

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

For Workers' Liberty East and West

Fight the Tories! Rebuild the left!



Back Benn and Heffer!

IRELAND: THE

TORIES

HAVE

NO ANSWERS



The introduction of internment in August 1971 was followed by an explosion of protest and violence. On 30 January 1972, the British Parachute Regiment fired on a peaceful civil rights demonstration in Derry, killing 14 people.

The new upsurge of slaughter and bloodshed in Northern Ireland and Britain is the latest proof that the Tories' policies for Northern Ireland haven't worked.

Now there are signs that they are seriously thinking about going back to internment. Imprisonment without charge or trial for as long as the police want to keep you locked up — that's what internment is. That was the disastrous policy which the Tories used in Northern Ireland when the present war reached the point of no return in August 1971, 17 long and

bloody years ago.

The Tory press reports that internment is being considered again as the Tories' answer to the recent IRA bombings and killings. Internment didn't work in 1971. It did the very opposite — it was petrol on the fire as far as Northern Ireland was concerned.

On the morning of 9 August 1971 soldiers and police swooped and rounded up hundreds of political activists and some Republican militarists. They said they were rounding up the IRA, but top of their list were socialists and other opponents of the Northern Ireland Tories' one-party rule.

People were arrested, beaten,

ill-treated, and locked away in internment camps and prisons.

How did the Northern Ireland Catholics respond? Were they cowed? No, they weren't! The entire community was pitted against the Government — including those who had little time for the IRA military campaign which had started a few months earlier.

Catholic areas were barricaded off. A powerful political campaign got under way to oppose internment. In Britain, for a year or so, the 'Anti-Internment League' was a very big movement.

Britain and its then Northern Ireland puppet government were discredited in many parts

of the world. The injustice of Orange-British rule over the Six Counties Catholics was brought home to millions of people.

And internment justified the IRA's military campaign to many new people in the Catholic community. It pushed thousands and thousands of young people towards the IRA, swelling its ranks. In the months and years immediately after internment, the IRA campaign grew immensely.

The centres of Northern Ireland's towns and cities were gutted with bombs. Soldiers and police were shot down. And the Catholic-Protestant division sharpened. The Protestants began to arm and organise

military forces which by early 1972 had perhaps 40,000 members. The same proportion in Britain would be well over two million people armed and organised!

Any proper balance sheet would conclude that internment was helpful to the leaders of the Provisional IRA and hindered Britain. Why then would the Tory Government, 17 bitter years later, be so stupid as to repeat what the Tories did in 1971?

Because it isn't quite the same situation in Northern Ireland. And because they may get the support of the Dublin Government this time round.

Turn to page 3

WOMAN'S EYE

Reproductive rights in the USA

By Lynn Ferguson

Women's right to control their own fertility is likely to become a live issue in the United States — not over the right to abortion or contraception, but over the right to reproduce.

The spark for this controversy is a suggestion made by Indiana Supreme Court Judge Roy F Jones last month. He was presiding over a case of a woman who pleaded guilty to poisoning her young son.

The woman, Melody Baldwin, has a history of psychiatric problems. Judge Jones sentenced her to 20 years in prison. Then he suggested that if she were sterilised her sentence could be substantially reduced. Melody Baldwin has not yet made a decision — but it's obvious that whatever she decides it will be far from a free choice.

A one-off from a whacky judge? No. Earlier this summer another American woman was sentenced to use contraception for the rest of her childbearing years as a punishment for leaving her two young sons alone in her flat for three days.

Civil liberties activists are protesting at these rulings. Indeed, the burden of US legal precedent is that the rulings are unconstitutional. But the real legal situation is unclear, and it's likely that such rulings will become more frequent.

Now child neglect and abuse are horrific crimes. It is difficult not to feel a gut response wanting punishment and retribution.

But why do mothers neglect and abuse their children? Despair, poverty, all sorts of factors, must contribute. Living in a society where child care is privatised, where families are thrown on their own inadequate resources to sink or swim, there will be tragedies.

Whatever anger we feel at abusers, they need help. Women like Melody Baldwin need therapy, counselling and real material aid. What they don't need is Hobson's choice, between 20 years in prison or a life sentence of infertility.

The tendency towards punishing women by taking away control of their reproductive capacities is not confined to the US. Last year a Manchester woman went into premature labour and gave birth to a stillborn baby after her unborn child was made a ward of court, to be taken into care immediately after birth.

Such cases catch the public eye and cause controversy. But control of women's fertility has been going on in a barbaric way for a long time. Doctors have injected women, without their knowledge or consent, with Depo-Provera, a long-term contraceptive with nasty side-effects, if they considered them 'socially inadequate'. Black women in particular have suffered in this way.

Women have been offered abortions on the condition that they consent to sterilisation. No-one knows how many women this has happened to, or to what extent such practices continue. Those affected are often not in a position to make a fuss.

A woman's right to control her own fertility is about more than the right to contraception and abortion. It's about the right not to have your fertility used against you, or taken away as punishment, judgment, or control. That judges can sentence women to sterility is a real indication of the barbarism of our society.

Brent: fight the cuts!

By Cheung Siu Ming

The ruling Labour Group on Brent Council agreed last Sunday, 7 August, to make £16 million cuts.

Last week the Education Committee had already agreed to £3 million cuts, losing over 200 teachers' jobs through compulsory redundancies. These cuts add up to the £19 million needed to keep to the council's budget this year.

The week before, Social Services director David Divine resigned just before he was sacked for alleged incompetence. NALGO Social Services members struck for a day in protest. A council meeting subsequently voted 27 to 24 to reinstate him. Left dissidents voted against the Labour leadership and were backed by Tories and Liberals out

to embarrass a Labour Group in disarray. Divine has decided not to return.

Last month Brent NUT invoked a collective dispute when the council broke a voluntary redeployment agreement. The council conned the gutless NUT leaders into fruitless talks while compulsory redeployment of teachers continued.

Nick Krivine, publicity officer for Brent NALGO, spoke to SO: "The £16 million cuts are to be made before Christmas. The council have bought peace with the dust, but otherwise the cuts are in the big spending departments of Social Services, Education and Housing."

In Social Services, 362 jobs are to be cut. Closures include basic services such as day centres for the mentally handicapped. Charges will be introduced for day nurseries and

day centres. In Education, teaching jobs, nursery education, youth and community services, and career services are to be cut. In Housing, cuts will be in private-sector services and housing benefit staff.

The Labour leadership's proposals include "action to reduce rent arrears". The Police Monitoring and Women's Units are also to be closed.

The council want job losses through voluntary redundancies, yet Social Services are already very stretched with the shortage of social workers.

NALGO striking over Divine should be seen in context. We had no illusions — he was brought in to carry out cuts. But the way he was treated — how much more easily could they mistreat junior staff?

Although Divine was in NUPE, NALGO Social Services members

struck in his support to show their anger over cuts.

There is financial mismanagement. We are blaming Odran Steed, the Director of Finance, and Charles Wood, the Chief Executive. There is £4.5 million Urban Programme money from the DoE, and £400,000 from the Manpower Services Commission, unclaimed. £488,000 will be lost from the EEC Social Fund when training projects are closed. Government subsidy on housing benefit is not being claimed, and £1.5 million had not been claimed from the Home Office for the Developmental Programme for Racial Equality in schools.

There has not been much of a tradition of joint union action, but what we need to do is to bring the whole workforce into dispute".

