

SOCIALIST

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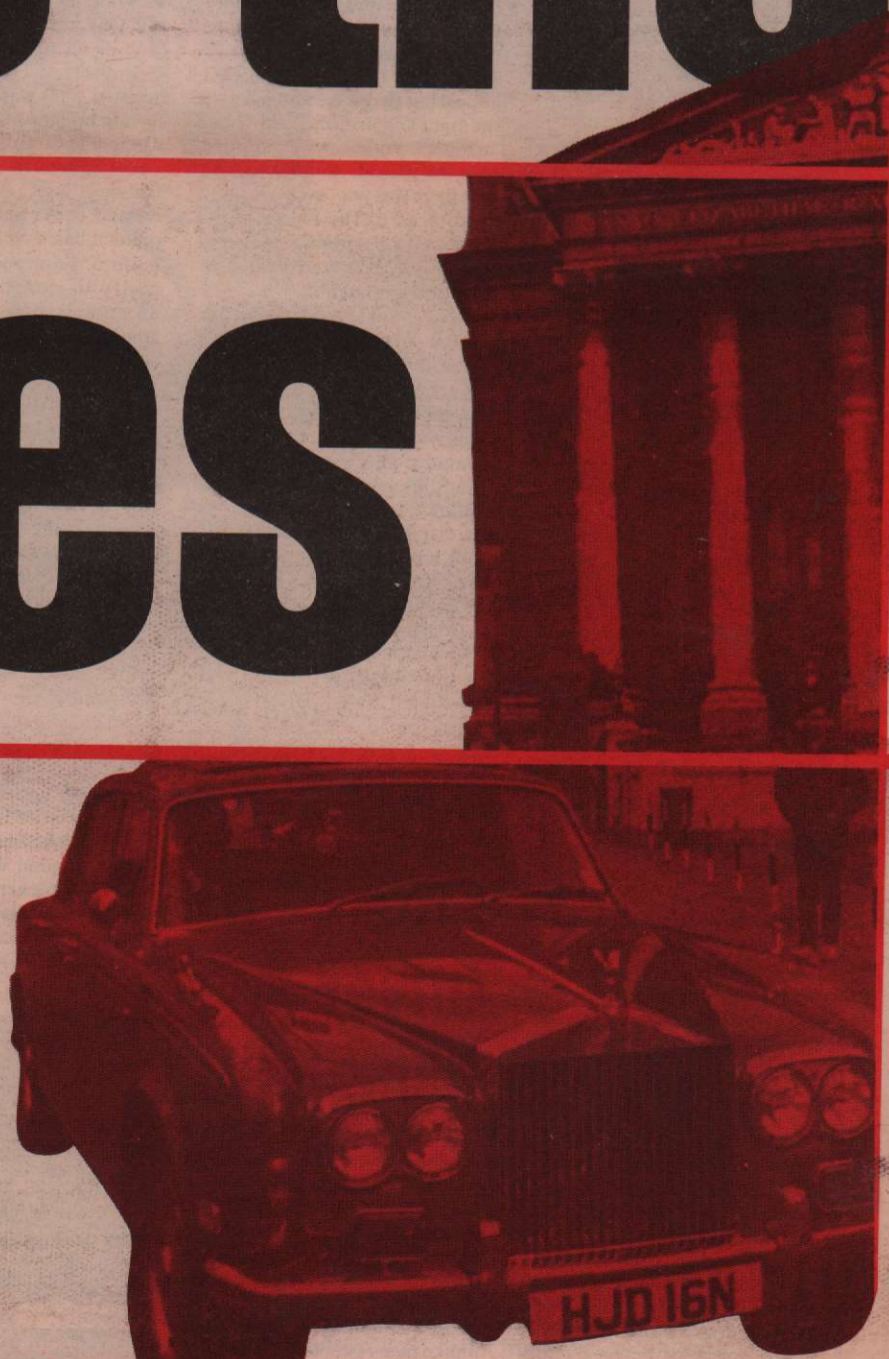
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ORGANISER

It will be socialism or barbarism!

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Pensions, Welfare**

**Make the
bosses
pay!**



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Make the rich pay!

By Colin Foster

ON 29 November, Budget Day, the Tory Government will announce another round of welfare cuts. All the signs is that it will be one of the most hurtful to date. After having to back down on the Post Office sell-off, John Major is desperate to prove to the Tory right wing that he has not gone "soft". And the government wants to make space for further tax cuts for the well-off so that it can rally its discontented supporters.

Already, since 1979, the Tories have cut the number of Health Service hospital beds by a third. They have pushed hospital waiting lists up to record numbers, while private hospitals have boomed, with half their beds empty.

They have cut back the cash for social services in the community, while pushing sick elderly people and the mentally ill in to the hands

of those social services.

They have imposed limits on local authorities which have effectively stopped council house-building and reduced the supply of cheap rented housing to a trickle. The flipside of the huge cuts in public spending on housing is the growing army of homeless on the streets.

They have cut the value of dole and the basic state pension, relative to average earnings, by nearly a half. They have stopped benefits for 16-17 year olds, throwing them on the streets, and put 18-24 year olds on a special low rate of benefits.

They have starved schools of cash, and reduced students to a lower income than the unemployed.

On all these fronts, they want to go further. They already have in train plans to cut benefits for the disabled and long-term sick, through the new Incapacity Benefit, and to make life harder for the jobless, with the new Jobseeker's

Allowance.

They have talked about chopping Industrial Injuries Benefit and reducing Housing Benefit.

And their argument, again and again, is that the country can't afford the old Welfare State. Cuts have to come somewhere. Costs have to be limited. Hard choices must be made.

It is all a lie! It is all a cover for massive hand-outs to the rich!

Public spending on health is about £35 billion a year, on education, about £32 billion, and on social services, about £6 billion. These figures are artificially inflated because the bulk of the money is wage payments, and the wages are counted gross, whereas in fact the government only pays out net wages and the tax and National Insurance simply passes from one government department to another. More realistic figures would be £26 billion for health, £24 billion for education, £4 billion for social

security.

The government spends another £74 billion on benefits. Of that £20 billion at least would be saved by creating decent, useful jobs for the jobless — as could be done by employing more people in health and education, doing urgently-needed repairs to hospitals and schools, and launching a big programme of building work to bring empty property into use and build new houses.

Suppose that means increasing the health and education budgets by fifty per cent, and spending £15 billion a year on housing. And suppose all pensions and benefits are increased by fifty per cent. Total cost: £77 billion, or £57 billion net if £20 billion is saved on social security.

Wild? Impossible? Ridiculous? Not at all.

The top 20 per cent take 41 per cent of all household income in Britain. Since 1979 they have increased their real income by 50%.

Suppose the government taxed them so as to reduce them, not to poverty, but only to the same level of luxury as they had in 1979. The bottom 20 per cent, after all, have seen their real income after housing costs go down since 1979.

Just doing that — reducing the top 20 per cent to the same level of luxury as in 1979 — would bring in £61 billion a year, or enough for a 50% expansion in welfare provision with £4 billion to spare. No extra taxes on the other 80 per cent of households would be necessary.

Another way of looking at the figures is to take the marketable wealth owned by the top five per cent of households. It adds up to £627 billion. If the government took

control of that wealth — while leaving even to the top five per cent all their income from wages and salaries — and secured a return of 10% per year from it, that would bring £63 billion a year.

It would be enough to pay for the 50% expansion of welfare, without any extra income tax on anyone's wages.

No Tory government is going to tax the rich in that way. But by mobilisation we can stop them cutting welfare further, and reverse cuts here and there. We can pave the way to kick the Tories out, and to return a Labour government on which we press demands to take control of the commanding heights of wealth and rebuild the Welfare State.

Labour's "modernisers" scrabble for answers US Democrats collapse at polls

By Dale Street

WHEN THE Democrats suffered their biggest election defeat for 40 years in last week's American mid-term elections, the Labour Party's "modernising" faction found itself with a lot of explaining to do.

Clinton's Democratic Party became a model for the "modernisers" when Clinton won the presidential election in 1992. But what now?

In an article in the "Guardian" last Friday, 11 November, arch-"moderniser" Peter Mandelson attempted to explain what went wrong.

According to Mandelson, "a basic error of Clinton was not to develop an effective communications strategy".

What this means in plain English is that Clinton backed anyone with the "talents" of Mandelson himself, the former Director of Communications for the Labour Party.

Another of Clinton's mistakes,

says Mandelson, was to surround himself with "too many hangers-on, low calibre Arkansas friends who were appointed to key positions and often gave second-rate advice." Decoded again: Clinton had no-one as good as Me!

So, says Mandelson "confusion grew about what defines the Clinton presidency."

Mandelson warns that Labour must have "clarity, conviction and consistency... if it is to withstand the inevitable pressure of the right."

This does not mean that Mandelson wants clear left-wing policies. No indeed.

"To avoid the confusion of identity that has marred Mr Clinton's administration, Labour must ensure that its modernising changes are both complete and well understood, as Blair argues."

In truth, the "modernisers" have already led Labour to defeat in 1987 and 1992. The Democrats' defeat is another example of the bankruptcy of the "modernisers" electoral strategy.



Clinton: reneged on gay rights in the armed forces and on universal health care

March against cuts in Newham

By a Newham resident

ON SATURDAY 5th November a march organised by Newham UNISON in protest at Newham councils' plan to make £6 million in cuts went from East Ham to Stratford. It was attended by around 150 people including groups from Barking and Dagenham UNISON and Hackney Trade Union Support Unit.

The cuts come at a time when the council is sitting on £14 million in the council resources. These cuts would mean reductions in services

including the closure of children's and old peoples' homes, reductions in home help services, youth services, student grants and much more.

This was a clear demonstration to Newham Council of the unacceptability of these cuts. Newham, London's poorest borough, needs more services not less.

● There will be a lobby of East Ham Town Hall, 6 pm Monday 21st November.

● Contact Newham UNISON No.2, 47 Eve Road, Stratford, London E15 3DQ.

Fighting miscarriages of justice

Free the M25 Three!

By Nicki Jameson of the M25 Three Campaign

THE FAMILIES of three innocent men — Raphael Rowe, Michael Davis and Randolph Johnson — who were wrongfully convicted and jailed for murder in 1989, are still campaigning for their release.

On the night of 15-16 December 1988, three masked men made a series of violent attacks and robberies around the M25 in Surrey, leaving one man dead, another severely wounded.

Victims told the police that two of the men were white and one black; one was described as having long blond hair and blue eyes. Rowe, Davis and Johnson are all black.

Three days later armed police raided a house in south London and arrested 12 people, including Raphael Rowe and Michael Davis. They were all initially charged with aggravated burglary.

Also arrested in the course of the next few days were three white men, who later admitted in court to taking at least some part in the robberies: Shane Griffen, Mark Jobbins and Norman Duncan. They were to become key prosecution witnesses. Unrecorded interviews were conducted with at least one of them and the whole direction of questioning was towards getting them to incriminate Rowe, Davis and Johnson.

Despite Rowe and Davis calling seven alibi witnesses, they were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for murder and robbery.

Their application for leave to appeal was heard in October 1992. At that hearing the prosecution handed documents to the judges for a ruling on whether or not they should be disclosed to the defence. The judge ruled they should not on grounds of a "Public Interest

Immunity". There were two documents: the report of the Surrey police investigation about the circumstances of an unrecorded interview with Norman Duncan and a list of the names of the people who received reward money put up by the *Daily Mail* and one of the victims.

The M25 Three lost their first appeal but they have not given up the fight for justice. Lord Chief Justice Watkins, who presided over the appeal, said of this case that there was not "even a lurking doubt" as to the men's guilt. Watkins is a notorious reactionary who has almost never ruled in favour of a defendant.

The criminal justice system is riddled with corruption, racism and malice from top to bottom. The government has recently announced measures to safeguard against miscarriages of justice. The continued imprisonment of these three innocent men show how shallow these proposals are. We can't let the M25 Three rot in jail. Send messages of support to the men. Raphael Rowe (MP3660), HMP Maidstone, County Road, Maidstone Kent ME14 1UZ; Michael Davis (MP3661), HMP Swaleside, Brabazon Road, Eastchurch, Kent ME12 4DZ and Randolph Johnson (MP39903), HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs WR11 5TZ. Contact the campaign: 28 Grimsel Path, Camberwell, SE5 OTB. Telephone: 071 735 2985.

Free Oliver Campbell!

OLIVER CAMPBELL, a 23 year old black man, has spent more than three years in prison for a murder he didn't commit. Campbell, who has a mental age of seven was forced into confessing to the murder because he could not stand up to the barrage of police questioning. His story is not unlike many people with learning difficulties who become victims of miscarriages of justice.

During the summer of 1990, Oliver worked as a shelf-packer in a warehouse. He spent his spare time clubbing or hanging around Leicester Square. Here he met Eric Sammuels, his eventual co-defendant.

On the evening of 22 July a robbery took place at a supermarket in Hackney. Shopkeeper Baldev Hoondle was fatally shot. There were four witnesses to the murder. The robbers were described by all witnesses as being under 6 foot tall. Oliver is 6 foot 4 inches.

After an appeal for help on Crimewatch UK, Oliver was arrested. This was on the basis of having bought a similar baseball cap to one of the robbers.

Eric Sammuels was detained a few days later. After a year on remand, Oliver was found guilty of murder, based entirely on his confession. Sammuels was found guilty of conspiracy to rob. Sammuels has subsequently admitted to a fellow inmate that Oliver was innocent.

Relying on confession alone to convict someone is always wrong, but in the case of an obviously naive and suggestible person it is obscene. Oliver thought that if he told police he was involved he could sort the situation out later.

No solicitor was present, at the time of the confession.

The curtailment of the right to silence, now law, will particularly affect vulnerable people like Oliver. Police can tell them it will look bad in court if they remain silent and use this as a way to further pressure them into confessing.

Oliver has been on hunger strike to draw attention to his plight. You can write to him c/o HMP Wormwood Scrubs, Du Cane Road, London W12 OAE. There will be a picket of Wormwood Scrubs on 19 November.

● Contact the campaign for justice: PO Box 6580, London, E6 3TL.

Close down Campsfield Immigration Detention Centre!

Protest outside the centre at 12 noon, Saturday 26 November
For transport from Oxford phone: 0865-57282

Next week the Socialist Organiser staff will be helping on the production of the Welfare State Network paper, Action. The next Socialist Organiser, no. 628, will be published on 8 December.

ALLIANCE FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY MEETINGS

LONDON

Wednesday 23 November

"The IS/SWP tradition — is there anything worth saving?"

Speakers: Sean Matgamna (AWL), Steve Freeman (RDG) and Andy Wilson (ISG)

7.30 Lucas Arms, Gray's Inn Road, Kings Cross

BIRMINGHAM

Wednesday 23 November

"Fascists in Dudley West — how to beat the racists"

1.00, Student Union, Perry Bar site, University of Central England

LEICESTER

Tuesday 29 November

"Who's gained in the new South Africa?"

7.30 Room 2, Student Union, Leicester University

LANCASTER

Wednesday 30 November

"Sex and class"

1.00 Fylde College Lancaster University

YORK

Friday 18 November

"How to defeat the Criminal Justice Act"

1.15 G045, Gooderick College, York University

SHEFFIELD

Friday 18 November

"What can be done about Tory sleaze?"

