

Vote Labour **9 June**

# SOCIALIST

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## Labour leadership elections

# Labour should fight for workers' rights, says Bill Morris

**BILL MORRIS**, the General Secretary of Britain's biggest manual union, the TGWU, has intervened into the debate over the Labour leadership with a clear call for a minimum wage "which I believe should be no less than £4 per hour."

He has also called for "a commitment to full employment, support for a right to trade union recognition and employment rights."

Morris made this call last week.

By Bill Morris, TGWU  
General Secretary

**B**RITAIN IN 1994 has been transformed by the Tories from the workshop of the world into the sweatshop of Europe.

Every day, over four million of our fellow citizens work for wages which come nowhere near covering even the basic necessities of a decent life.

The worker in the food processing factory, the school cleaner, the long distance lorry driver, the shop assistant and the NHS worker are just some of the working people trying to get by on what is, in anybody's terms, a pittance.

They are alone in the European Union (with the exception of

Ireland) in lacking the protection of a statutory minimum wage — a floor below which even the worst employer is not allowed to fall in terms of wages paid to the workforce.

It is time for Labour to make it clear that it will dispel the dark clouds of poverty hanging over the country, that it is time to give hope to the millions working for obscenely low wages.

That is why the T&G has launched a campaign for a national minimum wage of at least £4 an hour. We believe that Labour should go into the next general election clearly committed to this figure, so that the low paid can know exactly what to expect from the next Labour government.

The low paid are sick and tired of the well-heeled and comfortably off telling them that there is no need for a statutory minimum wage. They do not need lectures on "jam tomorrow" from people who are paid more in a day than millions of workers earn in a week.

Obviously I am not presuming to write policy for the Labour Party. The minimum wage target of £4 an hour is a policy for the T&G, which our negotiators will pursue with employers. But in due course we would naturally look to a Labour government to give statutory enforcement to that rea-

sonable target.

Tackling poverty in this way is the very purpose for which the trade union movement came into being. Least of all should we be offering the low paid vague promises of a better future dependent on the election result. They need action now.

I cannot accept the argument that this policy is a vote loser. If we campaign for it, it will be a massive vote winner. Above all, we need to give people positive reasons to vote Labour based on clear and unambiguous policies.

We are told that we cannot afford it. The fact is that the government would gain around £2.3 billion a year, through paying out less benefit and getting in more tax, if employers were made to pay a decent wage. Four million workers would benefit in their pay packets from this proposal, 350,000 families would be taken out of the benefits system.

The notion that a minimum wage would cost jobs — not a consideration which government and commentators worry too much about when the issue is profits or privatisation dogma — is an argument which has been used against every idea for social progress.

Perhaps the best-remembered example of this scaremongering

was on the introduction of equal pay legislation twenty years ago. Women would be priced out of jobs; employers would simply dump them rather than pay equal rates. While equality at work still has some way to go, we know that there has actually been dramatic increase in the number of women at work: fifteen million today, compared with twelve million before the legislation.

The question of equality is also a major part of the case for a minimum wage. Low-paid workers are mostly women workers, who are still forced into the worst-paying jobs with the least protection. It is long overdue that the demands of women workers became absolutely central to the whole perspective of the labour movement. Fighting for pay decency is also a critical part of the

fight for social justice and equality for women.

If our demand for £4 an hour can be criticised, it is perhaps on the grounds of excessive modesty. It means just £160 before deductions for a 40-hour week. Those who do the shopping, pay for childcare and try to balance the household books do not need to be told just how little that is.

• *From Tribune*

## Stop Blair! Fight for union rights! Rebuild the Welfare State!

**E**VERY serious trade unionist and Labour Party activist knows that in the forthcoming election for the leadership of the Labour Party it will be a serious defeat if Blair or his modernising clone Brown triumph.

They will ditch existing limited commitments and renew the attacks on the trade union link. For that reason we are canvassing party members and trade unionists to sign the following statement. The aim is to create the basis for an effective left input into the leadership debate.

We the undersigned want to see a campaigning Labour Party which opposes the Tory government by every means available and is committed to:

- The restoration of trade union rights including the right to strike, take solidarity action and picket effectively.
- Rebuilding the Welfare State and public services.
- No Liberal/Labour pact. Defend Labour/union links.
- A 35-hour working week with no loss of pay.
- A £4.05 per hour minimum

wage.

We will seek to organise around these ideas in the Labour leadership elections and will support the candidate who stands closest to them.

Name.....

Address.....

Organisation.....

• *Copies of this statement are available from: SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.*

## "Killer bug" hysteria How hospitals can make us sick



**T**HE tabloid press has been much excited by a few cases of what was once a very common problem — the infection of wounds by what are usually fairly harmless bacteria, leading to blood poisoning or tissue death (gangrene).

The bug in question is *Streptococcus pyogenes* (Group A), one of a group of pyogenic (pus-forming) bacteria. Many of these bacteria are found naturally on the skin and in the orifices of healthy people. They usually cause little or no harm and are said to be commensal. They live with us and may benefit us by denying access to more harmful bacteria. *Strept. pyogenes* is found in the noses, throats and tonsils of many healthy people, whence it can be spread by sneezes, coughs etc.

If introduced into wounds or if the carrier has a low resistance to infection, *Strept. pyogenes* can become more bothersome. It is a major cause of sore throat and tonsillitis; it can cause middle ear infections; skin diseases such as impetigo; scarlet fever, formerly a major cause of death; it can infect burns and wounds, including surgical ones; it can cause puerperal fever, a major cause of death following childbirth in 19th century Europe.

There are several variants of *Strept. pyogenes* Group A containing most of the dangerous ones. They are virulent in two ways — they are invasive and they produce many poisons, and they produce a

wider variety of diseases than any other species of bacterium. Some of the poisons are haemolytic (they destroy blood cells and damage other cells as well). The bacteria carry a special protein on their outside which prevents the white blood cells from swallowing them. Thus, they can give rise to blood poisoning which can simply overwhelm the natural defences. Some recent deaths have been due to this. They also produce enzymes that break down connective tissue (fascia), helping them to spread from a small focus of infection. The cells die due to the bacterial toxins and to the toxins released by damaged cells, producing a region of necrosis, hence "necrotising fasciitis". It is difficult for the body's immune system to cope with this and, without treatment, the system can become overwhelmed, leading to death.

With prompt treatment, the bac-

*"Women giving birth outside the Vienna Lying-In Hospital had a greater chance of survival than the unfortunate inmates."*

teria can be killed with penicillin, resistance to this being fortunately rare, but dead tissue must be removed. Though now very rare, such overwhelming infections can be devastating and, if the present scare results in prompt recognition and treatment it will have performed some service.

There is no epidemic and in most cases the bacteria are not closely related (Group A includes a vast number of sub-groups). This has been pointed out by some of the "quality" press but even these have

been unable to resist the lure of a "good" story. *The Independent on Sunday* illustrated its otherwise down to earth article last week with the tragic case of a man who had suffered loss of parts of both legs and all his fingers, not from necrotising fasciitis but from blood clots caused by infection with *Strept. pyogenes* Group B, not even closely related to Group A.

In those cases where the infection has been picked up in hospital, it may be that shortcomings in hygiene will be revealed. In the last century, before the importance of antiseptic methods was recognised, surgeons caused a substantial number of deaths by spreading bacteria from wound to wound on their instruments or hands. In the most notorious case, women giving birth in the gutter outside the Vienna Lying-In Hospital had a greater chance of survival than the unfortunate inmates, whose doctors arrogantly refused to believe that passing from a post mortem examination to a delivery without washing their hands could be the cause of the puerperal fever that killed over half the mothers.

It may be that it is impossible to completely prevent *Strept. pyogenes* in hospitals but it is at least worth considering whether cramming more and more sick people in larger and larger hospitals, cleaned by worse paid and more overworked staff, treated by exhausted and demoralised doctors and nurses and then discharging them after shorter and shorter stays might be making things worse.

The "flesh-eating" killer bug is not the only problem bacterium at present. Almost unreported is the rise in cases of infection of hospital patients by MRSA, Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus, and I will write about this next time.



China increasingly combines the evils of Stalinism and capitalism. Thousands of peasants sleep in big-city railway stations after coming to the cities to look for work.

## Fifth anniversary of the Tienanmen Square massacre Clinton colludes in Chinese repression and tyranny

**L**AST WEEK the 'liberal' President of the USA, Bill Clinton, decided to let China keep its "most favoured nation" status as a trading partner with the USA, despite China's continued 'violation of human rights'.

The neo-Stalinist regime in China jails, tortures and shoots its own people and continues to deny them every basic human right the USA claims to hold sacred. In Stalinist China there is no freedom of speech, press, assembly or sexuality and there is no rule of law. Millions of people are locked away in jail camps. There are perhaps one million political pris-

oners.

The USA deplors all this, but US capitalist self-interest decrees that China must retain its "most favoured nation" trading status.

It was always foolish to look to government such as Clintons' to help the Chinese people — or for that matter the people of Bosnia or Rwanda — against their oppressors. Even when the USA and its allies went to war against Iraq in 1991, after it seized Kuwait and its oil, they were careful to preserve the ruling Baathist regime.

Put not your trust in governments!

After Major's "beggars" speech

# Sweep Tories out of Downing Street!



First the Tories force them into begging on the street, then they denounce them as "offensive"!

**L**ONG AGO their enemies foolishly nicknamed the Tories "the stupid party." If that was ever true it has not been true for a very long time. Stupid? They are ordinarily as cunning, as ruthless and as lacking in scruples as a starving rat who suddenly sees the chance of getting a badly needed feed! But no one will ever go wrong calling the Tories "the dirty party."

With his back to the wall over Europe, the "nice", bland, one-nation Tory John Major suddenly turns into a snarling, backwoods, class-war, Tory bigot demanding that the hordes of people — most of them are young and one in four of the homeless

is an ex-member of the British armed forces — who are forced to get their living by begging on the streets of our cities should be driven off those streets.

It was a naked appeal to the gut prejudice of the hard-core supporters of the Tory Party.

This is the "party of property" that by its policies has created the hordes of beggars whom Major denounces.

The party of "family values" which, by withdrawing state benefits from unemployed youths aged 16 and 17, has deprived many thousands of them of their family homes.

The party of "Victorian values" that has organised not a return to the values it preaches but to Victorian conditions for a large part of Britain's poor.

This is the party of the robbers whose essential morality consists of laying down the moral law to their victims so that the sight of their disasters does not deprive the spoilers of the full enjoyment of their loot.

This is the Tory Party, one of the dirtiest, foulest, most repellent parties in Europe today.

And yet it is not enough to recoil from the sickening sight and sound of Major, the leader of Britain's fat cats, denouncing the starving poor and fomenting a witch-hunt against them. That is easy. It is so easy that not only the Labour but even the Liberal leaders do it.

It is necessary to offer a solution to Britain's unemployed youth, to the masses of the homeless, to the vast numbers who are almost

as poor as the beggars John Major denounces.

The restoration of state benefits to young people at 16 and 17 would make a big difference. Yet Labour — which seeks to associate itself with the revulsion Major's speech evoked — does not dare to even make a clear commitment to restoring benefits for 16/17 year olds.

The wretched creatures who lead the political wing of the labour movement are now — lest anyone think they are too left-wing — talking of putting young people into Tory-style, make-work, pseudo-jobs at £50 a week. Yes, these are the same Labour leaders who proposed that the state should compensate the rich speculators who lost money when Lloyds of London ran into diffi-

culties!

In their own way, and in their own creepy style, the Labour leaders are as obscene as John Major is when he openly attacks the victims of Tory rule, and blames them for the plight to which capitalism and Tory rule have reduced them. It is at least clear where Major stands.

The discussion now getting underway in the labour movement around the election of a new Labour leader may create an opportunity for the rank and file to call to order some of the people who stuff Labour's front bench. It is long overdue.

House the homeless!  
Restore benefits for 16/17 year olds!

Jobs for all!  
Rebuild the Welfare State!

*"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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## WE SAY

Unite the left! For unity in action and honest dialogue about our differences.

# Their D-Day, our 1945

THE OFFICIAL celebration of the 50th anniversary of the British/US invasion of Hitler-controlled Europe has been hi-jacked by the Tories as part of their Euro-election campaign.

That is natural enough. The war the British ruling class and its Tory Party fought against Hitler was a war of empire, a war rooted in British capitalist rivalry with capitalist Germany. It was a war to defend and advance the interests the Tory Party represented.

But that was not the war the vast mass of the British people fought. Subjectively, they fought against Hitler and everything Hitler represented.

The Tories, and prime minister Winston Churchill, dressed up the interests of British capitalism in anti-fascist rhetoric; but millions of British workers believed in fighting fascism, and trusted the Tories not much further than they would have trusted Hitler or his British spawn Sir Oswald Mosley.

The British working class fought for a new world when they fought Hitler, a world without the British capitalist savagery they had been living under when war broke out. The soldiers of the British Army, those who landed on the Normandy beaches on 6 June 1944 and those in Alexandria and Cairo who set up soldiers' parliaments to discuss the post-war world they wanted to shape, left no doubt where they stood.

At the first chance they got, in the 1945 general election, they kicked the Tories out and put Labour in with a landslide victory. That was a vote for a revolutionary transformation in Britain.

The Labour Government, by creating the Welfare State and liberating India, made a revolution of sorts after 1945. For millions of British workers, D-Day, 6 June 1944, was a step towards the day of reckoning for the Tories in 1945.

This newspaper belongs to the tradition of those who denounced the Second World War as an imperialist war on both sides. Our comrades fell victim to Nazi repression in Europe and, a few of them, to the milder repression inflicted in British and US jails, for the stand they took on the war.

In Britain, our comrades told the working class that they could not rely on the Tory-led coalition government to uproot Hitlerism and all it stood for. They told the working class everywhere that unless capitalism was uprooted, fascism would rise again. They advocated a thorough-going social revolution.

That would have been the best outcome of World War 2 for the working class and for all humanity. It did not happen. Capitalism survived. That being so, it is good that the crazy savagery of Nazism was put down, even by those who could not, because of their own capitalist nature, dig out the roots of fascism and racism.

We are proud of what our comrades on both sides did in that war, and we advocate now what they advocated then. If the labour movement rouses itself now, we will soon bring the Tories who now celebrate D-Day to a second Tory 1945!

## The lessons for youth

PERHAPS 100,000 youth attended the Anti-Nazi League festival in South London on Saturday 28 May. It was a gigantic event which dwarfed all the left-wing organisations, including its organisers, the Socialist Workers' Party.

The audience was mostly teenage and mostly white, attracted by the bands.

