

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

For Workers' Liberty East and West

Fight the Tories! Rebuild the left!



Back Benn and Heffer!

THE PRISONS

THATCHER'S HELL-HOLES

Increase poverty, insecurity, and the dog-eat-dog spirit. Shout loudly about law and order. Throw 51,000 men and women into squalid, overcrowded jails. Mix well — and you have prison riots.

At Glenochil jail in Scotland, the media have had a chance to look at one of the places where the Tories try to lock away the problems of their system.

In May there was a riot at Glenochil, apparently arising from an individual clash between a prisoner and a warder. Since then most of the prisoners have been locked in their cells 23 hours a day. The great majority of them have not been outside their corridors for 10 weeks.

The cells have only cardboard furniture. The prisoners have no beds — only mattresses on the floor, which are soaked in urine. There is no glass in their cell windows. They have lice and scabies.

The warders go round the cells wearing riot gear.

Talking to journalists, prisoners have demanded a public inquiry and the removal of the Glenochil prison governor. A demonstration outside the prison by prisoners' women relatives on 26 July will demand improvements in conditions.

The men at Glenochil are mostly serving sentences of five years or more for grievous bodily harm, armed robbery, and similar offences. But the jail is not reforming them, or turning them away from crime. It is brutalising them — and it is brutalising the prison officers too.

Since the Tories took office in 1979, the number of people in British prisons has gone up by a quarter. The Government has increased spending on prisons by 34% (between 1979 and 1987), and launched the biggest prison-building programme



Inside Glenochil prison

this century, but the cells are still crammed.

Over 80% of the people in jail are convicted of relatively minor offences, with terms of 18 months or less. A quarter of those in jail at any one time have not been sentenced or convicted at all — they are on remand, waiting for trial.

In Holland the number in jail — as a proportion of the population — is one third of the number in Britain. Dutch prisoners have relative-

ly humane conditions: the right to vote; the right to meet spouses, girlfriends and boyfriends privately; access to journalists; a good complaints system; decent cells with colour TVs and pets.

In Sweden the number of remand prisoners again in proportion to population — is one-third Britain's.

In the US, on the other hand, the relative prison numbers are twice Britain's, or six times Holland's. The jails are hell-holes like Bri-

tain's. In California prisoners can pay extra to go to a private jail; the advertising stresses that they are almost certain to suffer homosexual rape if they go to the public jail. The US also has the death penalty.

The result? The US's crime rate has risen even faster than Britain's. Holland's and Sweden's crime rates are much lower, and have risen no faster than Britain's.

Tory Britain breeds crime and despair. Trying to lock the problems away won't work.

Cleveland: who will listen to the children?

WOMAN'S EYE

By Lynn Ferguson

Despite the Butler-Sloss report, all the TV coverage, the plethora of articles in the press, we still do not seem to have got to the bottom of what happened in Cleveland. Bits of the jigsaw seem to be missing.

How many children were abused? How many themselves verbally backed up the medical indications? How many mothers believed the diagnosis? And how many in the back of their minds did have doubts about the behaviour of their husband, or some other male adult, doubts they couldn't face?

Most of this we'll never find out. What is for sure is that there were children who did say they'd been abused. There were mothers who were grateful to Dr Higgs and believed her diagnosis. But these cases received little prominence in the reporting around the affair. All the individual case histories we have seen have been of families who vehemently insisted they're children hadn't been abused.

Now to be wrongly accused of abusing your own children must be a nightmare. To have your children taken away in such circumstances must be nothing short of heart-breaking. No-one can fail to be moved by the families' accounts of their suffering. But that gets us nowhere. It's cheap journalism which doesn't get us any nearer the truth.

A few weeks ago New Statesman/New Society published a long and hair-raising account by a mother of her discovery that her 3 year old daughter had been abused



Children: at risk?

by her husband's father. She gave detailed descriptions of the changes in her previously happy and well-adjusted child's behaviour — her nightmares, her demands to be touched on her vulva, her displaying of her genitals to all and sundry, her alternate aggression and withdrawal.

The woman told her husband — who didn't believe her. She saw psychologists, doctors — who didn't believe her, who accused her of being a screwed-up hysteric.

Eventually she told a friend involved in child therapy — who believed her and found her help. This woman didn't live in

Cleveland, and the events happened 2 or 3 years ago. But to read such an account gives balance to the picture and sets the events in Cleveland in a real context, the context where child abuse is still something that many professionals think happens rarely, or only in 'dysfunctional' families. Certainly not in ordinary middle class homes.

So what have we come out of the whole affair with? Well, cynically it's given a bunch of Fleet Street hacks easy copy for almost a year. Stuart Bell has got himself a national name and a probably bestselling book into the bargain. It has been recommended that services for protecting and helping children should be better integrated and co-

ordinated. But do we really think the government is going to provide the necessary resources?

The real donkey work is going to be left to the voluntary agencies — incest survivors groups, Childline etc — the very groups who haven't been consulted or listened to during the whole affair. As for the abused children and the mothers, isolated and unsupported who have to deal with the abuse at the sharp end, who see their children physically and emotionally fall apart before their eyes, well no-one wants to listen to them. They're left out of the official equation, treated as objects of policy, rather than as key actors. After all, they're not professionals.

Socialists and alcohol

What should socialists say about alcohol? Simon Pottinger opens a discussion.

Drunken football fans have never proven too difficult for tabloid editors and pub philosophers to understand.

Homespun solutions to the problem, ranging from flogging to national identity cards are common currency.

A summer of rioting in sleepy towns, many in the Home Counties, by people described as having "too much money in their pockets and too many pints inside them" has also caused anger. Middle class violence — post exam 'high jinks', or 'wild child' parties ending in damaged hotels — have however rarely qualified for quite the same vehemence as 'our boys in Dusseldorf'. The parents are not as often held to blame or the public schools for that matter.

What is to blame? Alcohol. The quality and gutter dailies have launched themselves at the issue, with editorials saying what you would expect. In fact, this sum-

mer's events are nothing new, and as the papers lose interest, all the costs and symptoms of alcohol abuse will still exist.

* 40,000 premature deaths a year in the UK.

* 1,000 deaths of children and young people.

* 1 in 5 general hospital beds occupied by a patient with alcohol related illness.

* 2 out of 3 suicides.

* Half of all cases of domestic violence.

Despite the alarming growth in the number of heroin addicts, that drug kills only about 60 people a year. Anyone calling for policies to control alcohol as a dangerous drug, however, is looked upon as a killjoy puritan.

The left usually has few answers — either we say "it'll all come out in the socialist wash", or we go along with the prohibition of drugs such as cannabis, or we dismiss the issue with a few jokes.

What is needed is a mixture of education and policy designed to control alcohol consumption. Like it or not, as overall consumption increases, so too does every other single resultant of abuse mentioned above.

We would have to consider: * Linking the price of drink to the increase in earnings, and not reduce

it in real terms as successive governments have done. This would reduce consumption.

* Refusing to increase licensing hours as is presently being done, and even consider restrictions.

* Ban drink advertising, like cigarette advertising. Stop drink companies sponsoring sport.

* Funding proper community and preventative medicine.

* Education about the long-term health damage of drinking and when it is inappropriate to drink at all — such as when working or driving.

* Clamp down on drink driving. Introduce random breath-testing.

These measures would begin to reduce the damage currently attributable to drink. They would also reduce the profits of the brewers, and would therefore reduce funding to the Tory Party! Ask yourself why the increase in licensing hours came so high up the agenda of the Government so soon after the election.

Have a think about how much alcohol-induced damage you see around you, and how that's going to increase now pubs are going to be open longer and the real price continues going down.

Who do you think gets most out of drink: you, the Tories or the brewers?

Cleveland: 'Higgs was not major culprit'

by David Hughes, Political Correspondent

The two doctors at the centre of the Cleveland child sex abuse case will not be named in the report.

Dr Higgs and Dr Ryan, the two doctors who were named in the report, were taken from their families in the wake of the Higgs-Ryan findings.

The inquiry is expected to report that the Cleveland child sex abuse case was not a major factor in the wider context of child abuse.

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Cleveland report will disappoint



Cleveland: the doctors were wrong

Poll in Pakistan

Pakistan's president, General Zia, has set 16 November as the date for elections for the National Assembly.

Zia took power through a military coup in 1977. Elections were held for the National Assembly in February 1985, but only non-party candidates were allowed to stand.

Party candidates will be banned in the November election, too. Zia said that they "could mislead simple people". Political parties are allowed to agitate, but they cannot give their label to candidates.



Photo: Morabadi/Reflex

Parade in Tehran on the 8th anniversary of the war.

Lessons of the Gulf War

“Making this decision was more deadly than taking poison”, said Ayatollah Khomeini of his government’s decision to sue for peace with Iraq.

It is to be hoped that an end to the Gulf War will indeed see the old man off.

It seems that the war will end. Iraq’s Saddam Hussein has been pushing his advantage very hard, invading Iran and scoring further victories. But Saddam’s aim is to get the most favourable possible deal in the ceasefire talks, rather than to go for Khomeini’s throat. He has taken too many risks already in the eight years of this gruesome conflict.

The ‘war of words’ goes on, but the gradual shift towards diplomacy is evident. The real question now is: how can either regime make the transition from war to peace while maintaining their own stability?

Iran has undoubtedly been preparing. The dominant Rafsanjani faction, which opted for the peace settlement, has concentrated power in its own hands and seems confident it can maintain it. Certainly its rivals — principally, more hard-line fundamentalists — are not in a position to move against Rafsanjani.

