

Germany
1919:
year of
revolution



centre pages



Why
Africa
starves

page 11



Israel:
what
hope for
peace
now?



pages 4
& 5

The
logic
of
Marxism



page 12

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

Women's pit camps formed

Women Against Pit Closures activists, including Anne Scargill (centre), protesting outside Markham Main colliery, Armthorpe, South Yorkshire. Markham Main and Trentham near Stoke-on-Trent are to be the first sites of a series of women's pit camps designed to act as a focus for the struggle to keep all the threatened pits open. Brenda Proctor reports from Trentham: page 2. (Photo John Hoolihan)



OUR PITS STAY OPEN!

By Arthur Scargill,
NUM President

The fightback against pit closures has given fresh hope and energy to the trade union and labour movement. This is not just about coal and miners' jobs, it is about all of British industry, the NHS and other vital services, and the livelihood of millions.

At a meeting of the coal and rail unions on January 5th the NUM made a call for a "Stay-Away" Day of Action because, despite the tremendous campaigning and over-whelming public support, our pits are still under threat, industries and services are still under attack and workers throughout Britain are still losing their jobs every day.

The government and BC's closure plans have of course now been found unlawful (and irrational) by the High Court, whose ruling on December 21st quashed the decisions announced by Michael Heseltine on 13 and 19 October 1992.

Continued on page 2

Who's to blame for the Shetland oil disaster?

By Steven Holt

The shipwrecked oil tanker *Braer* breaking apart in the bad weather on the Shetland coast symbolises corrupt, wasteful, inefficient, get-rich-quick capitalism. Such events are not freak accidents in a technologically advanced, energy-efficient

civilised capitalism. This disaster came less than a month after a similar "freak accident" off the coast of Spain. These oil disasters stem from the same attitudes what led to the chemical disasters of Seveso and Bhopal.

It is impossible to eliminate accidents and disasters. But the sheer

frequency and scale of such events under capitalism is something else again. Safety procedures neglected and maintenance staff overworked in the drive to maximise profit — that is why we have so many of these accidents under this system. It exists primarily to generate wealth for the powerful few. Accidents pay! They

calculate that the times they get away with cutting corners pay for the "freak accidents". We pay too.

A socialist society would assess accident risks and costs of safety measures but decisions on safety would be made democratically. There would be no bosses overworking men and women to the point where

accidents become inevitable, or avoiding maintenance procedures in order to push up profit margins.

Oil tankers are necessary? Yes, but consider how much less oil per year would need to be shipped around the world if all population centres had free, efficient public transporta-

tion systems. And if, rather than the present day built-in obsolescence of goods, (many of which require plastics, made from oil), goods were built to be durable, perhaps we could then get on with our lives instead of slaving to afford to replace the latest peice of crap household machinery that has broken down.

Support the women's pit camps

By Brenda Procter (of North Staffs Miners' Wives Action Group)

For the first few weeks after the Tories announced the pit closures, there was endless media hype. It was a 'big story'. Then it stopped. There was nothing in the press anymore. The campaign needed a new profile.

So we thrashed it out at the Women Against Pit Closures national meeting in Sheffield with women from mining communities all over the country. We decided to set up pit camps at the ten pits threatened with immediate closure.

We are not going to just sit back and do nothing while our communities are devastated by British Coal!

When we turned up to Trenton with a caravan at 4.30 this morning, British Coal called in the police. They told us we were breaking the law. We told them that British Coal was breaking the law closing the pits! When unions ignored the courts the way British Coal has, they have

their funds sequestrated. That is what they did to the NUM during the strike.

We will stay right here until the decision to close the pits is reversed.

The support we have had so far is incredible! The NUM have given us all the support we want. Islington miners support group paid for the caravan for us. We are on a busy road here and people have been blowing their horns in support. We've had pensioners bringing food. Lads from the college have brought stuff too. Members of the Fire Brigades Union have been to offer their support. We have the support of North Staffs Miners Support Group who are working closely with us to get backing from the labour movement and the general public.

What can people do to help? The best thing that people can do is to come here themselves and show support!

Every visit is a morale-booster.

This is too big an issue to back down on. We are prepared to take whatever action is necessary to keep our pits open. So are the miners themselves. We

hope that working people will see that direct action is the only way of defending ourselves.

* Messages of support, and donations to the camp can be sent to: Trentham Pit Camp, c/o

Paul Carey, Secretary, North Staffs Miners' Support Group, 82 Ashford Street, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent, ST2 2EN. (Cheques payable to "North Staffs Miners Support Group").

Our pits stay open!

From front page

Not only did the High Court find the closure decisions unlawful, the judges found that taxpayers' money (we estimate more than £100 million) has been spent illegally on the closure plans by Heseltine, and we've been advised that he is personally liable to reimburse the Treasury since he authorised the expenditure.

I've written to the Prime Minister asking what steps he proposes to take to recover the sum involved and also whether he intends to retain Mr Heseltine as the Secretary of State responsible for the coal industry.

The High Court judgement means, among other things, that BC cannot now move to wipe out the 10 most immediately threatened pits as it has planned to do

by the end of January.

However, as I write this, production and development work have not yet resumed at nine of them. BC is threatening to cease production at the 10th (Betws in South Wales) and there is as yet no indication that all 10 will be treated in the same way as the 21 pits which are not within the Department of Trade and Industry's coal and energy review.

None of the threatened 31 pits must close. The trade union and labour movement campaign must go forward, fighting for all key industries and services. The situation demands leadership and initiative from the TUC and all affiliated unions.

This article is taken from the latest edition of *Trade Union News*. Available from TUN, 28 Bradbury Park, London N1.

NUS — stop grovelling, start fighting

By Mark Sandell

The NUS Students' Charter launched on 9 December is not a proud statement of NUS policy but a whinging plea for mercy to the Tories. In fact this "NUS Charter" ignores NUS policy.

NUS policy calls for:

- * the abolition of student loans;
- * an increase in the student grant to a decent level;
- * the restoration to students of the right to claim benefits;
- * the abolition of the meanstested parental contribution.

None of this is in the "Students' Charter"! There are only vague statements about student "financial support". This fits well with Labour Party policy, but it is simply no use to students!

This is a negative charter, marked more by what is absent than by what is there.

- * The Equal Opportunities section does not mention sexuality.
- * There is no mention of safety in colleges.

- * Although many NUS members are on the slave labour YT schemes there is no mention of Youth Training.

- * There is nothing about the scandalous shortfall of over 80,000 places on YT, leaving young people with no income. This in particular is a disgrace.

Ignoring NUS policy and NUS conference-decided priorities the authors of this "Students' Charter" have made up NUS policy on the hoof! They demand fifteen week term semesterisation: but this has not even been discussed at the National Executive let alone NUS

conference. These, of course, are the people who have cut a swathe through NUS democracy...

The Charter was distributed to the press and Vice Chancellors before it went out to student unions: student unionists discovered the Charter through reading the press! Plainly the bureaucratic creeps who run the NUS think they can do without the members.

This is a poorly organised publicity stunt aimed at impressing wet Tory MPs. What NUS should be organising is mass campaigns which pulls together and expresses student anger against this Tory government.

But, despite the Tory threat of voluntary membership the Labour-Liberal-Independent lash-up that leads NUS have decided to keep the lid on any action. This Charter is their document of surrender. By abolishing Winter conference the NUS leaders have isolated the National Executive from activists' demands.

The Tories are in a terrible mess, shaken by public anger over the recession and the plan to butcher the pits. Making NUS a soft target in this climate will not make the Tories less likely to attack us! A mass campaign on education and student poverty could link with struggles over the pits, the public sector and privatisation. It would convince rank and file students that NUS is worth fighting for.

The top priority for student activists must be to build fighting unions.

We demand of the NUS that it starts to campaign, and stops crawling to the Tories.

Manchester student cuts

By Paul Williams, MANUS Convenor

On 19 January, Manchester City Council Education committee will be discussing a package of cuts that will seriously affect the future of further education in the city. The cuts include a massive decrease in discretionary grants of over £100,000. This means that each new student will receive £70 less a year (they get around £500 now).

If all this doesn't clear off the deficit, the committee will be discussing a 50% cut later on in the year!

These cuts mean that access to education will be denied to many more young people simply because they can't afford it. These young people can chose to go on a Youth Training Course, go to college, or

starve.

Further Education faces another drastic change. In April, we get a new centralised way of funding FE colleges — "incorporation". Local Education Authorities will no longer fund and control colleges — colleges will control themselves with money straight from the government.

Colleges will become more "business orientated" looking for extra ways to make money. Already in Manchester, colleges are starting to make extra cash by charging unemployed students exam fees. These are normally waived for students on the dole.

Further education is gradually being cut off from the people who need it most. Students must fight to make sure that education remains open to all — not just the privileged few!

The lie machine



Are you surprised to be told that "Charles" and "Di" have both been feeding the tabloids with their "side of the story"? It has been public knowledge for months!

Free Choi Il-Bung!

Under South Korea's repressive National Security Law socialist publisher Choi Il-Bung faces a court hearing and possible five-year prison sentence on 14 January.

Choi Il-Bung has published translations of Western Marxist critiques of the Stalinist bureaucracies.

Socialists should not forget that South Korea had its own Tiananmen Square massacre a decade ago in the southern city of Kwangju.

Details from Campaign to Free South Korean Socialists c/o 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DE.



Prakash and Prem must stay!

Prakash Chavrimootoo and her 9 year old son are continuing their fight against deportation to Mauritius. On 24 November the High Court turned down their application for leave to appeal against deportation. Rodney Bickerstaffe (NUPE) Prakash and Prem and Claire Short MP hand in a petition to the Home Office on 10 December 1992. For more details contact Gloria Mills (NUPE), Tel: 081-854 2244. Photo Mark Salmon

Irish Labour backs Finna Fail coalition

By Mark Osborn

The Irish Labour Party met last Sunday, 10 January, and agreed to the Labour leadership's proposed coalition deal with Finna Fail. The 1,200-strong conference backed the leaders with only around 50 delegates in opposition.

The Labour-Finna Fail programme was made public last Friday.

It is promised that the government will recommend the introduction of divorce legislation. Labour leaders promise to legalise homosexuality and bring in legislation to liberalise the laws against abortion.

They also promise to increase council house building from the current 1,000 to 3,500 homes per year. This is still far short of meeting the Irish hous-

ing crisis.

It is said that the coalition will stop the privatisation policy of the current government.

These measures are all relatively slight reforms and are a

big price to pay for tying the labour movement to a bourgeois party which has been rocked by scandals.

Irish Labour should stand on its own.

UNITA bandits on the run

As we go to press, forces loyal to the MPLA government in Angola appear to have succeeded in driving Jonas Savimbi's South African backed UNITA bandits out of all the major cities in the country including UNITA's national HQ in Huamba.

Since UNITA lost the UN-brokered elections last September to the MPLA they have been threatening civil war. Now all Savimbi can hope for is to retreat to the countryside and from there launch forays into the towns.

By all accounts the local population, even in towns that were

considered UNITA strongholds seem to have welcomed the MPLA.

Though the government which doesn't deserve the support of socialists is likely to use the present Angola "emergency" to restrict democratic rights for all oppositionists, it would be wrong to pretend that there is no difference between the MPLA and UNITA.

It is all to the good that the UNITA military machine appear to have received a major blow, if it has not yet been completely



A pitiful sight

Smith betrays democracy!

Grimacing and chattering, tumbling, mincing and posturing on the broken stones of a once great building, the monkeys are a pitiful sight. They make noise, occupy space; some of them dress up comically in ill-fitting bits of human clothing, strutting and prancing and jabbering aimlessly. Throw something bright, or beguilingly noisy into the midst of this company of chimps and they will rush towards it in wonder, examine it, snatch it and squabble over it. The noise they make!

But they can do nothing constructive; not they, but creatures of another species shaped the stones on which they scamper in unconscious mockery and parody.

What monkeys? The monkeys in a hundred old movies which you

too will have seen? No — the monkeys in suits who prance about on top of the Labour Party!

Now — for God's sake — the leaders of the Labour Party are squabbling over Bill Clinton! The victorious shadow of the USA's President-elect has fallen across their lives, and they are all agog, besides themselves with excitement. What can they learn from Clinton? Who will reveal to them the inner secret of Clinton, the real, magical essence of Clintonism? Where can they study, so that they too can be like Clinton?

They have invited some of Clinton's "election technicians" over to explain it all to them and to coach them for the General Election in four years time.

Reports say that some of them — Blair and Brown, probably — are now convinced that all would have gone well for Labour last April if only Neil Kinnock had learned to play the saxophone in time, or had it been possible to reveal that he'd been playing away from Glenys. Any day now, one or other of Labour's "modernisers" — Margaret Beckett, maybe — will discover that Labour could win the next election if, like Clinton, it would champion capital punishment!

Kinnock himself, like Lazarus rising from the tomb, has miraculously come back to life to help "Clintonise" the Labour Party. He is convinced that this is the only way for Labour to win the next election. Kinnock, who knows all about winning elec-

tions, thinks that Clintonism is the Kinnockism of tomorrow. Those who don't want to "modernise" the Labour Party, he shouts at middle-of-the-road NEC member, John Prescott, should not be in the Labour Party at all. And so it goes on.