The event proved that despite the relatively low level of class struggle there are still plenty of youth who want to fight, and who are interested in politics.

Yet in so far as the SWP educate the youth that the recent anti-BNP activity has turned up, the education will be one-sided or plain wrong. The SWP suggest that an alliance ranging from socialists and Labourites over to "anti-racist" Tories can defeat the menace of fascism. Generalised, this is an argument for an alliance with Winston Churchill against Michael Heseltine over pit-closures or a tactical vote for Liberals in the South West to get rid of the Tories.

It is a bad lesson for socialists to teach youth new to politics. We need to turn the youth towards the working-class and the labour movement. The ANL-SWP "Don't Vote Nazi" campaign in local government elections ignored the need to focus on a workingclass alternative to fascism.

## REBUILD THE WELFARE STATE

# Market madness makes thousands homeless

By Martin Thomas

**N**EARLY one million homes stand empty. Half a million building workers are jobless. Vast numbers of bricks are stockpiled.

Yet thousands live on the streets, tens of thousands live in grim hostels or temporary housing, and hundreds of thousands of households have to share with others because they cannot find a place of their own.

That is how the capitalist

market system works. Your need for shelter counts for nothing unless you can back it up with hard cash. A millionaire's whim for a third or fourth home, or a landlord's wish to keep a place empty to get a higher rent or clear it for redevelopment, is powerful because it is backed up by money.

For thirty or forty years, after World War 2, large-scale council housing opened the way for most working-class people to have a chance of a decent home. That was new; it was a deliberate bending of the laws

of capitalism, imposed by labour-movement action.

As late as the 1930s, 30,000 households in London had still lived in cellars; 63 per cent of families in London shared a house or a flat with others. Something like a third of the working class lived in slums - often a whole family in one or two rooms, with one toilet and one water tap shared by the whole house.

Council housing changed that. But the Tory Government has made it almost impossible for councils to build new housing, difficult for them to maintain the housing they have, and compulsory for them to sell off their best houses and flats cut-price.

Their deliberate aim is to run down public provision and return housing more and more to the free market.

In 1980s, rapidly-rising house prices encouraged more and more people to throw every penny they could into buying a house and paying the mortgage. By the late 1980s, that bubble burst: 80,000 households a year were being evicted because they had fallen behind on mortgage payments, and who knows how many more were keeping their homes only with the most dire diffi-

culty.

The great increase in joblessness and low pay under the Tories - also partly products of their assault on the Welfare State - has combined with the rundown of council housing to create mass homelessness.

How can young people without jobs, or on low pay, possibly find homes today? There are no council homes free. They cannot even dream of buying a house, or paying a mortgage. To rent from a private landlord, they would have to pay a large deposit, and then a large chunk of their income each week.

To give every household a decent house or flat would take a very small part of the resources available from the tremendous productive power created by modern capitalism. Give a legal mandate to local authorities to take over empty homes and offices; give them funds to renovate or adapt, or to build new dwellings where necessary; and it could be done.

But capitalism has different priorities. Increasingly, the system which can produce marvels of new technology and unprecedented luxury also denies a large part of the new generation one of the basics of life: a roof over their heads.

## Why housing costs so much

**H**OUSING is increasingly the most difficult thing to afford for working-class people.

While all other basic goods - food, clothing, transport - have become cheaper relative to average earnings, housing has become more expensive.

In the mid-'50s the average house price was three times average earnings; by 1990, four times. Around Tokyo, it is common for a working-class family to spend half their income on housing; in New York, the poor spend some 70 per cent of their income on housing and utilities.

House-building has advanced much less, technologically, than any other mass-production industry, so the labour-time needed to produce a house has not decreased in the way that the labour-time for a loaf or a shirt has. The attempts at "industrialised" building which produced the tower-blocks of the 1960s were a costly fiasco.

Part of the reason is technical: houses have to be built on scattered sites, rather than in factories. Social factors also play a role. Because the housing market lurches up and down even more erratically than other

sectors of capitalism, even the biggest capitalist building firms hold a very small permanent workforce and stock of equipment. A national publicly-owned building industry, operating on a long-term plan, would have much more scope for increasing productivity.

House prices and rents also include a cut for the landlords who own the site and it is a very big cut for inner-city sites. Nationalisation of all building land would get rid of that extra burden on working-class people seeking shelter.

## Tories scapegoat the poor

**T**ORY MINISTER Michael Portillo is planning to cut back Housing Benefit.

According to the Guardian (30 May), Portillo plans to reduce the maximum rents payable through Housing Benefit and/or reduce benefit to the unemployed so that it covers only a proportion of the rent.

The Tories have already announced measures to make councils put the homeless into

temporary, rather than permanent, accommodation.

Apparently the Tories reckon that such measures will force the feckless poor to shape up to the healthy discipline of the market. In reality they will send thousands of people on a demoralising, destructive trail from one shoddy temporary dwelling to another. Their chances of building stable lives or getting stable jobs will be ruined. More

and more will end up on the streets.

The Housing Benefit system is already a scandal. Thanks to local authority cuts and the complexity of the rules laid down by the Tory Government, claimants routinely suffer huge delays. In Hounslow, in 1993, the average delay in processing Housing Benefit claims was 112 days - and many other local authorities have far longer delays than the 14 days which the Government supposedly sets as a limit.

The long delays lead to many people building up huge arrears and losing their home before their claim is processed.

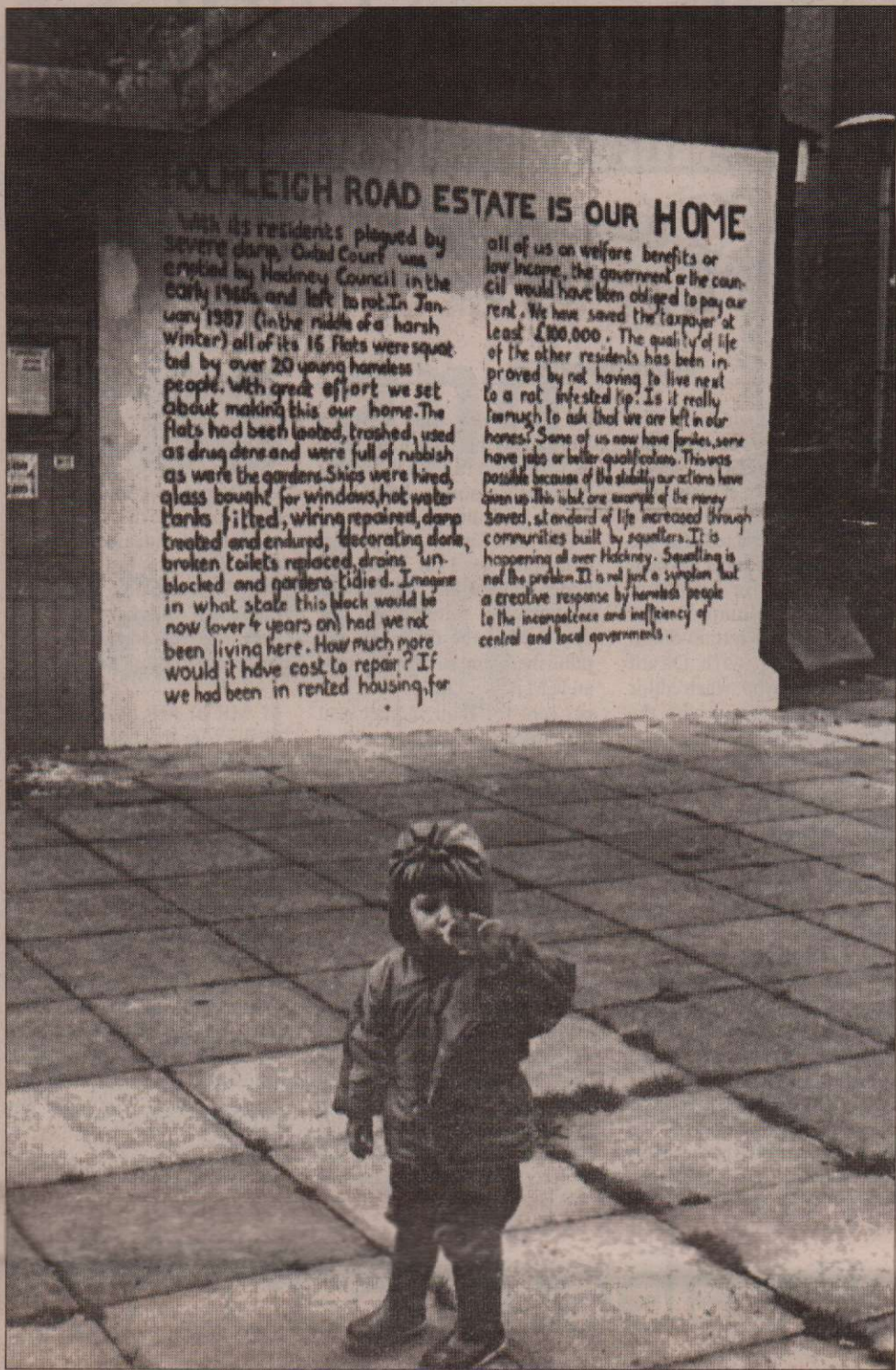
The system also encourages private landlords to charge higher rents, reckoning that the well-off will pay the higher rate and the worse-off will get it paid by Housing Benefit. It creates a "poverty trap" for the low-paid, who lose 70p in Housing Benefit for each extra £1 in wages: when you take loss of other benefits into account, they often get no gain at all from a pay rise.

The answer is for local authorities to be given a legal mandate and funds to launch a crash programme of renovations, compulsory purchases, and housebuilding, to provide decent housing for all at affordable rents.



The Tories' vendetta against council housing has left many families housed in expensive but squalid "bed and breakfast" places.

**REBUILD THE WELFARE STATE**



Tory cuts have left many councils unable to maintain their housing-stock. Above: Hackney East London.

# The way to jobs for all

**I**S FULL EMPLOYMENT possible? Could everyone have a decent job? Yes! Full-time workers in Britain do an average of 43.6 hours a week. It is the longest average work-week in Western Europe. If the average work-week were cut by 14%, to 37.5 hours — as it could be by a properly-enforced standard 35-hour week — then the same amount of work would employ 14% more workers. In other words, it would create jobs for all the unemployed. The shorter work-week would have to be coupled with proper training and re-training. In fact, millions of new and worthwhile jobs can and should be created by expanding education, training, and other public services, and rebuilding the Welfare State.

*“A properly enforced standard 35-hour week would create jobs for all the unemployed.”*

The nett cost of employing the jobless — their wages, less the money saved on state benefit — would be around £14 billion a year. At present wages and “social wages” get about 58% of output in Britain; the wealth-owning class and the State get the other 42%. Adding another £14 billion to wages would change the split from 58:42 to 61:39. Such a change would be resisted fiercely by the rich who would lose out — but it is not impossible or unimaginable or contrary to any law of nature. If the extra costs made British production uncompetitive, then that is an argument for international trade-union and socialist action to spread shorter hours and better public services to other countries.

## Rebuild the Welfare State!

**T**ORY policies have led to the growth “underclass” of people who have little chance of a stable job or a secure home. Now the Tories are blaming everything on the supposed personal failings of the jobless and homeless! As if some sudden increase in idleness and fecklessness has fallen from the sky on us since 1979, and all the Tory Government has been doing is trying to respond to it! By denouncing and criminalising the “underclass”, the Tories hope to rally better-off workers, those with fairly stable jobs and homes, to their side, persuading them that

the real class struggle should be one which rallies those workers together with the wealthy classes against the dangerous, destitute, desperate “underclass”. In fact the majority of workers face a constant danger of themselves, or members of their family, being forced into the “underclass”. Tory measures to cut jobs and job security make this worse. They are meant to: it is the threat of being forced into the “underclass” which makes workers submit to exploitation. Only by battles against the wealth-owning class to save jobs and conditions, and to

rebuild the Welfare State, can the working class protect itself and save the “underclass” from demoralisation. Despite Tory dogmas, no economy can operate by the free market alone. If it does not have a proper Welfare State, then it will have some degrading and demoralising substitute - begging; crime; charity or patronage handed out by churches, families, and ethnic communities. Tories in government means begging and crime on the streets: the result is unavoidable, and no amount of scapegoating and police repression will change it. Rebuild the Welfare State!

## How US cities make war on the homeless

**L**AST December, the American socialist fortnightly Workers' Vanguard reported from San Francisco: “Supporters of the group Food Not Bombs tried again to simply distribute free food to the homeless and hungry, and five of them were arrested within 20 minutes. Arrests nos. 1 and 3 were for handing someone a

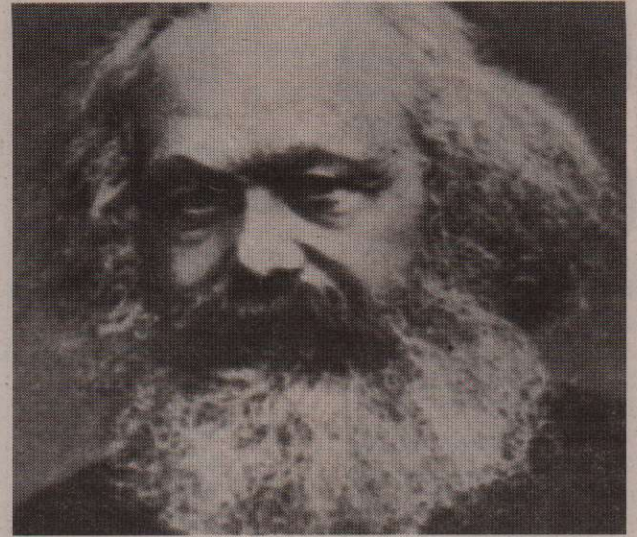
bagel, arrest no.2 for handing someone a banana, and arrest no.4 for holding a bag of bagels... “The group has taken over 575 arrests to date... [The city's mayor is out to] harass the homeless from the city by such measures as handing out citations for sleeping on the street, taking away their carts and

destroying their personal belongings...” Other American cities have launched similar anti-homeless drives, designed to clear beggars and the destitute from the main city-centre streets where the wealthy have their offices, shops and hotels. This is the way the Tories want to take Britain.

Workers' Liberty '94

## Ideas for Freedom

Friday 8-Sunday 10 July  
Caxton House, Archway, North London



**Guest speaker:** Neville Alexander, a leader of the South African Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) and a Workers' List candidate in the recent election, will be speaking about South African on Saturday 9 July and about how socialists should organise internationally on Sunday.