Probably, once peace is secured, the dominant trend will be towards a rapprochement with the ‘Great Satan’ — Washington — par-

ticularly once there is a change of administration in the US.

Saddam also seems relatively secure, although Kurdish oppositionists (allied with Iran) are by no means silenced.

Of course, things could go wrong, and long-term hostilities could start up again. Early expectations for how soon peace would come have proved too optimistic. But the war does seem to be moving towards an end.

In the Iranian capital, Tehran, there was dancing in the streets. For the war has been increasingly unpopular. If Rafsanjani’s plan is to stall for time, rebuilding Iranian forces under cover of a prolonged ceasefire, he will find stiff resistance within Iran to a return to war.

Undoubtedly, the mullahs need to rebuild their military forces, which are certainly demoralised and by some accounts virtually in collapse. The ‘revolutionary guards’ are needed as much for internal repression as for external warfare.

EDITORIAL

But on both sides, if the transition to peace can be made smoothly, there will have to be military demobilisation for both political and economic reasons.

The Gulf war has had a lot to teach socialists. Both the Iraqi and the Iranian regimes have, at different times, declared themselves ‘anti-imperialist’. Both have accused the other of ‘pro-imperialism’ (among other things). Yet the war has never been a contest between ‘imperialism’ and ‘the masses’, or between ‘progress’ and ‘reaction’.

Both sides have acted as mini-imperialists, seeking to dominate the region, directly oppressing minority nationalities (especially, but not only, Kurds), and depriving their populations of the most elementary democratic rights.

On both sides, the war was used to beat left-wing opponents into

submission. In Iran, the spectre of ‘imperialism’ was used to hoodwink many leftists into believing they did have something in common — a common enemy — with Khomeini. This was not merely naivety: it flowed from a widely-promoted view of the world. It proved, quite literally, fatal.

American imperialism is, obviously, hostile to the Iranian regime. But — a second lesson — it is not able simply to replace that regime at will with a more suitable one. It needs allies within Iran, and those it lacks.

The relationship between Iran and the US is not akin to old colonial and semi-colonial relationships. Imperial colonies always had large social layers who benefited from colonial rule and could be relied upon to help maintain it. Elsewhere, more recently, savagely right-wing regimes have looked to the US for support in conditions where the US would not need to intervene directly and militarily. Chile

is an example.

But in Iran there is no base, at the moment for a pro-American regime, at least not one openly and avowedly so, depending on American military support. And so the American naval intervention that began last summer was unlikely ever to aim further than a policy of *containment*. The subjection of Iran or even the overthrow of Khomeini, was in reality beyond their means.

And so the Gulf War which is ending now is that same reactionary war on both sides that started in September 1980. The socialist policy that best matched the requirements of the situation was unrelenting hostility to both sides in the war throughout it, from beginning to end and beyond.

Before, during and after, we must look to the downfall of Saddam and Khomeini and build solidarity with Iranian and Iraqi socialists fighting to bring about that downfall.

Trying to purge the poll-tax fight

By Stan Crooke

Question: What happens to Labour Party members who recruit people to the Labour Party to fight the poll tax.

Answer: They get expelled!

This is now the fate hanging over Tommy Sheridan, a member of Pollok Constituency Labour Party and secretary of the local anti-poll tax union. Notoriously right-wing Pollok MP Jimmy Dunnachie has persuaded the Labour Party National Executive Committee (not that it needs much persuading) to launch an enquiry into alleged Militant ‘infiltration’ of Pollok CLP in general, and into Tommy Sheridan in particular.

The latter’s crimes, according to Dunnachie, include:

* Criticising in public Labour’s current (do-nothing) policy on the poll tax (does Dunnachie think that Kinnock should be expelled as well for his public attacks on Labour’s nuclear defence policies?).

* Urging people to join the Labour Party to strengthen the campaign for non-payment of the Poll Tax (Dunnachie is, of course, totally opposed to non-payment).

* Advocating de-selection of Labour elected representatives who failed to fight the poll tax (for obvious reasons, Dunnachie, himself selected as a Labour candidate by only a small majority, is less than enthusiastic about notions of democracy and accountability).

* Being a ‘self-confessed member of the Militant tendency’, and ar-

ranging a meeting — on behalf of the local anti poll-tax union — which included ex-Liverpool councillor Tony Mulhearn as one of the platform speakers.

One motivating force behind the enquiry is hostility toward Militant. Pollok CLP recently passed a resolution declaring the ‘promotion of Militant to be an infringement of Labour Party rules. And the chair of Pollok CLP, Stuart MacLennan, formerly a ‘self-confessed’ Trotskyist himself, shows the same attitude towards ‘Militant’ in the Labour Party as he does towards them in his dealings in the CPSA.

But the Labour Party right wing is also anxious to put the skids under anti-poll tax campaigning.

As the call for non-payment continues to gain ground and more Labour Party members become

critical of the role of Labour controlled councils in administering the poll tax, so too the right wing (whose line on the poll tax is: hang on in there until the next General Election) become increasingly ruthless in its efforts to head off the burgeoning campaign against the poll tax.

In Kinnock’s New Model Labour Party the solution they have adopted is the obvious one — call in the NEC and expel the trouble-makers. And what better place to start than with an anti-poll tax campaigner who also subscribes to ‘Militant’s’ ideas, thus enabling the anti-Militant prejudices of sections of the Labour Party to be exploited and mobilised in an attack on the involvement of any Labour Party member in anti-poll tax campaigning.

Socialist Organiser
PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA
01-639 7965

Latest date for reports: first post Monday or by phone, Monday evening.
Editor: John O’Mahony
Typesetting: Upstream Ltd (TU)
01-358 1344

Published by Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.
Printed by Press Link International (UK) Ltd (TU). Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.
Signed articles do not necessarily reflect the view of Socialist Organiser.

GRAFFITI

Competition kills

Research from the US on the effects of the market in healthcare indicates that "competition kills patients." Medical researchers Shortell and Hughes studied data from a total of 214,839 patients on Medicare, being treated for 16 common complaints in 981 hospitals in the year 1983-4. They found correlations between higher mortality rates and 3 main factors. Hospitals with stringent procedures for reviewing charges had death rates 6-10% higher than the average. Hospitals with strict procedures for reviewing 'certificates of need' had mortality rates 5-6% higher. Also significant was the impact of Health Maintenance Organisations. Members pay a fixed monthly amount to the HMO, which then

negotiates cover for basic medical needs. Shortell and Hughes research shows that HMOs lead to pressure on hospitals to cut their costs and treat more patients as out-patients. The general conclusions are that competition and cost control

drive hospitals to make economies which risk a rise in mortality. The schemes investigated are very similar to those that Tory advisors would like introduced here. Will they be taking the results of this research into account?

Unequal opportunities

Lambeth Council has decided to give pay rises of thousands of pounds each to senior managerial staff, whilst ratting on a pay agreement with lower paid workers. Staff in the Grants and Mortgages section, all of whom earn under £10,000 a year were due a total of £85,000 in back pay between them. Lambeth now say they won't get it, because the agreement with the senior staff was 'legally enforceable'

whereas the deal with the Grants and Mortgages section was not. Lambeth has a reputation as a 'lefty' council. It is also an equal opportunities employer. A third of the workers in the Grants and Mortgages section are black. Lambeth NALGO's deputy convenor thinks this is significant "I think our pay rise has not been honoured because we have the least muscle."



What's special about this supermarket in Newcastle-under-Lyme? It's being shut down because it's too ugly. Meanwhile Sainsburys have built a Homebase shop in mock-Egyptian style in West London: according to the Observer, local opinion was overwhelmingly favourable.

Maybe local communities should have more say in the design of large buildings; and maybe if they had a say it wouldn't mean stultifying conformism and conservatism.

Cop dissents

Judges and police have fallen out over the continuing demonstrations by P&O strikers in Dover. High Court Judge Michael Davies declared the demonstrations at Dover as 'unlawful and intimidatory', as well as demanding that the NUS disown the assembly.

Then, on Newsnight, a Dover policeman Supt. Graham Mountford, said he regarded only 6 of the demonstrators as pickets and the others as being 'just there to add their presence to the work the pickets are trying to do.' He also said "I believe it is a right everyone should have to be allowed to demonstrate, so long as you demonstrate within the law."

Double the poverty

One in five families in Britain are living on or below the poverty line. The Select Committee on Social Services — which has a Tory majority — has just produced a report which shows that the number of families claiming means-tested benefits has almost doubled in the 9 years that Thatcher has been in office — from 4.4 million to 8.2 million. Probably another million are left out as they don't claim the benefits they're entitled to.

The committee has clashed with the government before. Earlier this year it agreed with Labour that the NHS need an immediate injection of £1 billion. The latest report is based on official government figures, but the committee says this is the last time that this will be possible.

Judging complaints

More on the police... The Police Federation has come down in favour of an independent body to investigate complaints against officers. The present system is that any complaints are investigated by senior police officers who report back to the local police authority, which then decides what and whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

The government has decided to stop publishing the numbers of people living below the income support level.

Tory looks

Psychologists have come up with a novel reason for Labour's poor electoral performance — it is the way the candidates look!

Professor Ray Bull took 7 pictures of Conservative MPs, 7 of Labour and showed them to people, who were asked to judge them according to good looks, intelligence, social class and political inclination.

People thought the better looking more 'intelligent-looking' pictures were of Conservatives!

Maybe we'll see the shadow cabinet running off for facelifts now!

A Police Federation spokesman Glyn Williams said the main issue was 'public confidence'. "We know from experience that nothing is more thorough than a properly conducted inquiry by a police officer. But ... it would be argued that the police were being judge and jury in their own cause".