12.00 Norton College

Thursday 24 November

"Socialism, Parliament and revolution"

Speakers: Pat Murphy and Adam Buick (SPGB)
7.30 SCCAU, West Street

Tony Blair's new "Clause Four"

A sham of "social justice"

TONY BLAIR wants social justice, so he says. And he will reportedly make that the main theme of his proposed alternative to Labour's Clause Four.

But what is justice? Is this "justice" as in the Criminal "Justice" Act which Tony Blair refused to oppose in Parliament? Yes it is, if we go by the report of the Labour leaders' Commission for Social Justice. It says:

"Confronted with the opportunity to save someone in the street from death, we will think that we should stop to save them even if the cost is not taking the children to school; but is it fair to save every saveable person from death at the cost of sending many children to quite inadequate schools?"

Why is that "the cost"? Why is that the choice? In a world of advanced technology, vast luxury for the wealthy class, terrible waste, and enormous unused resources, why

"Why does the CSJ demand that we chose between health and education?"

does the CSJ demand that we choose between health and education?

And do they not know what real choices are being made now?

In Britain today, for the first time since the National Health Service was set up, people are being left to die for the sake of budget limits. Parents have seen their premature babies left to die without doctors or nurses making any attempt to save them, not because they could not be saved, but because that NHS "trust" had a budget rule that attempts to save babies before a certain age were not worth the high cost.

Old people have been refused treatment, or given ridiculously long waiting-times — in which their illnesses

can go from bad to fatal — in the name of NHS budget management.

On the streets of Britain's inner cities there are many people suffering, homeless, begging, some ill, some drunk, some in a coma, all cutting many years off their lifespan. As we walk the streets we do not individually have the resources to help them all: the government just says they have themselves to blame.

None of this has helped education: on the contrary, schools are more cash-strapped than ever.

But not all of the very sick are being left to die. And not all children are being starved of education.

Rich people who are very sick get the best treatment. Children of rich families get the best education. Poor people — or, as yet, a small minority of poor people — are left to die; children of poor families get pauper education.

The choice is not between health and education. It is between letting the rich monopolise health, wealth, and education, and mobilising the poor to secure health and education as rights for all at the expense of the privileges of the rich.

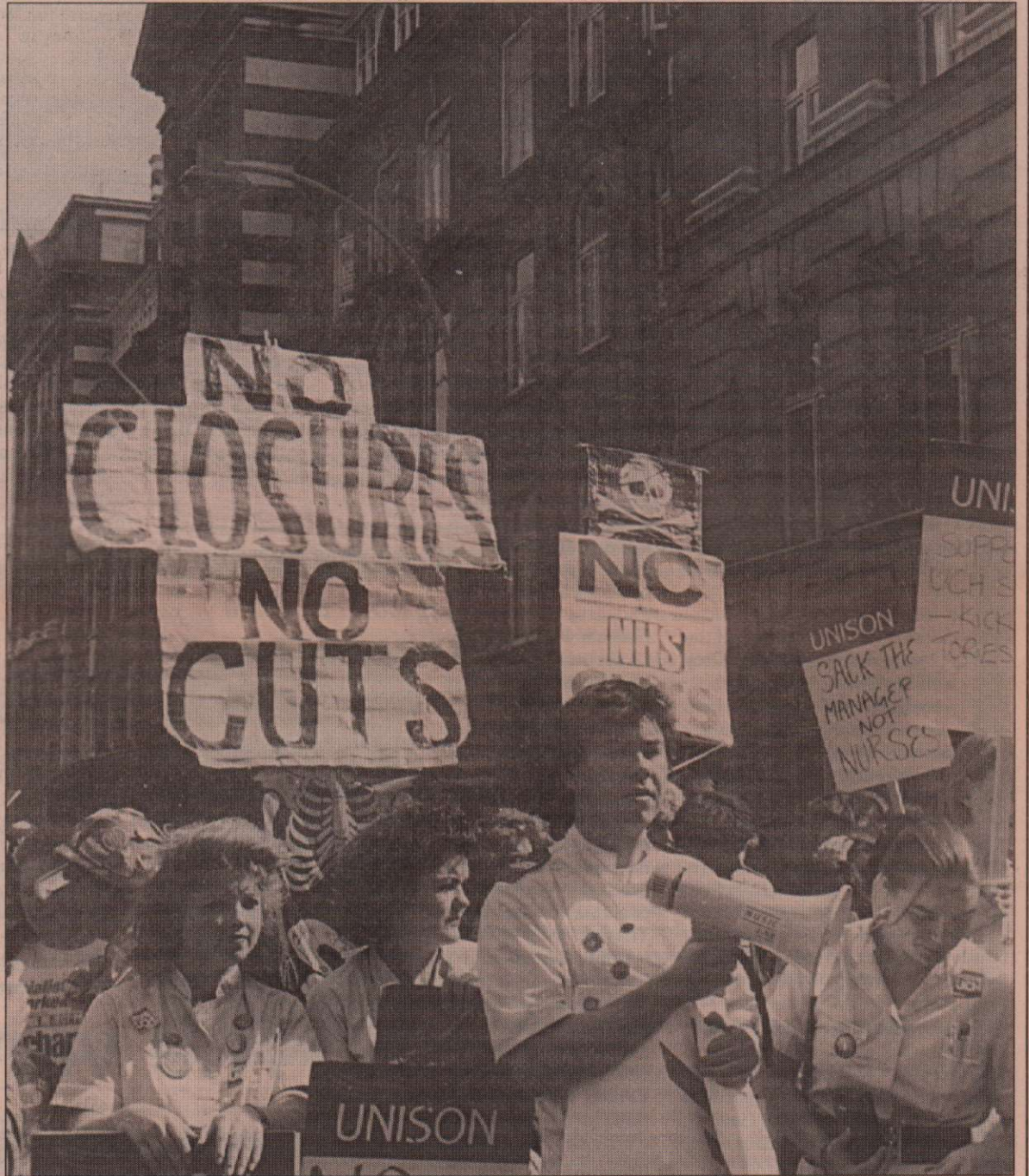
The CSJ demands a choice between health and education because they have already made *another choice*, about the limits of their "social justice". They have ruled out seizing the wealth of the wealthy. They have rejected "tax-and-spend" policies in favour of juggling within existing budget limits. They have denounced what they called "Levellers' Britain".

The CSJ stands in front of the treasure-houses of the rich, with the doors bolted behind them and a sign reading, "Don't touch! No levellers allowed!", and it is from that stance that they tell us that we must choose between health and education.

They ask the reader to identify with them as "we". "We" will stop to save someone dying in the street, but "we" will limit health budgets for the sake of education.

"We", by assumption, are not dying ourselves. "We" are confident that if someone is left to die because they are "uneconomic", it won't be us. "We" are not the children lacking education. "We" are well-off, healthy, middle-aged, middle-class people, making prudent, responsible, well-meaning choices — people just like Tony Blair and most of the members of the CSJ.

It is the same voice as that of a Labour councillor telling us that we



Labour should fight for resources for the Welfare State at the expense of the rich. Photo: Garry Meyer



must close old people's homes in order to have resources for schools — or, the next year, that we must cut back in schools in order to save old people's services.

To identify with the CSJ's "we" — even to pose the question the way they do, let alone to give the same answer — is not to be a socialist. It is to ignore the real choices and go for false choices.

Labour's existing Clause Four, with its commitments to "common ownership" of social wealth, "popular administration and control" of the economy, and "securing the full fruits of their labour" for the working class, points to the real choice. That is why

Tony Blair wants to get rid of it, and to turn us to the fake choices promoted by the CSJ.

Tony Blair's new statement of aims, to be put to Labour's National Executive on 30 November, will not spell things out as clearly as the CSJ. According to the Independent on Sunday (13 November), it will have a fine list of ideals.

"Beginning with social justice and freedom of opportunity... it would also embrace equality in its widest sense, including the divisions between rich and poor, and democracy not merely as a right to vote but also as a means to provide open and accountable government.

"The Blair vision also encompasses mutuality, a respect for others as well as for oneself... It would be a statement of the ends of socialism, rather than of the means to achieve them".

But what do all those ideals mean to the old people, the premature babies, and the homeless, currently being left to die in the name of budget limits? Not a challenge to those budget limits.

They mean equality — within Tory budget limits. Democracy — within Tory budget limits. Respect for others — "as resources allow", within the limits set by a decision not to touch the hoards of the wealthy.

"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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Will Dublin's crisis wreck the ceasefire?



As we go to press on Tuesday 15 November, the Southern Irish government looks likely to fall. John O'Mahony analyses the implications for Northern Ireland.

SINN FEIN/IRA leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness are among those who have said publicly that the political crisis which threatens to bring down the coalition government in Dublin also poses a threat to the so-called Northern Ireland peace process.

The influential constitutional nationalist leader John Hume, of the SDLP, has said the same thing. They may well be right.

The coalition government which has ruled in Dublin since January 1993 consists of the "constitutional Republican" party, Fianna Fail, and, as junior partner, the Irish Labour Party. Fianna Fail has been the main party of government in the 26 Counties of southern Ireland for sixty years now. It is a party that, behind nationalist rhetoric and a diluted "Republicanism", has long notoriously practised snout-in-the-trough politics, rewarding its own with jobs and perks.

The government's turmoil went critical last week when, after months of jockeying, Fianna Fail rode roughshod over its Labour partners and appointed the Attorney General, Harry Whelehan, as president of the High Court.

Labour had been against Whelehan's appointment all along; then, on the eve of Fianna Fail's decision to push through the decision to appoint Whelehan, the latest in a series of clerical sex scandals broke. It came out that a warrant for a paedophile Catholic priest on the run from Northern Ireland had been delayed for seven months by Attorney General Whelehan's subordinates. No convincing explanation has been offered.

The suspicion of special treatment for the Catholic priest, who is now in jail in Northern Ireland, inevitably arises. Labour is saying that Fianna Fail leader Albert Reynolds should at least have waited until a proper inquiry had been held into the seven-month delay.

An important issue of accountability is involved in the Whelehan case, as Labour leader Dick Spring insists. More than that, there is the massively important question of whether or not an offending Catholic priest is sure of being subjected to an equal

operation of the law in the Republic. That is no small matter in a society where the Catholic Church has traditionally had immense power, where its power has not yet been lost, and where, indeed, Church and state are still entwined.

Whatever considerations of "dirty politics" may be in play between Labour and Fianna Fail in the build-up to this crisis, the Irish Labour Party has taken a proper stand on a very important issue — and an issue that has a great bearing on relations between Protestant and Catholic Ireland.

Labour may pull back from forcing a general election because in a recent by-election its vote was 30 per cent down on the general election two years ago. It has a ready-made excuse: save the coalition to save the peace process. The right-wing-led Irish Labour Party is firmly committed to playing coalition politics with one or another of the bourgeois parties. Even some people who opposed coalition two years ago — Jim Kemmy TD, for example, who is currently chair of the Irish Labour Party — now favour coalition.

Why should a change of government threaten the "peace process"? Gerry Adams and his friends regard Ireland's other major bourgeois party, Fine Gael, which would have to be the senior partner in any government that excluded Fianna Fail, as their bitter enemy. Though Fianna Fail too has in the past interned and shot Republicans, both Fianna Fail and the Provisionals are descended from the losers in the 1922-23 civil war. Fine Gael were the victors.

Fianna Fail has always declared that it aims to win peacefully in Northern Ireland what the Provisionals have tried to win with guns. It is no idle sneer to describe the Provisionals as Fianna Failers with guns. Both Fianna Fail and the Provisionals stand in that long Irish nationalist tradition — going way back to the pre-1914 Home Rule Party — which looks to partnership with Britain to secure a united Ireland, if necessary against the will of the Irish minority.

Fine Gael places much more emphasis on Irish unity by consent. They look more to an intra-Irish solu-

tion, not to a British-imposed solution; they are also probably more content to accept the status quo. There would be an important shift in the coloration of the Dublin government if Fine Gael replaced Fianna Fail at the centre of a coalition.

Yet the danger to the "peace process" does not lie there exactly. A government dominated by Fine Gael would most likely try to keep things on their present course. The danger lies in the possibly destabilising effect on the Provisionals of such a shift.

The declaration of a ceasefire without the Provisionals having won anything that Adams can present as a victory has not — or, at least, not yet — led to a split in the IRA only because of hopes of results from the so-called "pan-nationalist" alliance. This alliance, stretching from Irish America through the constitutional nationalist SDLP in Northern Ireland to the Fianna-Fail-led government in Dublin, had come into existence and seemed to offer the prospect of massive pressure on Britain, forcing Britain in turn to put pressure on the Unionists.

Some Republican activists must have "bought" the ceasefire on the basis of "wait and see". Fianna Fail's ejection from government would breach the "pan-nationalist" front and therefore undermine the credibility of the ceasefire with sections of the Provisionals. They might then decide to abandon it.

The recent Post Office raid and

"A ceasefire has not yet led to a split in the IRA only because of hopes of results from the so-called 'pan-nationalist' alliance."

The view of Irish Labour

Socialist Organiser spoke to Jim Kemmy TD, chair of the Irish Labour Party, shortly before Albert Reynolds was due to address the Dail on Tuesday 15 November

THE CRISIS has been brought about by Albert Reynolds and Fianna Fail.

Former Attorney General Harry Whelehan was appointed President of the High Court after Fianna Fail members nominated him in a cabinet meeting last Thursday in which the six Labour ministers had walked out of.

Albert Reynolds had insisted on the immediate appointment of Whelehan, which was opposed by Labour because of Whelehan's inadequate explanation of a seven month delay in the extradition of paedophile priest, Brendan Smyth.

Our Parliamentary Party met on Sunday 13 November. The meeting decided to leave government unless Albert Reynolds adequately



Albert Reynolds

killing of a postal worker by "unauthorised" Provisional IRA activists — reportedly from a PIRA area luke-warm about calling off the war — reflects the tensions in the ranks of the militarists. Those tensions can only grow as their hopes are disappointed after the scheduled talks begin between Sinn Fein and the British government. The political crisis in Dublin must, at the least, intensify those tensions.

The prospect that the "peace process" may be disrupted by political instability in Dublin has an eerie parallel with what happened 20 years ago, during the last big attempt to end the war in Northern Ireland.

After the "Sunningdale Agreement" of 1973, a government was set up in Belfast in which Catholics and Protestants shared power. It was backed by a minority of Protestants and by the Catholic SDLP. To parallel power-sharing in Belfast a Council of Ireland was agreed upon, loosely linking Dublin and Belfast.

The Belfast power-sharing government functioned, despite noisy and bitter opposition from a majority of

Protestant-Unionist politicians. There was reason to believe that it could survive, over time allaying the fears and suspicions of the Unionists, and slowly build wider Protestant support by bestowing economic benefits paid for by Britain. Then the British miners' strike of 1973-4 broke out, plunging Britain into chaos.

The Tory government tried to blackmail the miners by calling a general election on the theme: Who rules? Government or unions? The Tories lost the election.

In Northern Ireland, the unscheduled general election allowed the enemies of the Belfast power-sharing government to register their protest in a way that shattered the moral authority of that government. Of the 12 Northern Ireland seats then at Westminster, they won eleven.

Crippled, the government limped on for a couple of months. When the clause about a Council of Ireland was activated, a powerful General Strike erupted in Northern Ireland. The power-sharing executive collapsed. The consequences have lasted for twenty years, so far.

explained his actions over the Whelehan-Smyth matter and he convinces us that the coalition partnership can actually work in the future.