**Some short introductory courses:** Why does capitalism have crises? ● the World Crisis (Fri 8 July) Can people really change? ● What will socialism be life? (Sat 9 July)

Why a working class revolution? ● Does socialism mean state tyranny? (Sun 10 July)

**International briefings:** Brazil ● Mexico ● South Korea ● Nigeria

**The Russian crisis:** Hillel Ticktin and Bob Arnot from the journal *Critique* discuss the issues (Sat 9 July)

**The left:** *Revolutionary History* sponsors a series of discussions about the post-war history of British Trotskyism (Sun 10 July)

**Labour movement issues:** are strikes possible any more? ● What sort of rank and file movements do we need in the unions? A forum (Fri 8 July)

**Forums for discussion on:** Women, sex and pornography ● Crime and punishment ● Modernism and Back to Basics ● Religion and belief in God (all Sat 9 July).

**Debates at Workers' Liberty include:** Should boxing be banned? ● Gail Cameron and Tony Greenstein: should socialists support the PLO-Israel peace deal? (Sun 10 July) ● Professor Meghnad Desai and Martin Thomas: Is full employment possible? (Sun 10 July) ● Jill Mountford and Mark Seddon (editor Tribune) What role do left-wing papers have? (Fri 8 July) ● How do we defeat the Tories? ● How do we get peace in Ireland? Sinn Fein debates the AWL on Saturday 9 July

**Additional sessions include:** ● Fascism, free speech and no platform, Tim Gopsill (editor of the Journalist), Sean Matgamna and Steve Meyers (Campaign Against Fascism in Europe) on Friday 9 July

● Alison Brown on A History of Black people in Britain (Saturday 9 July)

● A History of contraception introduced by Sarah Wellings and Lesbian and gay struggles since Stonewall (both Sunday 10 July)

● Stalinism and Music introduced by Hannah Wood (Friday 8 July)

● An introduction to the politics of war. Vicki Morris discusses the case of World War 1 (Friday 8 July)

● Cheap food, entertainment, a bar and accommodation are available. There is a professionally staffed creche.

● For a full agenda phone Mark on 071-639 7965

● Tickets before end of June £7 (unwaged), £11 (low-waged) and £16 (waged) for the three days. Details: 071-639 7965.

Write to: WL94, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. Cheques payable to “WL Publications.”





Youth Fightback is...

... the voice of revolutionary socialist youth.

This page is separately edited.

Editor: Mark Sandell

Phone: 071-639 7967

for details of our activity.

Letters and articles to *Youth Fightback* c/o PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

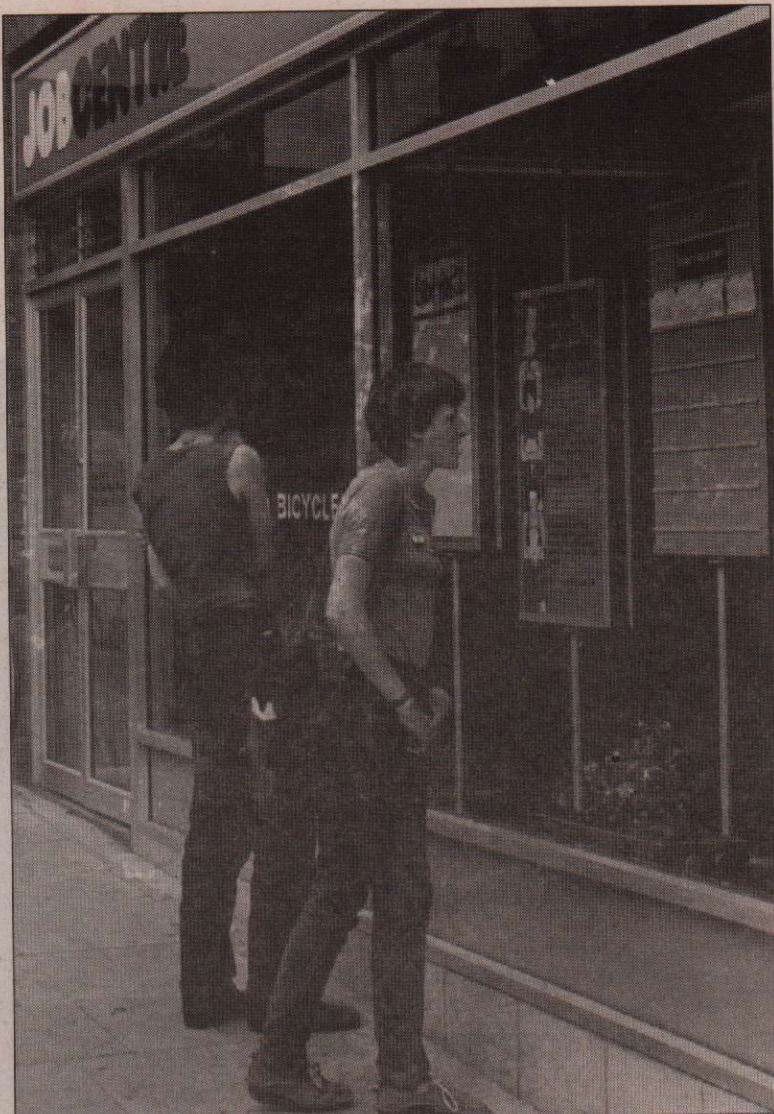
**No to workfare! Restore benefits for 16-17 year olds!**

# Decent jobs and training for youth!

By Mark, Southwark

AS JOHN MAJOR and the Tory press pour out their hatred for they youth their policies have forced onto the streets, the Labour Party leadership's response has been utterly pathetic.

This is scandalous! Youth need proper training, leading to guaranteed jobs, and they need trade union rates of pay. These could be created by investment in public services. Labour should commit itself to creating full employment.



Youth need proper training and guaranteed jobs

## Young workers rights under attack

THE TORIES juggle figures to hide the real numbers of the unemployed. Even so, for over a decade the official figures for unemployment amongst 16 to 25 year olds has never dropped below half a million. The real figure is much greater.

This is the direct result of the same Tory policies that have decimated industry and deliberately used unemployment to drive down wages, undercut working conditions and brought social devastation to many inner-city areas. In many areas crime is the only way to 'get on' and youth have no contact with the labour movement.

One Tory answer to the social crisis they have created is to attack youth. In 1988 all benefits were withdrawn from 16 and 17 year olds in order to make YTS compulsory workfare. This so-called training scheme for 16 and 17 year olds has become a worse and worse cheap labour scheme.

In March 1991 only 38% of youth trainees left their scheme with any sort of qualification.

The Youth Opportunities Programme, introduced by a Labour government, was condemned as cheap labour at the time, as it paid £19.50 a week. Yet if this payment had kept pace with inflation it would now be over £90 a week, which is more than the £29.50 a 16 year old gets on Youth Training.

Despite the fact that 16 and 17 year olds have no right to benefits, there is a massive shortfall in "Youth Training" places. 80,000 of these youth have no income at all.

The rights of young workers have also been undermined. In 1986 the Tories withdrew the protection of Wage Councils for workers under 21. In 1979 the wages of 18 year olds were 42% of the average wage of 21 year olds. In 1991 they had dropped to 37%. A recent survey found some

teenagers working for a miserable 90 pence an hour.

The Labour Party and trade union movement have done very little to fight these attacks. Nor have they done much to organise casual, low paid young workers or the unemployed. This has only added to the schism between many working-class youth and the labour movement. It could also help to provide a fertile soil for the fascists to sow their seeds of hate.

The labour movement must make a sharp turn now to fighting to organise youth, to demand real training with trade union rates of pay and rights — training that cannot be used as cheap labour to undermine other workers and that leads to a guaranteed job.

There is no time to waste. Labour must commit itself to the restoration of benefit rights and real training for youth at trade union rates of pay.

## York football fans fight racism

By Kester, York

EVERY SINGLE Football League team in the country has supported the "Kick Racism out of Football" campaign, with the sole exception of York City Football Club. The president of York City is the Tory MP for Ryedale.

Now local anti-racists involved in Youth United Against Racism have initiated a campaign to force the management of York City FC to join in and fight racism.

The national campaign was set up last year by the Professional Footballers Association, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Football Trust with the backing of the Footballers Supporters Association. It is working to stamp out racism on the terraces and on the pitch.

Football teams set aside pages in their programmes for anti-racist education, anti-racist campaigners are often allowed to leaflet outside, and some clubs have even ejected people who have shouted racist abuse from the terraces.

Campaigners in York have already collected over 500 signatures on a petition, with the aim of making it up to the number of signatures for an average York City attendance (about three or four thousand).

Together with members of the local Young Labour group we have been petitioning at local colleges, in the town centre, and door-to-door. We are also pushing for support from student unions and York Footballers' Association.

North Yorkshire Area NUS and York Young Labour have already backed the campaign and the Area NUS is encouraging member colleges to get involved.

*"As soon as the media snarled, Labour backed away."*

As soon as the media snarled at Gordon Brown's attack on the exclusion of 16 and 17 year olds from benefits, Labour backed away from a simple commitment that even the Liberals made — a pledge to restore benefit rights to youth.

Then Labour's Commission on Social Justice came up with the appalling idea of a three-month national citizens service. This skivvy scheme would put unemployed youth to work sweeping pavements for £50 a week — that's even less in real terms than the Youth Opportunities Programme of 1978 which was rightly condemned as a cheap labour scheme.

## Tories scapegoat travellers

By Hannah, Lewisham

TRAVELLERS in Britain are fac-

ing a huge attack on their civil rights. The Court of Appeal has ruled that councils who have a duty

in the 1968 Caravan Sites Act to provide sites for gypsy travellers do not have to do the same for non-gypsy travellers.

The ruling has been made just weeks before the Criminal Justice Bill becomes law and gives the police and courts draconian powers to harass and fine travellers. Of course police already attack travellers: every summer the police chase travellers around the country and occasionally attack convoys, destroying vehicles and battering people as they did in "The Battle of the Bean Field."

Travellers, like beggars, have been

the target of the Tories' scapegoating bile. Socialists have a duty to oppose the suppression of the civil rights of travellers. You don't have to think dropping out of society and look for a utopian "New Age" is an answer to stand up against the right-wing hate campaign against the predominantly young people who opt to live a nomadic life style in a society that offers them so little.

We should: demand full civil rights for travellers, oppose the Criminal Justice bill, fight police harassment and the scapegoating of travellers and gypsies.

### (Rich) Git of the Week

Michael Forsyth, the Employment Minister, like most of the Tory cabinet, is not interested in the state education system. Why? Well his son has just been expelled from his public school for being 'discourteous', thereby saving his dad £3,000 a term. So while our schools are starved of resources, school buildings are crumbling and students and teachers have to suffer cramped conditions, Michael Forsyth will be tramping the country to find a new flashy private school that for a huge wodge of dosh will accept his 'discourteous' son.

# Black and white, unite

# Tories play the

By Mark Osborn

**I**N AN effort to save the Tory Party from heavy defeat in the Euro-elections, the Home Secretary Michael Howard is stirring up racism.

During a Tory election press conference last Thursday, 26 May, Howard claimed Labour would repeal the Immigration Acts of 1971, 1981 and 1988.

Hypocritically, Howard whined that Britain's race relations would be put at risk by Labour's "assault on our current controls." Howard warned that 8 million foreign nationals living in European countries could come to Britain to live because of Labour and Liberal capitulation to European power. Howard's claims were immediately seized upon by the tabloid press.

Earlier in the week the government further restricted the right to entry of foreign students and casual workers.

John Cunningham has replied for the Labour Party by saying Labour had no intention of repealing any immigration laws. Cunningham reported Michael Howard to the Commission for Racial Equality for a clear breach of a declaration signed by all parties to avoid making race an issue in the elections.

Picking on black people and on foreigners is a traditional Tory vote-winner, one Michael Howard refuses to give up so easily.

All the Tories' current talk of "immigration controls" is a "respectable" method of talking about "us" and "them", that is to say black people and other "outsiders." The slightly disguised language actually asks white people if they mind living next to black people? If they do not find foreigners somewhat strange and threatening? And if they mind paying for the worrying presence of such strangers?

**T**HE EMERGENCE of immigration control as a political response of British anti-black racism really dates from the 1950s.

In 1945 there were perhaps only 25,000

black people in Britain and the majority of whites had never met a black person. Nevertheless, racism was deeply rooted. Black people were considered backward, ignorant and lazy.

But the post-Second World War boom was underway and labour was needed.

In 1946 the young James Callaghan MP called for "an addition to our population which only immigration can provide."

Workers came from Ireland; Poles settled in Britain. In 1948 the government passed a Nationality Act which allowed colonial subjects rights of entry and settlement which did not previously exist.

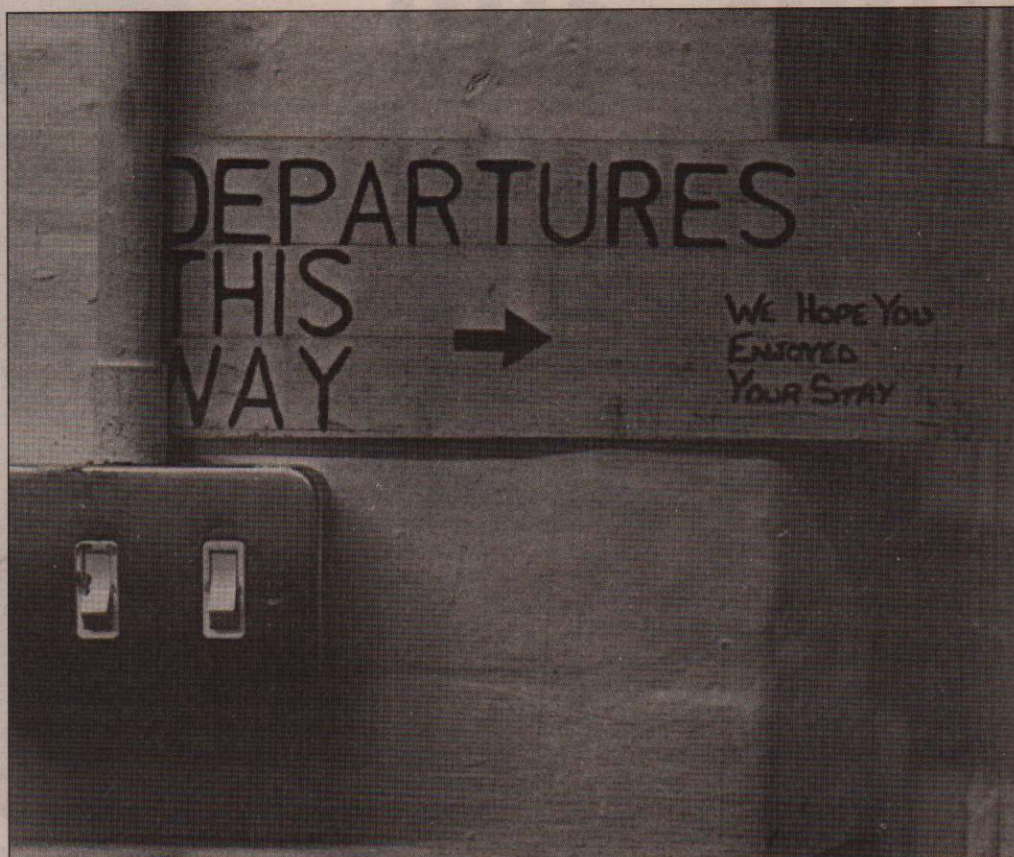
From the late 1940s immigrant workers

*"Picking on black people and foreigners is a traditional Tory vote-winner, one Michael Howard refuses to give up."*

from the West Indies and South Asia began to arrive.