Eric Hammond of the EETPU with Kate Losinska of CPSA at the TUC in Brighton 1986. Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report

Pull out of EETPU!

I agree with John Bloxam (SO 364) that the TUC has handled Eric Hammond very ineptly. It should have campaigned among the EETPU rank and file; instead it relied on threats and persuasion in the bureaucrats' committee-rooms.

I disagree with John's conclusion that militants should stay in the EETPU even after it has definitively parted ways with the TUC. That conclusion might make sense if it were coupled with a campaign for the TUC to drop the expulsion and for the EETPU to reaffiliate. But things have gone too far for that. If the left can't stop Hammond taking the EETPU out of the TUC, we will not be able to make him reaffiliate in the near future.

Whether we like it or not, there will now — barring unexpected about-turns — be a membership war between the EETPU and the TUC. The EETPU, maybe in alliance with other anti-strike unions, will try to make deals with bosses to cut out TUC unions.

How do we respond? Wash our hands of the business and say that because the TUC leaders have bungled the affair, they deserve all they get? No: we need a responsible policy. We need to campaign for a vigorous response by TUC unions.

That vigorous response must include fighting EETPU attempts to poach existing membership, competing with the EETPU to organise new areas — and winning members over from the EETPU. We can't prevent a membership war: we can

make sure it is not one-sided.

The EETPU will not respect any TUC demarcation of unions' constituencies. It is already trying to recruit railworkers. The TUC cannot respond by leaving electricians as the EETPU's reserved area. It can't tell electricians that they must be in the scab EETPU or nothing. In any case, the bulk of the militants in the EETPU have already made it plain that they will leave Hammond's organisation and seek membership in TUC unions: can we argue for rejecting them?

Some militants will have to stay in the EETPU because they are in areas where the EETPU is heavily

dominant or has a single-union deal. They should take two cards — a TUC union card as well as an EETPU one. The workers who remain with Hammond cannot be abandoned: we should relate to them as NUPE or CoHSE activists relate to RCN members, or NUM activists to UDM members.

A vigorous policy to defend trade-unionism must mean a campaign to win over workers from the EETPU — and that means making provision to organise electricians in TUC unions, and encouraging militants to leave the EETPU.

Martin Thomas, Islington

New class in USSR

Recent articles in SO have made a point with which I agree, but it surprises me that you do.

You say that Russia being economically progressive in Afghanistan, no more excuses its imperialism, than the fact that capitalism in England was economically progressive in the 19th century, excuses British Imperialist expansion.

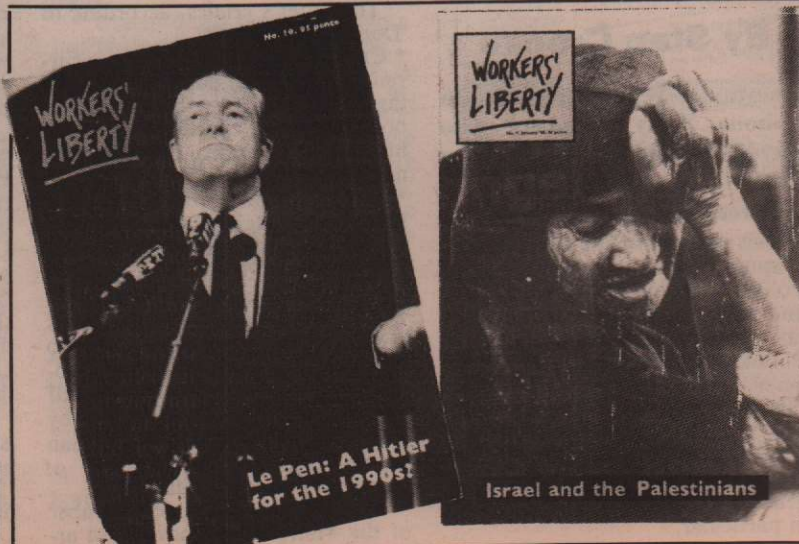
Britain was a new class society. Capitalism of an industrial entrepreneurial kind had under the pressures of the Napoleonic wars come to dominate the economy, driving out the older Mercantilism, and it achieved political power as a result of the Great Reform Bill.

Thus capitalism, which politically can be said to stem from the French Revolution, but which rapidly grew in France's main opponent as you say played an economically progressive role, but that no radical ought to have supported this role, or should so do retrospectively.

But you don't believe the bureaucratic collectivist analysis which make it possible to apply the same reasoning to our present society. If the Russian bureaucracy is still (70 odd years after October) only an episodic and transitional society then that is an impermissible argument.

I suggest you examine the logic of your own reasoning.

Laurens Otter.



Workers' Liberty

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Socialist Worker and the end of the Gulf War

A sell-out by the mullahs?

The Iranian decision to sue for peace in the Gulf War has produced an extremely bizarre response from the Socialist Workers' Party.

Last week's *Socialist Worker* made very strange reading indeed.

Originally the SWP had adopted a serious and sober approach to the Iran/Iraq war, defining it as "A bloody war of attrition between two sub-imperialisms fighting for local rather than global hegemony." In that there was agreement between ourselves and the SWP.

This implied that "there was nothing to choose between the two regimes. The workers' and peasants' interests lay in the defeat of their own bourgeoisies".

All that has changed. The SWP argued that once the US had become more deeply involved in the Gulf conflict then the nature of the war changed.

"The conflict is now primarily between the Khomeini regime and the US plus nearly all the Arab regimes. In these circumstances victory for Iraq is a victory for imperialism... we have no choice but to support the Khomeini regime against the US and its allies".

But now the SWP has gone further down the pro-Iranian road. The only possible interpretation of last week's *Socialist Worker* is that Iran was in the right from the start, that Iran's role in the Iran/Iraq war has always been anti-imperialist and that, therefore by implication, the SWP's original position was totally wrong.

This is what *Socialist Worker* said last week:

"When the war began the western powers welcomed Iraq's attack on the regime which emerged from the Iranian revolution. They hoped an Iraqi victory would allow them to dominate the area just as they did before the fall of the Shah... Even with all the forces raged against Iran it would have been possible to defeat imperialism. But at every stage (ie from 1980) the interests of fighting the Iraqis and Americans were subordinated to the interests of the Mullahs who dominate the Iranian state".

It is impossible to read this and not draw the conclusion that the SWP believe the Iranian cause in the war was just from the beginning. The SWP should be honest and say they now think this, or they should drop this line of argument.

They then go on to denounce the Mullahs for holding back the 'anti-imperialist' war effort by attacking the Kurds, forcing women to wear the veil and attacking the workers' movement.

"If Khomeini had mobilised the Kurds to fight imperialism rather than repressing them, if the Iranian leadership had encouraged workers to exercise control over the war against imperialism instead of intensifying their exploitation, if they had encouraged the participation of

By Tom Rigby

Iranian women and not oppressed them then the war could have been won".

This is strange indeed. If only the workers had been in power in Tehran then the war could have been won is the SWP's basic argument.

What's wrong with this is that it dresses up the Iran/Iraq war as an "anti-imperialist war" on Iran's part and then argues for socialism and workers' power not from the point of view of it being necessary for the working class and the oppressed, but from the angle that working class socialism is the most efficient and militant form of "anti-imperialism".

This is the crassest populism. It is fantasy politics.

The pioneer Russian Marxist George Plekhanov criticised this populist approach long ago when he argued that the Marxists — as opposed to the populists, or today's 'anti-imperialist' SWP — "is convinced that not the workers are necessary for the revolution, but that the revolution for the workers".

In order to justify this populism the SWP adopt some mind bogglingly incoherent arguments. For example:

"The war was used as an excuse to force women off the streets and back behind the veil... if they had encouraged the involvement of Iranian women and not oppressed them, then the war could have been won."

The SWP are distorting reality. The Islamic regime started to attack women's rights in February and March 1979, long before the start of the Iran/Iraq war.

Anyway, socialists do not advocate the liberation of women because it is the most effective way of defeating imperialism but because it is in the interests of women themselves and must be part of the socialist revolution.

Last week's *Socialist Worker* turned this upside down.

Another example of this fantasy politics is the argument:

"If the Iranian leadership had encouraged workers to exercise control over the war against imperialism instead of intensifying their exploitation", and: "If he (ie Khomeini) had used the revolutionary enthusiasm and organisation to fight the war, the chances of success would have been far greater".

So the SWP advocate that the leader of the bloody counter-revolution uses revolutionary enthusiasm and organisation! And that the butcher of the Iranian working class 'encourage' workers control!

This is fantasy on such a scale that it makes the Utopian socialists whom Marx and Engels criticised for believing that the ruling class could be convinced of the desirability of socialism appear as rational scientific socialists.

In fact, even if the SWP were right, and they are not, that Iran's war was just, under no circumstances would we advocate placing such fantastic hopes in Khomeini. It would be ABC for Marxists to insist on working class independence. The SWP have gone so crazy that they have even forgotten how to apply the ABCs.

The SWP has gone a long way from a class approach to the Iran/Iraq war. Their original error had been to see the arrival of the US fleet in the Gulf as changing the basic class character of the war. Since that change of line the SWP have blotted out and refused to address reality. They pick on instances of Iraqi aggression and US support for Iraq, often from before their



Photo Kavah Golestan (Reflex)

Socialist Worker believe he died fighting a just war.

change of line last year, to justify their stance now. They fade out whole parts of the picture such as the Mullahs' use of the human wave of unarmed children against modern military technology or the imperialist (including Israeli) sources of Iranian arms. Any spurious argument or questionable 'fact' that can be found is used to justify their support for Khomeini's war.