The press have distorted some of my remarks. I have said that the party has three options:

1. To accept an apology and go back into a working government with Fianna Fail;
2. Form an alternative administration with parties other than Fianna Fail;
3. Force a general election.

I feel that a Labour-Fine Gael coalition is unlikely. Between the two parties we would have insufficient members to form a government, we would need a third party. An agreement on this basis is unlikely.

The consensus in our party is that an election is preferable to negotiations for a new coalition.

There has been much speculation about the effect of an election on the peace process. It is perfectly true that Sinn Fein and the IRA would be happier with Fianna Fail than Fine

Gael. Perhaps the prospect of Fine Gael gains would produce tensions inside Sinn Fein and the IRA.

However, I would say that there is actually a lot of cross-party agreement on the peace process in the Dail — there is less difference between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael than is sometimes portrayed.

We put our view that Labour should reject coalitions with capitalist parties on principle. Jim Kemmy replied:

It is certainly less than ideal. However by being in the government we have stopped privatisation. If we were not there nine or ten public companies would be privatised.

If you advocate the Labour Party should not be in coalition then you should remember that unemployment in Ireland is already 300,000 or 16%. We have a duty to stop this figure getting worse and stopping privatisation.

Being in coalition has been painful — but we have a duty to do what we can to protect workers and the trade unions.

Lobby Parliament on Budget Day!

By Jill Mountford,
Secretary Welfare State
Network

BUILD THE Lobby of Parliament on Budget Day" (29 November)! That's the message from the Welfare State Network (WSN) and many local campaigns fighting to defend all our services.

We don't know the full extent and details of the cuts the Tories aim to make in their Budget but social security spending cuts are certain.

Reports in the *Daily Telegraph* (Monday 14 November) suggest the Government plans to scrap the Industrial Injuries Scheme. This scheme compensates automatically — though inadequately — workers who have a permanently disabling accident in the workplace (e.g. loss of limb). It costs around £600 million a year, and it is one of the few remaining universal benefits.

There were an estimated 15,000 industrial injuries last year. The true figure may be much higher because a lot of people do not report injuries, believing they will be not compensated.

The government says that instead of receiving automatic compensation workers must sue their bosses. What an injustice! With the new legal aid restrictions, few working-class people can afford to sue their boss! Bosses, on the other hand, will be able to afford the best lawyers and the expense of long litigation.

Any cut in the Industrial Injuries Scheme will have far reaching and devastating effects on the lives of many thousands of workers and their families.

Kenneth Clarke wants to make cuts like these in order to fund an estimated £10 billion in tax cuts some time next year for the Tories' ruling-class

mates and well-off middle-class people. Between 1979 and 1992 the government made £31.2 billion of tax cuts and half of these cuts, around £15 billion, benefitted the top richest 10%. People on low and average pay now pay more tax than in 1979.

Local councils around Britain are also calculating how to make cuts in their budgets for 1995-6. In inner London, for example, Labour-controlled Southwark Council has a shortfall of £7 million. Labour-controlled Islington Council plans £5 million pounds of cuts. They are cutting play and youth provision, increasing charges for Day Centres and Home Helps. Labour-controlled Haringey council plans a staggering £14 million in cuts. Services provided by the council will grind to a halt.

Labour councils should take a lead and attack the government, not the working class. Cutting local services always affects the lives of working-class people many times more than those of the rich.

But the government's lack of funding and concern for Community Care continues to be the biggest scandal of all. The Isle of Wight council's Community Care budget is due to run out some time this week, and the Liberals running the council plan to sue the government for the shortfall. And Community Care budgets are running out elsewhere too, in Gloucestershire, and Tory-run Cambridgeshire.

Such a situation is putting some of the most vulnerable people in our society — the old, sick, disabled, mentally ill — at grave risk of injury and possibly death from neglect.

But what do you expect from a party whose guiding philosophy is profit before people? This is the party who puts in positions of power people like Roy Lilley, chair of Homewood NHS Trust in Sussex. This



Tory Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke: thirsty for cuts

"selfmade" millionaire and Tory councillor said in an interview to the Health Service managers' journal *Healthcare* that patients are only a "doctor's third priority". The first responsibility is to the Trust and the second to "proper training".

What the Tories are doing to what remains of our Welfare State is barbaric. It is getting worse day by day.

It is easy to become numb to such attacks, as there have been so many. Some people feel demoralised and impotent. According to the polls, almost half believe the Tory propaganda that Britain cannot afford a Welfare State.

But most people, including those who voted Tory at the last election, believe what they Tories are doing to the Health Service is wrong and should be stopped. They believe that people like Lilley should be condemned and removed from their positions. They would rather have, a decently-funded health service than tax cuts for a few.

The Welfare State Network wants to organise those people.

We believe that a Welfare State that provides for the sick, the elderly, the young and those in need is the hallmark of a civilised society.

The lobby of Parliament is part of the national campaign to save the Welfare State. Get involved in the Welfare State Network and local campaigns to defend services, build the lobby of parliament, and support the WSN newspaper "Action for Health and Welfare"!

Lobby Parliament on Budget Day

29 November

Defend pensions, benefits and education

- Assemble at the lobby gate from 1.30pm
- Meeting in the Grand Committee Room in Westminster
- Speakers include: Tony Benn MP, Alick Mahon MP, Alan Simpson MP, Dennis Skinner MP, Jack Jones, Kate Adams (Incapacity Action)

Clause Four: self-interest vs cowardice

UNION LEADERS, as a very general rule, are motivated by two powerful impulses: preserving their own status and ensuring an easy life. Unfortunately, these two imperatives don't always coincide. The Tories' anti-union laws, for instance, presented a real dilemma. They represent a fundamental (and potentially lethal) attack on the bureaucracy's very existence. On the other hand, serious resistance would involve confronting the Government and, maybe, unleashing forces that would be very difficult to control. In the end, as we all know, sloth and cowardice won out over self-preservation.

Tony Blair's attack on Clause Four presents the bureaucracy with a similar dilemma. Most union leaders understood that the "review" of Clause Four is, in reality, part and parcel of the Labour leadership's ongoing drive to weaken the union link to breaking-point and dilute union influence within the party to virtual non-existence.

This will be all the more obvious if (as seems likely) the "review" of Clause Four turns out to involve re-writing the entire Clause and not just the famous part four. If the whole Clause is up for grabs, then the party itself will no longer even be formally defined as a "political party of labour".

So far, the signals from the union bureaucrats have been mixed. Bill Morris of the TGWU - the largest affiliated union - seems to be hedging his bets, saying on the one hand "The T&G's supports Labour's aims and values, expressing as they do the alternative to the unrestrained free-market economy which prevails in the country", and then on the other, "We welcome the debate initiated by Tony Blair". The T&G's Broad Left-dominated Executive has yet to express a view, but the union's opposition to the findings of the Social Justice Commission suggests that it is far from being in Blair's pocket. It may also be significant that the T&G is about to merge with UCATT, whose leadership has been outspoken in defending Clause Four.

The affiliated sections of UNISON could also maintain their conference position of opposing Blair. Rodney Bickerstaffe and Alan Jinkinson are presently in high dudgeon over the Social Justice Commission and Blair's back-tracking on the minimum wage. Bickerstaffe is said to feel personally betrayed, having spent the past 15 years telling his membership not to fight too hard over privatisation and low wages because the next Labour government would solve their problems.

John Edmonds of the GMB is, as ever, playing a thoroughly devious game. He voted for the leadership at the party conference, but a close study of his words after the Clause Four vote suggests that he is keeping his options open (stripped of its elliptical verbiage, his statement boiled down to "wait and see"). The fact that the GMB has a version of Clause Four, part four written into its constitution is unlikely to weigh heavily with the opportunistic Bro. Edmonds. But Blair's continuing equivocation over the minimum wage might do. Remember in 1988 Edmonds proposed a form of OMOV, even before the Labour leadership was pushing the idea: by 1993 he was one of its leading opponents.

The NCU voted in support of Clause Four at Labour conference and its president, Bill Fry, is supporting the "Defend Clause Four" Campaign. There are signs, however, that Fry (who's from the Engineering Section) may face a pro-Blair rebellion from the leadership of the NCU white collar section, especially as the NCU is merging with the UCW who have a militant membership but a craven leadership.

At the Labour conference delegates from both the UCW and the RMT broke their mandates and voted in support of Blair over Clause Four. Alan Johnson of the UCW openly defied a specific instruction from his union's conference re-affirming Clause Four. The RMT has long-standing policy in support of the Clause and even has a call for the "suppression of capitalistic society by a socialist order of society" written into its constitution! Both unions have recently found themselves in open conflict with the Government (the anti-privatisation campaign in the Post Office and the signalworkers' dispute) that have politicised their respective memberships: rank and file revolts over Clause Four cannot be ruled out.

What's crucial here is linking the fight for Clause Four to the immediate concerns of ordinary union members. Blair's attack is all about Labour committing itself publicly to keeping key elements of the so-called "Thatcher revolution" like Compulsory Competitive Tendering and the privatised utilities and coal industry.

The Blairites' message is simple. They want to abandon any commitment to public ownership. As that ex-Scargillite turned Blairite master strategist and man of principle Kevin Barron puts it: "The Tories use public ownership as a stick to beat us with. If someone's hitting you with a stick you take it away!"

Very clever, Kevin. Where I come from, you pick up the stick and hit them back with it!

If Barron and John Prescott think they can sell abolition of Clause Four to privatised dust bin men or dinner ladies in UNISON, TGWU or GMB with that line, then they could well find out that they are a bit more out of touch than us lefties.

Blair and his yuppies have not yet won the unions. Even amongst the bureaucrats, self-interest may yet prevail over evulence and cowardice. It's up to us to make sure that the rank and file light a fire under their big fat arses.

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper



DEATH BY A THOUSAND CUTS

By Rosalind Robson

THE NATIONAL Audit Office has been asked to investigate claims of misuse of public money by the Health Care International Group. HCI built a private hospital on the site of a disused asbestos factory in Glasgow, opened it up last June, and went bankrupt last week. The Government invested £30 million of public funds in this "dynamic" free-enterprise project. It is a disgrace that the Government has funded a hospital for the rich to jet in from all around Europe and the Middle East and have their relatives stay at the 5 star hotel next door and especially in the

middle of an area so desperate for money, housing and services. Those responsible should be made to account for such waste.

Already, before the HCI hospital was opened, half the beds in Britain's private hospitals were empty — while patients lie in trolleys in NHS hospital corridors.

VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY let her holier-than-thou-mask slip this week. The heartless, ice-cold, penny pincher was revealed when she spoke to us all, as if we were naughty schoolchildren, and said: "Choices have to be made. You cannot live in cloud cuckoo land with a money tree whenever you need extra resources."

Are those services that are now being cut back in Community Care, home helps, district nurses, meals on wheels, as local authorities

run out of money, to be defined as "extras" or fantasies out of "cloud cuckoo land?"

It is Bottomley and her Government who live in another world to the rest of us — of people who can afford private health care, public schools and expense accounts at posh hotels.

THE REGISTRAR AND Chief Executive of the UK's Nursing Standards body was sacked last week. He had received £24,000 in performance bonuses on top of his £60,000 salary in the past year.

This is an odd kind of performance related pay! One of his performance targets was to create 'an effective and efficient organisation.' He was sacked for being autocratic and dictatorial!

£44 MILLION WAS charged last year by casualty departments to victims of road accidents. Many people who do not have fully comprehensive car insurance were unable to claim for these charges.

At the same time £220 million was clawed back by the DSS from the compensation claims of people receiving benefits who were badly injured on roads or at work.

ACCORDING TO THE Law Society about 14 million people were denied access to justice last year after the legal aid cuts. Only people on Income Support or net earnings of up to £61 qualify for legal aid.

The network that counts

EYE ON THE LEFT

By Alan Johnson

AS EACH year passes and the Socialist Conference gets smaller and smaller, the claims of the organisers seem to get bigger and bigger.

This year, the Conference (Manchester, 5-6 November) aimed to "create a congress of networks in England, Scotland and Wales." But while in 1988 the Second Socialist Conference was attended by 2,200 people, this year only about 150 people turned up — almost exclusively thirty-something or forty-something and white.

The utopianism of the conference's aims extended to some of the politics on offer in the workshops.

Someone from a Local Exchange Trading Scheme (non-cash direct barter scheme) in Manchester said 80% of the UK population would be in such schemes within four years, and then told us of plans for private corporations — local of course — to donate lots of LETS currency to local community groups. Rosa Luxemburg's comment about those who throw thimbles of lemonade into the sea and expect to make it sweet may have come to some of us listening to this utopian nonsense.

Even Tim Lang, who argued powerfully on the damage done to workers by free trade and GATT, ended up calling not for popular democratic control over the vast productive potential of the world capitalist economy — that would be 'left posturing', apparently — but rather for a return to local self-sufficiency and an end to the international division of labour!

All this is a great pity because the problem being addressed by the Conference was a vital one. The opposition to the effects of the free market is split into a myriad of campaigning fragments. The question the conference posed was 'how can we get beyond these fragments?'

There are three main answers to this question on the British left. First there is the SWP/Militant Labour/RCP way, which is to recruit one by one to their organisations until

they are able to offer an alternative leadership to the Labour Party.

Second is the Socialist Movement way which is to link the fragments very loosely by a central information and resource bank/debating forum. It is unclear whether the Socialist Movement is a fragment itself in this perspective or the co-ordinating centre. Anyway, anything more than a loose network is to risk the autonomy of the movements and is arrogant vanguardism.

Both these perspectives have in common a light-minded disregard for the existing working-class movement, the still organically-linked and many million strong Labour Party and trade unions. Both conclude that the right wing will be dominant in that movement and, running away, they try to build an alternative movement outside it.

The third alternative begins with the idea of socialists working for a two-way interchange of ideas and action between the existing working-class movement and the new campaigns. Such a two-way movement is seen as mutually transforming, immersing the labour movement in the struggles of the working class and oppressed, rupturing the control of Labourism and drawing into the labour movement those forces and ideas traditionally excluded or marginalised, inflecting those forces and ideas with a working-class perspective.

Socialists play the role of an ideological and political lever in this two-way interchange, augmenting ourselves in the very process of the transformation of the existing movement.

This perspective had some limited success in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the Bennite democracy battles: Marxists could shift bigger forces, play the role of the lever, lead and learn from struggles.

Despite the great setbacks of the last ten years it is this network — of socialists active in the labour movement and working for its transformation, drawing in new forces and ideas from diverse struggles — which, unspectacular as it may be for much of the time, and unfashionable as it is at the moment, will count for most in the long run.

Britain's vicious media: a victim speaks out

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

FIRST OF all, let me thank you for giving me a rare opportunity to put my side of the story. When you're just an ordinary sort of bloke like me, you don't have much access to the media and you have to use whatever opportunities you can find.

This publication isn't perhaps, a natural host to my views but I'm no narrow political sectarian. Why, I even write a regular arts column in the *Guardian*, despite that paper's decidedly pinkish stance!

Actually, I had to use last week's column to set the record straight about my own personal difficulties, drawing an apposite parallel between myself and the heroine of Catalani's *La Wally*: in the dramatic aria 'Ebben? Ne audro Loutano', she pleads with her father not to force her to marry a man she does not love. It's a very powerful piece and I may well play Leslie Garrett's definitive rendition on my Radio 3 *Easy Listening Arias from the Movies* spot this

Saturday — tune in if you can!

By the way, the heroine ends up chucking herself into an oncoming avalanche — an example I have no intention of following, despite my inner torment!