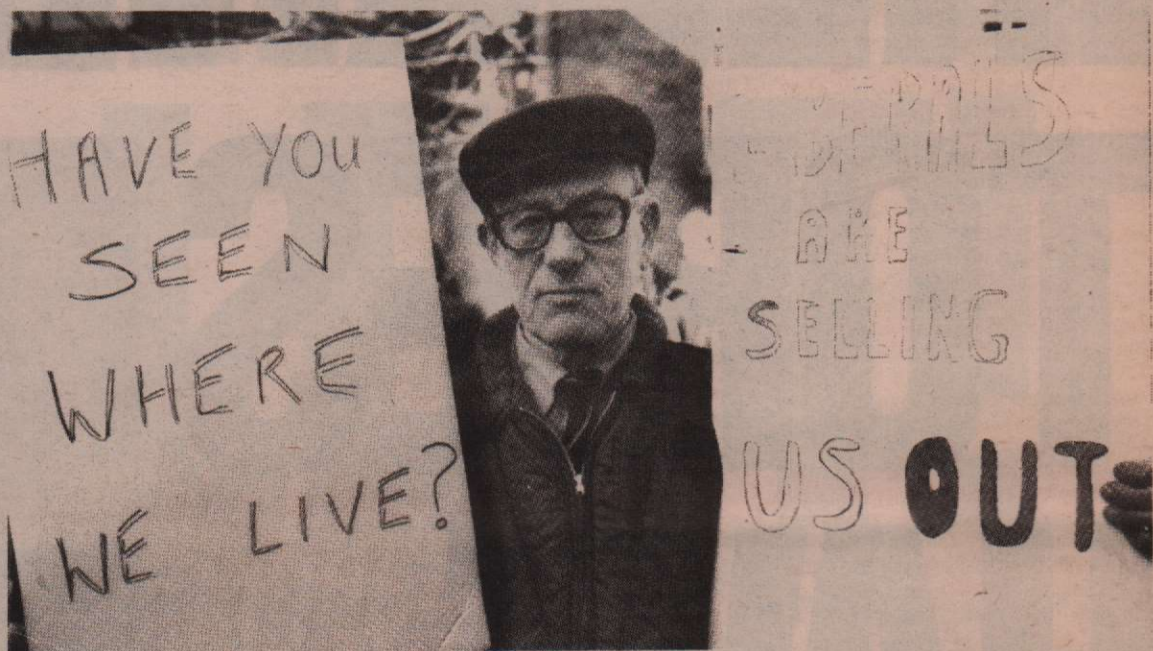
Housing: the opposition grows

By Will Adams

The House of Lords on 28 July passed an important amendment to the Housing Bill which, if it remains in place, would force the Secretary of State for the Environment to organise a ballot of all tenants in the area proposed for a Housing Action Trust, and would only allow him to set up a HAT if over 50% of those eligible gave positive support to the proposal. The amendment was passed following a great deal of lobbying of the Lords by tenants from the estates where Nicholas Ridley has said he wants the first HATs to be set up.

Ocean Estate Tenants Association from Tower Hamlets, East London organised a meeting in the House of Lords before the debate where tenants from threatened estates in Tower Hamlets, Lambeth, Southwark and Sandwell, West Midlands, told Members of the House of Lords how Housing Action Trusts were not what they wanted on their estates and, if the Government were so sure they were a good deal for tenants they should at least put the proposal to a ballot of the people affected. It was clear at the meeting that all the estates proposed for the first round of HATs have already had, or are planning major improvements to the housing and localised housing management, two things the Government says the Councils have failed to provide.

The Government will try to overturn this amendment, either in the



Lords in October or when the Bill returns to the Commons. But it puts them in the embarrassing position of having to argue why housing legislation supposedly based on 'tenants choice' should have no provision for tenants to have a choice on HATs. The Association of Metropolitan Authorities has plans to fund an independently-run ballot anyway, which will allow tenants to demonstrate their opposition.

It is clear that the Government is shocked at the scale of the opposition to their plans. The conciliatory noises from William Waldegrave about "winning the hearts and minds" of tenants have been dropped. Speaking on a phone-in programme on LBC in London, Waldegrave implied that the HATs will be imposed despite the wishes of tenants — and that tenants will

thank the Government when they see the results. He dismissed callers who objected to his plans as unrepresentative of tenants' views.

In Tower Hamlets, the Liberal-led Council has said it is unanimously opposed to a HAT being imposed in their area. But the local press have reprinted letters and minutes of meetings between the Council leadership and the Department of the Environment about the issue. In one letter from

last February a Councillor told the DoE "the Council and the Government share a common commitment to diversify tenure". Jeremy Shaw, who chairs the Neighbourhood Committee in Bethnal Green, asked the DoE at one meeting to spread any HAT in Tower Hamlets across Labour-controlled areas as well as Liberal-controlled ones to "lessen the political impact". Jeremy Shaw told a local paper, "obviously it is an embarrassment to us now".

French miners' strike enters fourth month

The miners of Gardanne (in southern France) have been on strike for three months now. 48 of them have been occupying a shaft at the mine since 13 May.

On 25 July they had a visit from Arthur Scargill.

The dispute started on 7 April, when the miners of Gardanne launched a strike of two hours each day for a wage rise of 5% and for a bonus of 1500 francs [about £150] to compensate for the increase in the cost of living.

The management responded at the end of April by paying the workers for only three hours of each six hour shift. That led immediately to a round-the-clock strike, initiated by the CGT union. A day-and-night picket line has been maintained.

According to the CGT, the increase claimed by the workers represents only 1 per cent of the money paid in interest to the banks last year by the coal mines in Provence. Besides, over the last six years, the miners' productivity has increased by 23% while 400 jobs have been cut.

As of 28 July, more than 730

face-workers out of 900 are still on strike. Collections for the strike have brought in 160 million centimes [about £160,000]. There is widespread sympathy for the miners' demands among workers in the region.

Most of the local councils in the coalfield, including the Communist Party council in Gardanne itself, are supporting the strikers financially. They have provided free meals for the strikers' children in school canteens in term time.

Peasants donate fruit and vegetables, and even a supermarket gives free food to the miners.

The miners' wives have got organised, too, and twelve of them have staged a hunger strike in solidarity with the dispute.

A delegation of miners and their wives visited a rally in Dover last week to support the P&O strikers. The NUM in Britain is appealing for support for the Gardanne miners. Send cheques, payable to the NUM and marked on the back 'French Miners' Strike', to NUM, St James' House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield S1 2EX.

[Information from the French socialist weekly *Lutte Ouvriere*].

Labour MI5 in Bermondsey

By Mick O'Sullivan

Someone has been doing an 'MI5' operation on Bermondsey Constituency Labour Party.

Copies have come to light of a list of GC delegates, with alongside each name the note 'MT' ('Militant tendency'), 'FT' ('fellow-traveller'), or 'OK'. Jim Mortimer, who as general secretary of the Labour Party in the early '80s was in charge of beginning the purge of 'Militant' supporters, is marked down as a 'fellow-traveller'.

The Bermondsey party was suspended by Labour's national leadership at the beginning of the year, with a list of 14 charges and allegations.

It joined a long and growing list of parties and individuals now caught up in the trawl against the

left.

The witch-hunting list has, however, caused a lot of embarrassment, and the NEC organisation sub-committee has promised to look into and report — after its inquiry into the suspended Bermondsey party is finished.

Another row has centred on the soft-left Labour Coordinating Committee. In March, it circulated CLPs which it thought to be friendly, asking them for details of the political affiliation of their youth officers.

When challenged, the LCC said that it kept only the details of youth officers sympathetic to the LCC (for LCC circulars), and threw away the other results of the inquiry. As *Tribune* asked, why then did the LCC ask which faction 'ultra-left' youth officers supported? To know which wastepaper basket to throw the form into?

Ireland: the Tories have no answers

From page 1

They may even get agreement from Dublin for a simultaneous introduction of internment north and south of the Border. In 1971 internment was used exclusively against Catholics and was seen in Dublin and Southern Ireland as just another Unionist-Tory blow against the oppressed Catholics in the Six Counties. Today Dublin and London share the political overlordship of Northern Ireland, under the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

People are war-weary. The IRA is unpopular in the South, and is seen as a threat. IRA killings like those last week of two elderly Northern Ireland Protestant workers because they did building work for the state forces are deeply repugnant to the big majority in the South. London may calculate that with Dublin support and collaboration this time round, internment would bring advantages.

It would allow them to jail Republicans and their sympathisers, people who can't be legally locked up now, under the rule of law.

But the Dublin Government is a Government of Fianna Fail, "the Republican Party", led by Charles J Haughey, who is the leader of mainstream constitutional nationalism and republicanism in the South. Haughey initially criticised the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Haughey believes that only a united Ireland will solve the problem. IRA/Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams has lately been calling for a united front of all nationalist parties in Ireland, including Haughey's Fianna Fail.