At first only a few thousands arrived, but after the early 1950s increasing numbers. The National Health Service, public transport and certain sections of private capital — for example, the textile bosses — began to recruit black and Asian workers. Even Enoch Powell, as Tory Minister for Health during the early 1950s, organised recruitment drives for black workers.

Although the first two post-war governments — Labour, under Attlee, followed in 1951 by a Tory administration — considered restriction on (black) immigration, this issue remained on the margins of politics.



Grim mockery in a British holding centre for immigrants

In June 1950 the Labour Cabinet set up a committee for a review of "further means which might be adopted to check the immigration of coloured people from the British Colonial Territories." Significantly the committee rejected legislation because "any solution depending on an apparent concealed colour test would be so invidious as to make it impossible for adoption."

The running was made by cranks like Louth's Tory MP Cyril Osborne. As early as 1950 Osborne was demanding "separate figures for coloured immigration" from the Labour government.

By 1955 Osborne had been joined by Winston Churchill who suggested that the Tory election slogan should be "Keep Britain White." In the same year the Conservative Central Council called for con-

trol, although the Home Secretary's draft immigration bill presented to the Cabinet in October 1955 was rejected because public opinion had not "matured sufficiently."

In April and May 1958 two private members' motions calling for immigration control were presented to Parliament. The second motion was backed by 34 MPs, including two Labour members. During late August and early September there were anti-black riots in Notting Hill, west London and Nottingham. The *Times* "explained" the riots in the following way:

"There are three main causes of resentment against coloured immigrants of the district. They are alleged to do no work and to collect rich sums from the Assistance Board. They are said to be able to find housing when white residents cannot. And they are charged with all kinds of misbehaviour, especially sexual. Talking to housewives at their garden gate, menfolk in saloon bars and teenagers at corner cafes your Correspondent had no doubt that these charges are universally believed to have some substance in them." (3 September 1958). In the wake of the riots the *Daily Express* published a poll suggesting that four out of five people now supported immigration controls.

The economy was slowing and opinion was shifting.

In October 1961 the Conservative conference voted for controls and in July 1962 the Commonwealth Immigration Act became law. Controls were popular, were vote winners.

To his great credit, Hugh Gaitskell, the Labour leader, fought to defend the black workers. He opposed the Bill "on principle." He said: "What... is the reason for the Bill? The immigrants are healthy, law abiding and are at work. They are helping us. Why then do the government wish to keep them out? We all know the answer. It is because they are coloured... There are social problems and an appalling housing problem. We concede the existence of these problems in certain areas but we do not believe for one moment that this Bill is the way to handle them." Dennis Healey said the Bill would be

## "Operation Elgar": 100 homes raided in Southwark

# Union opposes deportations

By Mark Osborn

**A**LLIANCE FOR Workers' Liberty members and UNISON activists are continuing to campaign against the targeting of West African workers during a series of immigration raids known as Operation Elgar.

Elgar took place on the morning of 27 April. Immigration Officers and police raided 100 homes of alleged "illegal immigrants." It was reported at the time that 70 people had been detained.

UNISON's National Executive commented that the "civil and political rights of black people have been denied." They add that the raid, which took place in the week before the 5 May local government elections, against workers who were widely reported as working for Southwark's Labour Council looked "like an attempt to discredit a Labour Council."

On the same day, 27 April, Bermondsey's Liberal MP, Simon Hughes issued the following press release: "For every illegal immigrant employed by Southwark Council, a legitimate local job seeker is deprived of a job... if the allegations are true the voters will make sure next week that the guilty heads will roll."

Local Labour MPs Harriet Harman and Tessa Jowell have written to Hughes rightly accusing him of trying to win votes "on the basis of hostility to the black community in Southwark." Unfortunately this letter was only written on 18 May.

Harman also wrote to the Secretary of state demanding information about the Elgar raids. As of 20 May Charles Wardle's office admitted: "Eleven have been removed from the UK as illegal entrants or under the deportation process, and two remain in detention with a view to removal. The remaining 48 were released and 22 are subject to reporting restrictions pending removal from the UK or further consideration of their cases."

The Minister admitted that 24 worked for Southwark Council (rather than 70, as reported in the press during April).

The labour movement must realise that further attacks of this sort are very likely. Black and white workers must see this type of fingering as a threat to every workers' rights. If the state can pick off black Africans in this way, who will be next? Trade union activists? Cleaners? Library workers?

We must stand united. All workers must have the right to live in the country of their choice.



# and fight!

# racist card



British capitalism welcomed immigrants from the West Indies in the 1950s, though some had to camp out before they found jobs. Above: Clapham Common, 1948

repealed by Labour. In fact Labour capitulated to intolerant racism and the Labour government elected in 1964 reneged on the promise. The key event was the parliamentary election in Smethwick, Birmingham in 1964, when the Tory candidate, Peter Griffiths, won after a viciously racist campaign: his supporters' slogan was: "If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour."

Instead of standing firm the Labour candidate Gordon Walker, backtracked: "Be fair: immigrants only arrived in Smethwick in large numbers during the past ten years — while the Tory government was in power. You can't blame Labour or Gordon Walker for that."

Gordon Walker had spoken out against immigration control three years before and had been baited as a "nigger lover."

*"Labour had helped to create a climate where racist demagogues like Powell could take matters further."*

The Tories had found a vote winner, and Labour had found that it had not capitulated far enough to win the trust of white voters who responded to the Tories' racist call.

In January 1965 Gordon Walker fought and lost again in a by-election in the very safe Labour seat of Leyton, east London. A private poll suggested that 95% of voters favoured stringent controls of "coloured immigration."

The Labour government's majority was cut to three. They were shaken by the result — evidently, they had not only to be in favour of immigration control, but also to be seen to get tough.

A white paper was presented to Parliament in August 1965 increasing the discre-

tionary powers of immigration officials.

**E**ARLY IN 1968 Kenya's Asians were told that they would have to become citizens if they wanted to stay in Kenya. Many held British passports. In February 1968 racist right-wing Tory MPs Duncan Sandys and Enoch Powell predicted the immediate arrival of tens of thousands of Kenyan Asians. Labour panicked and quickly passed the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. The new Act removed right of entry to UK passport holders who lacked "close connection" with Britain. "Close connection" meant birth in the UK or descent from a parent or grandparent born in the UK.

Labour had been stampeded by the Tories again. Richard Crossman noted the change: "A few years ago everyone would have regarded the denial for entry to British nationals with British passports as the most appalling violation of our deepest principles." He, however, went along with the flow, "mainly because I am an MP for a constituency in the Midlands where racialism is a powerful force."

Labour had helped to create a climate where racist demagogues like Powell could take matters further.

In April 1968 Enoch Powell made his notorious "rivers of blood" speech in Birmingham. Although Powell was sacked from the Shadow Cabinet he received over 100,000 letters in support and London dockers and Smithfield meat porters marched in his defence.

Heath's Tories won the 1970 election and passed further legislation, the 1971 Immigration Act. The voucher — quota — system introduced in 1962 was scrapped and "primary immigration" (immigration of new people, rather than dependents) was ended. Callaghan promised its repeal saying the new Act gave a "badge of respectability to prejudice." He failed to get rid of the Act when Labour got back into office in 1974.

**I**N JANUARY 1978 Margaret Thatcher gave a television interview which simultaneously undercut the fascist National

Front and boosted the Tories in the opinion polls against Labour: "People are really afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture... the British character has done so much for democracy, for law, and done so much throughout the world, that if there is any fear that it might be swamped, people are going to react and be rather hostile to those coming in."

Thatcher labelled the problem as "cultural differences" — tapping into and giving sustenance to narrow-minded, fretting and fearful, little England racism. The Thatcher stance on immigration, much harder than Heath, helped the Tories win the June 1979 general election. In the years after 1979 still harsher and tighter immigration procedures have been introduced.

Ironically, Thatcher's cynical prejudice has been used against the Tory government by her own supporters. In 1989 Norman Tebbit attacked the government's plans to allow 50,000 Hong Kong Chinese civil servants and their dependents into Britain after 1997 using Thatcher's own words: "[We] will be swamped by a different culture." Tebbit warned that a fourth Tory election victory was being endangered: "The government is now driving voters back into the welcoming arms of the Labour Party."

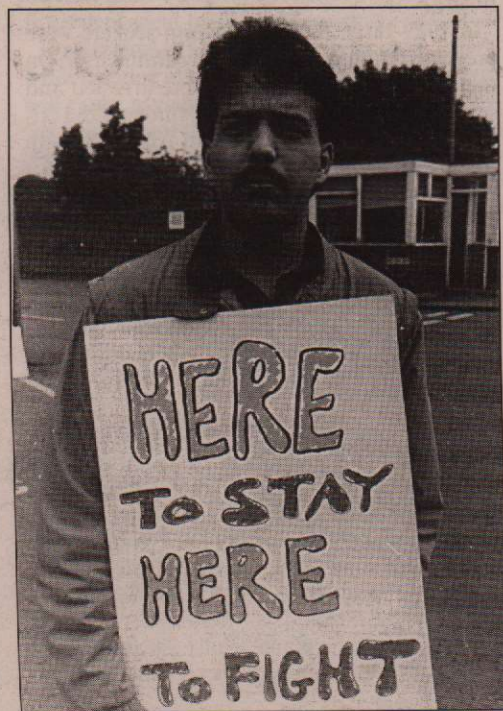
In the run-up to the 1992 general election, Labour leaders considered that they were being seen as "soft" on asylum seekers. Roy Hattersley said Labour would accept most of the proposed Asylum Bill. I rang up the Labour Party to ask if Hattersley's remarks had been reported accurately. The woman on the information desk said: "Unfortunately, yes... it's a disgrace."

Indeed.

The picture is very clear. The Tories have won votes by using immigration law as the central policy response to win the racist vote. Labour have accepted these laws rather than fought prejudice. And Labour has retreated further and further — to such a degree that opposition to immigration laws before the 1962 Act has virtually been forgotten.

Socialists must respond by opposing all immigration laws — laws whose effect is to divide and weaken our class, breaking it down along national and racial lines.

Workers of the world unite!



Blaming immigrants weakens working class

## Non-racist immigration laws?

### WHAT WE THINK

**D**URING THE debate on the 1988 Immigration Act Roy Hattersley said that immigration cases should be taken on their merits. He was not prepared to support "frivolous, cynical, wilful or unjustifiable" cases.

Hattersley believes some people should be let in, some should not.

Labour and the TUC propose that immigration controls should not be scrapped, but only altered. Immigration should be "firm but fair" and "not based on income or race."

Would the 1971 Immigration Act and the 1981 Nationality Act, which Labour's 1983 manifesto promised to repeal, be abolished by Labour? "We're not in that sort of business — Michael Howard would misrepresent us," says Labour's spokesperson Graham Allen.

Labour would leave in place, for example, the explicitly racist visa controls, imposed in 1986 on people from various South Asian and West African countries. At the time, Labour rightly criticised the restrictions as racist.

So talk of "non-racist" policies from Labour's leaders is so much cant.

Nevertheless, are "non-racist" controls — as advocated by sincere people like the TGWU's Bill Morris — possible?

The current rules and laws are racist in two respects. They deliberately target black people, allowing relatively free movement inside the EC but stopping others from the West Indies, Africa and South Asia. And then the rules are implemented — and interpreted — by officials who are often racist.

Clearly, some reforms would make these laws less bad. However, some reforms, like the TUC's proposal to control "unauthorised workers" through the imposition of sanctions against bosses, could make matters worse, pushing bosses into closer monitoring of workers on behalf of the immigration service.

Non-racist immigration controls are as likely as non-racist capitalism.

But why do we need any immigration controls? Behind every argument for regulation there is an argument about population movement.

The anti-Jewish Aliens Acts of 1905 and 1919 were justified: "Foreign powers have invaded London and other large towns." [Manchester City News, 1888]

The 1962 Act aimed to stop "the unchecked flow of immigrants." [Manchester Evening News, 1961]

And the recent Asylum Act was supported because "Europe is being inundated with people." [Daily Express, 1991]

Often the response of the left is: "Don't worry, no-one will move here if we get rid of the controls." For example: "In practice, very few unemployed people will leave Bombay to become unemployed in Bradford." [Pete Alexander of the SWP in Racism and Resistance]

This is not very convincing — I would rather be unemployed in Bradford than Bombay.

And the argument would fall down if large numbers of people did move here.

Let's assume getting rid of controls did mean large numbers moved to Britain. Would this be a problem? Would this undercut wages and threaten jobs? Not if the labour movement recruited immigrant workers, fought for their rights, demanded a cut in the working week with no loss of pay so that all workers could have a job.

Would Britain become "overcrowded"? What does this mean? We would not be packed like sardines in a can. It can only mean that British workers are worried that welfare and other services will become more overstretched.

The answer is that more money should, if necessary, be spent. Who will pay? Make the rich, not other workers pay!

This is the socialist case for getting rid of all immigration laws.

# Black and white, unite

# Open the door

By Dale Street

HERE ARE 19 million refugees living in exile in the world today. Another 24 million people have been forcibly displaced within the borders of their own country. One in every 130 people on earth has been driven into flight from their home.

This explosion in the size of the world's refugee population — in the course of 1993 another 10,000 people became refugees every day of the year — is the product of capitalism in decay.

The history of capitalism is the history of forced mass migrations, generated first by the colonial expansion of early capitalism, and then by conflicts between the imperialist powers as they fought each other for control of the globe's natural resources.

The greatest forced migration in history was the trans-Atlantic slave trade, when ten million Africans were transported to labour as slaves on the plantations of the Americas and the

*"In 1993, another 10,000 people became refugees every day of the year. This is the produce of capitalism in decay."*

West Indies.

Brutal mass displacements of indigenous populations were a defining feature of colonial expansion. As new territory was seized, the native peoples were driven out to make way for new settlers. Colonial demands for manpower were met by mass transfers of indentured labourers from one continent to another.