This is the crassest example:

"However much it sticks in our gullet, imperialism dictates that we support Iran. If there was any doubt about this then the decisive argument came with the news that the Israelis had lined up with Iraq."

(SW, 28 November 1987)

So for the SWP what is decisive in assessing the class nature of a war is imperialism's attitude to the conflict and in particular it seems the attitude of the Israeli state.

Apart from being dishonest, as Israel has supplied arms to Iran, it is a typical piece of the SWP's "socialist" anti-Zionism. But arguing that "imperialism backs Iraq therefore we support Iran" is a million miles away from Marxism.

As Trotsky used to argue, socialists do not develop their political line by saying no every time the bourgeoisie says yes. Otherwise every sectarian would be a master strategist. In assessing any war Marxists start off from the idea that war is a continuation of politics by other means. We ask what politics, what class interests are served by the war?

We do not see any reason why the stepping up of the US intervention in the Gulf last year makes a basic change in the class forces involved in the Gulf war. Because the US may appear to favour Iraq it does not mean we should line up with Iran.

As Clive Bradley argued in *Workers' Liberty* No. 10:

"...although the US and other superpowers want the war to end, a peace with victors would cause difficulties, especially if the victor was Khomeini. They are anxious to prevent the Islamic revolution disturbing their friends in the Arab Gulf states and Saudi Arabia. Thus the basic US policy has been containment. It is to this end that US ships were dispatched to the Gulf last summer.

The 'tanker war', initiated by Iraq, threatened oil exports in general; when it began to threaten Kuwaiti oil exports, the US decided something had to be done. Import trade routes are just as important, it should not be forgotten, as the region currently absorbs \$60,000 million worth of goods a year, of which half comes from the EEC and a third from the United States.

So the presence of the United States fleet in the Gulf is not for the objective of Khomeini's overthrow, as many on the left have believed. Of course Reagan detests Khomeini, but the US is not at present in a position to remove him. Direct colonial conquest or a Vietnam-style war would be unthinkably costly in a country as large, as populated and as relatively advanced as Iran — unthinkably politically and economically. To replace Khomeini, the US needs an alliance with a domestic political force. At the moment there is no one to ally with: imperialism has no alternative to Khomeini.

The best option for the US is to woo elements within the existing regime. Indeed it has no other option. The most likely alternative to Khomeini at the moment would be worse, from the US point of view — more fundamentalist, more anti-American. The best policy in the meantime is to maintain the stalemate, putting pressure on Iran to accept Resolution 598. This is what is going on now in the Gulf. Anyone who thinks it is now, or is likely to be, an all-out US-Iranian war has completely misunderstood the dynamics of the situation.

Within the policy of containment, the US is — for the moment — giving support to Iraq, and has put pressure on its allies (such as Israel) to do likewise. But the US know perfectly well that an Iraqi victory is going to require more than that. An Iraqi victory is not Reagan's priority."

The US did not even aim to overthrow Khomeini let alone to subject Iran to direct colonial occupation. (And if Iran were conquered by the US we would be in favour of a fight for Iranian independence and at the same time argue for independence from the Mullahs under all conditions.

Therefore to still support Iran in the light of these facts is to accept Khomeini's 'anti-imperialism' as good coin. It is to argue that the working class should adopt Khomeini's 'anti-imperialism' except fight for it more militantly than Khomeini.

But what Khomeini means by 'anti-imperialism' is aggressive Iranian nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism. It is the cover behind which the mullahs attacked and murdered the Iranian left. It is at least as dangerous for Iranian workers as US or British nationalism is for workers in the US or Britain.

Socialist anti-imperialism in the industrially developing, politically independent sub-imperialist countries like Iran or Argentina can only mean waging the class war against your 'own' ruling class and their foreign backers.

Its aims and starting point are completely different from Khomeini's 'anti-imperialism'. In fact in Khomeini's understanding of the term socialists are imperialist, if 'imperialism' includes support for women's right not to be forced to wear the veil, and 'western' ideas like Marxism and socialism.

There is no 'anti-imperialist' continuum stretching from Khomeini to the Iranian working class. There is a river of blood dividing them and the SWP are on the wrong side.



Is the SWP an alternative?

available from SO PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. 75p plus 25p p&p.

Fight the Tories! Rebuild the left! Back Benn

A women's manifesto

It is crucial that women receive a fair deal from the Labour Party.

Women inside the Party are rightly demanding greater power and responsibility, and in addition Labour must persuade millions of women to support socialist principles and positive action if a Labour Government is to be elected at the next General Election.

A Women's Manifesto should be drawn up by the National Executive Committee in conjunction with the Women's Organisations in the Party, and should in my view contain:

- A major programme to provide free and integrated child care facilities for all who want them.

- Changes in the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts to strengthen them and widen their scope.

- The promotion of Positive Action Programmes to deal with discrimination in employment.

- Shorter working hours and a radical look at working conditions.

- The introduction of a Statutory Minimum Wage.

- Action to deal with the sexist and degrading portrayal of women in the media.

As far as presentation to the electorate is concerned, I believe that the Party should give women, and women's issues, a higher profile in election campaigns. We should provide a range of leaflets for women, written by women. We should attempt to explain to the electorate the fundamental link between our socialist principles and the fight for equality for women.

Our society is still caught up in the outdated image of male

By Eric Heffer MP

breadwinners, with women providing the 'back-up services' of home-making and child-rearing.

A number of actions need to be taken to alter this image and to change the attitudes behind it.

Firstly, childcare facilities must be a major priority to enable women to have access to work outside the home and to establish the principle of a woman's right to work.

At the same time working hours and conditions need to be altered so that all parents have time at home with their families on an equal basis.

Action needs to be taken to end discrepancies between men's and women's wages: this is one principle reason why I have supported over many years the idea of a statutory minimum wage, to reduce the enormous gap between the low paid — who are mainly women — and those on higher pay. Collective bargaining has clearly failed to achieve this redistribution.

I support Party Policy on the issue of abortion. I believe there should be changes in the law to give women the right to choose whether or not they have an abortion, and to ensure that abortion facilities are available, free within the National Health Service, on an equal basis throughout the country.

I have voted against attempts to restrict the 1967 Abortion Act on three occasions in the House of Commons, and I voted for Jo Richardson's Abortion Facilities Bill in 1981.

The links between the Women's Organisation and the rest of the Party could be strengthened by the adoption of a formal constitution and rules for the Women's Organisation

in line with the rest of the Party. It is only through such a formal structure that the Women's Organisation will be able to operate in a truly democratic manner and present itself as a recognised force in the Party.

I believe that the promotion of resolutions direct from Women's Conference onto the Annual Conference Agenda would have two advantages for women. Firstly, it will give direct access to the policy making structure of the Party to the Women's Organisation, and, secondly, it will mean that the views and aspirations of women in the Party will be brought directly to the attention of the whole Party.

I support the principle that the Women's Section of the NEC should be representative of, and accountable to, the Women's Organisation in the Party. I would prefer to see all elections for the NEC conducted at Annual Conference so that Conference remains the supreme policy making body of the Party.

I also believe that we may face problems from other groups such as the Local Government Conference and the Parliamentary Labour Party who may wish to change the character of the NEC and demand similar representation.

However, the arguments concerning the election of the Women's Section of the NEC by women are extremely strong, and I would welcome discussions with women in the Party as to how best we can achieve this aim.

The Party should have a full-time Women's Officer. I believe that women should have a full-time officer with the appropriate research and administrative staff so they can effectively campaign and develop policy for women in the Party.

I also believe that Regional Women's Officers should be women, and that urgent action needs to be taken to end the present ludicrous situation where a majority of Regional Women's Officers in the Party are men.



Eric Heffer

By Lynn Ferguson

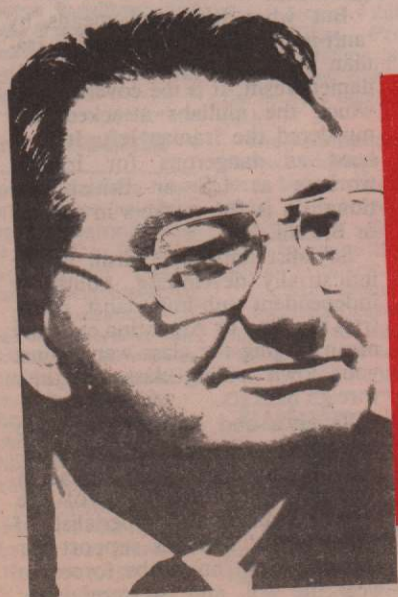
ERIC HEFFER has had a bad press on the left for his views on women.

Several women MPs left the Campaign Group over the Labour leadership contest. One of their declared reasons was Eric Heffer's personal position on abortion rights.

Does Eric Heffer may have private reservations on abortion? Maybe so. We cannot act as 'thought police'. What we can do is expect our representatives to put our needs and demands above their personal feelings when it comes to public policy. Eric Heffer has done that.

He has supported Labour Party policy of "a woman's right to choose" on abortion, consistently and publicly. As he

Forward to socialism



by Eric Heffer MP

with a foreword by Tony Benn MP

50 pence

This article is taken from "Forward to Socialism" by Eric Heffer. It originally appeared in Socialist Organiser.

and Heffer!



er: the left's candidate

In his article, he has voted against attempts in House of Commons to restrict women's access to abortion. Since he wrote his article, he has also voted against the Alton Bill — a sharp contrast to Roy Hattersley and other Labour MPs who either abstained or stayed away, often not even out of personal conviction but from fear of antagonising anti-feminist members in their constituencies.