How could Haughey agree to internment in the North, or still less to simultaneous internment in the South?

The answer is that Fianna Fail, and Haughey, have done it before — and very effectively. From late 1956 the IRA ran a campaign of attacks on police stations and customs posts on the Border. The back of the campaign was broken by the introduction of internment in the 26 Counties in 1957 — just after Fianna Fail was returned to office after three years in opposition.

Earlier, Fianna Fail — the Republican Party led by Eamonn De Valera, who had been sentenced to death for his part in the 1916 Rising — had interned, jailed and shot Republicans during World War 2.

Haughey was one of those responsible for internment in 1957. He is perfectly capable of using it again if it will serve his interests. The main opposition party, Fine Gael, will endorse it.

Haughey too wants to put the lid on Northern Ireland. He may have other reasons to back internment. The Southern economy is in terrible shape. Over 50,000 a year are leaving, mainly young people. Britain could probably buy Haughey's collaboration.

While 250 Tory MPs are calling

openly for internment, Thatcher says she is against it. But Thatcher and her Government will be "against" internment until the afternoon of the morning the police and soldiers swoop. Anything else would tip off the targets of internment and thus defeat its object.

Many people in the British labour movement would probably be sympathetic to internment if it stopped the slaughter. That is understandable, but short-sighted and wrong.

At best repression like that — even if it were completely successful — could 'work' only for a while. It would only be a matter of time before a new Catholic-IRA upsurge took place, more embittered than ever. That is how it has always been in Ireland's history.

The slogan that rings through modern Irish history is not empty rhetoric — "We will rise again". They have done it.

What Ireland needs is not more repression, but a solution. Last week it looked like a new round of tit-for-tat Catholic-Protestant slaughter might be beginning. Protestant sectarianism started killing Catholics at random in response to the recent IRA killings. Tit-for-tat slaughter reached horrible proportions in 1971-75.

What is the solution? It is to satisfy the legitimate democratic demands of both Catholics and Protestants. Half a million Catholics in Northern Ireland are oppressed — an artificial minority in the Six Counties state who want to be united with the Catholic South. The one million Protestants, the Six Counties majority, fear being oppressed in a Catholic-majority Ireland, and want to retain links with Britain.

The only possible way out is a federal united Ireland with autonomy for the Protestant area (and for Catholic districts within that area), and renewed links between all of Ireland and Britain.

No other solution exists; no other proposal could conceivably unite the Irish working class and make it possible for the workers to fight for a socialist answer to the misery and poverty capitalism spawns and has always spawned in Ireland North and south.

The British labour movement



In March this year, two British soldiers were killed after they drove their car at speed towards a funeral procession for Catholics killed by a Protestant gunman who attacked a previous funeral. Above: the body of one of the soldiers.

must oppose internment. The Labour Party leaders have had a policy identical to Thatcher's for the last three years, despite Labour's nominal commitment to a

united Ireland. They should now make it plain that the labour movement will fight against internment and campaign in the country against it.

Tit-for-tat slaughter

A new spate of 'tit-for-tat' killings seems to be starting in Northern Ireland.

Last Thursday, 4 August, the IRA killed two building contractors by spraying their car with around 150 bullets. The contractors were killed as part of the IRA's campaign against people who do work for the security forces.

The IRA's 'hit-list' includes British Telecom staff, fuel contractors, caterers, bus and ferry companies, cleaning contractors and suppliers of vending machines — anyone who services RUC stations, UDR bases or British Army bases.

Unionist politicians responded to the killings by calling for selective internment and for extra troops in border areas.

Then, on Monday 8th, two men were shot dead in an attack on a Catholic housing estate in the Ardoyne. A car drove round the estate firing at random at passers-by.

At the time of writing, no group has claimed responsibility for this attack, but it closely resembles the 'spray job' tactics which Loyalist

murder squads used on the streets of West Belfast during the '70s. There were many sectarian killings in the early '70s. Most were of Catholics by Protestants; but there was retaliation, and the whole spiral served only to make divisions worse.

In January 1976 the IRA ambushed a minibus carrying ten Protestant workers. They were lined up beside the bus and shot. It was in retaliation for the murder of five Catholics the previous day.

At that time the IRA and the Protestant UDA were preparing to exchange papers on the way forward. The killings put a stop to that.

What of attacks on civilians who do work for the army or the police — in an economy where jobs are scarce, and a large proportion of them are dependent on the British state — or attacks on individual Protestant part-time soldiers in the

UDR? Whatever their 'anti-imperialist' justification, in practice they are sectarian attacks.

The effect of the IRA's present military offensive is not to weaken or remove British oppression in Ireland, but to sharpen murderous divisions among the Irish people. This offensive will not drive the British Army out, or force Britain into any concessions, still less bring a solution in Ireland any closer.

Some Unionists reacted to the IRA actions by demanding that British troops be concentrated on border duties, and repression inside Northern Ireland be handed over exclusively to the RUC and the UDR, local Protestant forces. That demand serves as comment enough on the notion that all that needs to be done to get a free united Ireland is to take action against the British troops.

What's needed is dialogue between the communities, to work a democratic solution acceptable to both Catholics and Protestants which makes possible a free united Ireland and the removal of the British troops.

P R E S S
GANG
No,
Prime
Minister!
Yes,
Ma'am!

'Which' the magazine of the Consumers' Association this month turned its attention to the daily papers. They used ten researchers from the Glasgow University Media Group to analyse thirteen papers (including the Scottish Daily Record) during September and October last year, and came up with a few surprising findings. The Guardian, for instance, did not top the league for spelling mistakes (The Financial Times 'won' that category) and the Sun was eclipsed by the Star for sex stories — although the survey took place during the reign of the late Mike Galhert, since when the Star has cleaned up its act somewhat.

But the most striking result was in the Royal stories category, won hands down by Britain's only Labour paper, the Daily Mirror. The Mirror's obsession with the most trivial doings of the Windsor family is, of course, quite in keeping with the reverential labourite tradition that it embodies, and with the social ambitions of its present proprietor. Nevertheless, it contrasts strangely with the relative indifference to Royal goings on displayed by the Sun — an attitude that may possibly be due to the Digger's republican inclinations and/or editor Kelvin McKenzie's evident belief that the real Queen of England is Mrs Thatcher.

The Mirror's switch to colour photography had only served to heighten its corgi-like devotion to the Windsors: now we can see the full glory of Di's lovely gowns and Fergie's pregnant bloom. Last week the Mirror carried at least one (and usually more) Royal story everyday except for Monday when something must have gone wrong.

On Thursday, for instance, we had "A little girl with hair as red as Fergie's gave the Queen a glimpse of future happiness"; on Wednesday it was "Why I'm wearing a tight skirt, by Di" and some interesting information about how Prince William and his little brother are progressing with their swimming; on Tuesday there was "Anne's day of sadness" at the funeral of her mother-in-law, Mrs Phillips.

On Friday, of course, the Queen Mum had her 88th birthday and the Mirror gave the old soak most of the front page and two more inside, complete with colour pics (including one of "Ronger the corgi") plus lots of forelock-tugging guff along the lines of "Many happy returns, Ma'am".

But it was on Tuesday that the Mirror really excelled itself (maybe to make up for the previous day's lapse) with Di and Charles seventh wedding anniversary: "Say you'll share with me one love, one lifetime..." was Diana's 'dancing video message to Charles', in the form of a home video featuring her very own 'dancing routine' to the music of her favourite composer, the talented Mr Andrew Lloyd-Webber. The Mirror even printed the dots from "Phantom of the Opera" and put little hearts at the top of the spread.

As a certain former editor of the Sunday Express might say, "Pass the sick-bag Alice".

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 printer at the Post Office.
Articles do not necessarily reflect the view of Socialist Organiser.

GRAFFITI

Unfair charges

The Department of Employment is planning to introduce a £150 deposit from people wishing to take grievances to industrial tribunals. The National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux says that three quarters of cases which go to tribunals are from unemployed people claiming they were unfairly dismissed. Many of these would be on reduced benefits or no benefits at all because of the Social Security rules.