This bizarre episode is one of the strangest in Labour's recent history. The political bankrupts who lead the political labour move-

"for Labour now to bank on winning the next election by way of gimmicks and get-rich-one-day schemes is to take the sure road to a fifth Tory victory in 1997"

ment have lost all sense of their own and of the labour movement's political identity. The idea that the election victory of Slick Willy Clinton, the expensive, glossy, union-busting, millionaire ex-Governor of Arkansas can be a model for a Labour victory could only occur to people who are radically disorientated and demoralised. It is the other side of the coin to their continuing drive to sever Labour's links with the unions.

We do not know what technical lessons — if any — can be learned from Clinton's campaign, but for Labour now to bank on winning

the next election by way of gimmicks and get-rich-one-day schemes is to take the sure road to a fifth Tory victory in 1997. *We have been here before!* The gimmicks and calculations were different — Labour's lack of fight, drive and conviction, was exactly the same in the four years before the 1992 defeat as they are now four years before the next scheduled General Election.

The Tory government is morally and politically bankrupt. Its credibility and authority are badly shaken. John Major is neither feared nor respected. Millions — including many who voted for them last April — believe that the Tories lied and cheated their way to an undeserved victory in that election.

By harrying them and by rousing the people against them, Labour could force an early General Election, and drive them from office long before 1997. The great surge of anger that swept Britain over the pit closures and forced the government to retreat shows what could be done.

Instead, the pixilated idiots who lead the Labour Party want to continue their drive to depoliticise and "Clintonise" it!

Their favourite chatter is chatter about democracy. But, by their failure to fight the Tories, they mutilate, weaken and betray democracy. Right now they scamper and jabber and posture around Westminster with as little consequence as our poor monkeys on their broken stones.

When Britain planned an 'immediate & terrible war' in Southern Ireland

A "Top Secret" document released to the public last week, after 71 years hidden in the deepest archives of the state, outlines what Lloyd George's Tory-Liberal government would have done had the 1921 negotiations with Dail Eireann, the democratically-elected Dublin Parliament, broke down, as it seemed they inevitably would.

The document sheds additional light on the point we made in the editorial in the last *Socialist Organiser*: — that the present situation in Northern Ireland — out of which IRA bombers come to wreak havoc in London — has its roots in Britain's savage coercion of the majority of the Irish people. Without that coercion, the Northern Six County State, with its 40% Catholic-Nationalist minority, who are the majority in half of the Six County land area, could not have come into existence 72 years ago.

It has long been known that, in the wake of two and a half years of war in Ireland between British forces and the soldiers of the Parliament elected by the majority of the Irish people, the Irish negotiators, Michael Collins, Arthur Griffiths and others, finally accepted British terms only after Lloyd George had threatened to unleash an "immediate and terrible war on the Irish people".

Summarising the newly-released document in last Sunday's *Telegraph*, reporter Andrew Roberts outlined what the British Government had planned to do if the talks broke down.

"Plans included making the possession of arms punishable by death, imposing martial law, suppressing the Dail as a 'treasonable organisation', and blockading southern Ireland. Fifty thousand troops would be dispatched, civil courts closed, the Press censored; there would be a massive internment programme and Irish manufacturing industry would cease."

Already, from late 1920 the Black and Tans had systematically destroyed the economically vital rural "creameries".

Roberts adds: "The plans were approved by the Secretary of State for War, Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, and presented to a meeting chaired by the prime minister, David Lloyd George, and including Winston Churchill, then Secretary for the Colonies, the Conservative leader Austen Chamberlain, the Chief Secretary for Ireland and the Attorney-General.

"Had the Irish delegation not radically changed its stance two hours before the the seventh session of the conference, the British

Continued on page 4

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

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Anatomy of a stitch-up

It is one of the worst-kept secrets of the trade union movement that the GMB and the TGWU are going to get it together sooner rather than later. T&G Deputy General Secretary, Jack Adams has told regional officials that the deal is virtually "signed, sealed and delivered". Bill Morris and John Edmonds have established a close "personal chemistry", that was evident at this year's TUC.

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

"Left" GMB officials (there are one or two, believe it or not) have been trying to find out when and where the mysterious T&G "Broad Left" meets — a task that has defeated most rank and file T&G activists.

It seems that everybody knows what's going on — except the poor, bloody membership. So far, the only public indication of anything beyond the kind of harmless games of footsie that regularly take place between all unions, is a joint document on training, a T&G press release about "greater co-operation" with the GMB and some vague proposals for "joint working parties".

This is very odd, given Bill Morris' proclaimed enthusiasm for "maximum membership involvement" in the discussions around the Klein Report into restructuring the T&G. Presumably a major amalgamation would represent an important part of any "restructuring" proposals? What was the point of commissioning a £1 million-plus report into the union's structures and then holding a Special Rules Conference in December to discuss the proposals, if the forthcoming amalgamation wasn't even under discussion?

One explanation may be that Morris and the T&G leadership, having shelled out £1 million for Adam Klein to tell them the obvious, don't want to admit that they've wasted the membership's money: the GMB will undoubtedly want a further major discussion into the structure of the future joint union.

Perhaps the strongest aspect of this whole business is the air of inevitability that surrounds it: left and right in both unions seem to accept the amalgamation as inevitable. The hard right in the T&G are particularly enthusiastic, presumably because they see Edmonds and the GMB leadership as potential allies against the soft-left leadership that presently has control of the T&G. Equally, the GMB left are all in favour, hoping that the T&G's "Broad Left" will provide a break on Edmonds's more outrageous New Realist schemes. So, minor details like the fact that the two unions are presently on opposite sides in the debate on the Labour Party's union link have, so far, been brushed aside.

The leadership of both unions are in favour of speedy consummation because of simple economies of scale: the T&G's financial difficulties are well-known, but the GMB is almost as deeply in the mire. The difference is that the GMB has managed to keep its financial problems out of the press, whereas the T&G leadership has to content itself with a permanently disloyal, regionally-based opposition in constant touch with industrial correspondents.

Edmonds has one further reason to favour a swift lash-up with the T&G: in one "central" region of the GMB, a major scandal involving corruption, nepotism and sexual harassment at the highest level of the union's structure is about to break out. Edmonds has, so far, backed away from sacking the officer concerned. Much easier to give him a golden handshake as part of a "restructuring" resulting from an amalgamation with the T&G.

There are, in fact, powerful arguments in favour of a GMB/TGWU merger — as well as a lot of reasons for activists in both unions to be wary. So far, neither set of members have heard any arguments, for or against. Perhaps instead of spending a small fortune on a £120-a-head conference on "Clintonomics", the TGWU leadership ought to think about organising some proper consultation with its own members.

Israel after the deportations

A crime again

Michel Warshawsky from the Israeli, Trotskyist group Matzpen reports from Jerusalem

The deportation of the Palestinian activists, or supposed activists, just adds one more dimension to negative Palestinian attitudes towards the negotiations with the Israeli government.

Among the broad mass of Israeli Jews there is a great deal of support for the deportations. But

among the ruling class there is a majority which considers the matter to be both a crime and a stupidity.

Nevertheless, there are some signs that the Palestinians will resume the negotiations with the Israeli government. However, leading Palestinians are unhappy — they know how unpopular this will be.

In the medium-term, the deportations can only strengthen Hamas. This cannot be in the interests of the ruling class, but Rabin has acted like a General in government —

hit hard without thinking about the consequences.

I believe that the Israeli government will eventually have no choice but to look for a compromise, a way out.

Peace Now organised a demonstration in Tel Aviv, but there were fewer than one thousand demonstrators. Peace Now itself is split and has only taken a more oppositional stance on the question of the deportations as the mood among the Israeli elite shifted.

Peace Now have a big problem: the Knesset members they identify

with, from the left of Labour and Meretz, support the deportations.

The crisis inside the left-Zionist parties looks set to continue and deepen. The ruling bodies of both MAPAM and Ratz have both passed motions against the deportations.

From the Alliance for Workers' Liberty:

Arabs, Jews and socialism — £1.80 + 34p p&p from: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Rabin exposed

Adam Keller editor of *The Other Israel* reports from Tel Aviv

Rabin is not a left-wing man; that was always known. But we have placed too many hopes on the doves inside his government. These people from left-wing Meretz and the Labour Party have betrayed us by joining a government which has not committed itself to ending the occupation at any specific date.

The government reacted to a wave of nationalist hysteria which followed the kidnapping and killing of an Israeli soldier. But the deportations touch the deepest trauma of the Palestinians, the trauma of 1948.

Up until the deportations the only visible

opposition to the government was from the right. Now the left is reorganising. An ad hoc anti-deportation committee is circulating a petition which has a few thousand signatories.

Peace Now have organised a demonstration in Tel Aviv demanding the return of those expelled so that, if there are charges, they can be put on trial. There is no evidence with which to put most of the deportees on trial — that is precisely why they were deported!

It is more difficult to mobilise now because the so-called doves in the government are supporting the deportations. Sharon has said that if he had carried out the deportations there would have been 400,000 people marching again in Tel Aviv, and he is right.

A sharp debate has opened up inside Meretz. Many of the activists inside the three parties which make up Meretz are very angry with their leaders who are supporting the deportations. However, the leading bodies of the Meretz parties have stopped short of calling for their ministers to resign from the government.

One of the reasons Rabin thought he could get away with the deportations was that the negotiations with the Palestinians had broken up around the time the deportations took place. They are only due to start again in February. Rabin expected a few days of condemnation while the deportees dispersed, then a resumption of talks in February. He greatly misjudged it.

On the Palestinian side there was a wave of hope after the initial Madrid meeting which subsided when nothing was achieved. Then there was a second wave of raised expectations after the Rabin election victory. But then Rabin delivered very little.

He made these deportations which reminded the Palestinians of 1948.

Now there is a big Palestinian majority opposed to negotiations without the return of the deportees. This holds true for the Palestinian Arabs inside Israel, 80% of whom supported a one-day general strike on Tuesday 22 December.

The complicating factor is that the parties of the Arabs inside Israel are supporting the government. Last week they voted for the government's budget.

Contact *The Other Israel*, c/o PO Box 2542, Holon 58125, Israel

When Britain planned war in Ireland

From page 3

government may have been forced to implement the most draconian measures for the suppression of colonial rebellion since the American War of Independence."

Roberts quotes the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Nevil Macready:

"I am convinced that the only chance of avoiding a serious setback [if the talks break down] will be to strike at once with all means at my disposal".

Roberts adds: "All the proclamations were ready and arrangements had been com-

pleted between the Home Office, Admiralty and Board of Trade for the total suppression of southern Ireland.

"Twenty thousand rebels were to be interned, the Royal Navy being responsible for housing 2,500 of them at Scapa Flow, and provisions were made to move the families of Irish troops serving the Crown to England."

The Irish delegation — breaking their mandate — capitulated to the British threats. Within a year there was civil war in the south between their supporters and those who wanted to continue resistance to Britain. In that

war an Irish nationalist — "Free State" — government enforced the British diktat, using some of the methods the British would have used: they imposed and inflicted an automatic death penalty for the carrying of arms. Paradoxically, these events ensured the survival of the republican tradition represented by the losers in that civil war, but — fighting an Irish satellite government — it took a confused, mystified and frequently irrational form. That tradition now helps make "Northern Ireland" the intractable thing it is.

Send a donation to the Israeli campaign against the Palestinian deportations. Send cheques (payable to *Socialist Organiser*) to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA (write "Campaign Against Palestinian Deportations" on the back). We will forward all monies to Adam Keller.

st the Palestinians



16 year old Bassam al-Siyuri is re-united with his father on the West Bank, he is one of the nine alleged supporters of Hamas allowed back.

Socialist Organiser says Two states for two peoples

By Mark Osborn

The deportation of 415 Palestinian Arabs by the Rabin government — which broke its own laws in the process — is an outrage.

The deportees have been expelled into the so-called Israeli security zone in Southern Lebanon without either charges or a trial. The Israeli government should allow all those they deported to return.

The last Likud government began a "peace process" which gave nothing to the Palestinians. The election of Rabin renewed Palestinian hopes for some settlement.

There can be no support for Hamas — their policy is for the destruction of Israel and the creation of an "Islamic state" in all Palestine.

As Adam Keller has reported in *Socialist Organiser*, Israelis now live in fear of knife attacks from desperate, young Palestinians. There will be no end to such attacks until the Palestinians' national rights are respected, and Israel allows the formation of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

In Britain the problem is to support the democratic rights of the deportees while continuing to confront the anti-semitism which is being stirred up.

It's not "the Jews" who are responsible for the deportations, it is the Israeli government. "The Jews" or "The Zionists" (often a "respectable" form of anti-semitic terminology) are not one reactionary mass, culpable by collective responsibility — or conspiracy.

And we must not forget the poisonous role of the Smash Israel! "left". People like the SWP sour the debate, and make rational discussion impossible.

The Jews are the only people in the world who the SWP would want to deny a homeland. What is that if it is not anti-semitism? Who can be surprised if Jews are repelled by the left — perhaps to become chauvinists?

The way forward is consistent democracy — for the return of those deported, and for two states for the two peoples.

"It's not 'the Jews' who are responsible for the deportations, it is the Israeli government."

But Rabin, flanked by "doves", did very little. The occupation, torture, killings all continued. Then Rabin expelled over 400 alleged Islamic activists in retaliation for the brutal murder of a border policeman.

The net effect is to weaken the position of the mainstream PLO, who are involved in the negotiations, and to offer a great propaganda weapon to the radical and reactionary, Islamic Hamas organisation.

days of 24-hour curfew ending on 23 December. On the 27th of December the curfew began again and lasted until 2 January.

During these curfews people are not allowed out of their front door. People living in camps, in particular, suffer terribly.

General social conditions are appalling. There are no social services, no unemployment benefits, and little health care.