Heffer makes it clear that he supports the right of women in the Labour Party to have their views heard, and supports efforts for the democratisation of Labour women's conferences, despite his worries about the accountability and sovereignty of the Party Conference.

He proposes for a 'women's

manifesto' certainly need to be fleshed out. Exactly how should positive action programmes be implemented? We don't want a re-run of the actions of some Labour local authorities, where bureaucratically ham-handed efforts to get women into traditionally male areas of work led to unnecessary splits in the workforce, and isolation and hardship for the pioneer women.

For a programme of positive action to be of any real use, rather than simply an exercise in divisive tokenism, it has to be under trade union control and tied to an expansion of jobs.

Of course, any manifesto for women will mean very little while the Labour Party refuses to support women's struggles — the fight against Alton, the strikes by healthworkers earlier

this year — and refuses to fight for decent housing, an adequate minimum wage, full nursery provision, proper welfare benefits, the basic economic underpinnings for women's rights.

Eric Heffer stands for a Labour Party which sides with workers and with working-class women, and which bases itself on the struggles and needs of the working class. His statement on women's rights is miles ahead of the wishy-washy generalities in Neil Kinnock's 'Policy Review' documents.

That some feminists in the Labour Party refuse to support Heffer is more a symptom of the growing divide between some brands of feminism and radical socialist politics, than a comment on Heffer's credentials.

Socialists, black workers and positive discrimination

Recently I attended an induction course explaining the structure and some of the policies of local government and Wandsworth Council, in particular. One of the courses was entitled **Equal Opportunities**. Though the Council has a reputation of being more Thatcherite than Thatcher some of its objectives were quite interesting.

By Dion D'Silva

The Council aims to employ a workforce that broadly reflects the ethnic composition of the borough — 20%. In 1985, 8.4% of the officers and 15% of the manual staff were from the ethnic minorities. Recruitment was running at 9% and 24% for officers and manual staff, respectively.

The equal opportunities officer explained how the Council had been pushed into creating structures and procedures to achieve these objectives. He rejected the analysis that racism was to do with 'bad' individuals who should be made to change by feeling guilty. However when questioned about the role trade unions could play he was dismissive: "they are the most racist organisations of all". Unfortunately this is a very common view.

Britain has a history steeped in racism; yet the black population is comparatively well integrated. A study in 1984 found that 56% of West Indians and Asians were in a union compared to 47% of whites. Nevertheless black representation in union structures does not match up.

Spurred on by a declining membership and an increasing level of activity from below, unions are slowly beginning to take the issue of representing black members' interests more seriously. In 1985, the NUPE Race Equality Working Party came up with certain recommendations: Race Relations Committees at branch, divisional and national levels; rules against racism and racist behaviour; multi-lingual leaflets; education courses; attempts to negotiate equal opportunity agreements; opposition to immigration laws and support for Black Sections in the Labour Party.

Monitoring, once a controversial issue, is widely accepted as a necessary step. The NUCPS estimates the proportion of black civil servants at 6-10% of its membership. The Institution of Professional Civil Servants (ICPS) said that the level of its black membership was "likely to be very small in view of the low numbers (of black people) within the civil service grades we represent".

The reissued TUC Black Workers Charter includes policies on positive action. A Labour Research Department study of 24 unions found that about half had national officers for issues affecting black members.

The NUT won an industrial tribunal case concerning a member who was excluded from applying for internal promotion. This issue of representation at all levels in the workforce and unions is very important. In Wandsworth, where the ethnic minorities are well represented in numbers on the

manual side the small number of black officers and the prospects of promotion are real gripes.

Even so, unions could do more to represent their black members where they are now which tends to be in the lower paid jobs. Improving the pay and conditions of those workers must be a priority.

Black people do not tend to take positions in the unions because many are not confident that the unions are responding to their special needs. Nowadays many unions produce multi-lingual leaflets. The ACTT 'Jobfit' scheme aims to get 35% of students from ethnic minorities.

Some unions including UCATT, NUJ and notably NALGO are involved in anti-deportation campaigns around individual members. The Bakers' Union, NUT and ACTT prohibit or discipline racist activity. CPSA bars members of fascist political parties from holding office in the union.

Equal opportunity agreements are commonplace. The GMB has negotiated for employment monitoring and industrial language training. In the Civil Service a 26-point action program on recruitment has been agreed. It involves career development, appointment of Equal Opportunity Officers, use of targets and programmes and general opposition to racism. Some unions have won extended leave agreements, essential for workers with family and social commitments abroad.

There is a growing acceptance of the importance of black self-organisation. In many cases it is the pressure these groups have brought to bear that has changed union policies and attitudes. The NUJ Race Relations Party is 90% black and has the right to move and speak to motions at conference. The NALGO black workers is a well organised and powerful group that is recognised by the union and holds its own national conference.

Black people have constantly struggled against low wages and appalling working conditions. They have also had to face racism in their unions. But they have always shown their willingness to organise alongside white workers. And increasingly, black and white workers have taken action against organised racists. The latest being the action by CPSA members objecting to the employment of a fascist activist in Hither Green.

We must continue to press for our union leaders to take up issues that matter to black members and to extend their campaign to recruit unorganised black workers, many of whom work in sweat-shop conditions.

As socialists our aim is to bring people along with us, and to get maximum involvement. That is why work in the unions and the Labour Party is not just an option but a necessity. For we recognise that the only force that can change society and begin to root out racism completely is the working class.



This sign greets "illegal" immigrants at a detention centre near Heathrow. Photo Andrew Moore

Documents from the 1940s

The Trotskyists and the formation of Israel

The Jewish question in the capitalist world

1 As a trading people, whose survival in the midst of other peoples has been rooted in a particular social function, the Jews have seen their fate determined across the ages by the general evolution of society, an evolution which changed their relations with the different classes.

The bourgeois revolution in Western Europe opened the gates of the ghettos and integrated the Jewish masses into the society around them. The assimilation of the Jews seemed to be decided. But the countries of central and eastern Europe, the greatest reservoirs of Jews who had been pigeon-holed for centuries in the role of economic intermediaries, entered on the path of capitalist development at the same time as world capitalism had already entered its imperialist phase.

While the old relations of exchange and production were rapidly overturned, taking away from the Jews the material basis of their existence, there was no massive industrialisation allowing these millions of intermediaries who had become redundant to become integrated into the proletariat. The social differentiation of the Jewish masses was thus hindered. Only a small part of the Jews became capitalist or proletarian; a bigger part emigrated, thus counteracting the tendency towards complete assimilation which was operating in the western countries. The great majority remained in a miserable condition as small traders, "crushed between feudalism and capitalism, the decay of one augmenting the decay of the other" (A. Leon).

2 The anti-semitic movements of the past always had a direct or indirect social base. They were movements of different social classes whose interests came successively into conflict with the social function of the Jew.

It was the same with the revival which anti-semitism experienced around the beginning of the 20th century.

a) In the underdeveloped countries of Eastern Europe, reactionary political forces succeeded in diverting the discontent and despair of the masses towards periodic pogroms because the hatred of the poor towards the Jewish small moneylender, pawnbroker, small trader and inn-keeper was an undeniable social reality.

b) In the countries of central Europe, anti-semitic movements like that of mayor Lüger in Vienna found their social roots in the sharpening of the competition within the commercial and professional middle classes which were submerged by a tide of Jewish immigrants.

Over the next few weeks Socialist Organiser will be serialising some documents on Zionism and Palestine from the archives of the Marxist movement.

Today it is conventional wisdom for much of the left that anti-imperialism requires the destruction of Israel. 44 years ago, at the Labour Party conference of 1944, the left thought it had scored a great victory when it committed the next Labour government to assisting the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. In 1945-48, many socialists and Trotskyists backed the Zionists in Palestine on the grounds that, with whatever wrong ideas, they were fighting imperialism.

Today we naturally side with the oppressed Palestinian Arabs whose revolt against Israeli rule in the occupied territories is now 8 months old. But clearly Zionism and Palestine are issues where instinct and immediate impulses of solidarity are not enough to give socialists a clear view. We have to think the issues through, try to get an overview, and check our conclusions against the analyses and

c) In France, the anti-semitic movement which was unleashed at the time of the Dreyfus affair found its social origin in the hatred of the aristocracy for the Jewish bankers who bought up their chateaux, and of the aristocrats' sons who saw the careers which until then had been 'reserved' for them occupied by these dangerous competitors.

These social layers succeeded in directing against the Jews, for a certain period, the embittered nationalist feelings of a large part of the petty bourgeoisie.

Having their roots in determinate social conflicts, these different anti-semitic movements appeared with very diverse manifestations, from phenomena of the crudest barbarism (the Russian pogroms) to the formulation of 'refined' nationalist theories characteristic of the imperialist epoch (Charles Maurras).

3 The social possibilities of the assimilation of Jews in Western Europe had created a powerful ideological movement towards total assimilation.

The impossibility of a massive assimilation of Jews in Eastern Europe gave rise to a powerful current in favour of a national renaissance and the conservation of national peculiarities. In the midst of strong concentrations of Jewish people, in Poland, in Lithuania, in western Russia, in Hungary, in Rumania, and in Slovakia, there developed a new literature in Yiddish, a new folklore, an intense cultural life and even an autonomous political life (the 'Bund' in the workers' movement).

To the extent that the Jewish masses who had emigrated to the United States found themselves socially pigeon-holed in determinate sectors of economic life, and

arguments developed by Marxists in the past.