If the DE plans go through, many cases would never reach tribunals because people couldn't afford the deposit.



Safety and P&O

There are more reports of inadequate safety provision on board P&O ferries.

Scab seafarers who have been operating P&O ferries have come forward with evidence of serious breaches of health and safety.

Long hours and inadequate rest periods mean that seafarers are in no fit state to do their jobs properly. Ferries have not been properly maintained, and engine rooms have overheated, causing risks of fire or explosion.

On one ferry, the *European Trader*, crew fighting a fire found that breathing apparatus supposed to contain oxygen was empty.

So much for P&O's drive for greater 'efficiency'.



Stalin was wrong

Stalin's collectivisation policy was wrong, and bad for Soviet agriculture, — so says an article in the Soviet journal *Literaturnaya Gazeta*.

The author, Vladimir Tikhonov, says: "Alienated from his own land, deprived of any say in what was done with the product of his own hands, [the peasant] was converted from someone who was his own master into someone who simply carried out tasks and commands".

The forced collectivisation of the '30s resulted in the death of millions of peasants. At present families are being encouraged to lease land for up to 50 years.

The criticism of Stalin's collectivisation policy goes hand in hand with the rehabilitation of Gorbachev's ideological hero Nikolai Bukharin.

Children

The Chinese government has loosened its unpopular 'one child per family' policy.

Families in rural areas whose only child is a girl are to be allowed to have another baby — to try for a boy.

Girl children are seen as more of a liability than a blessing in China, and over the years there has been widespread flouting of the law.



Wapping pickets show their anger at Hammond

Stay in the EETPU and fight!

I don't find Martin Thomas' arguments for activists to pull out of the EETPU at all convincing.

To begin with Martin chooses the wrong starting point. He argues: "If the left can't stop Hammond taking the EETPU out of the TUC, we will not be able to make him re-affiliate in the near future".

A lot of the rest of Martin's argument is premised on this point. But it makes much more sense to begin with the fact that the leaders of "Flashlight" the broad left grouping in the EETPU, are only confident of taking 1.48% of the EETPU's 336,000 membership out of the union at this stage.

Therefore it would be crazy to abandon to Hammond the 25,000 who voted against his line in the recent ballot and the 175,000 who didn't vote, not to mention significant numbers of those who did vote for the union leadership but who may not have clearly understood the issues.

Martin contradicts himself. He argues "We can't prevent a membership war: we can make sure it is not one-sided".

This doesn't fit in with his original starting point. The left inside and outside the EETPU can't be at the same time too weak to beat Hammond and strong enough to turn the TUC against Hammond, win a membership war against him and in the process transform the TUC's timid and bureaucratic objections to Hammond into a principled defence of trade unionism.

If Martin assessed the real weakness of the left properly he would focus on how small the PRO-UC split is likely to be.

In reality the issues in the EETPU/TUC fight are not clear enough to the majority of organised workers — either inside or outside the EETPU — to favour Martin's approach.

There are real differences between the TUC leaders tepid new-realism and Hammond's open scab unionism; but they are only implicit in the present dispute with the TUC. It is significant that the TUC has chosen to fight Hammond on the issue of the Bridlington agreements — not on no-strike deals, or scabbing at Wapping.

The problem for the left is to convince the bulk of EETPU members that Hammond wants to take the union down a road that will lead to disaster, to it becoming an open hard scab organisation. It has not yet reached that point, and it would be wrong to make analogies with the UDM etc. Hammond can still be stopped.

But it can only help Hammond

and the bosses who back him to pull all the best activists out of the union. Especially as the left inside the EETPU now has the best opening it has had for years.

There are some factors the left can take heart from. Hammond is seen as a pariah by many in the movement; EETPU members are prevented from participating in TUC activities such as training courses etc; the majority of EETPU members work on multi-union sites, so doubt and uncertainty must be creeping into the minds of many EETPU members about what Hammond is doing to their organisation.

The 25,000 who voted against "independence" provide a good starting point from which to build an opposition to Hammond provided the left doesn't surrender in advance.

The alternative to this course of action is to hope to 'convince' electricians by means of a membership war. Apart from the fact, despite what Martin says, that this is something at which the officials are as good as the left, this strategy is more likely to benefit non-unionism than the TUC.

Obviously socialists can't be neutral in any membership war between the EETPU and the TUC. We are for TUC unions organising non-

union and new sites, we are against EETPU poaching; but we should relate to existing EETPU members by saying "look at the situation Hammond has got our union into, we should force him out".

The alternative proposed by the "Flashlight" leadership of running away from a fight against Hammond is no alternative at all. It may provide a few bureaucratic positions for Flashlight leaders in a new TUC union (or in the "holding" branches) but it's a dead-end for most EETPU members. It's a strategy that flows from the traditional outlook of some of the more Stalinist elements in the EETPU left, an outlook that found it's crassest expression in 1964 when CP members were banned from holding office in the union.

How did the ancestors of some Flashlight leaders react then? The CP instructed them to resign their positions and return to the tools to act as rank and file members. The 'left' bureaucrats responded by tearing up their Party cards.

It's the same kind of bureaucratic response being advocated by the Flashlight leaders today. We shouldn't support it.

Tom Rigby
Walworth

ACAS

An ACAS report has found that flexible working is becoming more and more widespread in British industry.

The report says that one quarter of the employers questioned had introduced flexibility during the past three years to break down skill/craft demarcations, and that 25% of employees were operating pay systems based on flexibility and performance.

The companies questioned said that on the whole unions did not stand in the way of flexible working.



Russia is a workers' state

In SO365, Laurens Otter argued two points: that SO is inconsistent by rejecting the theory that the Soviet Bureaucracy is a new class while we call the USSR imperialist; and secondly no radical can support an economically progressive action of Capitalism or Stalinism.

The USSR is not imperialist in Lenin's term — capitalism's highest stage. I don't think "imperialist" is the best way to describe the USSR. But consider the Roman or Turkish Empires. They weren't capitalist either, but they were imperialist in the same sense the USSR is — driven by the tendency to increase the power, prestige and revenues of their ruling stratum.

Laurens suggests this means the Bureaucracy has to be a new class! He's wrong. It plays no indispensable role in the process of production. It does not own the means of production. It cannot guarantee, or

transfer to its children the material advantages it has.

On "progressive" Stalinism, Laurens misses the point again. The Red Army's record in Afghanistan is reactionary: over 5 million refugees; a devastated economy; villages, families and agriculture ruined.

In 'Revolution Betrayed' Trotsky argued that when Stalinism does something progressive we say so, and we say it's good. That doesn't mean defending the Bureaucracy — for the massive gains made by Soviet workers are made possible by the nationalised economy, and are achieved in spite of the Bureaucrats.

Our programme remains the same: a workers' revolution in the USSR and across the world which exchanges Capitalist and Stalinist oppressors for workers' control and worker's liberty, East and West.

Duncan Chapple
Nottingham

Should socialists want more slaughter in the Gulf?

Clive Bradley asks why Socialist Worker considers the end of the Gulf War a 'victory for imperialism'

Socialist Worker's autopsy on the Gulf War gets more and more ridiculous. Their verdict is that socialists should "not rejoice" at the end of the war.

One of the most horrendous and barbaric wars of human history — in which over a million people died, many of them child soldiers — is nearly over, and we should *mourn*? On the contrary, socialists should rejoice, and loudly.

The United States may quite possibly have strengthened its hand in the region. But that may prove temporary. And it is a small matter compared to the weight of suffering that has been lifted.

To desire a continuation of this monstrous war, socialists would need very, very persuasive reasons. Something of immense importance would have to be at stake in the conflict. *Socialist Worker's* arguments are idiotic, as I'll show. They reduce to repulsive caricatures many ideas current on the left, ideas which led most of the left to support Iran at the beginning of the war. For that reason they are worth examining.

But perhaps worse than *SW's* political arguments are the methods used to cover their tracks. *Socialist Worker* of 30 July has dug up an old quote from the same paper of October 1980. "An Iraqi victory would give all conservative regimes in the Middle East a much-needed shot in the arm. That's why, even if it would temporarily strengthen the mullahs' hold, we must hope that the Iranians are able to repel the invaders".