Last week two brothers were shot dead on the balcony of their house. The justification was that they were breaking the curfew — on the balcony of their own home!

The occupying authorities are ugly, brutal and racist.

There are so many curfew days that work is completely disrupted. People lose their jobs, and so do not have enough money to live.

We had ten consecutive

Democracy for Tel Aviv but not for Gaza

Mary Khas reports from the Gaza

There is democracy in Tel Aviv but there is no democracy for us in Gaza or for the deported Palestinians.

Rabin is using an iron fist in Gaza. He wants to stop demonstrations of support for those who have been deported. There have been many utterly unnecessary killings.



Rabin

Care in a cardboard box

GRAFFITI

Back in the dark ages of Victorian Britain, well-meaning men built mental hospitals — lunatic asylums as they called them — asylums from a society that neither understood nor cared about mental health. Of course, the institutions turned out to be little better than prisons for keeping people off the streets, and often created more problems than they solved.

But now all that has changed — at least in that there are no longer philanthropic, Victorian gents setting up hospitals. Take St. Bernard's Hospital, set up in the 1840s by social reformer John Connolly. At the time it was called Hanwell Asylum for the Insane Poor. Now the asylum has been taken over by the real lunatics: the upwardly-mobile, insane rich of West London who are willing to pay anything up to £145,000 for a flat in the converted hospital, now known as Osterley Views.

But what of the original interns? No need for the new residents to worry: they have been taken care of by the Tories' Care-in-a-Cardboard-Box initiative.

Forget the Gold Blend couple: the ultimate product is now being advertised in the Midlands — God. The diocese of Lichfield has bought three advertising slots for the guy who used to do his own publicity through floods, plagues and parting seas but who now seems a bit past it and has to rely on the skills of young, thrusting, advertising executives. This is a hard job, since the Independent Television Commission's rules allow for claims that Persil washes whiter than white — but claims for the existence of God stretch even their standards.

So all you get is a peaceful pause. "This short pause for breath in a fast-moving, materialistic world has been brought to you by the Church of England" intones a soft voice. Cue a blank screen fading to the words "The Church of England this Sunday".

Of course this fast-moving, materialistic world has got nothing to do with the Church of England — one of the biggest landlords in the country. For example they are landlords of Gateshead's slightly materialistic Metrocentre shopping complex.

When a speaker from the floor gets warm applause, as happened at last Saturday's Miners' Solidarity Conference, for declaring it "A load of fucking crap" it is necessary to ask: what went wrong?

In this case, the answer is simple: *Socialist Outlook* or, more precisely, the political clique around SMTUC secretary Carolyn Sikorski.

For instance: a planning meeting voted by a majority of about 22 to 3 to concentrate on industrial as opposed to regional workshops to make sure the conference would be of some use and relevance. Only Carolyn and Patrick Sikorski and Alan Thornett voted against.

When delegates arrived they found that there were to be

both industrial and regional workshops, with the industrial workshops falling off the end of the agenda. There would be no time for discussion of resolutions from the floor. Guess who provided the agendas? The SMTUC officers.

But Sikorski did not get away with it. The conference almost unanimously rejected her proposed agenda. This is where the story gets interesting.

There were no fewer than four *Socialist Outlook* positions put forward in the discussion from the floor about how the conference should be run, and it was another *Outlook* comrade who moved the position that overturned Sikorski.

So what's going on? Have the *Outlook* majority at last woken up to what we have been saying about Carolyn Sikorski's undemocratic manoeuvring? It seems so. *Outlook* majority supporters are predicting a purge of the Sikorski faction sooner rather than later.

Whether they've got the bottle to do it is another question.

Having won a place in our hearts forever with his remark that "immigrants" should be sent back to "bongo-bongo land", Tory Minister, Alan Clark has again been in the news suggesting that Britain should have made peace with that misunderstood man, Adolf Hitler. The alternative that Churchill foolishly pursued was to ruin the empire and guarantee American hegemony.

The last word on this towering intellectual goes to his former tutor at the London School of Economics, Professor Donald Cameron: Clark "is an arrogant and self-centred man who talks bollocks".

One of Bill Clinton's recent appointees, Donna Shulula, was no sooner in the cabinet than she found herself involuntarily out of the closet. America's gay, journalistic terrorists, Queer Nation, decided to let anyone who would listen to them know about Ms. Shulula's alleged sexuality.

Ms. Shulula wanted to deny the allegation. But how? Politically Correct [PC] language to the rescue! "I have not got an alternative lifestyle" said Ms. Shulula, neatly avoiding the L-word, with the biggest euphemism since "women in sensible shoes".

But just how PC is PC? "I haven't got an alternative lifestyle", surely, is not dissimilar from "I am normal".

Proof that the average bourgeois politician will stay non-committal about any issue for as long possible. The forthright and frank, incoming Congressman for Missouri was asked "Are you a cat person or a dog person?"

His reply? "Basically a dog person. I certainly, though, wouldn't want to offend my constituents who are cat people... I have nothing against cats, and had cats when I was a boy, and if we didn't have two dogs might very well be interested in having a cat now".

Now the good people of Missouri know they will be well represented. Unless, of course, their favourite animal is a goldfish, hamster or sheep!

Last orders at the Last Chance Saloon

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

Kelvin, Max, Andrew and the boys were enjoying a quiet drink in the Last Chance Saloon when in burst that old gunslinger Cool Hand Calcutt to call them out for a show-down at the OK Corral. Kelvin and his boys had been warned — not least by Sheriff Mellor — that this was going to happen sooner or later, unless they changed their ways, and started acting with more respect. But they just laughed and then gunned down Sheriff Mellor in front of the whole town.

For those of you who've had enough of the wild west vernacular (I certainly have), I'll just remind you of the story so far: the British press were given their "Last Chance Saloon" warning by then Home Sec-

retary Hurd 18 months ago; the self-regulatory Press Complaints Commission (PCC) was the industry's final opportunity to prove that it could police itself effectively. Meanwhile, Sir David Calcutt proceeded with his investigation into press standards and behaviour.

"The result will be direct censorship of the British press for the first time in 300 years."

For a while it looked as though all the warnings had had some effect: the tabloids in particular seemed to be making an effort to clean up their act. The *Sun* went so far as to appoint an Ombudsman to deal with readers' complaints, and his early decisions quite often went against the paper. Corrections and apologies became more frequent and were sometimes given the same prominence as the offending articles (the *News of the World* devoted an entire page to a grovelling apology to Clare Short MP).

But it couldn't last. By the summer of 1992 "Mellorgate", "Squidgygate", "Fergiegate" and the *Sunday Times'* publication of Andrew Morton's "Diana — Her True Story", had stirred up a renewed public row over press "intrusion" and "tabloid excesses". The likelihood of Calcutt coming out in favour of statutory controls — and of the government agreeing — increased accordingly.

The extraordinary spectacle of the Tory press turning against the Tory government, and demanding Norman Lamont's head on a platter, made statutory controls more likely still.

"All socialists should stand with Kelvin and the boys at the Last Chance Saloon."

And there's the rub. We can all take pleasure in the howls of anguish now emanating from the editorial offices of the *Sun*, *Mail* and *Express*. We can all agree that to a large extent, the tabloids (and not just the tabloids, but some "quali-

ty" papers as well) have brought it on themselves. But remember that it was the spate of "revelations" concerning very public figures — Charles, Di, Fergie, David Mellor — that put statutory controls back on the agenda. It was the press's attacks on the government that made it almost certain that the cabinet will back Calcutt.

The result will be direct censorship of the British press for the first time in 300 years. Whatever you think of "Squidgygate", "Mellorgate" and the rest (and personally, I think a lot of what's been said about "invasion of privacy" in those cases is sanctimonious bunk), the Matrix Churchill scandal should have alerted all of us to the value of having a bourgeois press free from direct government control — and to the lengths that this particular government will go to in order to prevent the truth from coming out.

When it comes to the showdown, all socialists should stand with Kelvin and the boys at the Last Chance Saloon. But, of course, they won't: there will be a lot of Labour MPs in Cool Hand Calcutt's posse.

Children should have rights

WOMEN'S EYE

By Belinda Weaver

I think Sigrid Fisher and Jean Lane both misunderstood my recent letter about smacking children. I did not deny that many women have a hard time raising children in this society. I simply disagreed with Sigrid that parents smack their children only under stress. I tried to show that smacking was routine, not rare; I tried to explain why that was so. I think the issue was worth airing, and there is much more that needs saying.

Jean's letter ignores something very important. She doesn't accept that children have rights. Why not? Children aren't malleable, little dolls who must be forced always to do what the parent wants. Even tiny children express wishes and prefer-

ences that should be considered, even if they can't always be accommodated.

I was horrified that Jean could accept a parent's hitting a child for "refusing to listen to reason". Many, many adults don't listen to reason — would Jean consider hitting them?

Much "naughtiness" is simply behaviour the parent finds inconvenient or embarrassing. Since young children cannot link the punishment to their "crime", punishment is useless as a deterrent. Parents punish children to relieve their own anger and frustration, not because it teaches the child anything. The use of children as an outlet for adult anger is totally unacceptable to me, and should be unacceptable to all socialists.

The relationship between parent and child is that of all-powerful to powerless. A child has less power and fewer rights than a worker,

yet Jean would defend a worker against a powerful boss. So why not defend the child? Can't Jean identify at all with a tiny person, up against an all-powerful and not always benevolent parent?

I was hit as a child, often for things that were not my fault, such as clumsiness or dislike of certain foods. Once I was punished for borrowing a shilling from a schoolmate, although I had never been told not to borrow. As I grew up, I rationalised such punishments along the lines of "my parents smacked me, but they loved me, so they must have done it for my good, therefore smacking can't be bad". I was wrong. Even parents who love can do great harm. Loving someone does not mean you are always right or wise in the way you treat him/her. I had to disentangle punishment — physical and verbal — from the emotions my own punishments had made me feel, and

learn to see it for what it is — abuse of power.

I think there should be a law against smacking. There is in Sweden. The idea was rubbish here; people saw the hand of Big Brother and fretted about children snitching on their parents. Ridicule is a handy weapon.

But such fears are nonsense. There will be no snooping squads. The existence of a law will start to teach people that it's wrong to smack children and, more importantly, it will provide some protection and reassurance for children. It will show them that someone is on their side.

Socialists should challenge accepted attitudes, so this debate is important. We should affirm that children belong only to themselves, not to their parents, and that they have a right to grow up free from physical and verbal oppression.



The "Velvet Revolution" came apart at the seams

Czechoslovakia splits

Adam Novak, a member of the Association for Self-managed Socialism (ASS), reports from Prague about the break-up of Czechoslovakia

Most people here were opposed to the break-up. In the last elections most Slovaks voted for centre-left, populist parties who wanted to slow down the market reforms and negotiate a looser federation with which Slovaks would have more control over decision-making.

In the Czech Republic, where the right won the elections, the leaders said the choice was to maintain the Prague-centred status quo or split into two republics.

The Czech Premier, Vaclav Klaus, was looking to ditch the poorer, Slovak area and integrate the Czech land into the Western European economies.

In fact, most Czechs agreed with the Slovak demand for a looser federation. They believed this was a reasonable demand.

There is now a land border with guards and customs officials. But there is utter chaos — no-one has the papers which they were supposed to be issued with.

In one of the border towns, postal workers are not allowed to deliver postal orders to half of the houses in a street because they are over the border.

The announcements on Czech television have begun to stress that it will be necessary to set up proper borders, and that it will be necessary to separate the money.

Nationalised industry had already begun to be broken up between the two republics. Under the privatisation laws, enterprises were already being assigned to one or other republics. This is much better for the Czechs because all the final processing is on their side; the more defunct heavy industry was on the Slovaks' side.

"It's obvious that many of the criminals of the Stalinist period have not suffered, and are still doing well."

The government here has attempted to boost Czech nationalism. But it has flopped. People do not identify with the split. In Slovakia there is more of a nationalist identity.

Insofar as there is tension here it is directed at the Hungarian and Romany minorities.

There are only about 30,000 Czechs in Slovakia, 300,000 people of Slovak nationality live in the Czech Republic (about 200,000 of these are Romanies). Most Slovaks are applying for Czech citizenship.

Since the economic reforms started, Romanies have been losing their jobs because of their skin colour — some activists estimate Romany unemployment at around 50%. This compares with general unemployment levels in the Czech Republic of 5% and in Slovakia of 8-12%.

The Czech government has received help from British civil servants. One of the things they have learnt is how to fix the unemployment figures. So far, the methods used to calculate unemployment have been altered three times.

They have begun de-registering mothers of young children, saying that they are not really available for work.

The D-Day for 'coupon privatisation' is at the beginning of April. This involves a third of industry. They tried to sell it; now they are handing out coupons to give the industry away.

Many of the old Stalinists have been using the privatisation process to legally get a piece of the old property which they used to control as a group. It's obvious that many of the criminals of the Stalinist period have not suffered, and are still doing well.

The Czechs have been receiving promises from the German Embassy who say they will help integrate the Czech economy into their economic space. The question now is: will this leave the Czech Republic like the ex-East Germany?

Tory dispute over Churchill's legacy

Harking back

THE POLITICAL FRONT

By Thomas Carolan

The Tory leader, Winston Churchill, who led Britain to victory against Hitler, has been attacked by ultra-right-wing, Tory Minister Alan Clark — for standing up to Hitler! He should have made a deal with him, says Clark. For half a century standing up to Hitler was seen to be the crowning glory of Churchill's life. But times change. The mouldering mass of fabrications and half-fabrications that make up official history shifts; current politics reaches back and begins to rearrange the pile!