The first document we are printing is the Draft Theses produced by the International Secretariat for the Fourth International in January 1947, and probably written by Ernest Mandel. The second part, which will appear in the next issue of SO, has the political conclusions. This first part summarises the historical analyses of Jewry and anti-semitism developed by Abram Leon in his book 'The Jewish Question', and assesses Zionism and anti-semitism in 1946-7.

Forty years of hindsight reveal many flaws in the document. It underestimates capitalism's ability to revive; it overestimates the force of Arab nationalism; it underestimates the strength of the Zionist drive for a Jewish state. But on many questions of basic attitude and approach the document is a valuable check on today's debates on the left.

The document opposes Zionism. But its arguments are entirely different from those used by many anti-Zionists today in their description of Zionism in the 1940s.

geographically concentrated, this movement was extended to that country.

Lenin, who alone in the Second International knew how to apply a Marxist strategy to the national question, rejected all pedantry in his assessment of this current. He started from the viewpoint that the task of the revolutionary party was to integrate into the movement of proletarian emancipation all the currents of national and cultural autonomy which corresponded to the genuine aspirations of the working masses. That is why he recognised the *legitimacy*, from a socialist point of view, of this Jewish movement as much as of the Polish or Czech movement.

The task of the Jewish workers was to fight side by side with the workers of the country where they lived, for the overthrow of capitalism, after which complete liberty would be granted to them to organise things for their national and cultural autonomy according to their choice.

4 The epoch of decaying capitalism is also the epoch of the aggravated crisis of the Jewish problem.

Inflation, increased pressure from banking capital, and then the great economic crisis, ruin millions of small tradespeople and shopkeepers, and raise their hatred against Jewish competitors to extremes. The terrible unemployment among intellectual workers, and the increased poverty of the liberal professions in central and eastern Europe, create a particularly favourable climate for the appearance of huge mass petty bourgeois movements, which make anti-semitism one of their ideological weapons.

In the countries of Eastern Europe, these movements reflect an



Palestinian exodus 1967 after Six Day War.

extremely profound popular current, which expresses itself in numerous bloody explosions.

In Germany the State power, which had fallen into the hands of the Nazi leaders, organised from above the persecution and, later, the extermination of the Jews. In this sense it was decaying capitalism which consciously put power into the hands of a band of bloody criminals, and is fully responsible for the terrible fate of the Jewish

masses in Europe during the war. The extermination of the European Jews by German imperialism is a warning for all the other peoples, showing them the fate which awaits them if present-day society continues to rot.

5 Zionism was born in the Jewish petty bourgeoisie of Central Europe, as a reaction to the rise of anti-



Jewish refugees arrive in Haifa 1949

semitism at the beginning of the 20th century.

It was a typically petty-bourgeois movement, and for a long time it remained without aid from the Jewish bourgeoisie and isolated from the popular masses. In the course of the First World War, British imperialism, wanting to use Zionism as an instrument to install itself in Palestine, seemed to give it the possibility of becoming a reality, through the Balfour Declaration. After that, a slight inflow of capital and immigration began.

It was not until after Hitler's coming to power, and the rapid descent into the abyss of all European Jewry, that these two flows accelerated, though at the same time they were hindered by Arab nationalist explosions and by the policy of British imperialism, which was erecting more and more barriers to Jewish penetration in Palestine.

For the revolutionary proletariat, Zionism should be considered as both an *utopian* and a *reactionary* movement.

Utopian:

a) Because it considers possible a 'harmonious' development of the productive forces in a 'closed economy' in Palestine, in the middle of a capitalist world which is subject to greater and greater economic convulsions. The tremendous development of the Palestinian economy which would be necessary to allow the absorption of several million immigrants is unrealisable in the framework of the present-day world capitalist economy.

b) Because it considers possible the creation of a Jewish (or binational) State in the midst of the avowed hostility of 50 million Arabs, although Jewish immigration and the progressive industrialisation of the country develop the Arab population in the same proportion.

c) Because it hopes to obtain this result by relying on manoeuvres between the great powers, which in reality all only want to use the Zionist movement as a pawn in their power-politics in the Arab world.

d) Because it thinks it can neutralise anti-semitism in the world just by granting a nationality to the Jews, although this anti-semitism has deep social, historical

and ideological roots, which will be all the more difficult to tear up as the agony of capitalism prolongs itself.

Reactionary:

a) Because it serves as a support for British imperialist domination, giving imperialism the pretext of serving as an 'arbiter' of the Jewish-Arab disputes, itself demanding the maintenance of the British mandate, and developing a miniature 'closed' Jewish economy whose working masses have a much higher standard of living than, and different immediate interests from, the Arab working masses.

b) Because it provokes a nationalist reaction on the part of the Arab masses, causes a racial division in the workers' movement, reinforces the 'holy alliance' of classes among both Jews and Arabs, and thus allows imperialism to perpetuate this conflict, as a means to perpetuate the presence of troops in Palestine.

c) Because it slows down the movement for agrarian revolution by buying land from the Arab landowners and developing it, thanks to foreign subsidies, as 'closed' Jewish agriculture in the midst of Palestinian Arab agriculture. Thus the position of the landowners is somewhat reinforced, land is taken away from the Arab peasants, and, most important, the Jewish masses of Palestine have no interest in fighting for the division of the land of the 'effendis' among the Arab peasants, because such division would mean the end of their land purchases.

d) Because it puts a brake on the participation of the Jewish working-class masses in the class struggle in the rest of the world, gives them autonomous aims to achieve, and creates illusions in the possibility of improving their condition in the framework of decaying world capitalism.

For all these reasons, the revolutionary workers' movement has always waged a sharp struggle against Zionist ideology and practice. The arguments that the 'socialist' representatives of Zionism advance in favour of their case are either classic *reformist* arguments ('the possibility of improving the situation of the Jewish masses bit by bit...'), or *social-patriotic* arguments ('the national question for all Jews must first be resolved before undertaking the

solution of social problems for the Jewish workers'), or the classic arguments of *defenders of imperialism* ('the penetration of Jews in Palestine has not only developed industry, but also the workers' movement, the general culture of the masses, their standard of living, etc'), arguments advanced by the defenders of colonialism in every country.

How the Jewish question presents itself in the world today

6 After the Second World War, the particularly tragic situation of the Jews seems to be a symbol for the whole tragedy of humanity sliding towards barbarism.

After the terrible catastrophe of European Jewry, the Jews everywhere face a renewal of popular hostility towards them.

a) In *Europe*, two years after the 'liberation', more than 100,000 Jews continue to suffer the most infamous regime in the camps; the imperialist masters who in the course of their military operations managed to move millions of people in a few days, have not been able to find any refuge for these unfortunate survivors of the Nazi camps after 20 months of sear-

ching. In the rest of the continent, there are scarcely a million Jews remaining.

b) In *Palestine*, 700,000 Jews face an Arab world in ferment. The development of Egyptian and Syrian capitalism adds the factor of economic competition to the multiple causes of militant anti-Zionism. British imperialism and the Arab feudalists and bourgeois, for their part, will do all they can to divert the hatred of the oppressed Arab masses against the Jewish scapegoat. Thus the Palestinian Jews risk being exterminated in the general explosion which is brewing in the Middle East.

c) In *the USSR*, the bureaucracy used in its struggle against the opposition the anti-semitism which remained latent in the peasant masses and the backward sections of the working class. During the years of the first and second Five Year Plans, millions of Jewish tradespeople and shopkeepers were integrated into the middle and lower ranks of the bureaucracy as engineers, technicians, and cooperative directors, and into the upper layers of the collective farms. In western Russia they make up the part of the bureaucracy which is most directly in contact with the oppressed masses, and thus the masses' hatred against the parasites and profiteers of the regime is largely focused on them.

The bloody pogroms unleashed by the indigenous population at the time of the German invasion are

very clear indices of the sharpening of this hatred (70,000 Jews killed in Kiev within 24 hours). A sharpening of the social crisis in Russia, and the purging of civil war, will certainly mean the extermination of the Jewish masses if the counter-revolution triumphs.

d) Finally, in the *United States*, the pigeon-holing of Jews into determinate sectors of the trades, commerce, and liberal professions, will create at the next violent economic crisis the sharpening of competition which will give a powerful material base to anti-semitism, which is already present in latent form. The exploitation of reactionary prejudices against 'racial minorities' has long been the favourite weapon of the American fascist gangsters.

As the sharpening of the social crisis, the politicisation of the workers' movement, and the rapid decomposition of American 'democracy' engender the development of a mass fascist party in America, so anti-semitism and anti-negro agitation will take on monstrous proportions. The fate of the Jews in the United States is intimately linked to the outcome of the gigantic struggle of the American working class and the Yankee bourgeoisie. A victory of the latter, through the establishment of a dictatorship, will mean, in the short term, a catastrophe comparable only to the catastrophe which Hitler's coming to power was for the Jews of Europe.

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'Democracy, Not Revenge': available for 20p plus 13p post from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

A lament for feudalism

Belinda Weaver
reviews 'A Handful
of Dust'

'A Handful of Dust' is not just a lament for a failed marriage; it's a lament for the feudal aristocracy.

The film is adapted from Evelyn Waugh's novel. He based it on his own break-up with his aristocratic first wife, but turned the story into a requiem for the feudal values destroyed by capitalism.