Now *SW* concludes that this response "has been proved correct".

But this pro-Iranian policy was very briefly held. For the next seven years, until the summer of 1987, the *SW* opposed *both* sides. To justify a political record by 'losing' seven years of it is quite simply corrupt.

Later, in a separate article ('How Iran was defeated'), they half-heartedly justify their shifts of line. But they are trapped in a ferocious logic. Either there have been real changes in the political character of the Iran-Iraq war, which would justify sharp changes in approach;

- 1958: Iraqi revolution.
- 1968: Ba'ath Party seizes power.
- 1975: Iran and Iraq sign treaty in Algiers giving joint sovereignty over Shatt al Arab waterway.
- 1979, February: Iranian revolution.
- 1980, September: Iraq abrogates Algiers treaty and invades Iran.
- 1982: Iran dominant in war, but stalemate.
- 1985: 'Tanker war' begins. Iraq and Iran attack shipping in the Gulf.
- 1987: US and other Western powers send ships to Gulf to protect shipping and clear mines. Some conflicts with Iran.
- 1988: Iran sues for peace.



From 'Republican Worker'

or, fundamentally, the pro-Iran line was right all along, and for seven years of the war the *SW* plugged the line of pro-imperialist traitors! Naturally, *SW* veers all over the place trying to steer a course between these alternatives.

Their essential case is that the end of the Gulf War has seen a strengthening of the US's (and, to an extent, the USSR's) position in the Middle East and throughout the Third World. They say the US's aim was to face down Iran, whose 'Islamic revolution' is a threat to US interests. Iran was forced to sue for peace, thereby accepting defeat. Iran's 'surrender' is therefore a defeat for all opponents of imperialism. Thus socialists have no cause to rejoice.

More and more, the *SW* tend towards the argument that throughout the war Iran's victory was worth supporting. There is no other possible logic underlying what they now say. After all, Iran was consistently anti-American. Iraq more or less had the support of the West from the beginning, and certainly it had the support of the reactionary Gulf states, which are vehemently pro-Western. That's why *SW* feels it can refer to its own 1980 assessment with confidence: current policy fits neatly with it.

But *SW* hesitates to draw this conclusion. "For the rulers of both Iran and Iraq, the war became a part of their class rule", they note. But *SW* of 23 July comments: "at every stage the interests of fighting the Iraqis and the Americans were subordinated to the interests of the mullahs". If Khomeini had mobilised against imperialism, they say, the war could have been won. Logically, therefore, "at every stage" socialists should have criticised the mullahs — not for waging war, but for failing to do so consistently.

Indeed, some people have said that throughout the war: namely, the other *SW*, the once-Trotskyist US organisation which is now Castroite, Stalinoid, and increasingly daft. Its British supporters recently parted ways with *Socialist Action* because they find it too sensible!

SW tries to break out of this logic by insisting on the *decisive* character of US involvement in determining the character of the war. After summer 1987, a test of strength with imperialism had begun. Or, more accurately: originally, in 1980, it was a test of strength with imperialism (via Iraq — no US gunboats then, please note); then (at an unspecified time) it became "a part of the class rule" of both sides; then it became a war against imperialism again.

There seem to be two respects in which US naval involvement changed the war. First, militarily. "The introduction of the task force forced Iran to move its already severely depleted airforce south from the main battle front... An arms embargo was imposed on Iran... In the meantime arms and cash poured into Iraq" (30 July).



Photo: Kaveh Golistan (Reflex)

Iran's surrender in Gulf War

ON YEARS the Gulf War was portrayed by the media as, at best, two oil-rich states lying out on each other the murderous technology sold them by the two superpowers. At worst, the image was of a holy war — a jihad — waged by "mad Islamic clerics" against all things "civilised". In reality, however, the Gulf War was started by Iraq with the backing of the United States and Russia. After the British withdrew their forces from the Gulf in 1971 the Shah of Iran became the US's policeman in the region. His overthrow in 1979 allowed the Arab-basis who ruled the oil-rich states around the Gulf, and the United States government. They were confident that the revolution in Iran would spread across the region. And they had good reason to be. Iran's first president, Bani-Sadr, pushed the Islamic revolution. "I am not a religious man," he said. "I am a revolutionary." "From the other side," *Socialist Worker* wrote in 1980, "Iran's revolution was a class war. It was a war of the oppressed against the oppressors with the Islamic religion as its ideological banner." In 1979 a revolt in the name of "Islamic revolution" broke out in Iran. It was a class war. It was a war of the oppressed against the oppressors with the Islamic religion as its ideological banner. It was a war of the oppressed against the oppressors with the Islamic religion as its ideological banner.



Why socialists cannot rejoice

This is a dreadful argument. It ties socialist policy not to fundamental principles, but to the military course of the war. Once Iran starts losing, the policy changes (which is a peculiar sort of 'defeatism'). According to Lenin, for example, "The philistine does not realise that war is 'the continuation of policy', and consequently limits himself to the formula 'the enemy has attacked us'... without stopping to think what issues are at stake in the war, which classes are waging it, and with what political objectives... For the philistine, the important thing is where the armies stand, who is winning at the moment. For the Marxist, the important thing is what issues are at stake in this war, during which first one, then the other army may be on top" (Emphasis in original: *Collected Works*, vol.23, p.33).

If Iran's war was "a part of class rule", it did not cease to be so because the mullahs started to lose. But did America's involvement change the issues at stake? *SW* warns: "Socialists may have loathed the Islamic fundamentalist regime in Iran, but what will follow after the defeat will be worse". Worse than the Khomeini regime? Well, no. More like the same. "US, Japanese and European big business doesn't mind a government still disguised (?) in clerical garb..."

Indeed, "Iran's rulers decided to surrender because they thought the risk of working-class revolt through prolonging the war was greater than the undoubted risks of surrender". So the workers were likely to revolt if the anti-imperialist war continued? Funny sort of 'progressive' war, if workers should want to rise up against it, you might think. Or are the *SW* justifying support for the war on the grounds that the workers *would* rise up against it? This really is a right old mess.

"Iran's defeat is not simply a defeat for the rulers of the Islamic Republic, it is a defeat for Iran's workers too", says *SW*. "Now, as well as fighting a vicious reactionary government in Tehran, Iran's working class face a victorious superpower".

For sure the US will do what it can to help Khomeini (and his successors) to stabilise their post-war regime. But is this not because the whole notion that the US aimed to remove the Khomeini regime was false? Does this not contradict the *SW's* entire analysis?

And if the Iranian working class is in a weaker position now — which is extremely debatable — surely this is because the Iranian regime is *not* completely prostrate and 'defeated'. If only it were! In fact, the US wants and wanted a very 'controlled' end to the war. It does and did not want Iran to be absolutely humiliated and vanquished, precisely because that would be too big a risk for the US.

In reality, it is the *present regime* in Iran that is making peace, and the *dominant faction* within it that is most enthusiastic about it. Contrary to all the hasty warnings of the *SW*, at no point did US involvement lead to a qualitative change in the war's character; at no point was there any question of Iran's national rights coming under serious threat. This is the basic question — and this *SW* refuses to address.

Instead they are dissolving all working-class considerations into a vague populist 'anti-imperialism'. *Socialist Worker Review* (July 1988) warns against a pro-Western

Islamic regime on the Pakistani model emerging in Iran. But why would that be worse than Khomeini?

Only if Khomeini's fundamentalist 'anti-imperialism' is considered to be a kind of deformed 'first stage' of socialist politics would the *SW's* analysis make any sense. They do tend towards such a view. "Elsewhere in the region, fundamentalism became a focus for the poor and dispossessed... It was a nightmare for the United States".

Indeed; but was it a *progressive* phenomenon? Not every nightmare of Ronald Reagan's is a sweet dream for socialists.

We need to make our own independent judgments. Our enemy's enemy is not in this case our friend, even an unreliable one. We have every reason to rejoice at an end to the Gulf War. Our task now is to help the Iranian and Iraqi workers bring lasting peace — by destroying both regimes.