Son of the younger son of the Duke of Marlborough, Churchill followed his father into the Tory Party, and then joined the Liberals in time to gain office in the Reforming Liberal government formed in 1906. He helped found the early Welfare State and held office for a decade.

Disgraced for a misjudgement in the First World War — "the Dardanelles" — he 'went to join his regiment' at the front; but he was soon back in Lloyd George's government.

It was Churchill who sent soldiers and tanks against the Clydeside workers massed at St George's Square, Glasgow during the great 1919 strike. His government sent British troops to help crush the Russian revolution.

When in the early '20s the divided Liberal Party had collapsed, Churchill rejoined the Tories; and again he was in government!

He was a firebrand editor of the government newspaper, the *British Gazette*, during the 1926 General Strike urging get-tough tactics.

But by 1931, when the Tory-controlled "National Government" was formed under Labour renegade Ramsey MacDonald, Churchill had fallen out with the Tory leadership.

Out of office, he was a right-wing critic of the government on India and on other issues.

The leaders of the weakened British Empire, unready for war and fearful of it, allowed Hitler to re-arm Germany, and then 'appeased' him as he annexed Austria and — at first — the German parts of Czechoslovakia.

Churchill became their implacable critic. A long-time public admirer of the Italian fascist Mussolini, who he said, "saved Italy from Bolshevism", Churchill objected not primarily to Hitler's fascism but to German imperialism and the threat it posed to the British Empire.

He joined the government at the start of the war in 1939. Disaster came in June 1940 when Hitler conquered France, Belgium, Holland, Norway and Denmark. Churchill then became Prime Minister of a Labour-Tory-Liberal coalition government. With many unforgiving enemies in the Tory Party, he owed this elevation to Labour support. He was 65 years old, a man of the past with a by now strikingly archaic, Edwardian, upper-class accent.

But this was Churchill's "finest hour". The romantic old imperialist with a reputation for "excess" and for "unreliability" had always marched to his own tune. Now, as Britain, isolated and alone in Europe, faced disaster and — seemingly — certain invasion, Churchill was again out of step with much of the establishment. The rational, "realpolitik" thing for the British ruling class to do in 1940 was to make the best deal possible with Hitler, save what could be saved, bow to the reality of superior, Nazi German power. At any rate, the professional diplomats and civil servants thought that. So did powerful sections of the capitalist class. They said then what Alan Clark says now, as did Churchill's old ally, Lloyd George. That is what the

ruling class had done in France.

But Churchill was determinedly "irrational". He would have none of it. With a broad base in Parliament he appealed to the British people's fear and hatred of the Nazis, offering them "nothing but blood, sweat and tears", but promising "we will never surrender". Millions of British workers knew that a Nazi conquest would destroy everything they had ever won or hoped for, and they backed Churchill. He caught the imagination of those who saw no option but to fight Germany, slyly enlisting them in the cause of his beloved Empire.

As they proved when they voted him out and put Labour in at the 1945 election, they backed him forgetting nothing and forgiving him nothing.

It is impossible — especially for socialists who detest his politics — not to admire the indomitable spirit of the old fellow, wildly "irrational" as he seemed to the diplomats, prepared to die in the last ditch, refusing to even entertain the idea of a deal with Hitler.

Yet Churchill was not irrational. He saw further and clearer than the diplomats did. He knew that any "liveable" British deal with Hitler would last only until Hitler was strong enough to break it. He knew that Hitler was overstretching even Germany's strength. He knew that America — despite President Roosevelt's "Peace" election campaign in 1940 — would be drawn into the war against Japan and against Japan's German ally. So he held on. Soon Hitler invaded Russia, and got bogged down; American came into the war. Churchill was vindicated.

In triumph he was just another imperialist gangster, sitting down with Roosevelt and Stalin to casually dispose of the millions who lived in Eastern Europe. Despite the fine, anti-Nazi ideals he invoked to win support, Churchill's RAF refused to stop the transports to the death camps, like Auschwitz, by bombing the railway lines leading to them.

"Like Churchill in 1940, socialists today seem hopeless romantics when we refuse to consider the possibility that working-class socialism has suffered a knock-out defeat."

At the end of the war the Alan Clarks of that time, forgetting all they had said in 1940, canonised Churchill as the "greatest living Englishman". But, of course, the Clarks and their fathers never really believed in the anti-fascist, democratic ideals and goals which the mass of the British people who rallied behind Churchill believed in and fought for.

Now, from a weak Britain in a half-united Europe, some of them have a nagging feeling that history — with Churchill's connivance — short-changed them somewhere along the line.

Like Churchill in 1940, socialists today seem irrational, "emotional", hopeless romantics when, in defiance of the capitalist reality around us, we refuse to even consider the possibility that the working class and working-class socialism have suffered a knock-out defeat. We are irrevocably committed to the cause of working-class socialism — for life or death, prepared to rise or fall with it.

We too see further, and we see things more clearly. At the height of bourgeois triumphalism three years ago, when Stalinism tottered, we could still see that capitalism was rotten to the core. In the depths of working-class defeat we keep in mind the great history of our class. We see the fermenting, class struggle: we foresee working-class revival. We prepare for it. We will bury Alan Clark and his nasty, proto-fascist friends!

When the workers rose in revolt

The German Revolt

On 30 January 1933 it will be exactly 60 years since the German capitalists called the fascist lunatic Adolf Hitler to power to save them from a rebellious working class. Hitler was defeated in war and a partitioned Germany was ground into the dust for decades.

Yet, today, a reunified Germany, once again the greatest power in Europe, is experiencing economic slump and an upsurge of Hitler-style fascism. What happens in Germany will shape the lives of everyone in Europe in the period ahead.

In this, the first of two articles, Ray Saunders describes the German Revolution, the event which shaped modern, German history.

In the First World (1914-18), millions of workers were thrown into the battlefields to massacre each other for the sake of their capitalist masters — for colonies, profits and markets. As the war drew to an end, the workers began to revolt against this butchery, turning imperialist war into class war.

In 1917 the Russian Revolution showed that it was possible for the workers to fight back and win. In the following years, revolution swept through Europe. But Germany was central. Germany, with its mighty working class, was where the communists' hopes for extending the socialist revolution beyond backward Russia were focused.

In January 1918 there was a general strike in Vienna; soon afterwards, the proletariat of some twenty Germany cities went on strike. These were the first, bright flames of what was soon to become a revolutionary conflagration.

On October 28th, the fleet at Kiel was mobilised for a desperate, last-ditch attempt to forestall the now-certain defeat of Germany in the Great War. The Kiel sailors rebelled. Workers in the town joined their struggle.

By 4 November the town was under the control of the Workers' and Sailors' Council. The

German revolution had begun.

With the army crumbling, even the most die-hard conservatives realised that the only way to head off the revolution was to have the Kaiser (Emperor) abdicate and to end the war.

"As the war drew to an end, the workers began to revolt against this butchery, turning imperialist war into class war."

On 9 November the Kaiser appointed the right wing 'socialist' SPD chief Friedrich Ebert, as Chancellor. Ebert assured the Kaiser: "I hate revolution like mortal sin".

Ebert still wanted to save the monarchy. But vast crowds in the streets of Berlin were calling for the abdication of the Kaiser. Another SPD leader, Scheidemann, addressed the crowds. He finished his speech: "Long live the German Republic!"

The SPD was now the ruling power — indeed, the only possible, pro-capitalist, ruling power in Germany, given the terrific collapse and discredit of the old order.



With old documents for sandbags, Spartacists fire on government troops.

On 11 November the war officially ended. Now the right wing Social Democratic leaders had to defend German capitalism against the class war of the workers.

Their policy was threefold: to neuter the workers' councils — in Russia 'soviet'; to damp down the workers' revolt with social reforms; and to prepare for the bloody suppression of those who refused to be damped down.

A Provisional Workers' and Soldiers' Council had already been set up in Berlin, before 9 November by left-wing shop stewards. On 10 November the SPD called a more representative meeting — and persuaded it to endorse Ebert as the leader of a provisional government of four Majority Socialists and two members of the more left-wing but indecisive, Independent Socialists (USPD).

Ebert swore that the government would operate under the control of the Workers' Council executive — and then went off to conclude a secret pact with the heads of the military

staff, aimed at suppressing the Berlin workers by force of arms.

"Private property was not touched, and the bosses' forces of repression continued to exist and were built up."

In the days following 10 November, Ebert, Scheidemann and the four other Commissioners elected by the Berlin Workers' Council passed a series of laws. The eight-hour day was introduced; unionisation was guaranteed; old age, unemployment and sickness benefits were improved; press censorship was abolished and political prisoners were released from jail. Rosa Luxemburg, the leader, with Karl Liebknecht, of the revolutionary socialists, organised in the "Spartakus Bund".

This — so the SPD leaders said in reply to the workers' demands for a Socialist Republic — this was the "Social Republic". But private property was not touched, and the bosses' forces of repression — army, police, state, bureaucracy — continued to exist and were built up.

Workers' Councils were spreading through Germany, and Soldiers' Councils through the army. The SPD dared not oppose the Councils. Instead, it encouraged them. Indeed, in many places the SPD set up the Councils. *But it tried to keep them toothless, their aims no more radical than defending the new Republic against the threat of a monarchist-militarist comeback.*

In Kiel, the SPD leader Noske managed to break the power of the Sailors' Council. Presenting himself as the Socialist leader who would make sure their demands were heard in Berlin, he got the previous Council replaced by a new one made up of the most moderate and timid delegates.



Noske (left), SPD leader who tricked the Sailors' Council

olution of 1918-19



The army chief Groner — who was in constant consultation with Ebert — tried to trick the soldiers' councils into agreeing to restore full power to the officers. Addressing a Congress of Soldiers' Delegates at Ems on 1 December he told them that there was anarchy in Berlin.

"In Russia, the Councils had moved to the left as the workers discussed politics, learnt from experience, and found new leaders."

He would have won the day, if the left-USPD shop stewards' leader Emil Barth had not arrived from Berlin in time to nail his lies.

Groner's defeat, and the spread of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils throughout Germany, were a warning to the SPD leaders and the mili-

tary chiefs. The Councils set up in the first days of the revolution while the workers were still very much under the influence of the nationalist war ideology, were dominated by stolid social democrats. But it had been like that in Russia, too, at the start.

In Russia, the Councils had moved rapidly to the left as the workers discussed politics, learnt from experience, and found new leaders. The revolutionary minority led by Luxemburg and Liebknecht, the Spartakists, were agitating for the German Workers' Councils to follow the road of the Russian Soviets.

A witch-hunt against the radical left was necessary as well as the soft-soap, and trick posters appeared announcing: "Workers! Citizens! The downfall of the fatherland is imminent. Save it! It is not being threatened from without but from within: by the Spartakus group. Strike its leaders dead! Kill Liebknecht! You will then have peace, work and bread!"

In Hamburg and the

Rhineland counter-revolutionary conspiracies were uncovered in early December. In Berlin, 200 men seized the editorial offices of the Spartakists' new paper, *Die Rote Fahne* (The Red Flag). Eighteen people were killed and thirty wounded when troops fired on a demonstration of the left-radical Red Soldiers' League... on the instructions of the very authorities that had permitted the demonstration.

Later investigations showed the hand of the SPD leadership even in the arrest by right-wing soldiers of the (pro-SPD) Executive Committee of the Berlin Workers' and Soldiers' Council! It appears that Ebert wanted to check what the reaction would be to the suppression of the Workers' Councils.

The Berlin Commandant — Otto Wels, another SPD leader — founded a 15,000 strong Republican Soldiers' Defence Force, directly financed by capitalist groups.

Meanwhile, the army was rapidly demobilising. Regiments poured into Berlin, usually melting away soon after arrival. Revolutionary soldiers and sailors greeted the troops as they arrived, ripping all insignia of rank off their shoulders and giving them red cockades.

But Ebert did everything he could to restore the credit of the army and the officer caste. When nine divisions marched into Berlin on 11 December, he told them: "You return unvanquished from the field of battle".

On 16-20 December there was the first National Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Hundreds of thousands of workers joined a Spartakist demonstration to greet the Congress and demand full power for the Councils.

We will continue the story next week



Luxemburg followed Lenin more closely than social-democrats would have us believe

From Social Democracy to the Spartakus League

Seventy-four years ago, in 1919, the Germany monarchy collapsed and the official Social Democratic Party in Germany, the SPD, came out as the leader of counter-revolution.

It broke not the power of the big landowners, the militarists who had sent millions to the slaughter, the bankers or the industrialists, but the growing power of the militant workers, soldiers and sailors. It took over from the bankrupt monarchy and saved the social forces that had dragged Germany into one world war and were soon to drag it into another.

Before 1914, the SPD had been the greatest workers' party in the whole international movement: strongly organised, apparently unshakable in its Marxist orthodoxy, based in one of the world's great industrial nations.

But decades of cautious tactics had rotted its revolutionary spirit. From operating within the system, it had gone over to propping up the system.

In August 1914, the SPD, the "party of peace" voted to support German imperialism in the war. It promised "civil peace" between the classes so that the war might be won by Imperial Germany.

A revolutionary minority, led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, opposed the war from the start. They formed a faction called Spartakus.

Despite its political importance, the Spartakus group was organisationally very weak: a small, politically rather loose federation. Their *Spartakus Letters* and Rosa Luxemburg's *Junius Pamphlet* on the war, reached only a small audience. Their leaders were jailed.