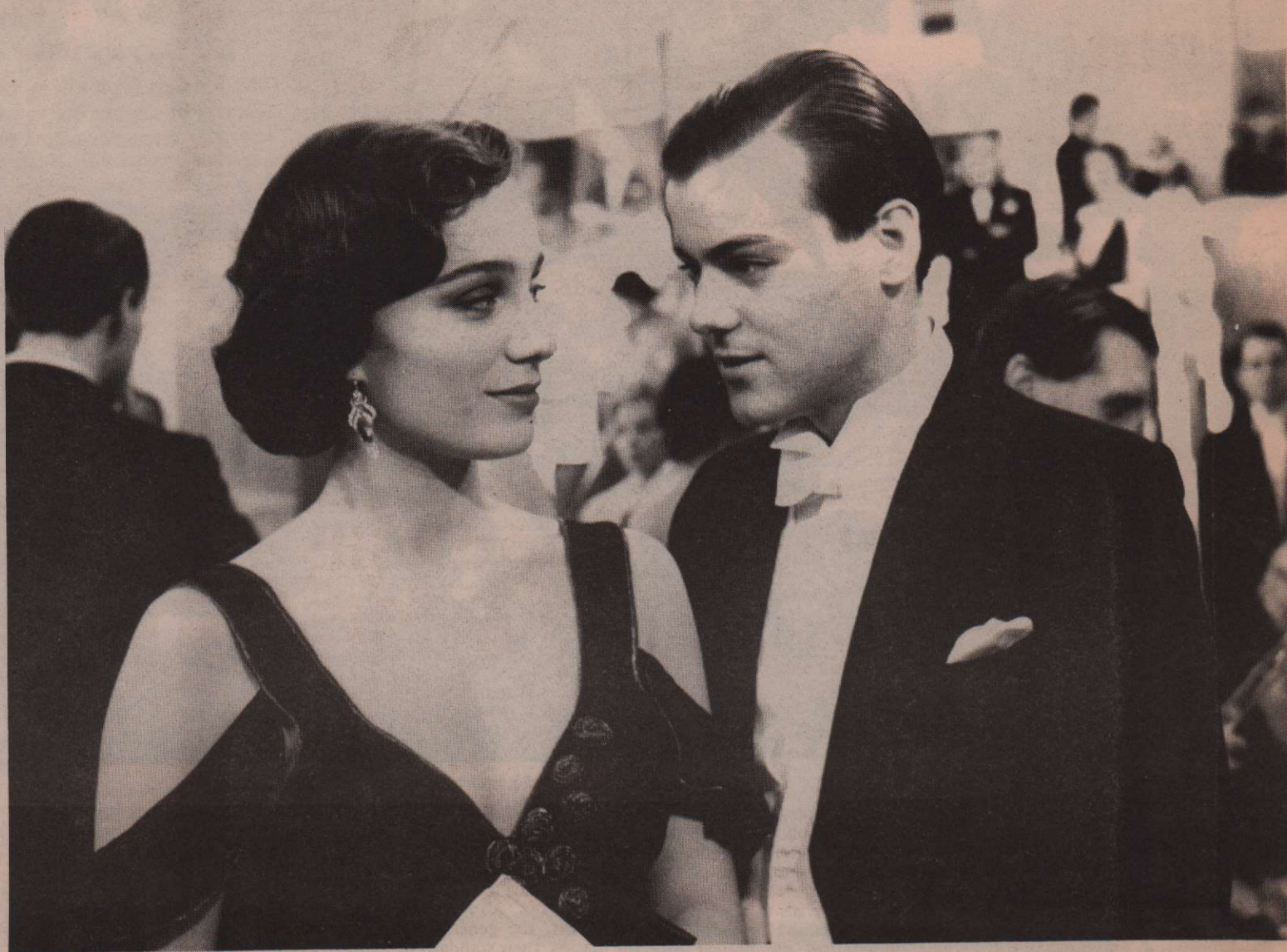
By the time Waugh married, the aristocracy didn't have much life left in it. The great lords and ladies thrived and prospered, but they had made their peace with capitalism and embraced the creed of moneymaking.

The lesser squires who turned their faces to the past and tried to keep up the old style were going to the wall. Estates were too expensive to keep up; revenues and rent were dropping.

Waugh was a snob and a social climber who wanted to get into the aristocracy. He was outraged when he found that aristocracy junking its old values. For the lords and ladies those old values were musty relics; for Waugh, they were the mark of an elite he wanted to enter.

Waugh's wife wasn't bound by the old ideas of duty and obligation. When she tired of Waugh, she took up with another man. Waugh saw himself as a martyr to the modern world and to the embourgeoisement of the aristocracy. He wrote 'A Handful of Dust' to express the pain of desertion, and to dramatise his own story by making it a parable of social change.

Waugh's hero is not a middle-class young man like himself. He is Tony Last of Hetton, a squire with a large estate and



Brenda Last and John Beaver

ancestors. When Tony's wife — the daughter of a lord — betrays him, she isn't just betraying the man, she's betraying her class and its supposed ideals.

Tony, as Lord of the Manor, goes through a number of rites and rituals that Brenda and her modern friends find absurd. Tony himself knows he's a bit of a sham. But he can't change, and doesn't want to change.

Brenda thinks he's mad to tie up all their income in Hetton. Like any capitalist, she wants

her money out and cashing more capital, not tied up in an obsolete tradition. Tony is prepared to pay the price.

Tony is devastated by Brenda's departure. On one side, he suffers from disappointed love. Yet on the other side, there's the upheaval in his settled habits. The change bowls him over. "He had got into the habit of loving and trusting Brenda."

But once Brenda has gone, Tony doesn't want her back, and it's not just pride. Brenda has changed, so she loses her

value for Tony. Tony can only value the stable and habitual, the predictable and reliable, the things that last.

Once Brenda has shown herself to be shallow and changeable, Tony loses faith in her. Despite his love and his bewilderment, he doesn't want her back.

Waugh's injured pride shows through in his picture of Brenda's lover, the worthless, spineless John Beaver. Beaver is middle class, yet longs to be part of the aristocracy. His

mother is a grasping, opportunist business woman, always out for the main chance, the antithesis of Tony.

The film closely follows the plan of the book, particularly in the latter part, where it crosscuts between Tony's and Brenda's very different predicaments. The film is rather glamorous and glossy, but then it's about the rich and you would expect the odd mansion and expensive dress to turn up.

Brenda is treated more sympathetically in the film. At least two small scenes have been added to show her less callous and hardboiled than the book does.

But the film finally shows the utter uselessness and waste of both Tony's and Brenda's lives. Tony's lordly rites are wasteful, stupid and petty. Brenda runs after Beaver because she's idle and bored. Both Tony's benign lordliness and Brenda's grab-what-you-can — both feudal and capitalist values — look threadbare under Waugh's bitter, cold gaze.

WHERE WE STAND

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

We want public ownership of the major enterprises and a planned economy under workers' control. We want democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

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

anti-socialist bureaucracies.

We stand:

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

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and

gays.

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

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

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

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

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Rail: step up S&T fight!

The NUR Executive has yet to decide how to take the Signal and Telecoms (S&T) dispute forward at the time of going to print.

British Rail's new pay and grading structure imposed on 5,000 S&T engineers in May was met with a wave of resentment and resistance.

Over 80% voted for industrial action. And BR has already made concessions in two areas of contention — classification of grades, and training. They have also backed down on their refusal to discuss pay and grading with the union.

However, support for the present overtime ban and 24 hour strikes is waning. Many engineers work Sundays at double time and are losing 3 days pay a week with little obvious disruption to BR. Faults are quickly repaired in the days following strike action.

A speedy victory is necessary to avoid dissipating members' militancy. Sheffield and Chesterfield District strike committee have taken a lead. They have sent a resolution supported by the District Council NUR to the NEC proposing a way forward.

To call a strike of "at least one week duration" to force BR to back down. To clarify the aims of the dispute: a maximum of 4 grades with 4 rates of pay and strict job descriptions. For seniority to be the only guide in selection of training and promotion. The resolution also calls for a recall S&T grades conference "as a matter of urgency" to discuss and finalise strategy for winning the dispute.

Other railworkers should be clear that this struggle affects them too. BR has a whole series of proposals for restructuring as a prelude to privatisation. A victory over S&T would make them much more confident to dictate to the rest of the workforce.

Workfare

TUC take note!

Government ministers like John Moore (DHSS) and Norman Fowler (Employment) constantly deny that they plan to introduce "Workfare" in Britain. The facts suggest otherwise. Over the last year there has been a series of transatlantic fact-finding visits by ministers from the DHSS and Employment. The American Workfare champion Charles Murray (of the "Manhattan Institute for Policy Research") noted an 'obsession' with Workfare in government circles when he visited London last year.

And you don't have to be a mind reader to work out what John Moore is really thinking when he makes speeches contrasting the "sullen apathy of dependence" with the "sheer delight of personal achievement".

Four recent changes in the welfare system combine to reduce so-called dependency" (or the "benefit culture") and point directly towards Workfare:

* The YTS is now effectively compulsory, since all benefit entitlement has been withdrawn from under-18 year olds.
* The period during which people



Pickets at Dover. Photo: Andrew Wiard

Dover: break the isolation!

By Ray Ferris

This Monday High Court Judge Michael Davies put the National Union of Seamen on probation for their 'contempt of court'. The judiciary has become the cutting edge for the state's contempt of trade union independence and democracy. An unelected, unaccountable judge is lording it over the labour movement. Davies even gave a local police superintendent a ticking off for suggesting his ruling was nonsense!

To purge their contempt the NUS leaders must give "no indication of union support — active or passive"

to the Dover pickets. And following the logic of capitulation to the courts this is the path they will follow.

Their next move is to try and stop local Dover Port Committee members endorsing their own picket lines! As Philip Hutchinson, Port Committee member put it: "its not 21 days to prove ourselves but 21 days to hang ourselves". The strikers at Dover are determined to keep up their mass presence.