- US out of the Gulf!
- For the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and Khomeini!
- Self-determination for the oppressed nationalities in Iran and Iraq!

Socialist Worker

Kinnock fails on unilateralism

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Palestine: declaring indep

The decision by King Hussein of Jordan to relinquish all claims to the Israeli-occupied West Bank has contributed to a major new diplomatic offensive by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Following Jordan's 'disengagement', pro-PLO leaders of the uprising in the West Bank and Gaza are reported to be moving towards a 'declaration of independence'. Coupled with the creation of a 'government-in-exile', this is a radical step towards the creation of the structures of Palestinian statehood.

Hussein's decision is unlikely to have been made lightheartedly. The West Bank was ruled by Jordan from 1950 to 1967, when it was seized by Israel. Jordanian law continued to operate there officially, and Jordan continued to have jurisdiction over schools, hospitals, agricultural projects and religious institutions. Until the mid 1970s, the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank tended to be pro-Jordanian. Economic links with Jordan are still important, although they have gradually been superseded by links with Israel.

Pressure

Hussein was probably prompted by two factors. Since the beginning of the *intifada* or uprising, last December, Arab pressure on him to abandon all claims to represent the Palestinians, in rivalry with the PLO, has been very strong. The Algiers Arab summit in June reaffirmed the PLO's sole

By Sam Eaton

legitimacy as Palestinian representative. Despite formal agreement with this proposition since as long ago as 1974, Hussein has long held to the possibility that he might play a role, possibly a dominant one, in negotiations with Israel.

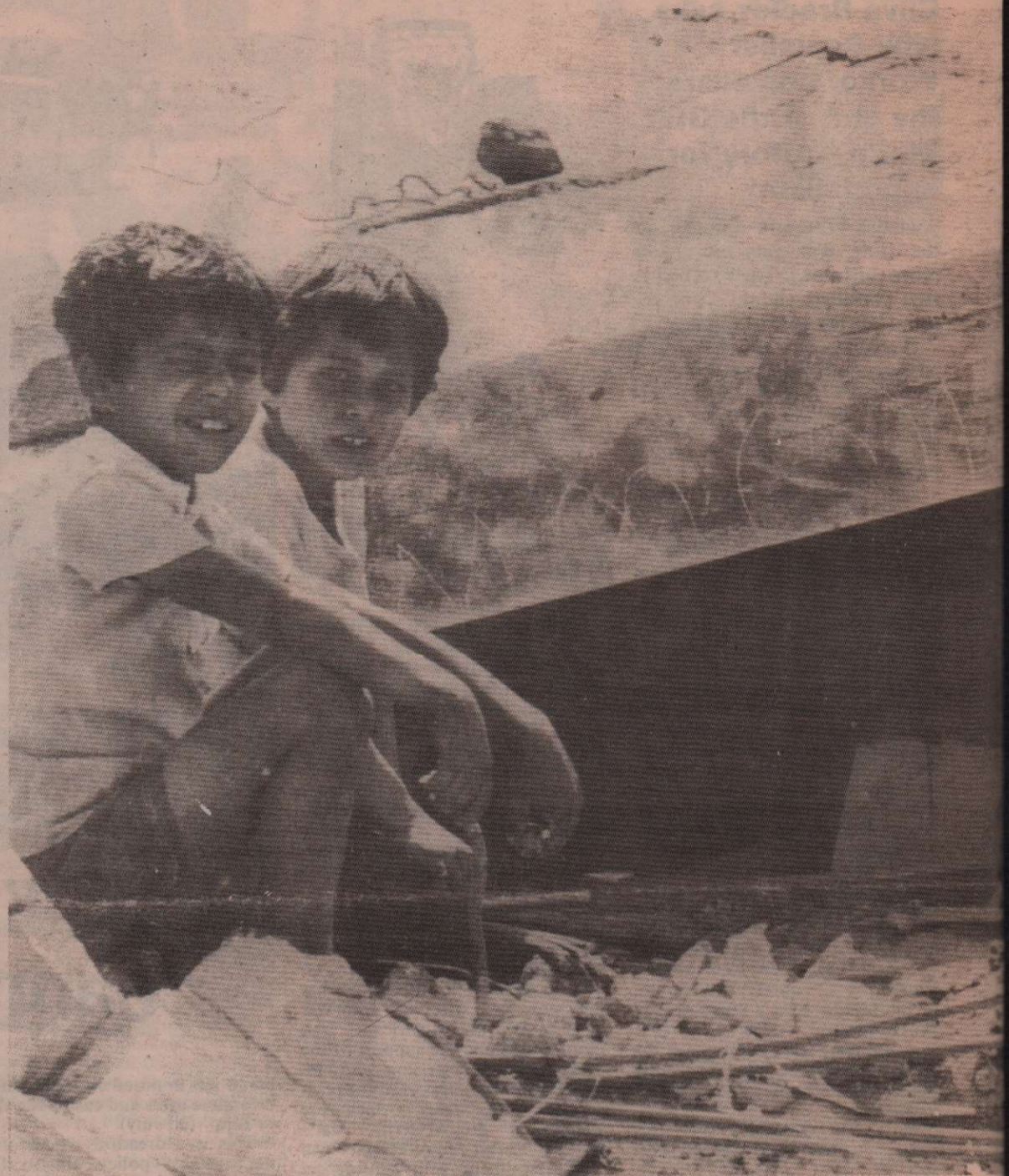
Within Israel he is regarded as a potential 'moderate' negotiating partner by the more doveish sections of the Labour Party. (In fact he is a brutal dictator responsible for the slaughter of 30,000 Palestinians in 1970). But the resilience of the *intifada* — which must surely have been having an effect on Jordan's large Palestinian population — has forced Hussein to stop equivocating.

'Transfer'

Second, Hussein must be afraid that Israel might act on its other 'Jordan option' — the forcible 'transfer' of thousands of Palestinians across the border, where, according to the mainstream Israeli right, they belong. (According to a different rightwing view, Jordan is really Israel's too).

Significantly, 'disengagement' from the West Bank has been accompanied by an insistence that only a minority of the Jordanian population is Palestinian, a claim that runs contrary to a widely-held belief. The aim is to distance Jordan from the ideological underpinning of this second Israeli 'Jordan option'.

But this policy also entails a risk. For 'disengagement' leaves a political vacuum in the West



Palestinians in a refugee camp.

Bank, and inevitably voices have been raised that Israel should fill it, through formal

annexation. Annexation would almost certainly be accompanied by the expulsion across

the river of West Bank Palestinians, to reduce the number of Arabs who would otherwise become citizens of the Jewish state.

However, the usually very hawkish Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has unequivocally resisted these calls, and looks likely to go on doing so.

The question now is whether the PLO can fill the vacuum, both politically, in the eyes of the world, and 'physically' through the establishment of real administrative structures.

Difficult

Presumably, even with the impressive structures that have been established by the *intifada*, it would be extremely difficult for the PLO (or the Palestinian nationalist movement within the occupied territories, which supports the PLO), directly to take over from Jordan in the running of schools and hospitals, although they may be able to take former Jordanian employees onto their own payroll to a limited extent. So Israel is likely to fill the 'physical gap'. But politically, a government-in-exile would be recognised by a large number of states, especially in the Third



Arab prisoners blindfolded on the way to interrogation.

Independence?



World, most of which already recognise the PLO.

Negotiate

More important is whether a government-in-exile would have any impact within Israel. Already, the view that Israel should negotiate with the PLO is far more respectable than it was five years ago. This week, left Zionist parties declared themselves for negotiations with the PLO on condition that it renounces violence and recognises Israel; members of left Zionist parties have had discussions with the PLO, which are prohibited by Israeli law.

The government-in-exile formula is implicitly a recognition of Israel (which is why the PLO has not opted for it before), given extra weight by the leadership within the occupied territories; the *intifada* has tipped the balance further away from the 'rejectionists' on the Palestinian side. Moreover the PLO has recently made louder-than-usual noises that it is prepared to recognise Israel.

This may make no short-term difference to the stands of either the Labour or the Likud wings of the Israeli establishment, but it should strengthen the hand of

the 'peace camp'.