As the war progressed, another group formed in the SPD, taking up a centre position between the revolutionary internationalist politics of Spartakus, and the rabid pro-war position of the Majority Socialists. They voted against further war credits, not because they counterposed class war to wars of imperialist rivalry (as the Spartakists and Bolsheviks did) but because they judged that "Germany's borders were now secure".

Even this centrist opposition was intolerable to the right wing

bureaucrats who now ran the SPD, people like Friedrich Ebert and Gustav Noske. The centrists were driven out of the SPD. In 1917 they formed the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD).

The USPD was a mishmash. On the left, the Spartakus group joined it as a faction. The "Revolutionary Shop Stewards" in Berlin were members of the USPD. But the party also included such people as Eduard Bernstein, the leading spokesman of outright reformism in the pre-war SPD.

To the workers, the USPD appeared as a revolutionary party: most of the radical workers' leaders belonged to it. But at the top its policy was one of alliance with the Majority Socialists or nerveless dithering.

In north Germany — particularly in Bremen — there were other revolutionary groups closer to the Russian Bolsheviks, who felt that the Spartakus group did not properly understand the need to make a clean break with the Centrists of the USPD. It was time, they thought, for a new party and a new international.

And indeed, the Spartakists' delay in organising a tightly-knit party — or even faction — weakened the revolutionaries crucially in 1918-19.

The German Communist Party was set up in the midst of the revolutionary tumult: inevitably it was small, ill-organised and immature, despite the prestige, experience and theoretical ability of leaders like Luxemburg. The fake-leftists and semi-leftists of the USPD leadership kept their hold over the majority of revolutionary-minded workers.

In 1918-19, it was the lack of a Bolshevik-type organisation which permitted the defeat of that revolutionary spontaneity.

Trickery and ruthlessness were the Majority Socialists' weapons, when the workers moved towards revolution in 1918-19 and called for a Socialist Republic. When Workers' Councils sprang up, they diverted them from seeking power and promised them instead "a guaranteed place in the constitution". Then they shot down and bludgeoned the revolutionary minority who refused to be tricked.

Dora Montefiore

From feminism to socialism

AGAINST THE TIDE

By Sean Matgamna

In its early phase, her life-story was a bit like a Barbara Cartland-style romance. In the late 1870s, the conventional, young Englishwoman bred in a Victorian manor house in Surrey goes out to Australia to visit relations and there meets and falls in love with a fine, rich, young Australian. After a short trip home, she goes back to Australia to stay. They marry and live happily — not for “ever after” — there is no such thing as ever after! — but for a decade or so. Then the man dies and she is left, in her late 30s, a widow with two children under ten. Still, she is very well provided for. She inherits everything.

Yet the formal reading of her husband's will by her husband's lawyer sparked the beginning of a radical change in this Victorian widow's emotional and intellectual life.

Having told her how rich she was, the unthinkingly brutal lawyer added: “Since your husband has not chosen to make any other provision, you will be the children's sole guardian”.

“What?” said the startled woman, who had never given any thought to such things, stung to outrage at the idea. “You are talking about my children, the children I have borne! Make other provisions, indeed!”

The lawyer insisted on his point: “He might very well have made other provision. For example, you are of different religions, are you not? He might have wanted to put

his children in the custody of someone of his own religion.”

The dead man, merely by willing it, could have taken her children away from her! That was his right, as ‘the man’. “As far as the law goes” — the lawyer nailed down the point — “there is only one parent”.

“This was the heroic age of British Communism, the period before and after the Russian Revolution. From the mid '20s onwards, everything was poisoned by Stalinism.”

At that moment the widow began to turn herself into a warrior for women's rights.

Once she started to look around at the world she lived in, at the place of women in it, and at the way it was run, she quickly turned into a radical socialist too. She would spend the rest of her long life campaigning against capitalism and capitalism's iniquities.

This was Dora B. Montefiore, who, at the age of 69, with three decades of militant feminist and socialist activity then behind her, was elected to the provisional executive of the Communist Party of Great Britain at its founding conference in 1920. Marxism, inspired by the Russian Revolution, was making a new start in this country. Now forgotten, she was, after Sylvia Pankhurst, then the most prominent British

woman Communist, and had been for a decade at least before that.

I've just read Dora Montefiore's autobiography, published in 1926, when she was 75, and ailing. Dora Montefiore does not deserve to be forgotten.

She was active at various times in Australia — where she edited the Sydney paper, the International Socialist — South Africa, Britain and Ireland. She wrote and spoke and organised for the pre-Russian Revolution Marxist movement in this country (the Social Democratic Federation; after 1911, the British Socialist Party).

She was jailed in 1906 for participating in a ‘Votes for Women’ demonstration in Parliament Square, and had — as a member of the anti-war BSP executive — to go into hiding in 1918 to escape the police, who persecuted and jailed anti-war socialists under the notorious ‘Defence of the Realm Act’.

“The international socialist movement published its famous Basle Anti-war Manifesto — which became a dead letter immediately war broke out in 1914. She was not impressed by Basle.”

In 1923, she was suffering from chronic bronchial asthma and 72 years old, but still the Australian government did not dare let her — an Australian citizen by marriage — return to Australia until she

promised not to engage in political agitation while there!

If ever there was one, this was the heroic age of British Communism, the period before and after the Russian Revolution. Afterwards, from the mid '20s onwards, everything was poisoned by Stalinism.

“I realised more than ever before the refined and machine-made tortures of a prison system which takes the souls of men and of women... and leaves them wrung-out rags of humanity’.”

It was the period of John Maclean, Britain's Karl Liebknecht, who stood out like a mythic hero against the First World War and went to jail for it. He came out mutilated and ruined.

Dora Montefiore was there with the immense crowd of Clydeside workers who greeted Maclean on his release from jail in 1918. She travelled with him to his home in the carriage from which the workers unhitched the horses, to pull it themselves through the streets, John Maclean standing up on the seat waving a large, red flag. She describes what prison had done to poor John Maclean.

“His thoughts are now disconnected, his speech was irresponsible, his mind, from solitary confinement, was absolutely self-centred. In a word, prison life had

done its work on a delicately balanced psychology, and our unfortunate comrade was now a mental wreck... When I stayed at this home after his second term of imprisonment, and witnessed the agony of his wife and the sorrow of his relatives, I realised more than ever I had done before the refined and machine-made tortures of a prison system which takes the souls of men and of women... and leaves them wrung-out rags of humanity.”

Montefiore was a delegate to various international conferences. She was at the Basle Congress of 1912 representing the BSP. There the international socialist movement published its famous Basle Anti-war Manifesto — which became a dead letter immediately war broke out in 1914. She was not impressed by Basle — a scheduled three-day event, cut down to one day of rubber-stamping and resolution-passing, with almost no discussion. She saw that it did not commit them to a serious struggle against war (she favoured commitment to the Great Strike to stop war).

Back in Britain, she expressed her opinion about it in George Lansbury's *Daily Herald*, and left the BSP when the British nationalist majority of that organisation pointedly disagreed. She rejoined it in 1916 after the patriotic minority — led by HM Hyndon, the founder of the British Marxist movement — had left the BSP.

She represented the Australian Communist Party in Moscow at the fifth World Congress of the Communist International in 1924.

Montefiore belonged, I suppose, to the type of old-style, pre-Leninist, socialist leaders which the American Trotskyist JP Cannon would retrospectively denounce as well-off, bourgeois dilettantes, floating like the cream on top of the working-class socialist movement. She was always able to take the doctor's advice to restore her health with a long sea-voyage to South Africa, or wherever. Yet she was solidly committed and, once committed, stayed with the working class movement, and with its best elements, all the way through into old age. And she was, again and again, in the thick of the fight, despite inconvenience or danger. We need more such dilettantes!

I sought out her book because I knew she had played an important part in one such fight — the 1913-14 Labour war in Dublin.

It was Dora Montefiore who conceived the idea of evacuating the starving children of working class Dublin to more prosperous homes in Britain for the duration of the Dublin fight, and Montefiore — aged 62 — who went to Dublin to try to get them out.

Her book contains an illuminating account of this important event in Irish working class history and, with your indulgence, I will come back to it next week.



The red flag in George Square, Glasgow

Why there is permanent famine in Africa

Africa, the lost continent

For decades René Dumont has toured the globe warning of the growing inequalities and poverty into which the third world, and primarily Africa, are sinking. Humanitarian efforts are not solving the problems confronting Somalia and Africa. He spoke to Sylvia Cancel of Rouge.

What are the causes of the famine in Somalia?

As in all of Africa, the first reason is the ever-worsening drought. It has reached an exceptional level this year, from South Africa — previously an exporter of cereals, and now obliged for the first time to import them — to Somalia — which is suffering from a drought without historical precedent.

This is not a normal cycle. The fundamental cause of it is the greenhouse effect arising from pollution, from our power-stations, from everything they burn: the fossil fuels which are increasing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and also of other atmospheric gases, like methane, which cause global warming. This is having disastrous effects on tropical agriculture. In Iraq, where we were in October 1991, we saw maize which had been in flower around 15 August, when the temperature is highest, which hadn't been fertilised. So that's the first reason — drought.

But there are also political problems. The war between Somalia and Ethiopia in the Ogaden, changes of regime... The Syad Barre dictatorship... But there's something worse than dictatorship, and that is no government. Chaos, lawlessness, banditry which prevent food aid getting through...

I've just returned from Eritrea where there is a government which arose out of the guerrilla war against Ethiopia. Law and order rule there and food aid is distributed. That's not to say that the economic situation is good; they can't survive without food aid. But at least it gets through and is distributed rationally in exchange for work. None of that exists in Somalia. It is a disaster.

The troubles in Angola, Mozambique or Somalia probably would not have reached the level they have if there hadn't been, right from the start, an agricultural crisis due to the drought. The political factors aggravate the situation.

How can the Somalis get out of this situation?

First of all we have to look at the



Somalis starve and the developed world belatedly sends aid. But all the time they are robbing the third world

exploitative relations between North and South. The extent of this exploitation has been precisely calculated by the United Nations development programme. They have calculated that the dominant economic system has allowed rich countries to exploit the third world, and have calculated the extent of this robbery. They don't use the word "robbery", but they calculate it at \$500 billion a year.

How does it work? By slashing the prices of goods the North buys from the South, primary agricultural and mineral resources like cocoa, for example. Things Somalis don't want. We've forced these countries to oversupply the market and outstrip demand, causing the collapse of prices and reduced revenue.

Another example: rich countries import raw fibres without paying

duties. But, once they have been processed, woven up and made into garments, they're sold with duty added. Likewise with everything we sell in the way of services, insurance, banking etc: \$500 billion worth!

But, since we're big-hearted and generous, we commit \$55 billion to public development aid. We steal five hundred, we "give" them fifty-five!

We've promised them even more! Twenty-three years ago the United Nations asked the rich countries to commit 0.7% of their Gross National Product to development aid. They've still only achieved 0.35%. France is giving 0.5%, like it did in 1981. But we're always promising to raise it to 0.7%...

Now we've sent some soldiers, who arrived just in time for prime-time viewing. A media event, a great show. Humanitari-

an aid cannot substitute for political action. The country needs rebuilding.

What do you think about humanitarian intervention?

We demand the lifting of sanctions on Iraq. There is an intervention force in Bosnia which isn't having much success. In Cambodia, likewise. And in Somalia, for the moment, uncertain results. All this costs a lot, for unproven gains. The lifting of the embargo on Iraq would cost nothing in itself, but it would allow the children to get enough to eat. Today France is using economic weapons against Iraqi children.

How far will this intervention go? As far as recolonisation? Where we are taking part in the events in Sarajevo it is hard to criticise the right to intervene.

But this has to be linked to political action, aiming to establish not just a new order, but to fight against an economic regime operating on a world scale. This is contrary to the "new world order" of George Bush.

After the near disappearance of the so-called communist regimes, it's said that the only viable regime is the free market, pure, cold-hearted liberalism. Since 1988, in *An intolerable world: liberalism in question*, we have shown that this economic liberalism is killing us.

We have to fight to reduce inequality, change the economic system, and allow poor countries to rise, develop themselves, that is, to catch up with us. Not to catch up with us, exactly. But at least to close the gap. We can get rid of poverty there, but to bring them up to our level is not possible.

Since we have, nonetheless, to close the gap, there is only one way to do it and that is to reduce our standard of living. When I say that to trade unionists in France it is not always accepted... It is possible to get the whole of the third world out of destitution, to raise them to a level of respectable poverty: education, health, adequate nutrition. But it's impossible if every family insists on having its own car. And while the population continues to grow, those limits will remain. We have to close the gap and reduce the waste.

Development aid can have different meanings...

In 1989 I met two experts from the World Bank who came to talk to me about their report on Africa. I asked them what they had done about cocoa and one of them replied: "You don't understand. The world economy needs cheap cocoa". As if the salvation of the world economy was tied to the ruination of its producers.

This is the idea behind GATT: everybody competing and everything cheap! They pit against each other the man with a big tractor and loads of land, and the third world peasant with his pick and tiny plot. For thirty years, GATT has been ruining the third world.

GATT is the law of the free market. Yet the developed countries achieved their development only by surrounding themselves with protective barriers. Now they are demanding that others open their markets. A certain number of countries are now joining the North: Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, are catching up with the less developed of the developed countries. Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia are also making progress. But in the rest of the third world there's only regression.

And Africa is the lost continent.