The imperialist slaughter of 1914-18 and the subsequent emergence of new nation-states on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires left behind a legacy of one

and a half million refugees.

During the bloodletting of the 1939-1945 war some 60 million people were forced into flight. The end of the war left over 21 million refugees scattered throughout Europe, and millions more in other parts of the globe.

The post-war boom generated a new wave of international migration as European capitalism imported foreign labour to compensate for domestic shortages of manpower. During the 1950s some 30,000 immigrants from the "New Commonwealth" arrived in Britain each year. Several hundred thousand migrants from North Africa were recruited to labour in France. Lacking any colonial possessions of its own, Germany turned to Turkey and Yugoslavia as sources of cheap labour, importing 1.8 million foreign workers by the early 1970s.

For purely ideological reasons, Europe and the United States also adopted an "open door" policy towards refugees from the Stalinist states during the years of the Cold War.

3.5 million East Germans were allowed to resettle in West Germany. Western countries accepted without question 200,000 refugees from the defeated Hungarian revolution of 1956, 80,000 Czechs after the crushing of the Prague Spring, and 30,000 Jews from Gomulka's Poland. Half a million Cubans who fled from Castroite Cuba were admitted to the United States.

But the end of the post-war boom brought with it an end of the "open door" policy towards migrant labourers and refugees alike. As unemployment in Europe steadily increased, reaching 9 million in 1979 and then 17 million by 1993, European governments sought to restrict further immigration to a minimum and to "encourage" the departure of migrant labour already present in Europe.

In clamping down on immigration successive British governments led the way in Europe. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act was passed in 1962, a further Commonwealth Immigrants Act was passed in 1968, the Immigration Act was passed in 1971, the Nationality Act in 1981, the Carriers Liability Act in 1987, another Immigration Act in 1988, and then the Asylum and Immigration (Appeals) Act in 1993.



1992: Kurdish women on hunger strike to be allowed to stay in the UK

While new immigrants were kept out, migrant workers resident in Europe were stereotyped and scapegoated. According to Jacques Chirac, leader of the Gaullist RPR in France, the typical immigrant family was:

"An overcrowded family with the father, three or four wives, and 20 or so kids, which receives 50,000 francs in social security payments, obviously without working, not to mention the noise and the smell..."

At the same time as creating a fertile ground for chauvinism and racism in Europe, the collapse of the post-war boom and the consequent intensification of cut-throat capitalist competition strengthened the social and economic forces which generated refugee flows.

Economic growth rates of developing countries plummeted as capitalism lurched into crisis. Massive debts contracted in the post-war years became a dead weight around the necks of developing countries — for every £1 donated as "aid" to impoverished countries, £3 returns to the donor states and Western banks as debt repayments.

Faced with balance of payments crises, developing countries imposed drastic austerity programmes as the price of receiving "support" from the International Monetary Fund. As a result, the poor became yet poorer, and more people were driven into poverty.

## Clampdown at the frontiers

WHILST paying lip service to the principle of providing asylum for refugees, governments throughout Europe have thrown up every obstacle to try to prevent refugees from entering Europe.

Visa regimes are promptly imposed on countries which, as a result of civil war or other domestic crises, begin to generate large-scale refugee flows. Citizens of those countries must first obtain a visa to travel to a European country. But requests for visas are almost invariably rejected.

Iranians were declared visa nationals by Britain in 1980 (just after Khomeini came to power), Sri Lankans were made visa nationals in 1985 (as the island collapsed into civil war), Turks and Ugandans were made visa nationals in 1989 and 1991 (as political tensions in the countries increased), and Bosnians in 1992 (six months after the outbreak of war).

European governments have also imposed fines on airlines which carry passengers without paper documentation, a measure which directly affects refugees as many of them are unable to obtain such documents from their national authorities. Legislation to this effect was introduced by Germany in 1986, Britain in 1987, and Denmark in 1988.

Immigration officials are now often stationed at airports abroad, to "advise" airlines on

whether passports and visas are genuine. Airline staff have also prevented passengers disembarking on arrival where they think that they may apply for asylum and cause the airline to be fined.

In 1989 three Kurdish asylum-seekers were prevented from disembarking by airline staff. On their return to Turkey they were arrested and severely tortured for 34 days. Amongst the criteria used by the Scandinavian Airline System to "spot" asylum-seekers are: possession of a one-way ticket; non-fluency in English; and a poor appearance.

Similar advice has been issued by the German authorities to Swedish ferry companies. Cars boarding ferries should be divided into an "express line" (where passengers are "Nordic-looking") and a "suspect line" (where passengers do not "look like the national of an EU country").

Another innovation directed at excluding asylum-seekers is the creation of "international zones" in airports. Such zones are deemed by states to be outside their sovereign territory.

Asylum-seekers who apply for asylum whilst still in these zones are consequently deemed to have not yet entered the country. By this bureaucratic sleight of hand, asylum-seekers can be forced back onto a plane, whilst the authorities deny that the asylum seeker ever reached their



Protest at the expulsion of 12 Iranians from France to Gabon, 1987.

territory.

Other measures have been introduced to ensure that even when asylum seekers manage to gain access to a European country, they are denied an adequate opportunity to present their claim for asylum and are consequently expelled as soon as possible.

The increased use of detention has often prevented asylum seekers from putting forward a proper presentation of their claim. In Finland upto 80% of asylum seekers have been detained, whilst the number of detained asylum-seekers in Britain has doubled over the past six months.

Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Switzerland and Greece are also notorious for their record of detaining asylum seekers.

The use of the "first safe country" rule has also facilitated the rapid expulsion of refugees. Asylum seekers who fail to apply for asylum in the "first safe country" they reach are summarily sent back to that country on applying for asylum in another country. According to Danish legislation, one hour in transit is sufficient for the "first safe country" rule to be applied. At the close of 1993 Britain expelled three Kurdish asylum-seekers to Holland after they had spent just 45 minutes in transit there.

Asylum seekers have even been expelled before a final decision has been made on their application. A Lebanese asylum seeker expelled from Denmark in 1988 was arrested on arrival in Beirut and disappeared. Five Tamils were expelled from Britain in 1989 and returned to Sri Lanka, where three of them were promptly detained and tortured, despite the fact that they had an appeal pending before the House of Lords.

Such measures expose the hypocrisy of the nominal commitment to human rights on the part of bourgeois politicians. As a result of these measures, refugees now have about as much chance of entering Europe as a dog suffering from rabies.

# and fight!

# for refugees!



Vietnamese children: they deserve a sanctuary in the UK, and a better life when they get here

Since 1950 the number of rural poor in the world has doubled. As a consequence of IMF austerity programmes, per capita incomes have fallen steadily in many parts of Africa and Asia (to say nothing of the former Stalinist states) whilst malnutrition has increased. One third of the world's population now lives in absolute poverty, and another third in poverty.

Economic decline and collapse in developing countries have generated major refugee flows

*"Scapegoating and stereotyping has encouraged a European-wide wave of violence against asylum seekers."*

in their own right, as well as provoking conflicts and wars for control of scarce economic resources, which in turn have generated further refugee flows.

The pursuit of environmentally destructive economic policies, either at the behest of the IMF and the World Bank or at the initiative of the indigenous ruling classes, has intensified

the immiseration of millions in the world's poorest countries.

Subsistence farming has been replaced by cash-crop farming in order to ease balance of payments crises and service debts to international banks. Large-scale logging operations, carried out to raise hard currency, have created mudslides and flooding in delta region, thereby destroying subsistence farming still further.

Large scale prestige development projects, in particular the construction of massive hydro-electric dams, have had an even more damaging impact on local environments and rendered vast tracts of land uninhabitable.

Such environmental destruction, promoted by the demands and operations of capitalism as a world economy, has driven millions more into exile or internal displacement. And as capitalism lurches deeper into crisis, so too does its readiness to sacrifice the environment grows correspondingly.

Just as capitalist crisis in the West has generated an upsurge in racism and nationalist intolerance, so too in many of the developing (or formerly developing) countries, the impact of the capitalist crisis has exacerbated long-standing ethnic tensions.

Such ethnic tensions are often a legacy of nineteenth century colonialism and, more recently, the Cold War.

When the imperialist powers divided up Africa, and other continents, between themselves in the nineteenth century, they did so

### Forgotten peoples

The government's decisions on refugee's pleas to remain in Britain, 1993

	Number of refugees	Refugee status %	ELR* %	Refusal %
Sri Lanka	2680	0	90	10
Fmr. Yugoslavia	170	0	26	74
Ghana	940	1	1	98
Turkey	1905	18	45	37
Somalia	3330	1	92	7
India	1145	0	3	97
Pakistan	790	0	5	95
Zaire	1715	0	1	99
Ethiopia	1660	1	95	4
Uganda	1560	0	72	28
Iraq	515	34	58	8
Fmr. USSR	30	0	0	99
Iran	280	35	46	19
Angola	1525	1	0	99
Sudan	1475	50	45	5
Lebanon	375	4	72	24
China	65	23	8	69

\*ELR = "Exceptional Leave to Remain"

without any consideration of whether the borders they drew on a map matched the boundaries between areas occupied by different ethnic groups.

In the colonies thus created, ethnic hostilities were encouraged on the basis of a "divide and rule" policy. In the aftermath of de-colonialisation the ethnic hostilities cultivated by imperialism have combined with conditions of economic crisis to produce a succession of wars, each of which has produced massive refugee movements.

Similarly, in the years of the Cold War Western and Soviet imperialism conducted a series of "proxy wars" in the countries of the "Third World", especially in South-East Asian, the Horn of Africa, and Eastern Africa.

In the aftermath of the end of the Cold War such "proxy wars" have now taken on a life of

their own, in the absence of any backing by the two superpowers of the Cold War, and have continued to produce large-scale refugee flows.

Refugees are thus doubly the victims of capitalism in crisis. On the one hand, the worldwide capitalist crisis has created an explosion in the size of the world's refugee population. On the other hand, it has generated the nationalism and racism in Western Europe which abandons refugees to their fate.

Increased aid for refugees and a liberalisation of laws concerning immigration are of benefit to refugees, but cannot provide a lasting solution to their plight.

The refugee crisis can be resolved only through the destruction of the capitalist system which, by its very nature, daily drives thousands more into the despair and misery of struggling to survive as a refugee.

## Grim welcome in "Fortress Europe"

**F**OR THOSE asylum seekers who manage to scale the walls of "Fortress Europe" governments throughout the continent are determined to make life as unpleasant as possible.

Residence restrictions are widespread. In Denmark and Switzerland asylum seekers are allowed no choice of residence and are obliged to live in designated reception centres. In Holland, Sweden and Belgium the receipt of welfare benefits is dependent on living in assigned residences.

Restrictions in Germany are even more severe. After a period of compulsory residence in a reception camp, asylum-seekers are transferred to hostels and may not travel outside of the district where the hostel is located without police permission.

In Denmark, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands asylum seekers are not allowed to work for the duration of the asylum procedure, which can sometimes take several years. In France the right of asylum seekers to work was abolished in 1991.

Asylum seekers in Switzerland are allowed to work. But 7% of their pay is deducted to "reimburse" the government for welfare benefits received — and to help cover the costs of deportation if the claim for asylum is rejected.

Nowhere in Europe do asylum seekers have a right to family re-union. Even those granted exceptional leave to stay on humanitarian grounds (a kind of second-class version of refugee status) have to wait four years before having even limited rights to family reunion.

Public hostility towards asylum seekers has been encouraged by racist press sensationalism and misreporting.

The conviction for rape of an Eritrean asylum seeker was reported by the "Daily Mail" under the

headline "Time to Close the Floodgates", whilst the "Daily Express" carried an article alleging that social security claims by refugees were having "a crippling effect on our economy" under the headline "Migrants can speak no English except one magic word ...asylum."

Scapegoating and stereotyping of refugees by governments and the media has encouraged a European-wide wave of violence against asylum seekers and refugees, especially those with black skins.

In 1990 and 1991 a series of arson attacks were carried out on refugee reception centres in Sweden. Refugee hostels were also targeted for petrol-bomb attacks in Switzerland in 1991. In Germany refugees have been amongst the main victims of the recent upsurge in racist violence.

Local authorities in many countries have also implemented their own anti-refugee policies. Sjobo in Sweden held its own referendum in 1990 to decide whether the town (population: 15,000) should accept 15 Iranian refugees. In Switzerland municipalities have ended paying membership fees to the Red Cross in protest at the resources allocated to refugees. And in Belgium local councils have refused to register refugees, thereby denying them access to housing and health care.

Only a small proportion of asylum seekers are ultimately officially recognised as refugees: 2.5% in Denmark, 2.5% in Switzerland, 6% in Britain and 7% in France.

But even before asylum seekers are deported, the policies of "deterrence" pursued by European countries have already spelt out the message that refugees have long since ceased to be welcome in Europe.

### Effects of the Asylum Act

This table, and the figures on decisions made in the second half of 1993 shows the dramatic fall in exceptional leave to remain (ELR) decisions and rise in refusals since the introduction of the Asylum Act.

	Decisions	Refugee Status (%)	ELR (%)	Refusal (%)
2nd Half	4,835	310 (6)	1,050 (22)	3,475 (72)
1st Half	13,335	1,285 (9)	10,075 (76)	1,975 (14)

Gerry Healy

# The monstrous gnome

Sean Matgamna reviews *Gerry Healy, a revolutionary life*, by Corinna Lotz and Paul Feldman [Lupus Books, £16.50]

**D**URING THE two decades of the great labour militancy, roughly from the mid-'50s to the mid-'70s, the most important revolutionary socialist organisation in Britain was the Socialist Labour League.

The fundamental responsibility for the failure of the left then has to be laid on the SLL and on its leader Gerry Healy. The SLL dominated the world of revolutionary politics during this period, overshadowing even sizeable organisations like Militant and the SWP (then called IS) and blocking the road of development for the tiny "Workers' Fight" group, a forerunner of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

This was the time when it was probably possible for Marxists to make a real breakthrough in remoulding the mass labour movement, or, failing that, to create a large revolutionary organisation linked organically to the mass labour movement.

No such breakthrough was made. Fuelled by the mass youth radicalisation of the late '60s, there was a wide diffusion amongst middle class youth of generally revolutionary ideas, but too often ideas of a populist, quasi-anarchist or diluted Maoist sort, hostile or contemptuous towards the actually-existing working class. One variant of this politics of middle-class ambivalence and half-contempt for the real working class took the form of patronising lionisation of the "working-class heroes" when they engaged in militant action, and giving up on them when they didn't. Another, the SWP's, combines lionisation with "building the party" as a substitute for the working class.