Certainly the government-in-exile is a logical next step for the Palestinian uprising. According to reports, the maximum negotiation position of the government-in-exile would be for a Palestinian state within the borders of the 1947 Partition Plan; the West Bank and Gaza would be the minimum. This would be, very explicitly, a 'two states' formula, albeit one whose maximum expression would be accepted only by a tiny minority of Israelis.

Risks

Contrary to the assumptions of many on the Left, this would not represent a retreat by the Palestinian national movement. It is a course of action involving a lot of risks, not least those arising from the precipitous 'disengagement' of Jordan (such as the status of many Palestinians who currently have Jordanian citizenship but may now lose it). But a clear and unambiguous course towards 'two states' should be supported by all socialists. Aside from any other considerations, it matches the logic of the Palestinian struggle as it has actually developed.

George Galloway: 'It's a forgery'

I was very distressed by your treatment of the forged letter story. Leaving aside the criticisms that could be made of the journalistic practices involved, I am bound to say that giving over your whole back page to such a counterfeit story does not say much for your revolutionary alertness to the kind of dirty tricks played by the enemy from time to time.

In the event you published the story which was a calumnious and libellous attack on at least three activists in the Labour Party on the basis of a forgery on notepaper stolen from my briefcase from the House of Commons.

You may be interested to know that you anonymous correspondent had earlier written to The Sun newspaper offering them the opportunity of purchasing the contents of my briefcase. "The Sun" immediately turned the letter over to the police. It is to your discredit that you chose a different path.

Although the forgery contains some attention to detail, and thus limited plausibility it was, on five minutes reflection, an obvious and crude hoax.

I will deal only with its most salient contradictions.

In the last paragraph of the hoax I am to be found congratulating Anita Pollack "on being selected". The letter is dated February 6th. In fact Anita Pollack was not selected as Euro candidate for South West London until 18th March.

In the first paragraph of the hoax I described Mark Lazarowicz, a close friend and comrade of mine, as having "as far as I know left the IMG a long time ago". Mark Lazarowicz has never been a member of the International Marxist Group or any other far left organisation.

In the third paragraph I am to be found inviting Anita Pollack to "give Wendy a ring at Westminster (219-6815)". In fact "Wendy left my employment and Westminster the previous month and the telephone number in question left with her.

The hoax is signed with what is clearly an attempt at my signature which has been subsequently thought not to pass muster and has been thus transformed into a per procuratornem of my own signature.

There are other errors and turns of phrase which ought to have alerted you to the fact that this letter was a forgery, but I will leave this for now, except to say that before you published this story both Anita Pollack and myself told you unequivocally that it was a forgery.

On a political level, the conspiracy you allege in your article headlined Labour's MI5? is equally flawed. The facts are that I have no relationship or connection personally or politically with either Anita Pollack or the mysterious "Paul" mentioned twice in the letter and who is presumed to be Mr Paul Thomson, the Chair of the LCC. The truth is that until receiving your telephone call I had never in my life had a conversation with Anita Pollack. I have serious political disagreements with her political position, still more Paul Thomson's, and I am no longer a member of either the Executive Committee of the LCC or even the organisation itself.

As to 'witch-hunting', a simple telephone call to, for example Militant, would have located the truth; that I have consistently opposed the expulsion of Trotskyists from the Labour Party and continue to do so. Indeed, I even made a high profile public intervention in Labour

In the last issue of SO we printed a letter sent to us anonymously through the post and allegedly written by Labour MP George Galloway. This letter, if genuine, showed Galloway to be involved in a computerised witch-hunt of Labour leftists. George Galloway responds.

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 large meeting of the Constituency Labour Parties called by the National Executive Committee on 10 August. An open meeting open to all CLPs will be held on Saturday, 20 August, in the evening, at the TSWU offices, 20 Avenue Road, London N1. Contact: Richard Adkin, Walsley CLP, 8 Agnes Grove, Liversidge, Mansfield, Notts. SLP, or Len Duffy, 051-639 1338.

LABOUR'S MI5?

From: GEORGE GALLOWAY, MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 9AA

Weekly in defence of one of the first expelled members, Mr Brychan Davies of the Rhondda constituency. I am neither 'new realist' or 'soft left' and I have no connection with 'the student democratic left'. As for my perjoratively described 'anti-imperialism'; I will leave my comrades in the national liberation movements to evaluate my work in this field.

In conclusion, your article accuses me of an act which is both politically sinister and illegal. It

goes without saying that should I decide to so proceed, I would have a substantial legal claim against you. I would, however, prefer not to take a left-wing newspaper to court whatever its offence against me. My decision will be greatly influenced, however, by the prominence which I hope you will give to the above in the next edition of your newspaper, together with a suitable apology. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours fraternally
George Galloway.

A comment

By John O'Mahony

Last week we reported George Galloway's assertion that the letter is a forgery.

It may well be a forgery. We don't know. The best way to handle something like this is to publish all the evidence — both the alleged letter, and Galloway's comments. The labour movement is entitled to know about such things and to have the chance to explore the truth — without the threat of the big stick of the capitalist courts being used against the labour movement press.

The secretive, oppressive, and illiberal practices of Mrs Thatcher's Establishment are not a model for the labour movement to follow, especially at a time when we are campaigning for more freedom of information.

If indeed the letter is a forgery, then George Galloway will emerge strengthened as a result of the exposure of the forgery, and not besmirched.

If George Galloway thinks it is his advantage to sue SO, then no doubt he'll sue. But whether or not George Galloway is involved, it is pretty certain that activities like those referred to in the alleged letter are going on in the Labour Party now [see page 2]. We do not know the present state of George Galloway's relations with his erstwhile comrades of the Labour Coordinating Committee, but he was until recently part of that wing of the Labour Party.

Regular readers of *Socialist Organiser* know that we run an 'open' newspaper. It is normal for us to publish replies and rebuttals, and we see it as a matter of course that Galloway has the right to reply to last week's SO.

It is unfortunate that George Galloway should make such a shoddy polemic of his response to the alleged letter.

At the end of last week, about the time Galloway would have been writing the letter printed here, I responded to a police request to go to Cannon Row police station and talk to the officer investigating the theft of Galloway's briefcase.

The idea that the notepaper on which

the alleged forgery was done came from the stolen briefcase was just one line of inquiry, not something that had been established. George Galloway has no right to write as if it is fact.

It would seem on the face of it to be improbable that the briefcase-thief who tried to make a few bob selling George Galloway's papers to the *Sun* would be interested in the internal Labour Party political mischief-making which would motivate forgery — or, for that matter, able to do a reasonably plausible job of it should they want to.

In fact everyone in the labour movement knows that an MP's notepaper is not the most difficult thing to get hold of. If the letter is indeed a forgery, the internal evidence suggests that it is the work of former soft-left friends of Galloway's who are well acquainted with the affairs of the left and know Galloway well enough to write in what comrades who know him tell me is something like Galloway's style.

It is not unknown for letters signed "pp" to be signed with the correspondent's name rather than that of his secretary; and any schoolboy with a bit of tracing paper could have forged Galloway's signature passably, anyway.

When we got the allegedly forged letter, we tried the phone number given in it; it got us through to George Galloway's office all right. We printed Anita Pollack's comment that she never received the alleged letter last week; but she and George Galloway were until recently members of the LCC Executive together. Even the date of Anita Pollack's selection is not conclusive: the election of delegates and the nominations to the final Euro-selection meeting might decide a selection well in advance of the final formal vote.

I don't know whether the letter is a forgery or not. Publishing it is one way to find out — and to help find out who forged it, if someone did. After all, if someone is doing such forgeries, we should find out who.

George Galloway's polemic shows him to be concerned less with the truth than with throwing up a smokescreen of shoddy rhetoric, such as the linking of SO with... *the Sun!* Last Saturday, 6 August, Galloway's friends at the Gorbachev fanzine the *Morning Star* did a similar smut-job on SO, no doubt derived from Galloway's letter.

Documents from the 1940s

The Trotskyists and the formation of Israel

7 The interminable series of sufferings through which the Jewish masses of Europe have passed have without doubt sharpened the development of a *national consciousness*, both among the survivors and among the Jewish masses of America and Palestine who feel most closely tied to the fate of their brothers in Europe.