The ABC of materialist dialectics

This week Leon Trotsky outlines the logic of Marxism — dialectics — expanding the account given by Vladimir Lenin in the first part of this series.

To fight capitalism effectively you need to learn Marxism: study this series!

The dialectic is neither fiction nor mysticism, but a science of the forms of our thinking insofar as it is not limited to the daily problems of life but attempts to arrive at an understanding of more complicated and drawn-out processes. The dialectic and formal logic bear a relationship similar to that between higher and lower mathematics.

I will here attempt to sketch the substance of the problem in a very concise form. The Aristotelian logic* of the simple syllogism* starts from the proposition that "A" is equal to "A". This postulate is accepted as an axiom for a multitude of practical human actions and elementary generalisations. But in reality "A" is not equal to "A". This is easy to prove if we observe these two letters under a lens — they are quite different from each other. But, one can object, the question is not of the size or the form of the letters, since they are only symbols for equal quantities, for instance, a pound of sugar. The objection is beside the point; in reality a pound of sugar is never equal to a pound of sugar — a more delicate scale always discloses a difference. Again one can object: but a pound of sugar is equal to itself. Neither is this true — all bodies change uninterruptedly in size, weight, colour, etc. They are never equal to themselves. A sophist will respond that a pound of sugar is equal to itself "at any given moment". Aside from the extremely dubious practical value of this "axiom," it does not withstand theoretical criticism either. How should we really conceive the word "moment"? If it is an infinitesimal interval of time, then a pound of sugar is subjected during the course of that "moment" to inevitable changes. Or is the "moment" a purely mathematical abstraction, that is, a zero of time? But everything exists in time; and existence itself is an uninterrupted process of transformation; time is consequently a fundamental element of existence. Thus the axiom "A" is equal to "A" signifies that a thing is equal to itself if it does not change, that is, if it does not exist.

At first glance it could seem that these "subtleties" are useless. In

reality they are of decisive significance. The axiom "A" is equal to "A" appears on one hand to be the point of departure for all our knowledge, on the other hand the point of departure for all the errors in our knowledge. To make use of the axiom "A" is equal to "A" with impunity is possible only within certain limits. When quantitative changes in "A" are negligible for the task at hand then we can presume that "A" is equal to "A". This is, for example, the manner in which a buyer and a seller consider a pound of sugar. We consider the temperature of the sun likewise. Until recently we considered the buying power of the dollar in the same way. But quantitative changes beyond certain limits become converted into qualitative. A pound of sugar subjected to the action of water or kerosene ceases to be a pound of sugar. A dollar in the embrace of a president ceases to be a dollar. To determine at the right moment the critical point where quantity changes into quality is one of the most important and difficult tasks in all the spheres of knowledge including sociology.

Every worker knows that it is impossible to make two complete-

"We call our dialectic, materialist, since its roots are neither in heaven nor in the depths of our 'free will', but in objective reality, in nature."

ly equal objects. In the elaboration of bearing-brass into cone bearings, a certain deviation is allowed for the cones which should not, however, go beyond certain limits (this is called tolerance). By observing the norms of tolerance, the cones are considered as being equal. ("A" is equal to "A"). When the tolerance is exceeded the quantity goes over into quality; in other words, the cone bearings become inferior or completely worthless.

Our scientific thinking is only a part of our general practice including techniques. For concepts there also exists "tolerance" which is established not by formal logic issuing from the axiom "A" is equal to "A", but by dialectical logic issuing from the axiom that everything is always changing. "Common sense" is characterised by the fact that it systematically exceeds dialectical "tolerance."

Vulgar thought operates with such concepts as capitalism, morals, freedom, workers' state,



Trotsky, following Marx and Engels, was a conscious dialectician

etc. as fixed abstractions, presuming that capitalism is equal to capitalism, morals are equal to morals, etc. Dialectical thinking analyses all things and phenomena in their continuous change, while determining in the material conditions of those changes that critical limit beyond which "A" ceases to be "A", a workers' state ceases to be a workers' state.

The fundamental flaw of vulgar thought lies in the fact that it wishes to content itself with motionless imprints of a reality which consists of eternal motion. Dialectical thinking gives to concepts, by means of closer approximations, corrections, concretisations, a richness of content and flexibility; I would even say a succulence which to a certain extent brings them close to living phenomena. Not capitalism in general, but a given capitalism at a given stage of development. Not a workers' state in general, but a given workers' state in a backward country in an imperialist encirclement, etc.

Dialectical thinking is related to vulgar thinking in the same way that a motion picture is related to a still photograph. The motion picture does not outlaw the still photograph but combines a series of them according to the laws of motion. Dialectics does not deny the syllogism, but teaches us to combine syllogisms in such a way as to bring our understanding closer to the eternally changing reality. Hegel in his *Logic* established a series of laws: change of quantity into quality, development through contradictions, conflict of content and form, interruption of continuity, change of possibility into inevitability, etc., which are just as important for theoretical thought as is the simple syllogism for more elementary tasks.

Hegel wrote before Darwin and before Marx. Thanks to the powerful impulse given to thought by the French Revolution, Hegel anticipated the general movement of science. But because it was only an *anticipatory* although by a genius, it received from Hegel an idealistic character. Hegel operated with ideological shadows as the ultimate reality. Marx demonstrated that the movement of these ideological shadows reflected nothing but the movement of material bodies.

We call our dialectic, materialist, since its roots are neither in heaven

nor in the depths of our "free will", but in objective reality, in nature. Consciousness grew out of the unconscious, psychology out of physiology, the organic world out of the inorganic, the solar system out of nebulae. On all the rungs of this ladder of development, the quantitative changes were transformed into qualitative. Our thought, including dialectical thought, is only one of the forms of the expression of changing matter. There is place within this system for neither God, nor Devil, nor immortal soul, nor eternal norms of laws and morals. The dialectic of thinking, having grown out of the dialectic of nature, possesses consequently a thoroughly materialist character.

Darwinism, which explained the evolution of species through quantitative transformations passing into qualitative, was the highest triumph of the dialectic in the whole field of organic matter. Another great triumph was the discovery of the table of atomic weights of chemical elements and further the transformation of one element into another.

With these transformations (species, elements, etc.) is closely linked the question of classification, equally important in the natural as in the social sciences. Linnaeus' system (18th century), utilising as its starting point the immutability of species, was limited to the description and classification of plants according to their external characteristics. The infantile period of botany is analogous to the infantile period of logic, since the forms of our thought develop like everything that lives. Only decisive repudiation of the idea of fixed species, only the study of the history of the evolution of plants and their anatomy prepared the basis for a really scientific classification.

Marx, who in distinction from Darwin was a conscious dialectician, discovered a basis for the scientific classification of human societies in the development of their productive forces and the structure of the relations of ownership which constitute the anatomy of society. Marxism substituted for the vulgar descriptive classification of societies and states, which even up to now still flourishes in the universities, a materialistic dialectical classification.

All this, as we see, contains noth-

ing "metaphysical"* or "scholastic", as conceited ignorance affirms. Dialectic logic expresses the laws of motion in contemporary scientific thought. The struggle against materialist dialectics on the contrary expresses a distant past, conservatism of the petty bourgeoisie, the self-conceit of university routinists and... a spark of hope for an after-life.

Glossary

Aristotle: greatest of the ancient Greek philosophers, described by Marx as "the great investigator", by Engels as "The Hegel of the Ancient Greek World". **Aristotelian logic** means the rules for deduction outlined in his *Prior Analytics*.

Syllogism: a syllogism is a pattern of reasoning by which a conclusion is derived from a major and a minor premise. For example: i. all men are mortal; ii. Socrates is a man; iii. therefore Socrates is mortal.

i. is a major premise, stating a general truth. ii is a minor premise, stating a fact that connects i. with iii. In iii. a new fact is inferred from the first two premises. This is the conclusion.

Metaphysics: this word comes from the Greek "meta", meaning "beyond", and "physics", the science of worldly phenomena.

After Aristotle's death, his disciples classified his writings. They made a catalogue. After the "physics" they found a work with no name, so they called it "after physics", in Greek, "metaphysics".

Hardly anything in Aristotle's metaphysics is metaphysical in the common, pejorative sense in which the word is used today as meaning nonsense.

For Marxists, bourgeois philosophy and social theory is "metaphysical" because it deals with the world in an unreal way, pretending it is made up of fixed, unchanging atoms relating to each other like parts of a machine.

Bourgeois philosophy calls Marxism "metaphysical" precisely because it sees the world in terms of contradiction, movement, interdependence, change, development, and tries to analyse the general in the particular, the underlying essence behind the appearance of what a thing is.

The best way to illustrate this difference is to quote the great, unconscious, bourgeois populariser of metaphysics, Margaret Thatcher: "There is no such thing as 'society'".

Today, in professional philosophy, the term "metaphysics" has been rehabilitated, and concerns questions like "what kind of things exist? What is the nature of being?"

100% proof machismo!



Eight gallons of blood pour out of Mr Orange (played by Tim Roth)

Cinema

Cathy Nugent reviews *Reservoir Dogs*

This is all about machismo, and every different side of the fragile, male ego gets into the film. Women appear only as non-speaking incidentals. It is a bloodthirsty yet stylish film. In parts it is hilariously funny.

The action concerns a diamond heist that goes badly wrong. The job is planned by the grizzly Joe (Lawrence Tierney). He assembles a team of assorted crooks and gives them each a pseudonym which they are then ordered to use at all times: Mr Pink, Mr Blue, Mr Brown, Mr

White, and so on. The story is told in a mixture of present tense — we see each gang member make his way to the rendezvous, a disused warehouse — and flashback.

The men now realise that a rat, an undercover cop, has infiltrated the gang and the plot is structured (and extremely well too) around their efforts to uncover the identity of this dog in their manger.

Reservoir Dogs presents masculinity and its conceits in a number of very different ways.

Take, for instance, the character called Mr Blond (played by Michael Marsden). He is called a psychopath by Mr White, but this is a bit rich coming from him, Mr "Yeah, I killed two, but just cops". Mr Blond appears to be Paul Newman, Marlon Brando, Steve MacQueen and

Elvis Presley (or parts they might play) rolled into one. Whether this is through the acting or just because Michael Marsden is like that, I don't know, but the effect is both pretentious and spooky. Spooky becomes disturbing when we see the same character slice up a hostaged cop with a cut-throat razor while simultaneously dancing around to that well-known tune "Stuck in the Middle with You". As he slices off his victim's ear the camera moves to an obscure and unoccupied corner of the room. This is weird but, I thought, quite effective. The whole scene portrays a brutish, psychopathic personality very well — 100 per cent proof machismo!

Several people left the cinema at this point. Well, it isn't for the

"The average human being has 8 pints of blood, not, as it appears here, 8 gallons!"

squeamish.

One injured gang member spends the whole of the film lying on the floor gradually bleeding to death. This is surreal too — the average human being has 8 pints of blood, not, as it appears here, 8 gallons!

Nor is this film for people who can't stomach racist and sexist dialogue: these men are foul.

The style of the film is very much like *The Godfather*. And it has the same nostalgic feel of more recent films like *Goodfellas* and *Grifters*. The men are dressed in identical, '50s-style, sharp, black suits and ties. They say that this, like *The Godfather*, is likely to become a cult film. Perhaps. Not, I hope, because lots of young men out there are taking this macho stuff too seriously. The intention of the director is clearly to send it up, not to bolster it up.

Tears of the women of history

A flashing moment of peace by the edge of an abyss.
Fears deep felt evaporate with the short lived ease of night.
Camouflage clad crouching low by the comfort of a grave.
Daring in the danger with sniper's eyes viewing the fall of a century
The dawn of an order new.

To such a mire has humanity fallen
When a time in chains in memory seems a better place.
Face in the dirt
Swallowing freshly dug soil
The Storm clouds rise over mountains bringing the first slaughter of winter.
Drying her tears the woman of history hides her eyes.
She now fears what she can see
The ice has melted revealing nothing new but the old reborn.
Did the Thirty Years War never end
Engulfed again the armies flow
In explosions of brilliant colour caress the Earth
A picture
Tracer fire replaces night sight
No pikeman rises
No charge to meet
Crumbling office towers provide a monument to their time.
Arakan descends from an age of antiquity
Sarajevo

The catalyst that engulfed the world is now the universal prey.
If the rain could fall to wash the streets
To wash the filth of war
Twisted in gutters of human debris.
Such a storm welcomed by the nettle filled bellies.
Empty stomachs with aches not of hunger but sorrows
Countless ever present — over powering.
The scavenging of the day has ended
The symphony of howitzers opens each note seeking out the crawling humans below.

The Fighter returns
In time the women from the shadows of the cellar approach.
In turn they take tightly the fighter in grasp.
Now he sees her
Pale of face
The heat of the sun kisses her no longer with the warmth of the past
It rises like a shadow with fear of the assassin.
White is her flesh yet beauty runs within her veins.
Deep anger gives expression through her dark eyes
Her fears and grief are like a golden polish.

He is all their hope,
The only reward is their very existence.
In days where time is measured by the shellfire
Where the dawn of new day by the shriek of a siren.
It was never the eye of an ancient artist who painted this hell
But the victors of the new age
A city blessed with the dead
In the cemetery of the Jews
Living die to own the graves
Even the after life offers no respite
Cries of pain
Painted as an orgy of slavic insanity.
Their blood no more than quality on a freak show.

The new crusaders arrive
The child of ruins sings a new tune
Of Soldiers from the north
Ships on the Sea
Only bullets for you and me.