Anyway, as you know, I'm just an ordinary sort of bloke, but for the past two and a half years I've been subjected to a sustained media conspiracy that has put intolerable pressures upon my marriage and made life frankly a living hell for my loyal wife Julia, who frankly has been a complete brick throughout it all. Fortunately, we have an adult relationship and she and Penny completely understand one another and are in total mutual support of myself.

I mean, it really is intolerable when you're arriving at Broadcasting House to host your live Radio 5 football phone-in show *Six-O-Six* (tune in if you can!) and you're confronted by a bunch of pompous prats from the media asking frankly bloody ridiculous questions like 'don't you think you've treated your wife

badly?' I meant to say, what kind of question is that to ask an ordinary bloke who's going through total inner torment?

And when I quite reasonably replied 'What's the big deal?' the tabloids showed pictures of me smiling and used the phrase 'What's the big deal?' as if I'm saying 'What's the big deal about the break-up of my marriage?' Which is obviously not what I was saying at all. I was obviously devastated by this total misrepresentation.

Actually, quite a few of the calls I received on my top Radio 5 phone-in show concerned my old pal Bruce Grobbelaar, an ordinary bloke who's been subjected to a frankly intolerable media campaign with no opportunity to put his side of the story. A bit like me, really, as I pointed out to the listeners.

As I said when I appeared on *GMTV*, it really is quite unacceptable when the so-called media hound popular self-made men like the Clown Prince of the Goalmouth or, say, independently minded, multi-talented Tory MPs, on the basis of no real evidence whatsoever. And we have no means of redress against the leftist media establishment who just want to destroy successful self-made men. It's a clear case of media harassment.

I mean, I don't earn much money as an MP. This summer, for instance, I was invited to take a full-time job that would

have required me to give up my seat and I disliked not to do so. So I actually make a financial sacrifice by being a member of Parliament. Just bear that in mind. In fact, if it wasn't for my consultancies (less than a dozen mind you) and my highly-acclaimed after dinner speeches (a snip at £3,000 a time: now booking) I simply wouldn't be able to make ends meet. So to speak.

Anyway, it really is intolerable when ordinary blokes are subjected to vicious media persecution and our lives are ruined — not to mention the pain and distress caused to our families and loved ones. You can bet that this will be a major theme of my forthcoming late-night talk show *Interface* on Channel Four (don't miss it!) As I told Clive Anderson last week, a lot of my guests will be just ordinary blokes (and blokesses!) who've been totally misrepresented by the pompous prats who control the British media. It will be like that bit in the *Marriage of Figaro* when the hero (valet to the Count Almaviva) has arranged an assignment between the Count and Susanna (maid to the Countess) but with the page-boy, Cherubino, disguised as her, and he strums on a guitar and sings of the agony and ecstasy of love: 'One moment frozen, the next all aflame.'

Can I have my fee in cash, please?

A woman of courage



WOMEN'S EYE

By Jean Lane

WHEN THE British National Party stood candidates in the local elections in the East End last year, racist attacks trebled. In one of them, the victim, Mukhta Ahmed, was so badly injured he was in a coma for two days. His face was unrecognisable even to his family and friends, and his scalp had become detached from his skull. Mukhta had been chased and kicked by a gang of about 20 white youths.

It has taken until just one month ago for anyone to be done for this attack. The only reason the police got hold of Nicky Fuller, one of the white youths responsible, was because his ex-girlfriend found the courage to shop him for what he had done.

Despite death threats over the phone and being followed in the street, 15-year old Kelly Turner gave a statement to the police and was prepared to be a witness in court against Nicky Fuller who, along with his mates, had bragged about "nearly killing a Paki."

Coming from the area that she does, Kelly probably knew what she would be in for if she came forward with her evidence. The solidly white, working-class communities in parts of the East

End have a history of being close-knit and hostile to outsiders.

The destruction of jobs on the docks and in related industries, as well as in the print, and the poor and inadequate housing, have turned a traditionally racist community into a place rotten-ripe for the filthy fascist ideas peddled by the likes of the BNP.

When a working-class community is hit to such an extent as this by recession and poverty, its youth are particularly vulnerable to hopelessness, crime and anti-social attitudes like racism. It is no accident that car theft and high-speed chases have become the popular sport they have in, for instance, northern cities devastated by unemployment.

Similarly, when youth are thus vulnerable young women are particularly at risk. It comes as no surprise that in places like Hackney in the East End of London and other cities such as Manchester, girl-gangs have grown that are increasingly just as capable of anti-social attitudes and violence as boy-gangs. This is partly because of the general anti-society youth culture that grows with the vacuum left by a state that is stripping away at the bare bones of society and the Welfare State in the interests of profit. It is also because of the need to assert and defend themselves in an increasingly hostile peer milieu. When girls get attacked, it is usually not just physical but sexual as well.

In such a community of vulnerable, hostile, anti-social youth,



Kelly Turner: she stood up against racism

black kids are also at particular risk. The attack on Mukhta Ahmed, as well as that on Qudus Ali and many others before and since are one of the results of Tory Britain's growth of racist breeding grounds. Hostility to and suspicion of the forces of the state unfortunately mean that, instead of uniting and declaring war on the government and the system, young people are at war with each other, and those who carry out vicious racist attacks get away with it.

Growing up in such a community, Kelly Turner could not but know the hostility that her action would bring upon her. Local white boys followed and threatened her. Adult friends of her father advised her to keep her mouth shut. Even her school teachers were unsympathetic; one of them saying that he didn't want her in the school because of the risk to the other kids.

Despite all this pressure Kelly said: "I was really scared... but

I thought what if it happened to me and nobody came forward? My mum brought me up not to be a racist. At the end of the day I couldn't keep quiet about it."

Usually, if the overwhelming culture in an area or a school or even just a room is racist, there are a few people who don't like it but keep quiet out of fear. That is how the racists get away with it. If just one person stands up against them, the quiet ones will feel relief or possibly even speak up themselves.

It takes real courage to be the one to stand up in the first place. That is what Kelly Turner has got. It is because such people exist that it is possible to redraw the lines of battle away from between sections of the working class as a whole and its real enemies: the state and its vicious Tory government and its policies of anti-working class ideas like racism.

Police cover-up

By Thomas Carlisle

ON 29 JANUARY 1991 Anson King was violently arrested, planted with crack cocaine by two policemen from Stoke Newington in East London. He was strip-searched and locked up. King, with the help of Hackney Community Defence Association, was acquitted of possession of crack at Snaresbrook Crown Court on 22 November 1991.

Following his acquittal King began civil action against the Metropolitan Police Commissioner for damages for assault, false imprisonment and malicious prosecution. The Met has now paid £70,000 damages in an 'out-of-court' settlement. At the same time they denied liability.

The case raises serious questions about the integrity of the Operation Jackpot investigation into allegations against Stoke Newington police. These questions are:

1. Although 134 cases involving 45 police were looked at by the investigation this was still only a fraction of the number of allegations of corruption and wrongful arrest. Anson King's case for instance was not looked at.
2. The police decided to pay record damages shortly before King's action was to come to trial. At the trial the police would have had to explain that one of the police officers admitted to



his duty inspector he assaulted King in self-defence although he denied punching him at the criminal trial. This evidence points to a conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

3. Although the Met Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon, has stated that he will be cracking down

on the number of out of court settlements made by the police, the case of Stoke Newington flatly contradicts this. Hackney Community Defence Association knows of 31 civil actions arising out of Stoke Newington drug cases. To date, eight have been settled out of court, costing the Met £240,000

in damages.

4. Why has it taken civil action to get compensation from the Metropolitan police?

5. Only two policemen from Stoke Newington are facing criminal charges. The people who beat, abused and tried to frame Anson King are still on the job.

All this points to a cover-up of the Stoke Newington scandal. Any examination of the facts about what happened with this group of coppers show the systematic and routine racism and corruption of the British police. It has also shown that the police regard themselves above the law and unaccountable.

That is why the Youth Fightback campaign, Youth for Justice, demands:

- An end to prosecutions based solely on confessions.
- And independent and elected police complaints body.
- Elected bodies to control the police with power over operational policy and budgets.
- Abolish the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

• If you want to support the campaign against police corruption at Stoke Newington Police Station contact: Hackney Community Defence Association at The Colin Roach Centre, 10a Bradbury Street, London N16. Telephone: 071-249 0193.

Fascists standing in Midlands by-election

By Mick Duncan

THE DEATH of a sitting Tory MP is not wholly bad news, but in Dudley West it is not entirely good news either.

In the forthcoming by-election, the National Front are intending to stand. The British National Party also seem to be thinking about it. A week or so ago, on Saturday October 29th, the BNP kicked off their election campaign by trying to hold a number of paper sales in Dudley. The fascists have been very active in the West Midlands. In the recent local and Euro elections the fascists polled an alarming number of votes.

This threat must be wiped out. It is vital that the Labour Party wins the by elections. A large vote boosts the

Nazis' confidence and helps them grow.

We must oppose them in these elections and provide a political alternative to the false answers of their filthy politics.

We must also demonstrate our strength and our unity in opposing the Nazis. They mobilised in their tens to build support for their foul lies. We must mobilise in far higher numbers to show them that they will not be tolerated.

That is why we have called the demonstration on December 10th in Birmingham.

Book coaches, get leaflets and posters out and support the demonstration.

• For more details call Mick c/o 021 356 8164

Stamp out homophobia!

WHAT PROMISES to be the largest National Union of Students Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) Conference ever will meet this weekend.

The current academic year has so far been good for the NUS LGB Campaign. Campaign activists have been provided with materials, information and leadership. Important initiatives have been taken on issues including lesbian and bisexual women's health and the continuing campaign for an equal age of consent. Different issues have been united in a 'Stamp Out Homophobia' campaign, which also encourages direct action against homophobes.

This weekend's conference is a good opportunity for LGB campaigners to develop this initiative. It should be done in a way that treats homophobia not simply as an issue of individual prejudice, but as a political issue, root-

ed in a political system of oppression. This means that the campaign needs to raise political demands: for legal equality, for the right to parent, for equality in education, for health and welfare provision, for an end to judicial persecution, for the right to fight back.

Left Unity will be putting forward these proposals at the conference. We will also be holding a briefing for delegates the day before conference, and a fringe meeting at conference itself.

Stamp Out Homophobia:

Picket Dame Jill Knight

Friday 25 November 5pm
at Dame Jill's surgery, Greenfield Crescent, Edgbaston, Birmingham.

More details from Charlotte Wade at the University of Central England Students' Union: 021-356 8164

Bradford rent strike

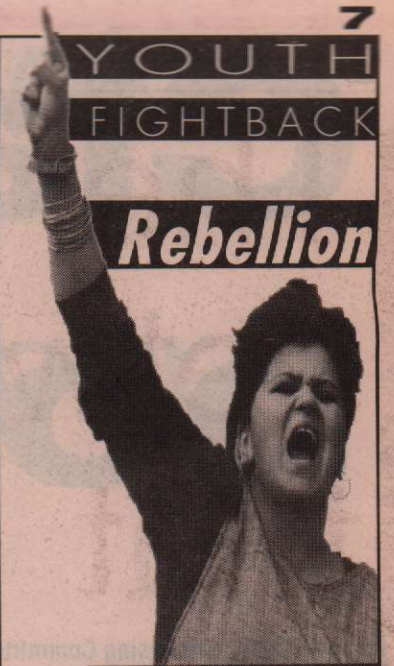
BRADFORD UNIVERSITY is in chaos over the decision of the students to engage in a rent strike, in protest at the 6.9% increase in hall fees.

Already, over 400 students have paid into the strike fund, which means the University stands to lose £750,000 unless it is prepared to enter into negotiations.

Chris Howson, Student Union

President, told Socialist Organiser, "Students up and down the country need to be far more active in fighting cuts imposed by the Government and ridiculous price increase at their Universities."

• Messages of support to Chris at Bradford University Students' Union, Longside Lane, Bradford BD7 1DP Tel: 0274-383300



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.

the struggle for workers' liberty

discussion weekend for students and youth

3-4 Dec, Caxton House, London

questions about socialism: what's wrong with capitalism? can the workers make a revolution? why is the left so divided?

what should CJB campaigners do now? how do we get rid of racism?

our history: the truth about the russian revolution. how hitler came to power.

what's wrong with your sociology lectures? what's wrong with your economics courses?

issues: socialists and ireland. can marxism explain violence against women?

should labour ditch clause four? (debate with the labour right). strategies for lesbian/gay/bisexual liberation (debate with stonewall).

Tickets/details from AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. Tel: 071-639 7965

£5 (HE students/waged) and £2 (school and FE students/unwaged) Cheques to "WL Publications"

• Demonstration •

Fight racism! Fight fascism!

For full employment and homes for all

Saturday 10th December assemble 1pm Chamberlain Square

Speakers include Labour Cllr Phil Murphy, CRE, & Free Satpal Campaign

For a Labour victory against the fascists in Dudley West

Clause 4 conference boosts campaign

By Tom Rigby, Organising Committee,
Defend Clause Four Campaign

THE CAMPAIGN to keep Clause Four of the Labour Party's constitution, which defines the party as a "political party of labour" committed to "common ownership" of the means of production, got a major boost last weekend.

Over 250 rank and file party activists from all over the country packed into a church hall in London on 12 November for the first national meeting of the "Defend Clause Four, Defend Socialism" campaign.

We agreed unanimously that the basis of this broad alliance should simply be winning a majority in the labour movement to keep Clause Four. Some people want to pursue additions to the constitution or separate statements of aims, but we agreed that these must be in addition to, not instead of, keeping Clause Four.

Miners' leader Arthur Scargill expressed the view — shared by thousands of party and trade union activists up and down the country — when he called on the parliamentary soft left to come into line and defend Clause Four rather than deluding themselves that they are engaged in a nice little academic debate about the Party's values.

What is really involved here, argued Scargill, is the whole future direction and identity of the Labour Party.

"I call upon Clare Short, Peter Hain, and others who consider themselves to be on the left to join with us. We don't need any new fancy words. We should be straight down the line. Defend Clause Four! Defend Socialism!

Labour Party conference can adopt whatever resolutions it wishes to bring the constitution up to date on issues like racism and women's rights, but that is no reason to change Clause Four.

The leadership of the party should remember that history is littered with leaders who ignored at their peril what the ordinary men and women who make up this movement believe in. And now the Clinton clones Brown and Blair want to turn Labour into a US-style Democratic Party.

If anyone has any doubts about this, then ask yourself why they spent Labour Party conference winning and dining big business at £300

a head when they should have been listening to the unemployed.

The next step is that they will be saying that we need a new name — one that doesn't jar with the City of London.

No change, not a dot or a comma or a word. It is Clause Four which marks this party out from the Tories and Liberal Democrats. We are fighting for the very soul of our party. There is no alternative."

Nick Nicholls, a British Telecom engineer and member of the National Communications Union (NCU) executive, told conference that the NCU engineering section had supported Clause Four at this year's Party conference and that they would be pushing for the new Communication Workers' Union (uniting Telecom and Post Office workers) to continue to do so. He brought to the conference greetings from Bill Fry, the NCU's national president.

Nick emphasised the importance of taking the battle into the unions. "The unions hold the key to this. If we can drive the campaign into the unions, if we can show to rank and file union members the relevance of Clause Four and common ownership, then we can win this battle. Whatever happens, the telecom engineers will be with you all the way".