But the present status quo is unbearable. Since the leadership is washing its hands of the dispute the strikers must try to bypass them. Pickets should be sent to other ports to appeal for solidarity and a national one day strike as a first step to regenerating the dispute. The TUC must be called upon, and lobbied, to throw its weight behind the fight against the Tories' trade union laws.

Another member of the Port Committee, John Wood is becoming a symbol for the rank and file attitude towards the courts and their union 'leadership'. He refused to rise when Judge Davies entered court and he said a majority of the NEC should resign, after disassociating themselves from the Dover pickets. But this spirit of defiance must be channelled outwards from Dover to breach its isolation.

P&O with nine ships now in operation is still having problems running a 'normal' service. Last Sunday a super ferry the Pride of Calais lay idle during the peak season.

Support the Dover pickets!

Two years and still on strike

After two years the workers at Keetons engineering company in Sheffield are still fighting for their reinstatement.

On 2nd July the workers at Keetons asked to speak to the management who had been breaking manning agreements by laying off workers and pressuring others into working additional machines. The workers were refused a meeting and decided to ballot for a strike. The result of the secret ballot, supervised by management, was 2-1 in favour of strike action. Within 5 minutes of this result the management told all 38 workers that they were sacked and would only be re-employed as new starters. Non-union labour only would be employed at a flat rate of £3 an hour with no pension. The workers immediately set up a strike committee and began picketing. After two years they are still out and deserve our full support.

Despite employing a small scab workforce the company has suffered heavy losses due to the picketing and widespread boycotting of

Keeton products. Further pressure must now be put on Keetons to reinstate all 38 workers on their original terms of employment.

The second anniversary of the dispute was marked by a march and rally in Sheffield on Saturday 2nd July. Hundreds of people turned out in support. A benefit gig and social on July 14th met with similar success. Money raised at events such as these is essential as although the strike is still official the AEU stopped giving the workers strike pay after the first year.

25 of the original 38 workers are

still out and manning the picket lines 24 hours a day. The Keetons Strike Committee organises collections in local pubs, factories and pits as well as having a stall in the city centre 3 days a week.

Many small engineering companies such as Keetons see this as a test case. The workers therefore cannot afford to lose.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to: Keetons Strike Committee, AEU House, Furnival Gate, Sheffield. (Tel:769041). Strike support badges are temporarily unavailable.

Coal

200 miners still sacked

IT WAS quite an emotional experience returning to work last week.

I reported on the afternoon shift, and the sacked miners were there with a banner to cheer me in. I felt very pleased, of course, to be going back to work, but I felt very bitter that I had to leave not only my pit but my county, when I was proved totally innocent and the Coal Board totally guilty.

It's something that's not easy to put into words, having to walk past victimised colleagues at the end of a pit lane for the second time in four years, and walking into work leaving them standing outside.

On Tuesday I reported for work and I found the pit on strike. I hasten to add it was nothing whatsoever to do with Whetton! It was an argument about putting men on a contract before they were ready for it, and then management stopped everybody's water money. We had a 24 hour strike in protest. Because the pit is now on holiday, I'm not sure of the outcome of negotiations.

There are still over 200 sacked miners. It seems the Coal Board is now saying to the NUM: either bring fresh evidence, or don't come back at all on the issue.

Of course, all the evidence has already been submitted, and there is nothing fresh. So the Coal Board is really saying "we're wiping our hands of them".

People have now got to face up squarely to the fact that unless we do something those 200 are never going to work again. I think the NUM has got a choice.

Certainly I'll be swinging my weight behind the forthcoming ballot for a 50p levy, but that's only an interim solution. The only way those lads are going to get their jobs back is by forcing the Coal Board



back to the table.

Now the Coal Board has already said it wants to break even next year, and it wants a trouble-free industrial relations year. We should be saying to them: "Unless you sit down round that table and talk sense, you are not going to get an industrially trouble-free year — and you're going to have great problems in breaking even".

We've got to make it clear to them that they can't hope to break even and set the industry up for privatisation while leaving 200 lads stood outside.

A lot of people say they have made their minds up on the Labour Party leadership, but every week something new happens, and it's becoming more and more clear that there has to be a change of leader. I said last week that Kinnock is a liability and he's got to go, and that view is shared in private by many of his close friends and allies.

I would certainly urge everybody to vote for Heffer and Benn. Prescott is an opportunist. He spoke to the mineworkers' conference, and he made the appropriate noises; but, looking back at the record, Tony Benn and Eric Heffer stand head and shoulders above everybody as a pair who have got the commitment and the experience.

The National Union of Seamen has got to face up to the fact that if they are not careful they will go the way of the miners and the printworkers — just a long war of attrition, with the courts deciding what they can and what they can't do.

I would urge those Dover seafarers, if the NUS continues to act as it is doing, to set up their own rank-and-file organisation as we did

during the miners' strike and run it themselves. Then the court can do what the hell it likes to the executive, so long as the seafarers continue and escalate their action.

It's becoming another forgotten fight by a small section of the trade union movement.

On the EETPU: I would not hesitate to expel Hammond from the TUC. On the other hand, I think it's a tragedy, because there are many fine lads in the EETPU.

I know that there have been some major debates within the EETPU about whether the militants should form a breakaway or stay and fight. I hope they form an alternative, because it would be a tragedy for them to go outside the TUC. It would mean them being debarred from the Labour Party, and in effect it would mean them being non-trade-unionists.

On the US Democratic Party convention — I think it's all a circus. There's no choice between them — it's Tweedledum and Tweedledee. The American people have fine working-class traditions and history — people tend to forget that. I think it's a tragedy that the US labour movement hasn't got a political wing, because the two US parties are just the same.

Paul Whetton was formerly secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts, and is now a member of Manton NUM, South Yorkshire.

Socialist Organiser will be taking a summer holiday break next week. SO 366 will be dated 11 August.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

Constituency Labour Parties conference

17 September, 11am to 5pm, at the
Manchester Mechanics' Institute
Guest speaker: Eric Heffer

The initiative for this conference comes from a
fringe meeting at the Chesterfield Socialist
Conference called by Wallasey CLP. An organising
meeting open to all CLPs will be held on Saturday
20 August, noon, at the TGWU offices, Birkenhead.
Contact: Richard Aplin, Wallasey CLP, 8
Agnes Grove, Liscard, Merseyside L44
3LP, or Lol Duffy, 051-638 1338.

LABOUR'S

MIS?

By John O'Mahony

ON THIS page we print a photocopy of a letter apparently sent from the office of 'soft left' Labour MP George Galloway to Labour Coordinating Committee activist Anita Pollack.

The letter appears to show that Galloway and others have compiled and computerised a list of 'hard-left' activists, their political opponents in the Labour Party. Under the Data Protection Act of 1984, it is illegal to hold information like that on a computer without the consent of those concerned.

If the letter is genuine, it indicates that the compilers are going to a lot of trouble to make their list as comprehensive as possible.

- They have sought out and obtained a list of people who were in the International Marxist Group (IMG) years ago;
- They have got hold of the names and addresses of those who signed a petition at the left-wing conference at Chesterfield last November. Chesterfield was a gathering of those who would back Benn and Heffer's leadership bid.

That in turn raises further questions: which petition? who circulated it? how did the compilers get hold of it?

George Galloway is a Scottish Labour MP, former leader of

Dundee Council, and former secretary of War on Want. He is one of those on the left who combine 'anti-imperialism' and support for the so-called socialist states with a very comfortable lifestyle and embittered anti-Trotskyism. He supports Kinnock and Prescott in the Labour leadership contest.

Galloway is part of the pro-Moscow 'new realist' soft left, centred in the Labour Coordinating Committee and the student 'Democratic Left'. They take factionalism very seriously. Some of them — not Galloway — are former members of revolutionary groups who didn't change their narrow sectarian approach when they changed their politics. They function as one blade in the knife — alongside the avowed right wing — in the Kinnockite drive against the serious left.

That these people should 'monitor' the left and compile and — illegally — computerise information about us would not be surprising. It would nonetheless be a crying scandal.

The Labour Party office at Walworth Road is not responsible for this witch-hunters' databank, if it exists; no sensible and informed person would doubt that the databank would be at their disposal.

The photocopy of the letter arrived at SO's office with no indication of whom it came from. George Galloway says it is a forgery. Anita Pollack (Labour's South West London candidate for Euro-MP) says she never received it. We tried and failed to contact Mark Lazarowicz.

George Galloway says that his briefcase was stolen "in April or May", and that he reported it to the police. He says he is bringing this letter immediately to the attention of the police.

From: GEORGE GALLOWAY, M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

CONFIDENTIAL

6 February 1988

Dear Anita,

As promised I have obtained the lists of names from Mark Lazarowicz. I am not quite sure why Paul thinks they are so important because Mark — as far as I know — left the IMG a long time ago; moreover, as we all know, most ultra-leftists tend to pack in politics when they pass puberty!

I have also obtained a copy of a petition signed during last year's Chesterfield conference: it includes addresses as well. Although not all of them are the sort of people we want to be monitoring it is probably better to be safe than sorry. I just hope the computer is large enough! Perhaps you or Paul could give Wendy a ring at Westminster (219 6814) and she can arrange for you to collect the files.

By the way, congratulations on being selected. If you need any help during the campaign give my old office a ring: most of them are ex-NOLS (the good guys!) and would be only too pleased to help.

Best wishes,

George Galloway
GEORGE GALLOWAY

Anita Pollack, 139 Windsor Road, London E7 0RA.