Sects were built but no serious revolutionary organisation rooted in the working class was built; and the most important sect during the decisive period was the SLL. It became the "Workers' Revolutionary Party" in 1973.

Even when, in the 1950s, it did serious and constructive work in the labour movement, the Healy organisation was organisationally authoritarian and, as a consequence, intellectually stultified. A further consequence of this was that there were widely disparate but underdeveloped and incoherent political currents within the organisation — the Banda brothers, for example, were always half-Maoist — held in balance by Healy acting as the organisation's Bonapartist dictator.

Official "Trotskyism" since Trotsky has been an unstable amalgam of Trotsky's hostility to Stalinism and reluctant endorsements of Mao, Castro, Ho Chi Minh, and Tito's versions of Stalinism as deformed expressions of "the world socialist revolution." Everywhere this "Trotskyism" has been inherently unstable. Every element in this self-contradictory "Trotskyism" existed in the Healy organisation in a latent or open state of conflict. The organisation learned to live with its incoherencies by evolving an organisational dictator who was also the ideological court of last resort. That was Healy.

Healy's role was a pre-condition for the survival of an organisation which had such political contradictions.

**H**EALY DOMINATED the organisation in an unchallengeable rule sustained by both ideological and physical terror against anybody who dared disagree with him — or with whatever political strand in the organisation's leading layer he was, for the moment, backing. For example, the

organisation "went Maoist" to support the Chinese "Cultural Revolution" in 1967.

In the 1960s the SLL progressively cut loose from the Labour Party — that is, from the working-class movement in politics — and, though it remained in the trade unions, its activity there became more like Third Period Stalinism than serious work (see the account of this in the Workers' Liberty pamphlet, *New Problems, New Struggles*). It recruited and exploited — exploited is the word! — mainly raw youth.

Healy was a highly volatile fellow who tended to believe what he wanted to believe, and ever more so as he got old at the heart of an organisation where his every whim was law. At the centre of a machine where no-one could make him take account of anything he wanted to ignore, Healy slowly went mad — or, if you like, retreated into such a childish me-centred solipsistic view of the world that it came to the same thing.

For example, by the late 1960s the SLL was going on 100,000-strong anti-Vietnam-war demonstrations with leaflets asserting that the march was a conspiracy by the press to boost the march organisers at the expense of great Marxists like Healy. Yet the SLL machine survived, as an increasingly sealed-off youth-fuelled sect, and expanded. Not accidentally, its main "industrial" base by the early 1970s was among actors.

They published a daily paper from 1969. But the SLL more and more inhabited an onanistic world where its own rigidly exclusive marches and theatrical projects were more important than anything else. One consequence was that by the early 1970s, the then saner IS/SWP had space to grow substantially. One disconcerting feature of the SWP today is that it grows more and more like the SLL of the '60s.

Healy was always, even in his best days, given to paranoid self-importance and paranoid fear of the State, and now his derangement got completely out of control. A terrible panic seized him during the 1974 miners' strike that led to the dismissal of the Tory Government by the electorate. At one stage members of the organisation were instructed to hide their "documents" because a military coup was only days away.

Then Healy "discovered" that other Trotskyists who opposed him, such as Trotsky's one-time secretary Joseph Hansen, were really secret "agents" of the US or Russian governments, or both. A great barrage of lies and bizarre fantasies was poured out.

A vast world-wide campaign — the Healyites had small groups in many countries — was launched to "explain" much of the tortured history of Trotskyism as a convoluted spy story. All of the world, and much of recent history, was reinterpreted as an affair of "agents" and double-agents. Perhaps as part of the eruption of his paranoia, Healy now transmuted into a "philosopher."

**L**IVING THE life of a millionaire if not a pasha, while members of the organisation often went short, Healy concentrated more and more on expounding a pseudo-Marxist, pseudo-Hegelian gobbledegook reminiscent, despite its verbiage about "dialectics" and so on, of nothing so much as L Ron Hubbard's dianetics, around which the Church of Scientology has been constructed. This stuff mixed oddly with his continuing "political" concerns and the lines were often crossed: it was not unknown for the WRP press to denounce someone in one and the same article as both a police agent and a "philosophical idealist."

By the mid-'70s the organisation was in serious decline, financially over-extended, and threatened with collapse.

At this point, Healy sold the organisation to Libya, Iraq and some of the sheikhdoms as a propaganda outlet and as a jobbing agency for spying on Arab dissidents and Jews ("Zionists") in Britain! Arab gold flowed into the shrunken and isolated organisation. Printing presses were bought, more modern than those on which the bourgeois papers were printed. To get away from the London print unions, they were installed in Runcorn, Cheshire anticipating by a decade Murdoch's move from Fleet Street to Wapping.

They churned out crude Arabchauvinist propaganda lauding Saddam Hussein and Libya's ruler Colonel Gaddafi and denouncing Israel and "Zionism." Numerically still in serious and progressive decline, the organisation nevertheless built up a property empire of bookshops and "training centres" around Britain. To earn their wages, they, still calling themselves Trotskyists, publicly justified Saddam Hussein's 1980 killing of Iraqi Communist Party members, and provided reports on London-based Arabs and on Jewish capitalists. The organisation, as *Socialist Organiser* insisted

at the time — paying for our insistence with a costly libel case — could now no longer be considered part of the labour movement. In fact it was still widely accepted as part of the labour movement, but that's another story.

The final act came in October 1985. Healy, who had run the organisation by personal terror, was now 72, weakened by age and by a bad heart. He was suddenly denounced as a rapist of 20-something female comrades and expelled from the organisation! Exactly what happened is still not entirely clear, but, with Healy dithering on the margin between retirement and full gushup, the WRP imploded. Faced with continued decline and, despite the Arab gold, a new financial crisis, the WRP apparatus divided. Healy himself was probably getting ready for a purge. The organisation fell apart in a great outburst of hysteria. The subgroups which Healy had kept in line fell on each other, and on Healy, who had disappointed their political hopes.

People whom he had oppressed for many years, using them as whipping boys and demoralised dirty tools, allied with the quasi-Maoist Banda brothers, his lieutenants of 35 years, and drove Healy out. With Vanessa Redgrave — a splendid actress, politically short of more than a few of the pages necessary for a full shooting script — playing Cordelia to his Lear, Healy fled from the wrath of his political children. He died in December 1989, an enthusiastic Gorbachevite. Asserting to the end his right to believe what he wanted to believe, he imagined that he saw Gorbachev carrying out Trotsky's programme. Thus the "Gerry Healy story" would have a happy ending!

At the end, and for a long time before the end, the "Gerry Healy story" was a series of episodes from the theatre of the grotesque, which is where Healy himself really belonged politically and personally.

**H**E CLAIMED Irish origins, but his story, which he spun out as from a repertoire the first time I talked to him, that his father was shot in Galway by the Black and Tans, made me doubt it. The story is repeated by Feldman. Altogether too pat, it inadvertently suggested someone with only a broad big-events acquaintance with Ireland and Irish history, and Healy was a notorious liar. (For what it's worth, Irish Communist Party members whom I knew in the late 1950s said he originated in Liverpool; Healy was in the CP until the mid-'30s.)

His leadership, first — in the '40s — of the Revolutionary Communist Party faction which favoured entry into the Labour Party, and then of the main British Trotskyist group in the late '40s and through the '50s, was that of a "branch manager" of the international tendency led by the American Trotskyist James P Cannon and by Michel Pablo (Raptis) in Europe.

Healy took most of his broader politics ready-made; even the articles and documents which appeared under his name were mostly written by others — Sam Gordon, George Novack, Michel Pablo.

Healy came to play the role he played in British Trotskyism from the mid-'40s onwards not despite but because of his indifference to political ideas. An almost identical political type, Pierre Lambert, came to dominate much of French Trotskyism in the same period. Healy, like Lambert, came to the fore because he was a lightweight politically, not caring very much about ideas.

In the 1940s and '50s, the world posed big problems to old-style Trotskyists, and most of the political leaders of the movement collapsed in demoralisation, confusion, or perplexity. The Healys and the Lamberts became central because they cared about the ideas only for their immediate organisational consequences, and could propose what to do on the basis of short-term calculations without any political or intellectual qualms.

After he asserted his political independence in the early 1960s, Healy's politics were blatantly cut to fit organisational needs, rather than organisational questions being arranged according to politics.

If James Cannon, Healy's one-time mentor, was fond of saying, after Trotsky, "the programme creates the party", Healy reinterpreted this guiding principle to mean: arrange to have a "programme" that will maximise party growth; 'the organisational needs of the party create the programme.'

**I**N APPEARANCE, Healy was extraordinary. Small — perhaps 5 feet 2 inches — and pudgy, he had an enormous, disproportionately large, high-coloured head, with only thin strands of hair



Gerry Healy: not as nice as he looks

on it, looking like they had been painted on with an eyebrow pencil. His face was large and fleshy, with small features, the little eyes permanently red and sore, reminiscent, as one-time associate Brian Behan wrote somewhere, of a young pig.

What he always called to my mind was Karl Marx's description, in *The Civil War in France*, of the politician Thiers, one of those who suppressed the Paris Commune: "a monstrous gnome."

He dominated his organisation by uninhibited brute force. The 'cadre' of the group was the product of 'selection' — survival — through a never-ending series of savage sado-masochistic rituals, involving the pillorying, hounding, denouncing and self-prostrating at one time or another of most of the hard core. In this way Healy built a machine that was essentially depoliticised, ready like the Stalinist parties for any "turn." It was a farcical caricature of Stalinism despite its verbal "Trotskyism."

That the SLL mutated like that was a great tragedy for working-class politics in Britain. Much of the history of that organisation is properly explained by the personality of Healy; the fact that the most important ostensibly revolutionary organisation in Britain took this form needs a broader and deeper explanation. But that is a subject in itself.

Paul Feldman contributes to this book a rehash of all the lying history the SLL/WRP put out in its last two decades. Corinna Lotz contributes a personal account of Healy's last four years, when she was his secretary/nurse.

Though she is badly informed politically — she thinks Lenin was "secretary" of the Bolshevik Party, for example — and naively believes in Healy (dollops of whose 'philosophical' gibberish notes from his lectures, lace her text) Lotz gives a touching account of Healy in his last years as a charlatan-guru for rich and silly theatricals — Maharishi Guru Gerry, so to speak, and L Ron Healy, rolled into one — globe-trotting to interesting places with Vanessa Redgrave's name on his calling card.

Lotz paints a fanciful picture of a gallant old man struggling for his truth against strong enemies, including the unbeatable ones, old age and ill-health. She made me forget for a while, though I have indelible adolescent experiences to remind me, that this man spent 25 years bullying — politically, financially, emotionally, sexually — and exploiting young people who thought he represented the legacy of Leon Trotsky, towards which his real relationship was that of Cain to Abel.

When Lotz described Healy moaning to himself shortly before he lost consciousness and died, I felt what both humanity and convention say you should feel about such things, though Gerry Healy would have been the first to scorn that sort of "weakness": "...he kept sighing, saying 'Oh my God'..."

Then my real feelings about the old reptile came to the surface in involuntary speculation about the meaning of the guru's "last words."

Was this last-minute appeal to 'Oh my God' a prayer? Did the old purveyor of pidgin-religion get real religion at the end? Or is the correct interpretation something akin to Christ's despairing cry on the cross: 'My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?' Had he thought he had a special relationship with the supreme Leadership in the sky?

If you exclude these possibilities, you are left with the sense of Edward G Robinson's dying words at the end of *Little Caesar* when, playing Rico the small-time gangster, he staggers around, shot through the chest: "Can this", he gasps, "be the end of Rico?" And a miserable end Healy's was too, 30 years too late.



Colonel Gaddafi

# Another well made cliché



Matt Cooper  
reviews  
'Grumpy  
old men'

**J**ACK Lemmon and Walter Matthau are both fine comic actors who can do the serious stuff too. The big question, is what are they doing in this film which, although never summoning the energy to be bad, never raises itself above the level of pedestrian.

The plot is premised on Lemmon and Matthau being two, well, grumpy old men. They have the basic love-hate relationship that has characterised every buddy movie since the dawn of time. The cause of this is that Lemmon married the girl that Matthau lusted after fifty years previously.

Now in the twilight of their lives, the wife in question being long dead, the men are left with nothing but their feuding. Then they're emotionally defrosted by the arrival on the scene of Ariel (Ann-Margret), an older women and widow to boot (she doesn't seem anything like as old as Matthau, but there's Hollywood values for you) and the dead conflicts are exhumed after 50 years, to be run through again.

The second time, the conflicts are resolved and everyone comes to a better understanding of themselves. If all of this sounds dull, pat and



"Apparently the script is written by a 27 year old, and one, it would seem, who has never closely observed old people"

predictable, that is because it is.

Despite the best attempts of Matthau and Lemmon to breath life into the film, they are simply not given anything to say that is particularly amusing or allows them to develop any depth to the charac-

ters. Apparently the script is written by a 27 year old, and one, it would seem, who has never closely observed old people. What Lemmon and Matthau in effect play are a couple of pretty immature juveniles in old men's bodies.

This is the bedrock of what passes for the humour of the film which is clearly intended to be a romantic light comedy. In *Grumpy Old Men*, what humour there is seems to revolve old people swearing and showing an interest in sex. The

romance is the usual tasteless sugary goo that you'd expect to find in a mass produced doughnut.

In short *Grumpy Old Men* is trite and cliched rubbish, well made enough so it can slip by almost without the viewer noticing it.

## The case against the welfare state



By  
Wayne  
Geofferies

In other words profits come before people, and all those elderly people who voted for a Welfare State after World War 2, paid taxes to fund it and now need treatment more than ever, can go and rot. So can anyone else who can't afford private healthcare.

Open Space, BBC2,  
Wednesday 8 June 7pm

**R**ABID right-winger David Marsland argues the case advocated by the Adam Smith Institute for dismantling the Welfare State. They say that the NHS is strangling the economy, and that it is crushing 'self-reliance'.

Little Napoleons, Channel 4  
Tuesday 7 June 10pm

**A**FOUR PART Town Hall drama, Little Napoleons begins on Channel Four, Tuesday 7 June at 10pm. Simon Callow plays a racist, Tory leader, and the story begins when two rival solicitors stand for local council elections.

## Future shlock



Channel 4  
Mondays

Geoff Ward  
reviews  
'Babylon 5'

**I**T WOULD BE unfair to write off Channel Four's new science fiction series *Babylon 5* after only three episodes, but I much prefer to watch its main rival 'Star Trek: the Next Generation' on BBC2, Wednesdays.