London Central Euro-MP Stan Newens told conference of how he and Ken Coates, the Nottingham Euro-MP, had managed to get half the Labour Euro-MPs to sign a statement which concluded: "To rescind Clause Four... would simply serve to confuse or dishearten our supporters and encourage our opponents... Clause Four should be retained in its present form..."

We unanimously endorsed Stan's document and thanked him warmly for the important work he has done in demonstrating the extent of support for Clause Four. The meeting also heard a statement from David Winnick MP pledging his full support and best wishes to the campaign.

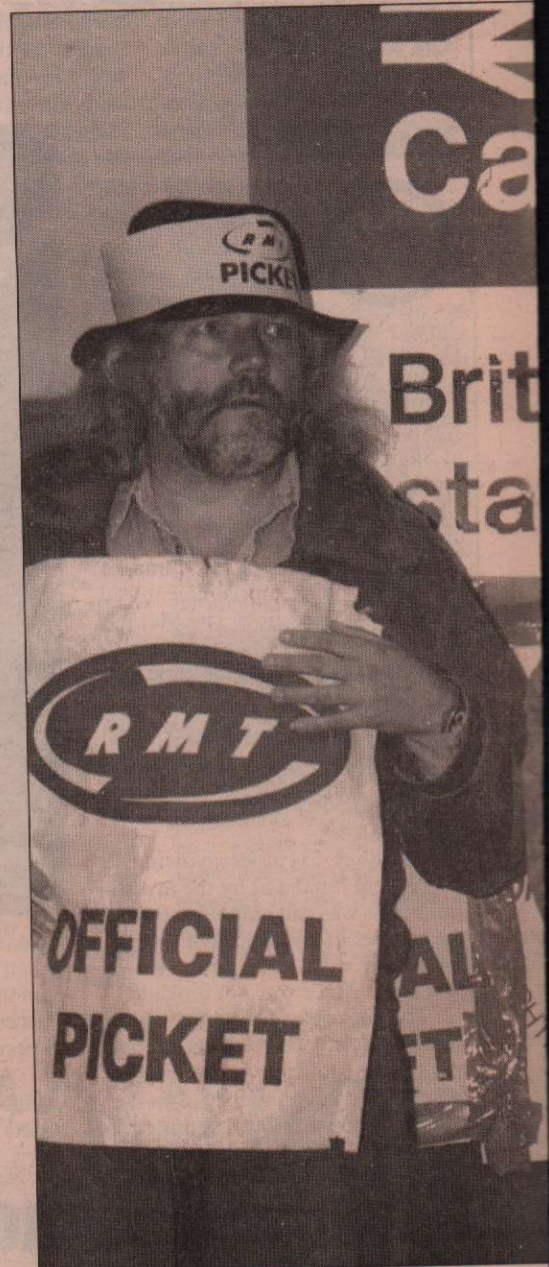
Speakers from the floor talked about the mood in the constituencies and the unions. UCW, MSF and RMT activists all pledged to campaign to win their unions to support for Clause Four, while constituency representatives painted a picture of the widespread hostility to the attack on Clause Four even from middle-of-the-road Party mem-

bers.

The meeting ended with a rallying call from Doreen Cameron, a newly-elected member of Labour's Conference Arrangements Committee, to take the campaign to Labour's grass roots. With a national campaign now established on a firm but broad basis, the battle for Labour's soul is well and truly on.



Arm yourself with the arguments! 80p plus 19p post for single copies, or £3 post free for six copies, from SCG Youth, 25 Howard Court, Peckham Rye, London SE15



Signalworkers picket: Labour must remain base

Four key d

Gerry Bates looks at the Tribune/New Statesman "alternative Clause Four"

THE DRAFT "alternative Clause Four" published by Tribune and the New Statesman on 11 November is much longer than the existing Clause Four and, indeed, rather wordy. To reprint it in full would take about half a page of Socialist Organiser.

Aside from that, there are four key differences between it and the existing Clause Four. On all counts the existing text is better.

Labour as a party based on the working class. Clause Four part 1 commits us "to organise and maintain in parliament and in the country a political labour party". Taken with part 2 ("to cooperate with the TUC or kindred organisations"), part 4 ("to secure for the workers...") and part 5 ("emancipation... particularly of those who depend directly on their own exertions for the means of life"), this is a clear statement that Labour is a party based on the

organised working-class movement.

The new draft says: "the Labour Party will... campaign... by working with the widest possible range of organisations, including trade unions and other democratic organisations..." This defines the unions as a force outside the party, to be worked with, rather than as the party's base.

Sovereignty of Labour Party conference. Clause Four part 3 commits Labour "to give effect as far as may be practicable to the principles from time to time approved by the Party conference". The new draft says nothing about the pivotal relationship between the Party conference and what Labour MPs do in parliament. But it is the sovereignty of conference that joins Labour in Parliament to the wider movement of the working class. Without it, the party is just a fan club and canvassing fodder for its MPs.

Common ownership of the



Labour Party conference voted to reaffirm Clause Four. We must campaign to impose that decision on Labour's leaders. Photo: John Harris.

ference ign



on the organised working class! Photo: John Harris

ifferences

means of production. Clause Four part 4 calls for "the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service".

The new draft would have us "promote a prosperous and fully-employed economy through a mixture of government intervention and private initiative and endeavour... Labour recognises that there is a role for both market mechanisms and public ownership and provision..."

This is a commitment not to socialism but to the "mixed economy", i.e. capitalism. Only the most fanatical "privatise-everything" Tory could disagree.

Social justice and equality. In Clause Four as it stands, the notion of social justice is tied to the question of control over society's productive resources. Common ownership is defined as a means "to secure for the workers... the full fruits of their indus-

try and the most equitable distribution thereof..."

These words are far from ideally precise. In a famous argument with German socialists, Karl Marx specifically criticised an almost identical phrase in their programme as words "which in a certain period had some meaning but have now become obsolete verbal rubbish..." The basic socialist watchword, he argued, should be, "From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs".

But, as Marx recognised, the words do "have some meaning" against the claims of the rich to control the bulk of the "fruits of industry". The new draft talks only of meeting people's "basic needs", which, as we all know, the Social Justice Commission defines as met by paying them £3.50 an hour (or less if they are young).

It has only a commitment to a "meritocratic" principle — in Mark Seddon's words, "equality of opportunity and outcome" — rather than to a socialist ideal of equality.

"If the choice is Blair or Clause Four, I'm for Clause Four", says Tribune editor

By Tom Rigby

THIS WEEK I talked to Mark Seddon, editor of Tribune, the main weekly paper associated with the Labour Party, about the Clause Four debate. Last Friday, 11 November, Tribune published an "alternative Clause Four", drafted by Mark in collaboration with the editor of the New Statesman magazine and a small group of soft-left MPs.

Those in the press closest to Tony Blair have been keen to present this as evidence that support for Clause Four is crumbling, and that Blair's wish to rewrite Labour's constitution has support even on the left of the Party. When I talked to Mark, however, what struck me most was the extent to which he has the same assessment of Blair's motives as we do.

"Like most people, I was not very happy when the leadership announced their intention to revise the constitution", said Mark. "It's not the great issue of the day on the doorsteps. People are much more interested in hearing about the kind of policies that are going to win us the next election.

"There is a perception among ordinary party members that the leadership want to get rid of any long-term commitment to public ownership and the redistribution of wealth. That is why they don't like Clause Four as it stands. Instead they want to turn the party into something that the SDP would be happy with".

Some of the other supporters of the "alternative Clause Four" — for example Clare Short, who keeps telling us all to trust Blair — do not agree. But why is Mark not defending Clause Four as it stands? Did Mark really think that Blair wants a proper debate, rather than just ramming through change on a "back me or sack me" basis?

"Yes, I think we can get a proper debate, with all options up for debate at conference and on any consultative ballot paper", said Mark. "The signals we are getting from the leader's office tell us that they would welcome a debate".

His initiative, said Mark, was based on the assessment that the major unions would back Blair at the next Labour Party conference if the issue were posed simply as Blair or Clause Four. He wanted to widen the options.

Couldn't a powerful rank-and-file campaign in defence of Clause Four force the union leaders into opposing Blair, I asked. Mark replied that his initiative was "a tactical gamble. We are taking risks.

"I think it's well worth setting the agenda and telling the leadership how far they can go. We have to make it clear that there is no way we can go along with abandoning public ownership or the redistribution of wealth".

What if Tony Blair does not allow a proper debate, I asked. "If the choice boils down to Clause Four or a formula written by Blair, then I will be supporting Clause Four", replied Mark.

At this point I wondered what Mark's fellow-signatories for his "alternative Clause Four" — front-benchers like Clare Short and Derek Fatchett — would think about that. Faced with the same take-it-or-leave-it choice, I'm sure they will vote for Blair against Clause Four. But I decided not to press the issue.

We went on to discuss the content of the alternative draft. I found Mark surprisingly reluctant to defend the details.

"There is going to be a continuing discussion. It's far from perfect", he commented. It was a serious gap that the draft had no direct reference to Labour being a party based on the working class or to the sovereignty of Labour conference.

Mark was also keen to be flexible about the precise status of the draft. "This is in effect an addition. We don't want to change Clause Four part four [the section of Clause Four with the commitment to "common ownership"] one bit. We don't want a constitution that is suitable for the SDP. Clause Four is a fine set of words, and had it not been for the decision to revise the constitution it should still remain on our membership cards".

I was left with the strong impression that Mark Seddon is passionately committed both to the idea of public ownership as an economic means to further the interests of the working class, and to maintaining Labour as a class-based party.

As the rank and file campaign to defend Clause Four gathers pace — as it will — he will be forced to take sides. And, what's more, he has already told us what side he will be on. I doubt it will be the same side as his more prominent co-signatories.

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Parliament and revolutionaries

By Alan Johnson

MARTIN THOMAS (SO617, "More than a lever") agrees with my argument (SO616, "Lever or sect?") that Marxists must seek to organise as a lever within the existing labour movement, rather than in sects, but then argues that I "overdo" the argument in four ways.

1. Martin rejects my view that the separation of the Marxists from the Labour Party in 1920 was a mistake because it isolated their weak forces, confirmed them in their native sectarianism, and ignored the character of the British working-class movement. He argues that only the organisational separation in a new party allowed the nascent Marxist movement to unite and develop.

Martin ignores the argument that revolutionary Marxist parties of any size have never been built by tiny groups of Marxists setting up in direct organisational competition with mass reformist parties in advanced capitalist democracies. Once the Communists had decided not just to organise together, which I agree with Martin was essential, but to proclaim the Communist Party, it had, with its immediate application for affiliation to the Labour Party, to seek the very relationship — Marxist lever in the movement — and indeed the best work of the CP in the 1920s, the Minority Movement and the National Left Wing Movement, was conducted as if that relationship existed.

For sure the right wing may force upon the Marxists from time to time a retreat to what Martin calls "some combination of 'Labour Party legal' and 'Labour-illegal work'", but such tactical retreats should not be dressed up as a preferred 'effective combination' as Martin implicitly does.

Take the NLWM for instance. This body emerged as a response to the 1925 Labour Party conference vote to ban individual Communists from holding Labour Party membership cards. Around 100 local parties resisted the ban and they linked up. The National Left Wing Movement and the newspaper *The Sunday Worker* organised much of the opposition, and Labour left-wingers and Communists worked together. The NLWM had the expressed aim "not to supersede the Labour Party but to remould it nearer to the heart's desire of the rank and file."

The assassins of the NLWM were the Communist leaders Palme Dutt and Harry Pollitt, who shut it down in 1929 on the grounds that: "Our strength will grow to the extent that we can weaken the Labour Party." They are supported in this by their later-day counterparts in the SWP who argue the NLWM was a barrier to left-ward moving workers joining the CP and not a bridge.

They are, of course, absolutely right.



"The most likely scenario for the development of workers' councils in Britain is the defence of Parliament."

To the extent that the NLWM was successful in organising left-wing workers to fight the Labour right, such workers will stay and fight in the Labour Party and not join the CP.

Now this relentless logic can be responded to in two ways. By shutting down the good work of the NLWM, give up trying to organise the left to fight, and going back to the safe world of one-by-one recruitment to the Revolutionary Party — persuading left-wingers to get out of the Labour Party for a start.

Or, by 'shutting down', in its organisationally separate form, the revolutionary party, thus allowing the Marxists to act as a lever, fighting the battle of ideas and organisation, augmenting the lever in the process, without weakening the

Labour Party at a point when the vast majority of the working class are nowhere near going beyond labourism.

2. Martin argues that my definition of the role of Marxist organisation is too narrow. Somehow he manages to present me as believing that the only proper role for Marxists is ideological, and the only proper place to play that limited role is within the existing trade unions and Labour Party.

No doubt I expressed myself badly for this is not my view. When I wrote in the last line of the article of "transform[ing] the existing working-class movement" I was using a short hand, common enough in *Socialist Organiser*, for a strategic line of march involving a protracted series of battles in which the labour movement, immersing itself in the struggles of the exploited and oppressed, transforms itself organisationally and politically, and a labour movement orientation is given to the struggles of the oppressed, linking them up to

class politics, going 'beyond the fragments.' The Marxists act not just as a 'think tank' of course, fighting the battle of ideas, though this is their irreplaceable role, but also as an activist and organising force.

3. As far as I can understand Martin on this, he thinks I overplay the importance of the national context. In the original article I quoted Lenin's view that the Marxist must study "that which is nationally specific and nationally distinctive." I also quoted Lenin's argument that Russia was not a model when it comes to Parliament because of the dominance of what he calls 'bourgeois democratic and parliamentary prejudices' among the working class in the west. I tried to point out some of those British particularities in the article and the consequences for Marxists, but Martin responded only to the question of 'parliament or soviets.'

4. Martin argues against the idea contained in my article that a combination of parliamentary and 'council democracy' might be the line of march for socialism in Britain. Citing the example of the fate of the German revolution after World War One, he quotes O'Mahony and Bloxam to the effect that, "the bourgeois parliament dominated and eventually sapped and destroyed the workers' councils" and that therefore, "a choice has to be made between workers' councils and parliament."

I think the example of the German revolution of 1918-19 proves the opposite of what Martin thinks it does. I think it proves that a strategic combination of parliamentary and extra parliamentary action is a necessary condition for a successful transition in the west.

In November 1918 the German state collapsed after four years of war. The army mutinied and the monarchy fell. Power was shared between six leading right and left wing socialists, supported by a network of Workers' Councils. The National Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, dominated by supporters of right

wing socialism, meeting in December, voted to call a General Election for January 1919, which would produce an elected assembly to draw up a constitution and be the sovereign power. The response of the Communists (called Spartacists) was to try to break up the Congress of Workers' Councils. They agreed to boycott the elections, and instead launched a futile revolution in January which was easily suppressed.

It is not credible to explain this away as 'leftism' which a revolutionary party tempered in struggle with an established leadership would have avoided. This line of reasoning views the German revolution as a re-run of the Russian, the different outcomes explicable solely by the presence or absence of such a party. What this ignores is the fact that the German workers had distinct social and political traditions which ensured that the easy counterposition of soviets to parliament was a disaster and cut the Communists off from the mass of workers.

This would be no less true for Britain. Any movement with the aim of 'smashing Parliament' would lose the very legitimacy without which it could not retain support. In such a situation the right would find it easy to mobilise support for Parliament as the cover to suppress the Councils.

