in this deal, no provision was made for the victimised OILC activists who remain sacked and blacked after the strike of 1990.

Despite all this, OILC activists continued to pursue a line of trade union unity.

An OILC initiative to pull the



Striking oil workers occupy BP's Glasgow Headquarters

competing unions together into a united federation was snubbed by national officials of the AEU and EETPU who failed to attend meetings to discuss the issue at this year's TUC.

It seems that the breakdown of this initiative, followed by the pathetic proposal to set up a completely toothless sub-committee of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to deal

with the offshore industry finally convinced OILC activists to take up the cudgels themselves and form a new union.

All serious trade unionists have a duty to rally to the OILC.

Their lightning strikes, and rig occupations have been an inspiration to us all, and their upfront campaigning style has proved that trade unionism can be popular. By their actions these brave fighters have done more for trade unionism

than all the fine — or not so fine — words of Airlie, Jordan, Willis, Edmonds and all the other TUC fat cats put together.

People, such as the leader writer of the *Morning Star* who have condemned the OILC activists for "playing into the hands of the extreme right" deserve only contempt.

After 25 years all the TUC trade unions combined can only claim a mere 6,000 members offshore out of a total workforce of 36,000. And the great bulk of that minority look to the OILC for leadership. It is not the OILC who are the "splitters" but the power-crazy officials of the AEU and the EETPU who cannot accept the burning need for workers unity in the North Sea.

As Ronnie MacDonald put it "we reject completely any attempt to paint our union as similar to and comparable with the UDM or the EETPU. Our business is not strikebreaking but defending the interests of the offshore workers. We want all trade unionists to know that."

Send messages of support and donations to OILC, c/o 52 Guild Street, Aberdeen, AB1 2NB, Scotland.

Publications available from OILC telling of their fight for union rights and decent health and safety in the North Sea include 'Striking Out', price £5, and 'The crisis in offshore trade unionism — a discussion document for the TUC'; both available from the above address.

## Stand up for real socialism!

By Mark Osborn

**S**ocialist Organiser never believed that the Stalinist states were socialist. We have always campaigned for democratic and workers' rights in the Eastern Bloc.

The problem genuine socialists faced for decades was that the Stalinist bureaucrats said they were socialists; the Western capitalists were only too happy to agree; and so for several generations Western workers were told on both side that *socialism equals Stalinism*.

Now the so-called Communist Parties have fallen in Eastern Europe and the USSR, the capitalist politicians and media are crowing

about the victory of capitalism over "socialism".

We know it is a lie. Stalinism was the opposite of socialism — anti-working-class dictatorship. Capitalism still means brutality and poverty for hundreds of millions of people; it must still be replaced by democratic socialism.

We are fighting the big lie of our ruling class. We are fighting to reassert the tradition of real socialism. We have produced

leaflets and can provide speakers for a campaign to *Stand Up For Real Socialism*.

To debate the issues out, we have organised a conference, *Is Socialism Dead?*, for Saturday 2 November, from 11 to 5 at Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19. Tickets are £6 waged, £4 students and low-waged, and £2 unwaged, from the Campaign for Real Socialism, 56 Kevan House, Wyndham Road, London SE5.

There will be a number of debates with right-wing ideologues, including:

• *Is Socialism Dead?* John O'Mahony debates Professor Kenneth Minogue of the London School of Economics.

• *Free market or socialist planning?* Martin Thomas debates Professor David Marsland of the West London Institute.

**S**ocialist Organiser needs £10,000 to buy new equipment. We aim — with our readers' help — to raise the money by the end of the year.

This week we received £288.44 bringing our total to £1750.17 or 17% of our target.

Thanks this week include: a Brighton bus-worker, £10; Sheffield *Socialist Organiser* sellers, £67.13 from fundraising; South-East London sellers, £23.31 from a car boot sale; and £15 from a Manchester reader.

Why not make a donation and help your



socialist weekly? Send cheques and postal orders to *Socialist Organiser*.

### 200 Club

Join *Socialist Organiser's* 200 Club draw: you stand a chance of winning £100 in our monthly lottery. Write to *Socialist Organiser* for details.

### Selling the paper

20 copies of *Socialist Organiser* were sold on the Tottenham Three demonstration on Saturday 5th October.

A large number of papers were sold during college society fairs including: Manchester University (20) and Poly (17); Essex University (85); LSE (30); Liverpool Institute (25); Brighton Poly (19); Newcastle Poly (30); Notts Poly (15).

### Get Socialist Organiser

Take a number of *Socialist Organiser* papers to sell in your area, or take out a subscription.

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