*Babylon 5* is the name of a space station. It's a sort of intergalactic United Nations which hosts ambassadors from five major solar systems in the year 2257AD.

It scores over *Star Trek: the Next Generation* in having flashier spe-

cial effects. It also has none of the incomprehensible pseudo-technical jargon you get onboard the new *Starship Enterprise*.

Yet implicit in the *Star Trek* series is the idea that human society has progressed beyond capitalism. It gives an optimistic, forward-looking vision of the future. In *Babylon 5* we get the crap from our world transposed into the future. Vengeful aliens feud; their double-dealing ambassadors plot against each other.

In a presidential election one crew member decides to vote on the basis of the looks and personality of the candidates.

Last week's episode had an alien hunter trying to capture people's 'souls' at the moment of their death. Last Monday's episode saw

these future civilisations tolerating slavery.

The characters in *Babylon 5* are much more gung-ho than the members of the 'Enterprise'. In *Star Trek* they only fire their 'phasers' as a last resort, after all peaceful means had been exhausted. There were few battle sequences in the entire last series. 'Babylon 5' is much more violent.

It's difficult to sympathise with any of the characters. They are as bleak and as bland as the austere-looking surroundings.

Perhaps *Babylon 5*'s popularity in America — it has won Emmy awards — has something to do with its harsh vision of the future as the continuation of the rotting capitalist society in which it was made. It wouldn't get my vote.

# Gerry Healy as I knew him

We reprint for the information of the labour movement, the introduction written by Ken Livingstone MP to a biography of the late Gerry Healy. For a review of the biography, see page 12. We have abridged the introduction slightly.

FIRST met Gerry Healy in 1981, shortly after I became Leader of the Greater London Council and was immediately captivated by his vivid recollection of events and personalities on the left. He had recognised the changed political climate which enabled Labour to take control of County Hall, and that we were using the immense resources of the Greater London Council to support those struggling for jobs and other rights.

Gerry Healy saw that it was possible to use the GLC as a rallying fortress for Londoners who were opposed to Thatcher's hard-line monetarism. Contrary to the image spread by his opponents, I was impressed by the non-sectarian approach that the *News Line* took on the reforms the GLC introduced. *News Line's* coverage was thorough and objective throughout our struggles. Given we were under siege by the Fleet Street press, it was a relief to pick up the WRP's paper in the morning! The GLC's public relations department usually put the *News Line* articles on the front page of the daily press cuttings bundle.

The first discussion I had with Gerry Healy made a great impact on me. Coming from a party where long term thinking is usually defined by the next opinion poll, I was challenged by the broad sweep of his knowledge and freshness of his approach. He knew how to operate in the political present through his understanding of the movement of economic and social forces.

Although we were in totally different political organisations, Gerry Healy always tried to find a point of connection with the world in which I moved. He did this because he wanted to find ways of working with the left in the Labour Party on common issues and principles. But he never laid down conditions. He accepted that there were fundamental differences between us, but they should not prevent us from collaborating against the Tories. It was a refreshing change from the world of intrigues and backstabbing politics of the Labour Party. That is why I felt happy about speaking at *News Line* rallies, even though I came under a lot of fire from those like Dennis Healey within my own party.

Gerry Healy and I both endured great upheavals during the 1985-1986 period with the Tories abolishing the GLC and the WRP torn apart by a major split. We lost touch for a time, but renewed contact a few years before he died because of his work in the USSR. I was happy but not surprised to discover that

we had reached similar conclusions about the dramatic changes in the Soviet Union during 1987-1989. Our last meeting in the summer of 1989 was devoted to a long conversation about the significance of perestroika and glasnost. We both knew that the events in the Soviet Union would change the lives of everyone in the world and especially those involved in socialist politics.

The other area we had a close understanding about was the role of the secret services in Britain. We know that joint campaigning between genuine Marxists and socialists in the Labour Party was viewed as a dangerous threat by the intelligence services. In particular, contacts between us and national liberation movements such as the Palestinians drew even more attention from the British state.

My own research and experiences have strengthened, not weakened, my conviction that MI5 considers even the smallest left organisation worthy of close surveillance and disruption. Given the pivotal role of Healy in maintaining contact with Yasser Arafat's HQ through the WRP's use of the latest technology, MI5 clearly felt that they had to stop the growing influence of the WRP. I have never changed my belief that the split in the WRP during 1985 was the work of MI5 agents.

It was a privilege to have worked with Gerry Healy. I know this book will give those who did not know him an opportunity to understand his contribution to the working class revolutionary movement.

**WHY DO we print this excerpt from Ken Livingstone's introduction to a biography of the late Gerry Healy, recently published by two faithful devotees of Mr Healy? [For a review, see page 12.]**

Because Mr Livingstone — who wrote the introduction in March, before John Smith died — is once more trying to launch himself as the candidate of the left for leader of the Labour Party. He did this two years ago when, with the tongue-in-cheek backing of the *Sun*, as well as the thoughtless backing of honest left wingers such as those around *Socialist Outlook*, he reduced the left to a bad joke. This piece of writing deserves to be widely known as part of the CV of Livingstone if he continues to press his candidacy for the post of standard-bearer of the left.

Livingstone's account of his relationship with Gerry Healy and the WRP is, however, substantially less than a full one. We need more details.

When Livingstone and his friends took over the GLC in 1981 it was already plain that the labour movement would either concentrate its strength on a serious fight-back against the Tories or face a crippling, long-term defeat. Provided that they were willing to defy the Tories and refuse to carry out their policies, left-wing councils like the GLC could have provided a rallying point for resistance to Tory cuts and

to the whole Tory programme. In fact the GLC, under Livingstone's leadership, systematically did what the Tories wanted them to do on essentials, facing down trade-union demands, complying with the court ban on their cheap-fares policy, and compensating by raising rates (local taxes) to finance "good causes." They made it very difficult to mobilise their electors.

They made left-wing speeches and indulged in gesture politics and they espoused good minority causes. They got the Queen to open the Thames flood barrier, with Livingstone bowing and scraping to her in public. But mobilise to fight the Tories they did not. Essentially, they did council business as usual and faked, using not the old catcheries of the traditional, *Tribune*-ite fake left, but a new style of faking, spun from the concerns of the real left in the '70s.

Livingstone and his friends split with *Socialist Organiser*, which they had helped to found, on these issues, when the big majority of organised *Socialist Organiser* supporters criticised and opposed them for their failure to use the GLC as a real anti-Tory fortress. They founded *Briefing* so that they could pursue their course unencumbered by arguments and objections from us.

But soon Livingstone and his close comrade Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth council (who had already tried to introduce cuts in services and had been forced by Lambeth Labour Party to desist) split from *Briefing* too and launched a glossy new weekly paper, *Labour Herald*. Politically they had no differences with *Briefing* which continued to give Livingstone slavish support as long as he headed the GLC.

The *Herald* seemed to come out of nowhere. It had only the flimsiest network of supporters, few people sold it in the labour movement and, GLC advertising notwithstanding, little visible "means of support."

*Labour Herald* was in fact produced for Livingstone and Knight by Gerry Healy's Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP), whose finances were in turn heavily dependent on subsidies from Libya and other Arab states and agencies. Livingstone, Knight and another councillor were billed as *Labour Herald's* editors but it was edited in fact by Steven Miller, a member of the WRP Central Committee.

About the same time as they launched *Labour Herald* for Livingstone and Knight, the WRP, in the person of Ms Vanessa Redgrave, sued *Socialist Organiser* for libel, dragging us for years into an expensive legal quagmire. That was Gerry Healy's way of tying up the opposition to Livingstone's *Labour Herald*.

But why shouldn't Livingstone ally with the WRP? After all, the WRP supported his GLC policies and his close and trusted comrade, Ted Knight, was indistinguishable from a member of the WRP. Why not? Because the WRP was transparently in the pay of Arab governments — you had to be politically virginal or very dim not to see that from their press. Because the WRP was a crazy organisation openly engaging in fascist-style anti-semitic agitation.

The illustration on this page provides an example of the lunatic level of it! Livingstone had an interview on the next page to this editorial in the daily *News Line*, agreeing with them that — because a BBC programme had told a little of the truth about their financial links with Libya — they were the victims of a BBC-"Zionist" — i.e. Jewish — conspiracy. Livingstone never dissented or demurred from this "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" anti-semitism, though he was frequently on WRP platforms and often in *News Line*.

Livingstone is also less than full in his account of the "upheavals" he faced in 1985-6. His "upheavals" included the collapse of *Labour Herald*. When the WRP tore itself apart after Healy was expelled in October 1985, the WRP's Labour Party paper, *Labour Herald*, was one of the casualties and soon ceased publication. It never had a life of its own.

You don't need a conspiracy theory to explain why the WRP blew up in 1985.

From 'Socialist  
Organiser' to  
Thatcher & Reagan

This morning... SATURDAY April 9, 1983

## The Zionist connection

A POWERFUL Zionist connection runs from the so-called left of the Labour Party right into the centre of Thatcher's government in Downing Street. There is no difficulty whatever in proving this.

Top of the list, we have the most recent appointment of Mr Stuart Young, a director of the 'Jewish Chronicle', as youngest-ever chairman of the BBC, having been a governor only since 1981. He is the brother of Mr David Young, another Thatcher appointee who is chairman of the Manpower Services Commission.

This is the key organisation which the Tories are transforming into a 'corporatist front', behind which they seek to mobilise jobless youth from 14 years upwards into a 'slave labour body to break trade union wages, safety procedures and working conditions... Thatcher has rolled out these appointments with magisterial arrogance while the Labour Party and TUC chiefs have accepted them without a murmur of protest'. (*News Line*, March 28, 1983).

The Tories know they can rely totally upon Zionist imperialism to produce the most hated reactionaries, in order to transform the situation at a later date into a pro-fascist, anti-Semitic pogrom against all the Jews in general.

Zionism made it possible for a number of rich Jews to leave Nazi Germany with the agreement of the Führer provided they agreed to become Zionists. The Tories know too they have a powerful anti-Semitic trump card up their sleeves, to replay once again as the most reactionary manifestation of racialism, which is anti-Semitism.

From the support and advance publicity which the 'Jewish Chronicle' gave the BBC 2 'Money Programme' on March 20, the reactionary Zionist link was clear for all to see. But it also stretches through Downing Street channels right into the White House and President Reagan.

The latest Reagan military provocation against Libya early in March raises in its sharpest form the central political question. Do Trotskyists defend the Libyan regime of Gaddafi against US imperialism as a matter of principle, or do they

denounce it as 'the reactionary Islamic government of Libya' and seek a 'neutrality' between US imperialism and Gaddafi? This is the position of 'Socialist Organiser', claiming to speak for 'lefts' in the Labour Party.

The same organ supported the Zionist-sponsored 'Money Programme' on March 20. They wrote: 'We ('Socialist Organiser') didn't wait for the BBC to tell us about the WRP's probable links with Libya. The fact that the BBC now says it doesn't make it any less likely to be true.' (April 7, 1983) (Our emphasis).

Here is unqualified support for the work of Thatcher's appointee as chairman of the BBC, who is also a director of British Caledonian Airways and the British Overseas Trade Group for Israel. 'Socialist Organiser' has landed itself right bang in the middle of Thatcher's hand-picked Zionists as an outright supporter of their policies of witch-hunting the WRP and the *News Line* for our principled stand against imperialism and in support of the Libyan masses under their leader Muammar Gaddafi.

The question of the hour, we repeat, is the pro-Zionist policies of the Reagan and Thatcher administrations and their hatred of the Palestinians and Libyans alike.

In the background of the 'Socialist Organiser' one can detect a powerful current of anti-Arab racism — also shared by Reagan and Thatcher. This is the substance of their support for the 'Money Programme' and their lying affirmation that Gaddafi finances the WRP with a '£1.5 million subsidy', claimed by the faceless person on the BBC 2 programme.

This is a lie from start to finish. Because the WRP unhesitatingly supports the Libyan and Palestinian people and its leadership against the nuclear war plans of Reagan, Thatcher and the Zionists in their campaign to destroy all national liberation movements in the Middle East, 'Socialist Organiser' has joined the class enemy.

The Zionist connection between these so-called 'lefts' in the Labour Party right through to Thatcher and Reagan's White House is there for all to see in its unprincipled nakedness.



Ken Livingstone

This crazy, Nazi-level editorial appeared in the Libya-financed daily paper *News Line* on 9 April, 1983. On the opposite page to the editorial, Ken Livingstone expressed the opinion that *News Line* and the WRP were the victims of a "Zionist" — i.e. in *News Line* parlance, Jewish — conspiracy.

In this editorial the irrelevant detail that a particular Jewish capitalist was a director of British Caledonian Airways is only mysterious if you do not know that the same WRP scribe who wrote the editorials would also — the details were made public when the organisation shattered in 1985 — have the job of writing "briefings" on British "Zionist" capitalists for the WRP's Arab paymasters. The writer was probably Alex Mitchell, who now works for the Murdoch press in Australia.

That there are state spies and agents in and around revolutionary organisations is as natural as bacteria in the air — but you have to be as paranoid as Healy to see them as all-controlling. They fish in troubled waters but that's all.

Apart possibly from *Labour Herald* — whose local government leaders had by '85 surrendered to the Tories time and time again — the WRP was by then nothing as a force in working-class politics, little but a mercenary agency of Arab nationalist propaganda.

In general, conspiracy theories are poison for the left. Substituting spy-watching and speculation about things that are here and now unknowable for broad politics, they breed lunacy, and they attract lunatics like rotten meat attracts flies. Healy proved that. But, suppose we go along with Livingstone for the sake of the exercise and look for spies in and around the WRP, where do we get to? Let's start at the top.

Who gave Healy his security clearance? Or Livingstone? For Livingstone's lost mentor Gerry presented those who knew him with a strange paradox in his old age.

For decades Healy's paranoia exaggerated and magnified everything in the real world that might have threatened him. He was known to be personally timid when not firmly in control. The panic-stricken cries of SLL/WRP dissociation when IRA

bombs started going off in London in the early '70s were something to behold, coupled as they were with extreme r-r-revolutionary posturing and routine petty violence in and around the WRP.

And yet, in his old age, when he did not even have the nerve to face his own comrades when they turned on him, Healy was openly associating with Libya whose diplomats shot down British police in the street and blew aircraft full of passengers out of the sky. How does that fit together?

Possibly the explanation is that Gerry felt protected? I once met an ex-WRP spy-watching man who had worked out a detailed theory that in its spy stuff the WRP always purveyed the line of one of the quarrelling factions of the British secret service and was therefore being run by the other. Finding this sort of thing less than fascinating I can not remember the details, if I ever took them in. But the question does arise here, and I repeat: who gave Gerry Healy his security clearance? When? Who cleared Livingstone? (Or me? But plainly it is time to stop!)