Indeed the most likely scenario for the development of workers' councils in Britain is the defence of Parliament rather than its 'smashing.' The fight to defend and deepen Parliamentary democracy, and to merge the power of a transformed Parliament with the nascent power of popular local councils, born of and sustained by struggle, runs with the grain of complex advanced capitalist democracies and is a necessary development of the classical Leninist model of the transition in countries like Britain.

The slogan 'Soviets not Parliament' refuses the historical traditions of the British working class and generalises from a very different and not-to-be repeated Russian experience.

Stuffed full of snappy soundbites



Matt Cooper
reviews
Sleep With Me

Directed by
Rory Kelly

EDGE CITIES are a rising phenomenon in the USA. These are unplanned, sprawling developments without the heart of a traditional city, ugly eyesores evoking a loathing in those who pass through them matched only by the boredom and discomfort of those who inhabit them. I think *Sleep with me*, and a clutch of films that have preceded it (especially the over-hyped *Dazed and Confused* but also a myriad of lesser

films), are part of an associated movement, "edge films." They share all the vices of edge cities and add some of their own. This is really movie-making for the MTV generation. Every piece of plot development is broken down into a single soundbite; characters are known to be cool and trendy only because they keep on telling you so; personalities are as immediately knowable as the bulging guitarist out of Bon Jovi. This is film-making for a twenty-something generation who are encouraged by their media to look only just below the surface when they go snorkelling. I noticed on the credits that no less than six people wrote the script, and my first assumption was that one wrote the story line while the others expunged it of anything that might

pass for original or insightful. What is left is the most banal and superficial pap possible. You are invited into the lives of Joseph (Eric Stoltz), a laid back landscape gardener and Nirvana lookalike, his grungy wife Sarah (Meg Tilly), and Joseph's best friend, the rather more beatnik Frank (Craig Sheffer). The plot? You are asking too much of a film, after all it's already got stars with looks and attitude. I am giving virtually the whole thing away by saying that Frank fancies Sarah, and Sarah fancies Frank a bit while feeling some loyalty to Joseph, and that all of this annoys Joseph. The film relies on gimmicks. In one sequence Frank wanders around with a video camera, and what you see is his video-eye view of the world

(although, for reasons that escape me, high-quality black and white film footage is used rather than grainy video image. The worst and most elaborate gimmick of all explains the need for the six writers. The film was written in fifteen minute segments by the six around an agreed story line. This is a fine way of having a game of consequences at your niece's sixth birthday party, but it is a terrible way of film-making. You cannot even script a half-way consistent character in this way. You can only stuff each character's mouth full of snappy but meaningless soundbites before you run out of ideas and have to hand the baton over to the next runner in this vacuous relay. Don't go and see this film, wait for it to come out on video — then save two pounds by not taking it out.

Violence, entertainment value and censorship

In defence of "Pulp Fiction"

DAN KATZ (letters, SO618) should loosen up a bit. His case against the film *Pulp Fiction* rests on the grounds that it contains violence which "exists for its 'entertainment value' alone." This is very weak. Never mind that Dan has not taken into account at least 95% of the film: the marvellous dialogue and the quirky idea of gangsters following the routine in their working lives, "doing their job" in a deadpan and unemotional way. Never mind that the film does not glorify violence in the manner of the average moralising western, or a sadistic blood-fest like a Jean-Claude Van Damme movie, but treats it with a nihilistic detachment. Never mind that the film is not actually the orgy of violence that Dan suggests. The main point that I want to contest is the idea that a film is bad because its violence "exists for its 'entertainment' value alone." Of course it does. The ancient Greeks recognised that conflict — and that often means vio-

lent conflict — was one of the elemental dramatic forms. Shakespeare put violence in his plays not for necessary plot development but to keep the mob in the pit happy. From the invention of modern cinema, violence, real or suggested, has been central to many a film especially, but not only, thrillers. So the violence in films is to entertain. Much else in film is to entertain too, be it sex, emotional distress and suffering, happiness, or even politics. Some films enlighten as well as entertain, but one that seeks only to "enlighten" is the most turgid propaganda. As it happens *Pulp Fiction* is black comedy at its very best and is "pure entertainment." You do not leave the cinema wiser than you entered it, but then the days are few anyway when people return to their beds at night wiser than they left them. I imagine the thing that really upset Dan was not the film itself but the audience reaction to it. The audience at Peckham, I know, can resemble baying dogs. They simply "got



Natural Born Killers: it is not right that such films are banned

off" on the violence, and it was this, I think, that upset Dan. But to criticise a film for an audience reaction rather than the film itself is wrong. Stanley Kubrick's fine *Clockwork Orange* can no longer be seen in Britain since the director himself

withdrew it in response to exactly the kind of puritanical and sanctimonious criticism that Dan is now making, although *Clockwork Orange* is both more violent and a better film than *Pulp Fiction*. I am willing to bet that it would create the same kind of response, or more likely worse, from the Peckham Premiere movie-goers that *Pulp Fiction* did. For the record I went to see *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* at Elephant and Castle, and the audience there bayed at the gore and ignored everything else, although the film clearly had literary pretensions way above the average slasher movie. Although Dan does not raise the question of censorship directly, his argument leans towards. Don't forget that Oliver Stone, an over-serious film maker if ever there was one, is having difficulty getting his *Natural Born Killers* past the British censors at the moment (the film is loosely based on a Tarantino script). Is it right that such a film is banned because some people enjoy the violence with more relish than Dan believes they should? The issues of violence and people's attitudes towards it are largely determined outside the film industry. But I do have a word of advice for Dan, don't switch to children's film. The average Disney feature or Macaulay Culkin film have an ideological subtext that is worse than any violence that you will see on the big screen.

Bourgeois pride

In every age the left, before it can do anything else, has to confront the pretensions of those in power, and debunk them. This is especially true when the ruling class is prosperous, triumphant and confident. The British capitalist class was very confident indeed in the first decades of the last century, when Britain, was the "workshop of the world", mistress of the seas, and had recently crushed the French Empire of Napoleon Bonaparte. Its bourgeoisie was puffed up with pride. In those years and for the rest of the 19th century Radicals and Socialists quoted, reprinted, and recited these splendid lines from John Keats' poem "Isabella", which pour scorn on the pretensions and pride of a bourgeoisie which lived by mean and inhuman exploitation.

With her two brothers this fair lady dwelt,
Enriched from ancestral merchandise,
And for them many a weary hand did swelt
In torched mines and noisy factories,
And many once proud-quiver'd loins did melt
In blood from stinging whip; with hollow eyes
Many all day in dazzling river stood,
To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.

For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,
And went all naked to the hungry shark;
For them his ears gush'd blood; for them in death
The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark
Lay full of darts; for them alone did seethe
A thousand men in troubles wide and dark:
Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.

Why were they proud? Because their marble founts
Gush'd with more pride than do a wretch's tears?
Why were they proud? Because fair orange-mounts
Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs?
Why were they proud? Because red-lined accounts
Were richer than the songs of Grecian years?
Why were they proud? again we ask aloud,
Why in the name of Glory were they proud?

Student or patient?



Geoff Ward
reviews
Heart of the Matter

BBC1
Sunday 13 November

IN AMERICA, over a dozen universities have banned consenting sexual relations between students and staff on the same campus. Couples have been split up, forced underground or driven out of the college. This blanket ban is not supposed to discriminate. The programme, however, ignored the effect it must have on gay relationships and those between older women and younger men. The problem was seen as being solely between "dirty" old male college lecturers and "vulnerable", "impress-

sionable" young women — though this ban must also apply to mature students. The ban portrays women as feeble and passive victims of conspiratorial, patriarchal power, who need protecting like children from rapacious faculty lechers. Comparisons were made with doctor/patient relationships, yet the only major conflict of interest cited was when lecturers are responsible for assessing their partners' work. Doctor Mary Beard from Cambridge pointed out that these assessments could quite easily be handed over to someone else, providing the relationship had not been driven into the closet. Supporters of the ban did not say why colleges should be treated differently from other workplaces, or why college women are more open to

the traumas associated with bad relationships. In fact, a young interviewee who was painted as a "victim" of such a relationship hardly fitted the stereotypical picture. She had "matured" sufficiently to gain qualifications, vote in elections, leave her parents and bear a child. When her lecturer/boyfriend began getting too serious after he had left his wife for her, the woman decided to dump him. Contradicting the notion that "power relationships" automatically favour the one you would expect, she had used the college authorities to batter him into giving up on pestering her. Young adults, including students, should be free to have sexual relationships with whomever they please. Joan Bakewell didn't say this, but then she always sits on the fence.

Matt Cooper

Against all racism!

Farrakhan and Bla

Last weekend's *Independent on Sunday* (13 November) carried a piece which reflects some of the anti-semitic sentiments that can be found among the American black community. Marty Kalfus had got a leaflet through the door of his shoe store on Harlem's 125th Street telling him to get out: "You've already made billionaires out of yourself [sic] many times over by the exploitation of our people of this community." This is bigotry getting a hearing because of *despair*. By the early 1990s 47% of African American 17-year-olds

were "functionally illiterate". Half of young Black men in the 15 to 19 age group who died in 1988 were killed by guns. Young Black American men stand more chance of being jailed than of going to college.

None of the mainstream politicians will help. Clinton has promised to "end welfare as we know it," and the Republicans are worse.

The workers have no mass political voice which can advocate and win workers' unity. Traditional American community-based politics dominate.

In the decimated Black communities one answer that has emerged is a poisonous strand of anti-semitism — blaming the Jews, rather than America's rich ruling class, which has both Jewish and gentile members, and now, some Black members too. This trend's most vociferous, organised force is the right-wing, anti-white, anti-Korean, racist sect, the Nation of Islam (NOI). NOI leader Louis Farrakhan is backed by a number of prominent Black intellectuals and rap artists like Ice Cube and Chuck D from Public Enemy. Mark Osborn looks at the issues.

IN AUGUST 1991 the Crown Heights area of Brooklyn, New York, erupted in three days of anti-Jewish rioting. Local Black people attacked Jews — 80 were injured and one, Yankel Rosenbaum, was stabbed to death by a crowd shouting "kill the Jew" — after an Hasidic Jew had accidentally killed a Black child, Gavin Cato, in a car accident.

Black demagogue Reverend Al Sharpton helped to build up the tension. On August 22 he said "the emphasis is on Black survival in Crown Heights. Our people are under attack... It is about the liberation of our community held hostage by a minority." Two days later, on the Jewish Sabbath, he led 400 demonstrators through Crown Heights shouting "Whose streets? Our streets!"

At Gavin Cato's funeral Sharpton denounced local Jews as "diamond merchants."

Sharpton is a member of the "anti-Zionist" New Alliance Party and has defended Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam (NOI) against charges of anti-semitism.

A few weeks after the Crown Heights riots the NOI published *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*. This book aims to pass for serious historical research and claims — like many classic anti-semitic texts — to be based on the works of "respected Jewish authorities."

The book's basic charges are: that Jews ran the trade in Black African slaves; that Jews were the major traders and owners of Black slaves in America; that Jews raped Black women; that during the post-American Civil War period of Reconstruction Jews continued to prey on the freed slaves.

Just for good measure the Jews are accused of infecting blankets with smallpox to kill Native Americans.

The picture is of a diabolically evil Jewish gang: "Jews have been conclusively linked to the greatest criminal endeavor ever undertaken

against an entire race of people — the Black African Holocaust." Apparently the Jews bear "monumental culpability" for African American slavery.

The book's ideological underpinning is a Jewish conspiracy: "Though scattered throughout the globe by political, economic and religious circumstances, they would reunite later in unholy coalition of kidnappers and slavemakers."

All types of conspiracy theories of history have the same basic flaws: ignorance of basic social and economic conditions and a downgrading of what the mass of people think and do. Of course, plots do exist — assassinations, bank robberies — but the actions of people are penned in by social conditions.

Conspiracy is quite useful because it allows anti-semites to say: this man is a Jew. He is a bad man. And you don't know it all. This is the tip of an iceberg. It makes a theory out of what is not known. It gives a structure to discontents and prejudice.

The American Simon Wiesental Centre has produced a useful refutation of the *Secret Relationship's* conclusions and methods. Quite convincingly they show that quotes in the *Secret Relationship* are taken out of context and authors are misrepresented. Other "authorities," like the Russian author Fyodor Dostoyevsky, are notorious anti-semites, or, like Lennie Brenner, "Smash Israel, anti-Zionist" Jews: "*The Secret Relationship* wants its readers to believe that any criticism of Jews voiced by a Jew [like Brenner] must be accurate and fair."

The Centre's book, written by Harold Brackman, titled *Ministry of Lies*, suggests that Jews took a minor part in the slave trade and in 1830 "there were just four Jews among the 11,000 slaveholders [in the American South] owning more than 50 slaves."

It is useful material. Nevertheless, what if it were true, by some quirk of history, that there were a disproportionate number of Jews who held slaves? In fact there were a lot of white people of British backgrounds who owned slaves and ran a large part of the slave trade. Does that mean "the British" "conspired" to take slaves? No, "the British" as such were not involved. But it paid the *British merchant class and plantation owners of British decent* to do so.

Does it mean I — and other white people in Britain — bear some collective historical guilt for slavery? For what people who are long dead, who may or may not have been our ancestors may have done? No, we do not. And neither do "the Jews".

So when *Ministry of Lies* talks of Jewish slave owners and Black women slaves, Brackman would do better to accept that Jewish men behaved just like any other men in a similar position. That is the point: there is nothing special about Jews!

The focus on Jewish involvement in the slave



Farrakhan's deputy Khallid Muhammad declared that "God will kill my enemy... that old no-good Jew."

trade serves one handy service for the NOI, as a spin-off: it obscures the role of the Arab and Muslim slave trade in Black Africans — a problem for those who want to pretend this was a matter of whites verses the rest. The Arab slave trade began earlier, lasted longer, and enslaved more Black people than the European trade. And Arab anti-black racism began *before* the European version.

The Secret Relationship was particularly well received by a layer of Black academics. In America's crazy world of ethnic competition this group of Black people is actually an aspiring competitor group with Jewish intellectuals on the US cultural and academic scene.

Already, in July 1991, Leonard Jeffries, Professor of the African American Studies Department of City University, New York, had spoken out against "rich Jews" who had "helped finance the slave trade." He also claimed that "there was a conspiracy planned and plotted and programmed out of Hollywood, with people named Greenberg and Weisberg and whatnot... Russian Jewry had a particular control over the monies and their financial partners, the Mafia [ie Italian Americans], put together a system for the destruction of Black people."

Professor Kwaku Person-Lynn of the California State University claimed the Jews

were kicked out of Spain in 1492 for making too much money from the slave trade.

And in his book *The Jewish Onslaught* Professor Tony Martin of Wellesley College, a Farrakhan fellow traveller, accused Talmudic rabbis of "inventing racism."

In 1991 Louis Farrakhan's deputy, Khallid Muhammad, said "Nobody wants to talk about what the Jews did. They are always talking about what Hitler did to the Jews, but what did the Jews do to Hitler?" In a later speech Khallid called Jews "bloodsuckers of the Black nation."

And speaking in February of 1994 he said: "God will kill my enemy and take him off the face of the planet... that old no-good Jew, that old imposter Jew, that old hooknose, bagel-eating lox-eating, Johnny-come-lately perpetrating a fraud, just crawled out of the caves and the hills of Europe, so-called damn Jew... I will never apologise to this bastard — never."

The hostile reaction to this speech was so intense that Farrakhan had to distance himself somewhat from Khallid.