CP Ford

Anodyne Anna

Television

Liz Millward reviews *Anna Lee*, 9pm, Sunday, ITV

Anna Lee is the latest addition to the vast company of telly detectives, in a two-hour, feature-length film — a series will probably follow — which was indistinguishable from the surrounding commercials.

Like all women detectives, Anna is fit and healthy, sensitive, expensively dressed, and weighted down with a handbag which wouldn't get onto Aeroflot as hand-luggage. She also has the detective ability of an Aeroflot stewardess. And she's ever so thin...

I long for the day when women detectives are as slobby, fat and badly dressed as, say, Morse or Wexford. No-one could mistake Wexford for a Coca-cola advert, but, as cute Anna breathlessly dashes around West London in her Classic Car ("I'm restoring it myself"), you expect to see a subtitle advertising trendy beer, chewing gum or TUP.

Her morning run is even more embarrassing, showing as it does the ethnic markets, litter and drunks of her home patch, all to a rising beat, a broad grin (feel the burn...) and the bounce of her glossy, blond hair. Yuk, yuk.

Need I say that she is beloved by everyone she meets — except the woman receptionist at her new place of work. All the men fall for her short skirts and complete lack of professionalism, sorry... 'impatience with bureaucracy'.

Far from being a rebel against the system, Anna conforms to every revolting PC stereotype going. The real subversive is the woman receptionist who looks like a repressed spinster, but accepts stolen Janet Reger underwear and lifts on the back of a motorbike!

Possibly it wasn't all Anna's fault. The plot was so transparent that it probably needed all the padding to fill the time. Maybe with a shorter slot to fill Anna will make fewer totally stupid mistakes and we will get to see a bit less of her sick-making private life.

Anna Lee was just formula TV taken to the extremes of the glossiest TV advertisement.

The politics of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty

We live in a capitalist world. Production is social; ownership of the social means of production is private.

Ownership by a state which serves those who own most of the means of production is also essentially "private".

Those who own the means of production buy the labour power of those who own nothing but their labour-power, and set them to work. At work they produce more than the equivalent of their wages. The difference (today in Britain it may be more than £20,000 a year per worker) is taken by the capitalist. This is exploitation of wage-labour by capital, and it is the basic cell of capitalist society, its very heart-beat.

Everything else flows from that. The relentless drive for profit and accumulation decrees the judgment of all things in existence by their relationship of productivity and profitability.

From that come such things as the savage exploitation of Brazilian goldminers, whose life expectancy is now less than 40 years; the working to death — it is officially admitted by the government! — of its employees by advanced Japanese capitalism; and also the economic neglect and virtual abandonment to ruin and starvation of "unprofitable" areas like Bangladesh and parts of Africa.

From that comes the cultural blight and barbarism of a society force-fed on profitable pap.

From it come products with "built-in obsolescence", and a society orientated to the grossly wasteful production and reproduction of shoddy goods, not to the development of leisure and culture.

From it come mass unemployment, the development of a vast and growing underclass living in ghettos, and the recreation in some American cities of the worst Third World conditions.

From it comes the unfolding ecological disaster of a world crying out for planning and the rational use of resources, but which is, tragically, organised by the ruling classes around the principles of anarchy and the barbarous worship of blind and humanly irrational market forces.

From it come wars and genocides; twice this century capitalist gangs possessing worldwide power have fallen on each other in quarrels over the division of the spoils, and wrecked the world economy, killing many tens of millions. From it come racism, imperialism, and fascism.

The capitalist cult of icy egotism and the "cash nexus" as the decisive social tie produces societies like Britain now, where vast numbers of young people are condemned to live in the streets, and societies like that of Brazil, where homeless children are hunted and killed on the streets like rodents.

From the exploitation of wage-labour comes our society in which the rich, who with their servants and agents hold state power, fight a relentless class struggle to maintain the people in a condition to accept their own exploitation and abuse, and to prevent real, democratic self-control developing, with

the forms of what they call democracy. They use tabloid propaganda or — as in the 1984-85 miners' strike — savage and illegal police violence, as they need to. They have used fascist gangs when they need to, and will use them again, if necessary.

Against this system we seek to convince the working class — the wage slaves of the capitalist system — to fight for socialism.

Socialism means the abolition of wage slavery, the taking of the social economy out of private ownership into common cooperative ownership. It means the realisation of the old demands for liberty, equality and fraternity.

Under socialism the economy will be run and planned deliberately and democratically: market mechanisms will cease to be our master, and will be cut down and re-shaped to serve broadly sketched-out and planned, rational, social goals.

We want public ownership of the major enterprises, and a planned economy under workers' control.

The working class can win reforms within capitalism, but we can only win socialism by overthrowing capitalism and by breaking the state power — that is, the monopoly of violence and reserve violence — now held by the capitalist class. We want a democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

Socialism can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers' struggles worldwide, including the struggles of workers and oppressed nationalities in the ex-Stalinist states of Eastern Europe and in still-Stalinist China.

What are the alternatives now? We may face new wars as European and Japanese capitalism confront the US. Fascism is rising. Poverty, inequality and misery are growing.

Face the bitter truth: either we build a new, decent, sane, democratic world or, finally, the capitalists will ruin us all — we will be dragged down by the fascist barbarians or new massive wars. Civilisation will be eclipsed by a new dark age. The choice is socialism or barbarism.

Socialists work in the trade unions and the Labour Party to win the existing labour movement to socialism. We work with presently unorganised workers and youth.

To do that work the Marxists organise themselves in a democratic association, the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

To join the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, write to: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

ORGANISING

Suffering from nuclear piles

SCIENCE COLUMN

By Les Hearn

Fifty years ago on 2 December, the nuclear age is said to have started with the first artificial chain reaction. Equally, one could argue that it started with the first atom bomb or even with Einstein's equation $E = mc^2$. Seen as part of a process, though, Enrico Fermi's experiment in a squash court in the grounds of Chicago University was a significant landmark.

With the discovery of radioactivity had come a realisation of the enormous amounts of energy released in nuclear reactions. However, there seemed no way of releasing such energy. All radioactive atoms known in the 1930s were prone to break-up or decay spontaneously. There seemed no way of controlling the process. This led the great nuclear physicist, Ernest Rutherford, to say in 1933 that anyone who thought they could get power from the break-up of atoms was talking "moonshine".

The work of others was soon to prove him wrong. In 1932, Chadwick discovered the neutron, a neutral particle the same mass as the proton, and also found in the nucleus of atoms. In 1933, Cockcroft and Walton had been splitting atoms artificially, and had verified Einstein's equation. These discoveries led the Hungarian physicist Leo Szilard, who had fled Germany after Hitler came to power, to suggest that if an element was found that could be split by neutrons and which gave out two neutrons for each one absorbed, then a large enough amount of such an element could sustain a nuclear chain reaction. This would release an incredible amount of energy, since nuclear reactions give out some million times more energy than chemical reactions. This would have enormous industrial and military implications.

Only five years later such an element was discovered when a rare

form of uranium was bombarded with neutrons. German physicists Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassman found traces of barium. This was surprising since normally in such experiments the new elements formed are close in mass to the element being bombarded. Barium has only about half the mass of uranium atoms.

Hahn wrote about this to his former co-worker, Austrian chemist Lisa Meitner, who had fled Germany after Hitler's takeover of Austria. Later, she was to fail to share the Nobel Prize for work done jointly with Hahn, perhaps because of her Jewish origins.

With her nephew Otto Frisch, Meitner explained that the uranium atoms were splitting into roughly equal halves, and releasing some ten times the energy of previous nuclear reactions. They called the process "fission", after the biological term for the division of cells.

The crucial factor for a sustained nuclear reaction would be the release of more neutrons to carry the process on, and Enrico Fermi, a recent refugee from Italy to the USA, was one of those who looked for evidence of this. In March 1939 this was found, leading Szilard to express forebodings for the future should fission be harnessed for destructive purposes.

Meitner and Frisch calculated that only a kilogram of fissile uranium would be needed for a chain reaction, but it was soon realised that the common isotope of uranium, 238, was unsuitable for fission. Uranium-235, the only fissile material then known, constituted only 0.7% of naturally-occurring uranium.

Despite this problem, Fermi and Szilard continued work on a controlled chain reaction. They had to find a way of slowing down the neutrons given out by the splitting atoms so that they could be more easily "captured" by other U-235 nuclei. This, they found, could be done with blocks of graphite, and Szilard calculated they would need 50 tons of graphite and 5 tons of uranium oxide, costing some \$35,000.

Szilard was aware of the possibility of constructing a nuclear fission bomb and feared that the Nazi regime would start working on such a weapon. Hahn and Heisenberg, another top physicist, were both still working in Germany. Einstein wrote to President Roosevelt expressing such fears, but this only brought \$6,000 to Szilard for the project.

Alarm bells rang in 1940 when refugee German physicists Rudolf Peierls and Prisch explained just how easily enough U-235 could be obtained to make a bomb with appalling destructive capability. Money soon ceased to be a problem.

After two years of further experiments, Fermi's team began constructing their chain reactor, dubbed Chicago Pile 1 (CP1). Built in a disused squash court, the "pile" was to consist of about 200 tons of very pure graphite, machined into a spherical shape. This would be the best shape to reduce loss of neutrons. Uranium oxide powder was pressed into 22,000 small cylinders to be fitted into grooves in the graphite bricks. Neutrons were to be provided initially by radium and beryllium. In case the reaction got out of hand, neutron absorbing "control" rods of cadmium were available for insertion into the pile. One of these was suspended by a rope, and a team member stood by with an axe ready to chop the rope and stop the reaction.

On 2 December 1942 a single control rod was slowly removed while neutron detectors clicked and Fermi made calculations. After a slight hitch at midday, the team went to lunch. Resuming that afternoon, the team reached the stage where the number of neutrons — and therefore the number of U-235 nuclei being split — was rising exponentially. When switched off for the day at 15.53 the reactor was producing half a watt of power, enough to run the average wrist watch! Nevertheless, the first chain reaction had taken place. Szilard remarked "this will go down as a black day in the history of mankind".

Alliance for Workers' Liberty public meetings

Tue 19 January

"Defend the Palestinians" Manchester Metropolitan University AWL meeting. 1pm, Student Union. Speaker: Mark Osborn.

Wed 20 January

"Defend the Palestinians" Northumbria University AWL meeting. 2.00, Student Union. Speaker: Mark Osborn.

"Is this a classless society?" Sheffield AWL debate a Tory councillor. 1pm, Room 2, Octagon Centre, Sheffield University.

Mon 25 January

"How to fight the crisis" Northampton AWL meeting. 7.30pm, Royal Mail Club. Speaker: Tom Rigby.

Wed 27 January

"Support the miners" Goldsmiths College AWL meeting. 2pm. Speakers include Paul Whetton.

Sat 16 January

Launch party for Harry Wicks' autobiography, *Keeping My Head*. 7.00, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

Sat 6 February

Conference: Defend State Education. 10.30 - 4pm, North Westminster School, North Wharf Road, NW1. More information: Flat 2, Downs Park Road, E5.

Workers' Liberty '93

Workers' Liberty '93 — three days of socialist discussion and debate — will be held at Caxton House, North London from Friday 2 - Sunday 4 July.

INDUSTRIAL FRONT

Lyons Maid occupation

Just before Christmas, workers at Lyons Maid, Kirkby voted to end their long-running dispute which started in February 1992 when Allied Lyons sold its Lyons Maid factory to a US asset-stripper.

In October, when receivers were brought in, the workers went into occupation, only to be driven out a fortnight later when they start-

ed a round-the-clock picket of the plant. The factory was then taken over by Nestlé, who announced that they would be closing the plant three weeks later!

Steve Alcock, TGWU convenor at Lyons Maid, explained:

"We had to make a decision there and then — wind up the dispute or go for broke. Picketing

was going to be a waste of time.

"We sealed off the entire site and occupied at temperatures of minus 35 degrees. Nestlé tried unsuccessfully to get in, backed by Pinkerton Securities, the US strike-breakers! We used this as a political lever against Nestlé, who say they are a good, union employer".

Then, on December 18, Nestlé

announced that they would give up the fight, and leave the necessary plant and machinery to set up a 'viable business'. The Kirkby workers now intend to set up an Employee Share Ownership Scheme to run the plant themselves. However this works out, they have shown that occupation is still a leading strategy to fight for jobs.

Support the Burnsall strikers

Fighting for our rights!

By Jeni Bailey

Since 15 June 1992, some 20 workers, mostly women and mostly Punjabi, have been on strike against the bosses at Burnsall Limited, a small metal-finishing company in Smethwick, West Midlands, which supplies major car manufacturers like Rover and Jaguar.

Last weekend Burnsall women were invited to the Miners' Solidarity Network Conference. They explained to *Socialist Organiser* why they went on strike and the difficulties they have faced: "We went on strike because there was no equal pay, no health and safety, toilets and canteens were very dirty. There

was forced overtime, every morning starting at 8.00am, finishing at 6.30pm." All the workers worked a 7 day week.

And the strike has highlighted very forcibly the double exploitation and harsh reality of working life many women and black workers face, and also the difficulties of getting organised and fighting for basic rights: "We need to be heard, we are an Asian minority. Because we have a language problem we are getting harassed by the police. Because they are white people they don't seem to understand. Because we are women, and Asian women too, they don't care. The police do make it worse."

They are finding it very diffi-

cult "... because it's a majority of men that we have to go and meet. We are just being totally ignored because we are women and black. We are just human, we just want what everybody else does, and if only good people could come out and support us... We can win if we all stick together. At the end of the day we are fighting for human rights."