Livingstone's "minstrel boyism" — "Though all the world betrayeth thee/One sword at least thy rights shall guard/One faithful harp shall praise thee" — towards Healy is as touching as his avowal that he shares Gerry Healy's spy mania is revealing.

John O'Mahony

# Why BBC workers must fight back

By a BECTU member

THE BBC is just one of several organisations that are proposing or imposing greater "flexibility" on hours of work. In the BBC's case, the proposals they tabled on 16 January are aimed at putting people currently contracted to work a set number of hours per month, then paid over-time, on a set number of *days* per month. People on "day contracts" will only receive time off in lieu.

These new working patterns

mean that, for example, someone who worked 40 hours plus 20 in one week could instead be made to work 60 hours in five days with no overtime pay at all. In addition, in some areas the BBC wants to change the accounting period for overtime, at present four weeks, to a year. This means that anyone who works their overtime in bursts may end up being paid none at all, since management would be able to make them work successive 16-hour days during busy times and then send them home during a slack period a few weeks later.

BECTU believes that people whose jobs are currently necessitate working overtime irregularly are likely to lose 10 to 15 per cent of their gross pay. Those at the extremes of overtime working — for example crews who have to spend 10 weeks in summer shooting on location, working 14-16 hour days with only one day off every other week — could end up losing up to 50 per cent of their pay over a year.

In most areas, the "penalty payments" for long-day working (over 12 hours) and for having less than

10-hour breaks between shifts are also now being removed. Although anyone receiving a request to work longer can "ask a manager to review the position", exhausted BECTU members are already finding themselves working days of more than 18 hours.

The other major concern of every BECTU member faced with management's current proposals is performance-related pay. The message from BECTU to anyone who really believes that if they work harder they will earn more money is — "Don't you believe it."

Every member's performance is to be appraised by a local manager between February and May each year, and pay rises will be calculated on this basis. The corporation wants to end members' main protection against favouritism and discrimination — the "rate for the job" — and replace it with a "range for the job". Under this new system, workers could find themselves being awarded up to 120 per cent of their current pay — or only 80 per cent of it. In other words, they could end up with a 20 per cent pay cut.

## Telecom union meets

THE ANNUAL conference of the telecom union NCU starts this weekend (5 June). It takes place whilst the pace of change is being accelerated by management strategists.

In the Post Office the announcement of partial privatisation is a threat to the jobs of all postal workers, including engineers and clerical staff.

Negotiations between BT and the NCU over weekend working are set to come to a head over the next few months. Will NCU members be able to force BT to pay for improvements in service through more shift allowances, overtime and increased staff? Or will BT achieve their aims of weekend

work for minimal or no extra pay, more flexibility and no overtime and the continued draining away of staff? These are some of the questions that will be debated over the next week.

Also on the agenda are propositions on the Child Support Agency, anti-trade union laws, the Age of Consent vote, full employment and the merger with the UCW.

On the issue of CSIP, we need to send out a message to any BT managers watching our conference NCU members are not prepared to accept such direct threats to their working conditions. We must be prepared to take the hardest line on this issue.

## Rail signal workers vote on action

By a railworker

AS WE GO to press the postal ballot of BR signals grades is coming to an end.

Railtrack have turned down a pay claim put in by the RMT for signalling grades, making a derisory counter-offer on condition that staff accept four weekly pay by credit transfer and the principles of their restructuring of signalling grades which will seek to

obtain more productivity and flexibility without providing any new money for our members.

Management refused to accept our argument that the substantial levels of productivity already achieved merited a pay award.

The ballot could open up a new front of resistance to the privatisation process.

If action is called then organising effective picketing is going to be the key to victory as managers are preparing to run scab boxes.

## Labour Party Conference model resolution Commit Labour to positive rights for workers

### LABOUR PARTY

ALL TRADE union and Labour Party members are urged to move this motion in their organisation for consideration as this year's Labour Party conference resolution.

We advise all comrades to shorten or alter this motion slightly as it is better procedurally to have several different versions submitted rather than exactly the same one.

CONFERENCE calls for the repeal of all anti-trade-union laws and their replacement with a positive framework of individual and collective rights at work.

Conference condemns the Conservative Government's record of attacks on trade unions since coming to power in 1979. Legislation to curb trade unions has been deliberate attempt to weaken the rights of working people to defend themselves against unscrupulous employers and attacks on their wages and conditions.

Conference believes that this is a part of a conscious strategy to recreate a low-wage and flexible workforce to service the Tories' market economy.

Conference resolves to campaign against Government measures designed to undermine the effectiveness of trade unions, as follows:

- \* Postal ballots for industrial action;
- \* Withdrawal of funding for postal ballots;
- \* Seven day cooling-off period before industrial action can take place;
- \* Changes designed to undermine union dues being deducted from wages;
- \* Abolition of Wages Councils;
- \* Further draconian penalties on unofficial strikers;
- \* Measures designed to undermine Bridlington Agreements;
- \* Interference in internal union matters, including finance;

- \* Withdrawal of funding for TUC educational courses;

- \* Weakening of European directives which gave protection to certain groups of workers, e.g. Transfer of Undertakings and 48 hour week.

Conference resolves to campaign for the next Labour Government to introduce laws ensuring:

- \* The right to join a trade union and take part in union activities without fear of dismissal or harassment, also the right to recognition for collective bargaining;
- \* The right of working people to withdraw their labour and to picket peacefully and effectively, in whatever numbers they choose;
- \* The right to take solidarity action without fear of the sack or legal action against the union;
- \* The removal of draconian financial and other penalties on trade unions, their officials or other individual members who sanction or take part in industrial action recognised as legitimate under the conventions of the International Labour Organisation;
- \* The right of union members to determine their own rules;
- \* The right to employment free from discrimination;
- \* Full-time rights for part-time workers;
- \* The removal of qualifying periods for rights against unfair dismissal and the removal of limits on compensation;
- \* Improved maternity pay, parental leave, adequate childcare provision, and the right to equal pay of work of equal value;
- \* The right to health and safety at work, including information on hazardous working materials, protection for workers who refuse to carry out dangerous tasks, and paid leave to attend health and safety training;
- \* The right to use the media to pursue legitimate trade union interests without victimisation.

## Inland Revenue workers conference

### CIVIL SERVICE

TWO ISSUES dominated this years Inland Revenue Staff Federation conference: Market Testing and merger with NUCPS, the executive and support grades civil service union.

The Market Testing debate saw delegates re-affirm conference policy of non-cooperation, but the tragedy is that the existing leadership are going along with the process at every stage and seem determined to oppose any action on the issue.

Merger with NUCPS was the liveliest debate.

The left won several victories including a special conference to discuss the new rule book which can be changed by a simple majority not two thirds.

The IRSF Broad Left continues to grow, winning the tax section standing order committee place and attracting over 200 to their fringe meeting at what is one of the smallest union conferences in Britain. An equivalent figure for UNISON would be 800!

## UNISON round-up Birmingham Housing Benefit strike into 10th week

BIRMINGHAM UNISON members in the Housing Benefit Sections have been on strike for over 10 weeks in a dispute over pay.

The dispute involves over 150 members, who put in a claim for regrading as a result of the City Council's new

multi-benefit system. This means that staff have to cover a full range of benefits and give advice on entitlement to Family Credit and Income Support. For this increase in responsibility, staff are expected to continue on their present 3/4 scale, and cope with a bac log of work due to a 25% cut in the workforce.

All the Council has offered is to take on 80 agency staff to reduce the backlog, and 5% extra pay for three months — all short term solutions.

The Branch has been campaigning for support and donations from branches up and

## Tories organise Euro-offensive against TUPE

By a civil servant

THE TORIES are hoping to win a major victory over the trade unions in Europe this month.

They plan to get the European Acquired Rights Directive (1977) — which is known in Britain by the acronym TUPE — amended so that it will no longer provide protection for workers who are "contracted out".

They want to change the law so that it only applies to "whole concerns," not particular functions like cleaning, messenger services, typing etc. At the moment it can be used to win certain guarantees for workers who have been "contracted out". It has led to a limited amount of protection of existing salaries and conditions.

## FE lecturers in London set to strike

COLLEGE lecturers across most of inner London will be on strike on June 6, 7th and 14th.

They are fighting to defend the existing contracted working week of 21 hours.

Unfortunately some in the union are pushing a deal signed at Manchester College of Arts and Technology which is claimed to be a 21 hour deal but which would involve a real working week at 25 hours.

This is because activities that

are presently part of the standard contracted working week — tutorial, marketing and enrolment — have not been counted in the new contracts.

The London lecturers should stick out for 21 hours.

\* The General Secretary position in NATFHE has been won by the Deputy General Secretary of the AUT, John Akker. The defeat of incumbent Geoff Woolf reflects his disgraceful role in the national FE dispute.

### member sacked

UNISON members in the Land and Property Department of Manchester City Council are campaigning to reinstate one of their members who has been sacked. He was sacked on 20 April on charges of gross misconduct, and at the appeal hearing last week, the decision was upheld. The charges made against him are not proven and do not amount to gross misconduct. The case will now be taken to a panel of councillors, and members will meet on Friday 3 June to decide how to step up the campaign.

## Alliance for WORKERS' LIBERTY Meetings

### LEICESTER

Thursday 2 June

**"Should anti-racists vote Labour?"**

*Debate between AWL and Inter-Racial Solidarity*

7.30 Castle Community Rooms, Tower Street

### LEEDS

Thursday 2 June

**"Did D-Day bring freedom?"**

7.30 Adelphi pub

### MANCHESTER

Saturday 4 June

**"The fight for workers' liberty" dayschool**

10.30-5.00, The Brow House, 1 Mabfield Road, Fallowfield.

Thursday 16 June

**"What leadership does Labour need?"**

8.00, Unicorn Pub, Church Street.

### SHEFFIELD

Thursday 2 June

**"Where next for Sheffield council workers?"**

*Speakers: Mark Serwotka and Chris Croome*  
7.00 SCCAU, West Street

### YORK

Thursday 30 June

**"How to defend the Welfare State"**

7.30, Priory Street, City Centre

### NOTTINGHAM

Thursday 9 June

**"Can workers trust the ANC?"**

8.00, ICC, Mansfield Road

### CANTERBURY

Tuesday 7 June

**"How to win women's liberation"**

7.30, Keynes College, UKC.

**The Alliance for Workers' Liberty has branches in many towns, for details of our work in your area phone 071-639 7965**

**Save Guy's  
Hospital  
March and  
Lobby of  
Parliament  
Tuesday 5  
July  
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# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Send us the cash to do the job properly

Asian youths stabbed and beaten in East London

## Stop racist attacks!



Wipe the smiles off the BNP Nazis' faces

By Hannah Wood

**T**WO YOUNG Asian men were the latest targets of the spate of racist attacks in East London as they walked through Poplar on the evening of 30 May.

Shah Mohammed Ruhul Alam, a 17 year old youth, was stabbed in the chest and is in a critical condition in the London hospital, Whitechapel. His friend was hit over the head with a baseball bat and bottles and needed stitches for his injuries.

The Newham Monitoring Project told Socialist Organiser that three white men were being held at Limehouse police station in connection with these attacks but we do not yet know if they are being charged.

Since the BNP's Derek Beackon was elect-

ed as a Tower Hamlets councillor in Millwall last September, racist attacks in East London have increased by 300%. Although the fascists were defeated in the May local elections, they gained substantial numbers of votes in some areas — notably 2,000 votes in Millwall.

The support for racist ideas is strong in some areas of East London amongst disaffected white working class youths.

Phil Maxwell, a left-wing Labour councillor in Tower Hamlets, told us that he is sure threat "the community will assert its determination to stamp out racism".

Serious anti-racist/anti-fascist activists need to work to link up community campaigns with a labour movement fight for jobs and homes as the only way to defeat the fascists.

By Joan Trevor

**E**VERYONE KNOWS what it's like to be short of money. (If you don't you'll have the courtesy to try and imagine it.) You had to smile winningly at a friend to scrounge your lunch money. Or a bank holiday fell at the end of a month and your pay cheque cleared after your rent was due. You had to write a creepy letter to the landlord who is not as understanding as your friend. Or you simply never get enough to cover all your costs and limp from one crisis to another making excuses, begging extensions and overdrafts, and pissing off your friends and acquaintances.

Sadly, that is a bit how it is in the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

We are permanently on our uppers. The money's spent even before it arrives. There's no such thing as a contingency fund or money in the bank.

We know we could make savings if we had more money to start with. Nothing worthy of the word "capital", but enough money to buy, for instance, paper for leaflets in bulk.

As things are now we buy what we cannot possibly do without immediately — small amounts with the least possible chance of getting any "economies of scale" — because politics constantly changes and we have to respond to events willy-nilly, regardless of our state of preparedness.

Politically we are prepared — we think about what is happening now, we study the past to understand and influence the present. But often, materially, we are caught on the hop.

And it is not just money that is short. As we often say, time is short.

We need to stop the Labour leadership's insane gallop to the right. We need to make the unions' leaders fight. We need to force them all to make the most of the opportunities that the Tories' present crisis affords. And it's all happening now! We have to act now.

"Time is money." Money is time. However you say it, our want of money often leads to waste of time.

Because we don't have the materials we need to hand we have to waste time procuring them somehow. That leaves us less time to do the job. The job isn't as well done as we are capable of.

We might get demoralised, except that we know it doesn't have to be like this!

Starting with this very simple appeal to all our readers and supporters for any donation you can make, and going further to ask you to think of ways of fundraising, we can solve our financial headaches.

Freed of money worries we can respond quicker to events and to the urgent tasks facing the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. We can do justice to our ideas and serve the socialist movement to the very best of our abilities instead of "as resources allow."

That prospect has to be worth £2 of anyone's lunch money.

Cheques/postal orders payable to "WL Publications" to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

## Fight fascism—work for Labour!

By Elaine Jones

**B**BRITISH NATIONAL PARTY leader John Tyndall, a pompous crank with a police record which includes convictions for possession of guns and inciting racial hatred, is standing in the Dagenham by-election on 9 June.

On the same day six other fascists will contest Euro-election seats.

The anti-Nazi magazine Searchlight told Socialist Organiser that the BNP had expected to do very well in Dagenham, just as they had anticipated taking control of the neighbourhood council in Millwall, Tower Hamlets in the local elections held on 5 May. The BNP's internal documents show that they had already made plans to rename the local neighbourhood office and made a series of new appointments. Labour's victory in Millwall was a bad defeat for them.

We must defeat them again! To canvass for Labour in Dagenham phone the local party on 081-592 5125.

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