SO WHAT is happening here? There has long been tension between America's Jewish and Black communities. But the conflict seems to have got worse after the mid 1960s. Take Harold Cruse's book *Crisis of the*

...We want poems
like fists beating niggers out of
Jocks
or dagger poems in the slimy
bellies
of the owner Jews...
...Setting fire and death to
whities ass. Look at the Liberal
spokesman for the Jews clutch his
throat and puke himself into
eternity...
Put it on him poem. Strip him
naked
to the world! Another bad poem
cracking
steel knuckles in a jewlady's
mouth...
Black Art by Amiri Baraka
(formerly Lerol Jones) from 1966

ck anti-semitism

Negro Intellectual (1967), a book obsessed with Jews and a book which contains recognisable themes.

Cruse quotes Dostoyevsky — to prove a point(!) — from 1877: "the Negroes have now been liberated from the slave owners, but that will not last because the Jews, of whom there are so many in the world, will jump at this new little victim."

Cruse then makes the point that the Union general Ulysses S Grant's office issued the following order in 1862: "The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Dept... are hereby expelled from the department." The conclusion is, however, not that Grant's Department was being anti-semitic, or was pandering to the hostility of traders who were competitors of the Jews, but that the Jews were competidid behave in this way! So, like Kwaku Person-Lynch on the expulsion of the Spanish Jews in 1492, the victims are blamed, and the explanations of the Jews' competitors and the anti-semites are accepted as good coin.

Also in Cruse there is a downgrading of the centrality of the Holocaust, and the familiar point about Israel's links with the Apartheid regime in South Africa.

The emergence of a radical, Black-nationalist wing of the civil rights movement which viewed ethnic conflict as central was a factor in the development of Black anti-semitism. Unlike Martin Luther King, a genuine liberal who wanted equality for all people, and who opposed manifestations of anti-semitism in the civil rights movement, the nationalists saw racism as being a white and also as a Jewish problem. And obviously there is truth on their side. There was and is a big fight to be waged against white racism. It is also true that there were and are Jewish, Korean, Arab and other traders in the Black communities. Some of them

cheat their customers and take advantage — that is the nature of traders.

Nevertheless there is no Jewish problem: there is an exploitation problem.

Issues which properly speaking should be class issues were and are seen as racial conflicts. The nationalists were influenced by anti-imperialist, anti-Israel rhetoric — particularly after the Arab-Israel Six Days War in 1967.

The Black Panthers' paper led with "Zionism (Kosher Nationalism) and imperialism = fascism." Kwame Toure — formerly a Panther leader — has recently turned to campaigning against the "Zionist pigs": "the only good Zionist is a dead Zionist."

In the early 1970s the NOI sold the well-known Russian anti-semitic forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Farrakhan claimed the "Jews are control of the mass media, newspapers, television, radio."

In the 1980s matters got worse. Farrakhan has claimed "the Zionists made a deal with Adolf Hitler," repeating a nonsense also peddled on the left, and that the creation of Israel was an "outlaw act." In 1983 he said Hitler was "a very great man" and that Judaism was a "dirty religion."

More mainstream politicians have also been infected. In 1984 Jesse Jackson caused a storm of protest after referring to New York as "Hymietown."

Farrakhan also reproduces traditional anti-semitic rubbish about ritual murder: "The germ of murder is already sown into the hearts of the Jews in this country." And Khallid Muhammad repeats the "Jews killed Christ" tale in his own way: "the white so-called Jews set up a Kangaroo court to charge Jesus... and under a system of capital punishment ordered the death penalty for Jesus, the Black revolutionary Messiah."

More bizarrely Farrakhan supporters and fellow-travellers have blamed "the Jews" for the



Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam is a blind alley for US black people fighting racism

hole in the ozone layer and for being involved in the creation of AIDS.

This is utterly crazy, debilitating poison! These ideas must be confronted and defeated before we can all move forward.

A MEMBER of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty told me a story recently about the bakers' strike during the British "Winter of Discontent" over 1978-9. A number of black workers were among those who scabbed during the struggle, and the comrade who was a steward in a bakery, was faced with a lot of white workers, who had been solid during the strike, denouncing "bloody black scabs."

The comrade went round the factory talking to the workers. "They're not 'bloody black scabs,'" he said, "they're bloody scabs."

Jewish capitalists are not Jewish capitalists — they are just capitalists. Workers of the world, unite!

"Issues which properly speaking should be class issues were and are seen as racial conflicts."

What is the Nation of Islam?

The Nation of Islam (NOI) was started in 1930 — a hybrid of Islam and Garveyism.

NOI's best known spokesman, Malcolm X, broke with the NOI in 1963-4 and was murdered in February 1965.

In December 1964 current NOI leader Louis Farrakhan, writing under the name Louis X wrote "Malcolm shall not escape... Malcolm is worthy of death."

Recently, in 1994, Betty Shabazz, Malcolm X's widow, was asked on WNBC-TV if she thought Farrakhan had anything to do with the death. She answered: "Of course. Yes... Nobody kept it a secret. It was a badge of honor. Everybody talked about it. Yes."

The NOI have filed a \$4.4 billion for defamation against the New York Post for printing the claim that Farrakhan was involved in the murder.

The NOI's programme is for a separate state for Black Americans. They want separate schools for girls and boys and separate black education. They are for a law banning "intermarriage or race mixing."

They are for the promotion of Black capitalism.

The NOI has had American white fascist speakers at their events, following the traditional ambivalent relationship between fascists and nationalists. In 1962 George

Lincoln Rockwell, leader of the American Nazi Party, spoke to a NOI meeting: "Elijah Muhammad [NOI leader] is to the so-called Negro what Adolph Hitler was to the German people... Heil Hitler." In a later letter he added that "I was amazed to learn how much they and I agree on things... The Honorable Elijah Muhammad and I have worked out and agreement of mutual assistance."

This was at the same time as civil-rights workers were being killed by white racists.

More recently, in 1985, the NOI invited American fascist Tom Metzger to a forum in California and accepted a \$100 donation from him.

So don't follow me up and

down your market/

or your little chop suey

ass will be a target/

So pay your respect to

the Black fist/

or we'll burn your store

right down to a crisp.

Black Korea by Ice Cube

... get rid of that devil, real simple/

put a bullet in his temple/

cause you can't be the nigger

for life crew/

With a white Jew telling

you what to do.

No Vaseline by Ice Cube

Raymond Molinier and the revolutionary spirit

By Martin Thomas

RAYMOND MOLINIER died on 30 October at the age of 90. He was, as far as I know, the last surviving Trotskyist who had worked closely with Leon Trotsky himself.

Of his activity since 1940 I know only a sketchy outline, from articles published in the French socialist weekly *Rouge* of 3 November. They tell a remarkable story.

Instead of drifting off into retirement, or becoming an elder statesman who contributes advice rather than hands-on activity, Molinier remained active as a rank-and-file Trotskyist until well into his 80s.

At the beginning of the Second World War, in 1939-40, he left his native France, ending up in Lisbon. His idea was that the Trotskyists in France would face terrible repression during the war, and they would need some sort of headquarters outside the country, operating in easier conditions, which could coordinate communications, send in literature, and so on.

He was right about the repression, but as far as I know he was unable to set up an effective HQ-in-exile. What he was able to do was help many Trotskyists to escape from the Nazis to the Americas. He did it with characteristic enterprise and imagination: he became involved in the running of a circus, based in Lisbon, which could use its tours as "cover" for the escapes.

Soon he had to escape himself, to Brazil, and then to Argentina. According to Cecilia Garmendia, writing in *Rouge*, he was active in the Argentine Trotskyist movement, at least for some of his time there. She gives no details, except to write: "You [Molinier] fixed things to help Bolivians fleeing the dictatorship, then the hundreds of Uruguayan and Chilean comrades who ended up in Buenos Aires [capital of Argentina]: any trick would do to get a comrade out of the country or to get another something to eat, some papers, or even a 'real' job..."

It was Molinier's generous energy in "fixing" such problems — something which cannot be learned from any amount of study of the volumes of *Capital* or solved by the writing of any number of theses, but is no less essential for any real revolutionary movement — which had first brought him close to Trotsky.

In 1977, after a military coup in Argentina, Molinier returned to France. There he joined the LCR, the group which publishes *Rouge*. Garmendia writes: "You tried to become a rank and file activist of the organisation. Not easy, when one has your history and your character..."

"You waged battles at the congresses — the question of the USSR... You were in the front ranks of the demonstrations. When there were the big student protests in 1986, you were still in the front seat!"

"Then age got the better of you... You spent some time in a special home of people of your age, where, from the heights of your 80-odd years, you found everyone too old and reactionary! Finally you decided to go back to Buenos Aires with your daughter..."

To judge from Garmendia's article, Molinier kept a critical mind. When LCR suddenly decided that the Sandinistas in Nicaragua were a new model for socialist revolution, "you [Molinier] remained distrustful (sectarian, said some of us) towards this young revolution, not Trotskyist enough..." And he objected, apparently, to the LCR's rather prissy habit of always saying "Spanish state" instead of "Spain" in order to underscore its commitment to self-determination for the Basques, Catalans, and others.

Molinier played no notable part in the long, laborious strivings of the various Trotskyist factions since World War 2 to update their theories in a world very different from that in which Trotsky lived and died. The organisations in which he worked, the LCR in France and the PRT in Argentina, subscribed to a version of updated Trotskyism very different from ours — a broken-backed, incoherent version in our view. Molinier was not a theorist. Revolutionary

organisations need theorists. They also need people with other qualities. Back in 1929, when Trotsky first argued with his French comrades that they should accept Molinier as one of their leaders, it was not because he thought Molinier could theorise for them, but because of what Trotsky called his "Molinieresque energy."

Trotsky had just been exiled from the USSR by Stalin's counter-revolutionary government. He was trying to organise and coordinate his sympathisers in various countries. France was probably the most important. There were many Trotskyist or semi-Trotskyist groups, publications, and prominent individuals. But all attempts to get them together in positive activity were obstructed by jealousy, pedantry, and inertia.

Molinier was a refreshing contrast, "with boisterous optimism and... a headful of plans for making Trotskyism into a great political force", wrote Isaac Deutscher. "He had schemes for infiltrating the [Stalinist] party with Trotskyists, for mass meetings, newspapers with a large circulation, etc... financial plans too, somewhat vague but not implausible..."

By July 1929, Trotsky was writing to Maurice Paz, editor of the main Trotskyist monthly in France until then, explaining with exasperated clarity why he, Trotsky, was backing Molinier and others in a new weekly paper, without waiting for an end to the long discussions and negotiations with Paz.

"I said to myself, after having observed them closely, that comrades who are capable of such initiative and such personal sacrifice are revolutionaries, or can become such, because it is in this way, Comrade Paz, that revolutionaries are formed."

"You can have revolutionaries both wise and ignorant, intelligent or mediocre. But you can't have revolutionaries who lack the willingness to smash obstacles, who lack devotion and the spirit of sacrifice..."

"You must understand that the person who is the 'axis', that is, the leader or one of the leaders of the revolutionary movement, assumes the right to call upon workers to make the greatest sacrifices, including that of their lives. This right involves no less important responsibilities."

"Otherwise, every intelligent worker will inevitably ask himself, 'If X, who calls me to the greatest sacrifices, keeps four-fifths or two-thirds of his time not to assure my victory but to assure his bourgeois existence, that shows that he does not have confidence in the imminence of the coming revolution'. And this worker would be right."

"Leave aside the programme, please! It is not a matter of programme. It's a matter of revolutionary activity in general... Your letters and above all your political attitude show me that communism [i.e. revolutionary socialism] is for you a sincere idea rather than a dominant conviction of life..."

Alfred Rosmer, an old and close friend of Trotsky's, and a man with great standing and experience in the French trade-union movement, was the most prominent of those who went ahead with the weekly. But he too found Molinier bumptious and crude. He could not tolerate this upstart young man (25 or 26 years old at the time) arguing and pushing after he, Rosmer, with all his fame and decades of experience, had spoken.

In a letter to his American co-thinker Max Shachtman, Trotsky recalled his own experiences when he was in Paris during World War 1 and working with Rosmer and the revolutionary trade-unionists around him who opposed the war. "More than once I was amazed at the meetings... no agenda, no minutes, unstructured give-and-take of discussion, no decisions, the meeting breaks up and everyone does just what he feels like



Raymond Molinier

doing or even nothing at all. And so it went week after week for years on end."

Long habituation to such small, informal, left-wing trade-union caucuses had set Rosmer against Molinier's more dynamic methods. Trotsky wrote further to a Spanish comrade, Andres Nin, dealing with Rosmer's disdain at the fact that Molinier was a businessman: he and his brother Henri ran a debt-collecting agency.

"It is precisely in this field that Molinier displays his altogether very exceptional revolutionary nature. He is undoubtedly a very capable businessman... But... personally he lives in extremely modest fashion, and maintains himself at present by night work as a chauffeur... Where does the money made by his 'brilliant' transactions go? Entirely to the needs of the organisation..."

"I ask you: what kind of hopeless philistine must one be to object to all of this? The commercial occupations of the Molinier brothers do not please Rosmer, you see. He distinguishes between honest, solid, respectable business and dishonest business — carried on by a communist!..."

Trotsky added: "Molinier's big fault lies in the extreme explosiveness of the man. At a moment's notice, he throws himself into doing everything for everybody, without asking the others and without coming back to them. By doing this, he often incites not only the bad workers against himself, but the good ones as well, who demand of him more normal and democratic methods of work. I have had some clashes with him on this field, and I fear I will have more in future."

He did have more. In 1934 the French Trotskyists joined the French Socialist Party, which was becoming more lively and moving to the left. They quickly gained support, but just as quickly the Socialist Party leaders moved against them. After little more than a year the Socialist Party expelled a number of Trotskyists. The Socialists were moving towards alliance with the Stalinists in the "Popular Front."

Trotsky argued that the time was not for cautious tactics, but for a sharp political offensive: raise the revolutionary banner, break the best people away from the Socialist Party, and set up a new revolutionary party. This tactic for a particular situation has since been garbled by many would-be Trotskyist groups into a general rule for relating to reformist parties in all situations: it still made sense then, I think.

But at precisely this point the Trotskyist group fell apart. Molinier and his friends, off their own bat, without any prior agreement, launched a new "broad revolutionary" paper, aimed at appealing to wavering left-wingers in the Socialist Party without making them choose directly for

Trotskyism.

Trotsky was furious. Worst of all, he thought, was that Molinier had used financial power (his access to the funds necessary to launch a paper) to short-cut political processes.

There was a split which continued until Trotsky's death in 1940. It was further envenomed after 1938 when Trotsky's son Leon Sedov was killed by Stalinists. Sedov's widow, Jeanne Martin des Pallieres, was a member of Molinier's group (and, in fact, Molinier's ex-wife). She claimed custody of Trotsky's grandson Seva, whom she and Leon Sedov had been looking after since his mother, Trotsky's daughter Zina, died in 1933; she also tried to hold on to Trotsky's archives, which Sedov had been keeping. Court battles ensued.

Both Trotsky and Molinier, however, were able to let objective political judgements override personal bitterness. In 1940, shortly before Trotsky's death, there was a tentative but open-ended exchange of letters about reunification. Molinier's group in France, without Molinier, would in fact reunite with the other Trotskyists in 1944.