The workers do feel very isolated but are still determined. "We are determined to win this strike, not only for the people working all over Britain, but also for the black people, for the Asian people and especially for the women. You don't normally get Asian women or black women making a stand."

To contact the Burnsall strik-

ers: c/o GMB, Will Thorne House, 2 Birmingham Road, Halesowen, West Midlands.

DSS: name badges? No thanks!

As we go to press the executive of the DHSS section of the low paid civil servants' union, CPSA, is discussing management's threat to make the wearing of name badges compulsory in all DSS offices.

So far the SEC has given no clear lead on the issue. Rather than simply saying they will support branches that take action, the SEC itself has to lead the fight against the imposition of name badges.

Civil servant should not be made scapegoats for the appalling state of the system. The people to blame are the Tories.

Miners' solidarity conference
Conference calls TUC lobby

Last Saturday's 'Solidarity with the miners' conference can only be described as a wasted opportunity.

Far too much time was devoted to 'rousing' platform speeches that were not really appropriate.

Workshops were poorly prepared, and the time for plenary discussion shortened ridiculously to less than half an hour, despite the fact that conference itself had voted overwhelmingly for two hours to be devoted to open and democratic debate.

The main, positive thing that came out of the conference was the decision to hold a lobby of the TUC in support of the NUM's call for a "Stay-away" day of solidarity industrial action

Lobby the TUC

Wednesday 27 January
Assemble 9am,
Congress House, Great
Russell Street, London.

Miners' noticeboard

Yorkshire and Humberside Regional TUC march and rally, Saturday 16 January.

Assemble: 11am, Parsloes Park, Dagenham. Speakers include miners, MPs, Ford workers, Tilbury dockers and healthworkers.

Wales TUC march and rally in support of the miners, Saturday 16 January.

Assemble: 11am, Sophia Gardens, Cardiff.

Newham miners' support march, Saturday 23 January. Assemble: 11am, Parsloes Park, Dagenham. Speakers include miners, MPs, Ford workers, Tilbury dockers and healthworkers.

Annie Hall Dispute

The Annie Hall dispute is a long-running but little-known dispute in the Yorkshire region, involving five women who previously worked at Annie Hall knitwear.

The firm, which has shops in York, Pocklington and Beverley, sells expensive clothing (much of it over £100), but pays the women workers a pittance for their labour — sometimes less than £10 for a finished jumper. On top of this, they have increasingly used

homeworkers to cut costs, sacking three women who previously worked 'in shop'.

The dispute, which has been running for over two years, has concerned both the sacking of these women without redundancy settlement, and the failure of the bosses, Gerald and Anne-Louise Henry, to pay up the £6,500 awarded to one woman by an industrial tribunal. The whole issue has, until recently, been carried on entirely by the women themselves but is increasingly being brought to the notice of the wider labour movement in Hull and York.

The response has been a regular leaflet of the shops before Christmas, warning potential shoppers of the deeds of the Annie Hall firm, and requesting that they don't shop there. In the course of these activities the Henrys have tried unsuccessfully to secure an injunction against the women and Hull Trades Council, and have harassed leafleters by taking pictures and calling in the police.

None of this has dampened the enthusiasm of the campaign, and it is true to say that the dynamism and commitment of the women involved has had a reviving effect on the local labour movement. Supporters are determined to keep up the pressure in the New Year, until the Henrys pay up what they owe.

The Industrial Front

MEMBERS of BIFU at the TSB took part in the first one-day strike against job losses last Friday 9 January.

As one BIFU activist put it, "it's time someone in this industry stood up against job losses".

35 ENGINEERING workers are on strike at Hillier Engineering in Reading.

The workers were sacked after they took part in a one-day strike at the end of last year's protest at a wage cut of nearly 40%.

Messages and donations c/o 1 Russington Close, Lower Earley, Reading RG6 4DG.

89 WOMEN were dismissed from Middlebrook Mushroom-rooms for refusing to accept a pay cut.

Over the last two years these women have faced 300 redundancies, changes to working practices, and, last year, a pay freeze.

Other sections have been told that their pay will not be cut.

The women are organising a boycott of Middlebrook Mushrooms. More information from: Pam Laverick, 85 Field Avenue, Thorpe Willoughby, Selby, N. Yorks.

Humberside — £28 million cuts

A week before Christmas, most workers employed by Humberside County Council received news that deep and devastating cuts were planned for April of around £28 million. The cuts are to "pre-empt" capping, and will literally wipe out sectors like the Youth Service, and will especially hit local services and education hard.

In education, a cut of between 3 and 7.5% is planned and Heads have been advised to prepare for the worst possible outcome. The County-quoted figures say this will mean four teachers from secondary schools and two from every primary school, but teachers in some schools have been told that 20 jobs will have to go and this would mean some schools closing. A figure nearer to 1,000 for the county would be more realistic.

The main problems at the moment are the enormity of the cuts, which have temporarily paralysed activists, but, more importantly, the total lack of leadership from most union officials, and their complete willingness to accept whatever the Tories and the County offer without a fight. The arguments used are familiar and need to be tackled.

1. "If we don't accept £28 million cuts, the authority will be capped and £40 million will be cut".

This argument totally disregards the current weakness of the Tories

on all sorts of issues, and the willingness of the membership to take action, and make them back down.

2. "If most redundancies are made by 'natural wastage' and compulsory redundancies are avoided, this will be a victory".

Apart from being totally unrealistic as a perspective, 'natural wastage' is still the jobs of people on temporary contracts or who don't really want 'voluntary' redundancy or early retirement. In any case, those teachers who are left will have bigger classes, more contact time and worse conditions, on top of the National Curriculum and Appraisal.

The real perspective is: either County Council workers fight now and force the Tories and the authority to back off with no cuts or redundancies; or we go down with a shoddy deal of cuts and redundancies, a pay cut and much less chance of defending ourselves in future.

Already Hull Trades Council has taken the initiative to organise a public sector alliance, with a rolling programme of lobbies, public meetings etc with a view to coordinated strike action as the movement develops. Important links are being forged with youth and community workers, civil servants, caretakers, ancillary and local government workers for the purpose of united action, and we have two months to organise a real campaign.

Sheffield Residential workers locked out

By Chris Croome, Sheffield NALGO

Residential Social Workers (RSW) and NALGO members in Sheffield, who have been striking for six months have been effectively locked out.

The original claim for training and pay parity with field social workers was not fully achieved, but management conceded that within 5 years all RSW's would be trained to NVG level 3 and concessions were made on pay.

However, after settling the claim, management stated that six children's homes and one home-

less men's hostel would not be reopening on the same basis as before the strike. This attempt to cut the service as part of a return to work agreement has been met with a solid resolve to continue the action by the strikers.

A campaign against the cuts is being run, a soup kitchen and cardboard city publicity stunt took place on 13 January and lobbies of housing management and the District Labour Party are being planned.

Please send messages of support to RSW strikers, c/o Sheffield NALGO, Arundel Gate Court, 175 Arundel Gate, Sheffield S1 2LQ.

Postal workers fend off fixed duties

By a Leicestershire UCW activist

It's part of Royal Mail management's business policy to bring in fixed duties for all workers by April 1994. So far, local managers have got away with imposing them in some areas — in others they have backed down when the UCW branch has won support for action.

But, in Leicestershire, management decided to pick a fight. They said they would not withdraw the fixed duties they had imposed on all workers, and that industrial action would not move them from this.

But they didn't get what they wanted. When the strike ended, 50% of postal workers at Melton Mowbray, and 25% at Coalville were not on fixed duties. Given the

conditions that exist for trade unionists at the moment, what we have achieved is a victory.

This is just going to be the first of many battles. In the long run we need to look towards a serious campaign over the shorter working week, so that the introduction of new technology and increased productivity improves the lives of postal workers rather than lengthening the dole queues.

The real issues are jobs and communities

WHETTON'S WEEK

Paul Whetton was the secretary of the Notts rank & file strike committee 1984-85

I am glad to see the women beginning occupations outside the threatened pits. The pit women have never been backwards at coming forwards — and more

power to their elbows.

But this is only one form of protest. The NUM are asking for support from the RMT. We had some tremendous support from railworkers in 1984-85. But now the union leaders of the rail unions have to realise that they are on the chopping block alongside the miners.

The rail union leaders must come out with firm plans to back Scargill.

"Panorama" on Monday night exposed Hestletine as a liar. On the one hand he wants to shut pits "because there is no market for

coal". On the other hand they import coal "because it is cheaper". Well they cannot have it both ways!

They bring out professors waving sets of figures in the air. Other academics have different sets of figures. This has little to do with the matter. The real issues are not markets and profits but jobs, communities and the lives of real people.

I think that many of the Tory arguments cover up the real reason for the destruction of the pits — they they want to destroy the NUM. Parkinson has made it

clear that we are being punished for 1972 and '74. Thatcher always said she wanted to break the unions and destroy socialism.

Now we see Labour tagging along behind the Tories. Labour must not compromise — all the pits should stay open.

Every day we seem to get closer to a pale blue Labour Party. Labour has embraced the market and accepted anti-union laws.

What I say to the Labour leaders is that if you want to find out what to do next do not go off to America to ask Clinton — ask your own rank and file!

Civil Service conference on Market Testing
Saturday 30 January

11.00am, the Library Theatre, Paradise Street, Birmingham
Sponsored by many branches in the frontline of the fight against Market Testing including CPSA British Library, plus CPSA, IRSF and NUCPS Broad Lefts.

Branches are invited to sponsor the conference, send delegates, and submit motions (closing date for motions is 22 January 1993). Delegation will be on the basis of branch size, to be notified to branches when the likely size of the conference is clearer.

A professionally-staffed crèche will be provided.

For more details contact: Phil Marston, Room 1472, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT.

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

A final push for £5,000!

Why Clinton is no alternative

Kim Moody from the US journal 'Labor Notes' reports from Detroit on why Bill Clinton is no example for British workers.

Bill Clinton, as Governor of Arkansas, has presided over a "right to work state" where the union shop is illegal.

The Arkansas state government offers tax breaks to big business as an incentive to move into the state. Health and Safety standards are hardly enforced.

In the gigantic poultry plants, most women workers suffer stress and strain under the pressure of work in non-union factories. Clinton has done nothing to improve the lot of the workers. He is hand-in-hand with the poultry bosses.

The President-elect has already sold-out on the national health-care plan. He has a scheme known as "managed competition". Essentially, he has done a deal with the insurance companies. He will not deliver a public health-care scheme at all. He will provide a three-tier system: the rich will

get good health-care; workers in the union plants who have won private plans will be OK; the rest will get the bare bones.

The idea that Clinton will hammer the very rich on taxes is wrong. However, what he does plan is to give more tax breaks to big business — "Investment Tax Credits".

His economic programme is garbage. His promise of \$20 billion to rebuild the infrastructure has already been halved to \$10 billion. This is an absurd amount in an economy this size.

Clinton has no job creation programme, must underfund plans for training schemes. We will have better-trained unemployed people!

Clinton is committed to budget-cutting and a balanced budget. Most of his funding comes from Wall Street.

Smith joins the Clintonisers

Interviewed by David Frost on Breakfast TV last Sunday morning 10 January, John Smith announced that one of his central aims is to cut any kind of collective trade union input into the selection of Labour parliamentary candidates.

He also targetted the union block vote at party conference saying that it was "unacceptable".

The entire "Clintonisation" offensive in the party should be taken very seriously by all socialists and trade unionists.

Dissatisfied by the draft final report of the working group on party-union links because it didn't go far enough towards breaking Labour from its base in collective working class organisations,

Labour's yuppy right have decided to go on to the offensive. The coalition of Clintonisers that encompasses the brilliant Neil Kinnock, ex-Walworth Road image maker Peter Mandelsson, election master strategist Patricia Hewitt and those lovely principled people from the Labour Co-ordinating Committee must be stopped.

Union leaders like Bill Morris of the T&G, who is in defiance of his own unions' policy, seem to be playing ball with those who want to break the link with the unions. They must be called to account. Last year's party conference made it quite clear: the trade union link must stay. It is up to the serious left to make sure that it does. We



Brilliant Neil Kinnock clutches his new idol to his heart

could start by forcing the debate on the union link into the open and demanding that the Draft Report that has been suppressed by Walworth Road be published so that every labour movement

activist can take part in the debate.

Contact Keep the Link, c/o Bob Tenant, 120 Northcote road, London E17 7EP.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty Xmas raffle was drawn on Tuesday 22 December. The winners were

- First prize of a video recorder: S. Wilson, Manchester
- Second prize of a colour television: Paul Wilkinson, Nottingham
- Third prize of a Xmas hamper: F. Lawn, South West London.

Our fund drive

The raffle raised £387 towards the Alliance for Workers' Liberty's fund-drive. Together with other donations and money received from branch Xmas socials, our fund total stands at £4,361.93.

Thanks to all those individuals and branches.

We need one final push to break our £5,000 target by 31 January, our deadline date.

Why we need extra funds

Nearly a year ago we began buying new equipment for the production of *Socialist Organiser*. The paper's technical appearance has improved a lot during 1992.

At the same time, the Alliance for Workers' Liberty needed extra funds to help our expansion plans. We believe there are now new opportunities to spread Marxist ideas among working class people.

As the miners focussed working class anger during the end of 1992, the tempo of work increased.

For all this we need additional money beyond our normal budget.

Help your socialist weekly

We are asking readers to help us reach our £5,000 target. Send a donation (cheques payable to "Socialist Organiser") to: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

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