Perhaps in Molinier Trotsky saw some of the character of the heroic activists who were just as irreplaceable to the Bolshevik party as the theorists like Lenin and himself. In 1931, he wrote of one of those activists, Kote Tsintsadze, who had just died after being exiled by the Stalinists:

"Kote was not a theoretician. But his clear thinking, his revolutionary passion, and his immense political experience... armed him better, more seriously and firmly, than does the doctrine formally digested by those who lack the fortitude and perseverance of Tsintsadze. Like Shakespeare's Lear, he was every inch a revolutionary..."

"His life was entirely bound up with the history of the revolutionary movement for more than a quarter of a century... He carried out the onerous work of illegal organisation, and any time revolutionists were caught in the net of the police he devoted himself to freeing them..."

"The Communist parties in the West have not yet brought up fighters of Tsintsadze's type. This is their besetting weakness, determined by historical reasons but nonetheless a weakness. The Left Opposition [i.e. the Trotskyist movement] in the Western countries is not an exception in this respect and it must well take note of it."

For a whole era, from the 1920s until very recently, people of the type of a Tsintsadze or a Molinier who became revolutionaries were much more likely — outside of the Stalinist states — to join a Stalinist party than the Trotskyists. The bigger party would offer more scope to their enterprise and energy; the theoretical and political arguments would often seem too abstruse. The Trotskyist groups ended up, perforce, with a proportion bigger than we would wish of political quibblers and unappreciated geniuses.

Now, with the downfall of Stalinism, the conditions have been created for that to change. Farewell, Raymond Molinier. We shall see your like again.

Labour leaders attack teachers' boycott

EDUCATION

MANY TEACHERS are deeply angered by the antics of Labour's new education spokesperson David Blunkett. He has come out in more or less full support for the latest version of the hated SATs tests proposed by Tory stooge Ron Dearing. These "new" proposals are in essence no different from those rejected last summer. But they have led Blunkett to call on the National Union of Teachers to call off its highly successful boycott of the tests.

- Tests will be compulsory in Maths, Science and English for seven, eleven and fourteen year olds.

- School league tables at 11 will be sent to all parents.

- Tests will be used to police teachers at key stages 1 and 2. Results could even be used to

decide pay increments and to discipline teachers.

Blunkett's new stance represents a further step to the right in comparison with his predecessor Anne Taylor and reflect the fact that many Labour local authorities are aping the Tories with their own "value-added" version of the Tory tests. These supposedly "balance" pure league tables by taking into account "external" factors like social class and the income of the pupils' families.

But as one NUT activist puts it: "The Tories are holding a loaded gun to headmasters. No league tables are any good. You can't make a decent idea out of this rubbish. What is needed to improve performance is more resources and a serious attempt to let teachers work out new and improved methods by talking

together and with parents about the way we teach.

"The NUT has quite rightly decided to keep up its boycott. This must continue through till May '95 and we must encourage other unions to join us."

As if Blunkett's dismal performance wasn't bad enough Tony Blair has decided to add his own tuppence worth.

Blair has come out in support of grant maintained schools, saying that he envisages a role for them. But as all teachers know, the development of more grant maintained schools along with testing at 11 represents the first steps towards the re-introduction of Grammar Schools. The end goal is to so squeeze local authority finances — which will come under renewed pressure with the increase in enrolment coming

up (350,000 in the next 4 years) — that more schools start to look at the option of going grant maintained on a selective basis.

NUT activists need to take up the fight against Blair and Blunkett through their union, the Socialist Educational Association and the Labour Party itself.

The Labour leaders' drift to the right shows the need for teachers to have their own distinctive voice as trade unionists inside the party. The NUT should ballot for Labour Party affiliation. Such a move would give a political edge to the campaigns that are needed right now over class sizes and pay.

The first step in the battle will come with the EIS's planned Scotland wide strike on December 15th against a miserly 2.3% pay offer.

Job cuts in Department of Health

CIVIL SERVICE

By and DoH worker

LAST WEEK, management announced 21% job cuts in the Department of Health. This is inevitably going to mean compulsory redundancies and a massively increased amount of work for the staff remaining there.

It will also mean an attack on pay and conditions generally; throughout the Dept. of Health there will be various pay and grading exercises. Allowances such as London Weighting and local pay additions are under threat.

The CPSA is committed to fighting compulsory redun-

dancies through strike action; those on the left are arguing for strike action against any staff cuts whatsoever. We are arguing against any increase in work-load, any change in job description, any changes to our pay and grading.

Morale at the Dept. of Health is extremely low as union members recognise there are no jobs outside. Although everyone has been offered voluntary redundancy, it looks like the take-up will be low.

The final announcement on whether there will be compulsory redundancies will take place in January. In the meantime, there will be a series of members' meetings to discuss the way forward.

Reinstate CPSA DSS Inner London South branch!

By a CPSA member

WHILE THE Tories are attacking Civil Service jobs, the leaders of the low paid Civil Servants union CPSA are busy attacking their members.

The latest attack comes on the big Inner London South DSS branch which has been closed down on spurious grounds at the whim of the union's General Secretary Barry Reamsbottom.

The branch leadership has hit back calling for the issues in question to be put to a full branch meeting. They have issued this challenge to

Reamsbottom:

"The closure of the Branch is an attack on the elected Branch members and we demand the opportunity to defend our good name and that of the Branch.

"We retain the confidence of our members and we challenge you to put this to the test.

"It is imperative that the Branch should be allowed to function again immediately if we are to retain members' support for CPSA and defend their interests.

"The actions of the NEC have put this support at risk."

A weekend school for Labour and trade union activists

Arguing for socialism in the workplace
Saturday-Sunday 10-11 December
Nottingham

WE ARE NOW entering a new period in British politics. After the defeats and setbacks for the trade union and labour movement of the last two decades, we are seeing the first signs that things are beginning to change for the better.

The signal workers' strike and now the retreat over Post Office privatisation show that the Tories are far from invincible, while the debate that is developing amongst Labour activists over Clause Four demonstrates that the Party is still an important arena for socialists.

This weekend school is designed to help socialists and trade union activists take stock of this new situation.

We will be holding discussions and workshops on a wide range of topics from history and theory, through campaigning on the Welfare State and the anti-union laws. There will be practical training sessions on how to organise strike action, and arguing for socialism in the workplace.

The entire weekend is geared around the theme of organising the fightback and building for the

future. All are welcome. Why not come along?

- The price for the weekend is £3 waged or £1.50 unwaged. Send cheques payable to "WL Publications" to AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA for your ticket.

- If you want to use our creche facilities phone Tom on 071-708 0511 or 071-639 7965 before 1st December.

- Crash accommodation will be provided. Alternatively, we can direct you to cheap bed and breakfast.

- More details from Tom on 071-708 0511 or 071-639 7965.

- Sessions include: The state of the movement today and the tasks facing socialists; What make the union bureaucracy tick? Strikes: how to fight, how to win; The Labour Party: from its origins to Blair and much, much more.

Right to Strike Conference

By Trudy Saunders, SMTUC and CPSA

The Tory government is considering yet further anti-strike legislation. Already the landmark NATFHE judgement has ruled that Trade Unions balloting their members have to provide a list of names accurate to within 10 people, however large the group. This makes practically all industrial action open to legal challenge and has already been used against other workers

This conference has been called to discuss how to fight for the right of workers to withdraw their labour, to discuss alternatives to the Tory laws, and to organise solidarity with those hit by these laws. The Conference will provide

trade union members with a unique opportunity to discuss a strategy to unshackle the unions.

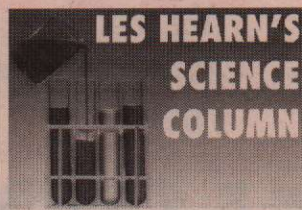
- Saturday 26 November 1-5pm
The Union Club, 723 Pershore Road, Birmingham

Jointly organised by:
Birmingham, Lambeth and Oxford Trades Union Councils, Public Sector Alliance, Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee, Socialist Campaign Group Supporters Network, Trade Union News.

Main Speakers: Ken Cameron (Gen Sec FBUI), Bill Wedderburn (LSE), Bob Crowe (Ass Gen Sec RMT), Doreen Cameron (Pres NATFHE)

- Registration Fees: £8 branches/£5 or £3 individuals. Return to TUN, PO Box 6496, London N1.

Genetic testing — who benefits?



GENETIC diseases are the cause of much pain, distress and early death. It is possible to detect two of these conditions, phenylketonuria (PKU), which causes a serious mental retardation, and congenital hypothyroidism, by a routine blood test of the newborn. This has been done for some decades in Britain, a drop of blood being taken from each baby's heel for testing.

It is now possible to test babies for the presence of genes for sickle-cell anaemia (SCA) and thalassaemia, both debilitating blood diseases and this is now being done in some hospitals in inner London, Manchester and some other cities. There are also pilot schemes to screen babies for the lung disease cystic fibrosis (CF) and for the muscle-wasting disease Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD).

Are these positive developments? Prominent science journalist Gail Vines discussed the issues in *New Scientist* recently. The answer depends to some extent on the accuracy of the information gained from the tests and on what use can be made of the information.

For PKU and hypothyroidism, there are overwhelming benefits to the screening since prompt treatment with a special diet or with thyroid hormone respectively allows the babies to grow up normally. For SCA, thalassaemia and CF, there are no cures but it can be argued that sufferers fare better if their condition is known earlier. For DMD, also untreatable, the benefit is much less definite.

In the state of Pennsylvania; all newborn boys are screened for DMD routinely without parental consent, something that has caused much controversy. One doctor has said that screening should be stopped altogether since parents might "develop a different outlook on a child destined to die".

It is inevitable that tests to identify faulty genes will be developed before cures are found for the diseases they cause. Perhaps knowledge about a child's condition should not be sought unless there is some tangible benefit to the child or its parents in having that knowledge.

But what about adults having knowledge of their genetic status? Potential parents should perhaps know whether they carry genes for genetic diseases which they might pass on.

If genetic screening of the adult population (or at least the child-bearing portion of it) is to be proposed in Britain,

a prime target would be the gene for CF. This is carried by about 3% of the population without ill-effect. A problem only arises if two carriers each pass on a gene for CF to a child, a situation which would arise on average 25% of the time.

In a pilot scheme in Edinburgh, four couples of CF carriers were identified out of nearly 6000 couples screened. They all opted to have prenatal diagnosis and to abort foetuses carrying two copies of the CF gene.

This is all very fine as long as the couples were not being coerced in some way into taking this action. Treatment for sufferers of CF is improving their life expectancy and quality of life and there may soon be "cures" for CF, even if these may have to be administered regularly.

Further, the reliability of the test is by no means absolute. This could lead to some people to feel there was no risk of affected children or conversely to worry unnecessarily. Another problem is the failure of some people to fully understand the meaning of genetic tests.

Some people found to be carriers have then developed a more pessimistic outlook on their own health, even though there was no risk to them from the single copy of the gene. For example, CF carriers have demonstrated raised levels of anxiety. Conversely, some people who tested negative for the CF gene were convinced that they could not be carrying the gene, even though it was explained that the test was only 85% accurate.

Some carriers have been subjected to discrimination by others, once again without justification. SCA carriers in the USA have been barred from careers in the armed forces and, in Nigeria, where up to a quarter of the population carry the gene, there have been calls for marriages between carriers to be banned.

Thalassaemia carriers in Greece have found themselves devalued as marriage partners (though no such problem appears to have arisen in Cyprus). There are justified fears that carriers could be refused medical or life insurance if their genetic status were known.

The lesson seems to be that genetic information should be the "property" of the individual affected. Where the information concerns the offspring of individuals, it should perhaps be available only where it is capable of being useful, instead of just being a source of worry.

Finally, although you can't make someone understand something, perhaps genetic information could be explained better.

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

What are you doing?

Clause Four: the next weeks and months are crucial



By Arthur Scargill, President, National Union of Mineworkers, President, Defend Clause Four Campaign

THE FIGHT to defend Clause Four, and to defend the principles of the Labour Party has begun. The coming weeks and months, from the campaign launch conference on 12

November, through the Labour Party National Executive Meeting on 30 November (when Tony Blair is expected to unveil his "new Labour" aims and objectives — the replacement Clause Four) and on until the start of the trade union conference season next spring, will be crucial.

Blair has shown that he is not going to be put off lightly. Within seconds of this year's conference voting to reaffirm Clause Four he was telling the country's media that the vote was not important. He was not willing to listen to conference, and he seems unwilling to listen to the movement. But we in the Party and in the trade unions can make him listen.

The statement recently signed by 31 of Labour's 62 MEPs insisting that the current wording of Clause Four must be retained intact was a big boost to our campaign, and

a shot across the bows of Blair and the "modernisers." It shows what can be achieved. Many MPs and trade union leaders are adding their support to our campaign.

The next stage is to take our argument out to the whole of the movement. Through local and regional debates and rallies, through work in CLPs and trade unions we must ensure that everyone is clear on the significance of Blair's attack on Clause Four. This work can be done. Arrangements for meetings and debates are being made, resolutions for union conferences are being prepared. But it must be done quickly, and for that we will need money.

Those who seek to undermine the principles of our movement have access to the media to relay their justifications to the membership. We do not. They have access to considerable financial resources. We do not. We have only ourselves, and the principles on which our party was founded. Please help the campaign to defend Clause Four. Please send whatever you can afford to the campaign. With your help, we can stop this attempt to destroy our socialist Labour Party.

● More on Clause Four: see centre pages.

By Joan Trevor

THERE IS a swathe of councils closing their old people's homes, privatising old people's homes, putting old people over whom they have power of life or death into private homes run not for the benefit of residents but for the bank balances of the proprietors. One such is Lambeth council in south London.

In the elections last May Labour lost Lambeth. Now there is a hung council. Liberals, Labourites and Conservatives take it in turns to chair committees. They appear together in local newspapers congratulating refuse collectors for their efforts in cleaning up Lambeth. Who is to be congratulated on cleaning up Lambeth? Is it the Tories? Is it the Liberals? Is it the Labourites who have initiated improvements to service delivery in this vital area of Lambeth life? The voters would like to know, so that they can reward them with their votes at the next election.

Last month Liberals and Tories ganged up to vote through closure of four old people's homes. Four other homes will be privatised — specialist homes like the one for people with Alzheimer's which, presumably, is a bit difficult to run within the law when you are also trying to make a profit out of it.

Labourites on the council didn't get involved in the vote on the closures and privatisations. But they suspect, with Liberals and Tories, that putting old people into private homes will attract a bit more money to the council's Community Care budget. A bribe from the government to be spent not on the old people concerned but to save the council from having to make cuts in other areas. Labourites on the council don't want to be seen to be looking a gift horse in the mouth. Voters might find out. They might call them irresponsible. Labourites on the council are "looking at the whole issue."

Leftists in the Labour Party are looking at the whole issue too.

What they see is: Labour councillors prepared to sell other people's grandmothers.

Leftists ask the councillors: what are you doing?

Why are you prepared to go along with sacking workers, jeopardising the health and dignity of old people in council care, accepting that care should be provided only when it makes a profit?

Isn't that really irresponsible?

When you put the issues to them like that their voices go all high and squeaky.

When you put it to them that to gain the respect of voters they should oppose the closures and privatisations, they talk as though the population of Lambeth were simmering anarchists and would tear down the Town Hall if anyone opposed anything it does.

This story is being repeated all over the country.

We need campaigns in the Labour Party to make councillors like these face up to what they are doing. More than that. To force them to fight.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty exists to help organise such campaigns.

If you can help our work with a donation please send a cheque, payable to "WL Publications", to: AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

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