This national consciousness expresses itself in the following way:

a) The Jewish masses in general now wish to affirm their own *nationality* as against other peoples. A violent Jewish nationalism responds to the violence of persecutions and anti-semitism.

b) The Jewish masses in Europe have their eyes turned towards emigration. Given the hermetic closure of all frontiers, following from general world conditions post-war, and in line with the wave of nationalism which carries them away, this wish to leave the continent of Europe, which for them is just a huge cemetery, expresses itself above all in a *Zionist* drive to go to Palestine.

c) Inside the Zionist movement, the struggle for "the Jewish state", formerly waged exclusively by the far right ("the revisionists"), is now taken up by all the parties ("Biltmore Programme") except the centrist party Hashomer Hat-zair.

The rebirth of the national consciousness of the masses is a result of the decay of capitalism, which is putting into question once again all the problems solved in its period of upswing. Basing itself firmly on its programme and on a scientific analysis of the situation in Palestine, but considering at the same time the real state of the consciousness of the Jewish masses, the Fourth International should recognise as legitimate their wish to develop their own national existence. It should show concretely that gaining this national existence is unrealisable in decaying capitalist society, and especially unrealisable and reactionary in Palestine. It should show that for the Jews as for all the other peoples of the world, the defence or the definitive conquest of their own nationality cannot be got by means of the construction of 'closed' states and

Part Two of the Draft Theses produced by the Trotskyist Fourth International in January 1947 outlines their political conclusions for the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine. Part One appeared in SO 365.

economies, but that the planned socialist world economy constitutes the only realistic framework in which a free and undistorted development of peoples is now possible. The Fourth International should make the Jewish masses aware of the terrible catastrophes awaiting them if the decay of capitalism continues. Only the integration of the movement for Jewish emancipation into the world workers' movement will allow a harmonious solution of the Jewish question. Socialist planning "turning the topography of the world upside down" (Trotsky) will guarantee all those who want it a special national existence in the framework of the United States of the World.

8 But the Fourth International will never win a decisive influence among the Jewish masses just by preaching the necessity of the socialist revolution for their emancipation.

Only by taking the lead in a vast world movement of solidarity by the proletariat for the victims of imperialist and fascist persecution; only in showing the Jews in practice that the solutions proposed by the revolutionary movement are more favourable and more realistic than the Zionist 'solution', will the Fourth International succeed, at the next turn of events, in bringing the Jewish masses into the world anti-imperialist struggle. To go against the Zionist current now; to counterpose to it another immediate and concrete way out: such are the two indispensable elements to prepare for the next stage: when the Jewish masses have gone through the experience of being deceived by Zionism, when they have understood the pointlessness of their efforts and their sacrifices, they will turn towards us on condition that we are able as from now to offer them our solutions as well as

an implacable criticism of Zionism.

a) All sections of the Fourth International should put forward the slogan, "Open the gates of all countries to the Jewish refugees!", "Abolition of all immigration controls". This slogan should be defended most specially by the SWP of the United States on the one hand, and by our British, Canadian, French and all Latin American sections on the other. These latter, as well as our Australian section, and in particular the sections of Argentina and Brazil, should add to these slogans the demand: "Abolition of all racial and religious discrimination in immigration laws".

Every concrete opportunity (complaints about the lack of labour and the decline of the population; partial opening of the country for certain categories of immigrants; acts of commemoration for the victims of fascism...) should be used to arouse the working-class public opinion of the country and to demand the launching of concrete actions with a view to getting immediate results. Resolutions like those of the CIO should be used as a point of departure to demand actions from the World Federation of Trade Unions, and to organise coordinated actions in the sectors of economic and social life best placed to express solidarity in action (seafarers, government employees, civil servants...) with go-slows, organised sabotage, protests, meetings, coordinated demonstrations, etc... *It is only to the extent that our sections are able to prove to the Jews that they are really and effectively struggling for the opening of their own countries to immigration that they will be able to get them to prefer immigration to those countries to immigration to Palestine*, which is harder to achieve and also constitutes an act contrary to the vital interests of the anti-imperialist masses of the Middle East.

b) All the sections of the Fourth International should seriously set about the task of fighting the rot of

anti-semitism which remains or is developing in large sections of the population in all countries. This work of cleansing is all the more urgent because the 'official' workers' movement, from conformism, from cowardice, or from narrow factional calculation (the anti-Trotskyism of the French CP is often expressed through anti-semitic arguments) does nothing to eliminate from the consciousness of the masses the anti-Jewish poison put there by Hitlerite propaganda.

At every concrete opportunity, our sections should destroy the fascist lies about "Jewish capitalism" or "Jewish monopolists". They should systematically rouse up the mass proletarian organisations against every attempt to reconstruct the anti-semitic organisations. Using the tragic examples of recent years, they should imbue the consciousness of the masses with this fundamental truth, that their own fate is at stake in the struggle against anti-semitic gangsterism.

It is only to the extent that our sections get this truth absorbed by the masses and translated by them into action that they will convince the Jews that only the integration of their movement of emancipation into the world workers' movement will put them in a position to defend themselves effectively against new waves of anti-semitism.

c) All sections of the Fourth International that confront an organised fascist movement thoroughly using anti-semitic demagoguery and going over to terrorist actions against the Jews, should try to mobilise the working class in *armed formations* (militias...) for the defence of the Jews. Where the Jewish population is concentrated in *Jewish quarters*, they should propose and favour the creation of *armed self-defence militias* while trying to fuse them with the workers' militias. They should explain to the Jewish masses that only this fusion in armed struggle can guarantee effective defence; but at the same time they should warn the workers that only an armed defence of the Jews will prevent the same fascist armies crushing the whole workers' movement at a later stage.

The Palestine problem today

9 The Palestine problem has gained a new and special importance since the end of the Second World War as a result of a series of "new factors" which are changing its face profoundly.

a) The industrialisation of the Near and Middle East has to a certain extent bolstered up the native Arab bourgeoisies in Egypt, in Palestine itself, in Syria, in Lebanon, and to a lesser extent in other Arab countries. The social differentiation of the old feudal and patriarchal Arab society has accelerated. An Arab proletariat, much more powerful numerically and already conscious politically, has appeared on the political scene

in several countries of the Middle East (strikes in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iran and Iraq).

Arab *nationalism* is being differentiated in the same way. Alongside feudal and reactionary pan-Islamism, there now appears a progressive pan-Arab current which sees the creation of a Union of the Arab countries of the Middle East as the only real framework for the development of the productive forces and for the constitution of an Arab nation. The bourgeoisie can only defend this idea in a hesitant way on the ideological level, to the extent that it wants an expansion of the market for its industry which, since the end of the war, has been plunged into a profound crisis. The only force capable of realising this programme of the national-democratic revolution of the Arab world is the proletariat, which alone is capable of pushing through, by the mechanism of the *permanent revolution*, the struggle against feudalism for agrarian reform, for the emancipation of the Arab world from imperialist intervention, and for the constitution of the unity of the Arab world.

b) The sharpening of *anti-imperialist* movements in the framework of the colonial revolutions, the most important overturns in the period immediately after the Second World War, and the weakening of the old imperialist powers (Britain, France, Italy) have had the consequence that the bourgeoisie and even certain feudal layers have seized the possibility of gaining by pressure, without having to unleash real mass struggles, from which they always recoil, important concessions from the occupying powers, such as the withdrawal of French troops from Syria and Lebanon, and the preparation of the withdrawal of British troops from Egypt. These various retreats by imperialism are a stimulant for the anti-imperialist struggle in the other colonial countries of the Middle East. They deal a severe blow to the prestige of imperialism and increase the confidence of the native masses in their own strength.

c) The transformation of Palestine into the *cornerstone* of the system of imperial defence in the Eastern Mediterranean. After the withdrawal of British troops from Egypt, Palestine will be the main base for the British fleet, airforce, army and secret services in the Eastern Mediterranean, the cornerstone of the defence of the Suez Canal and the imperial route to India. The strong concentrations of British troops in Palestine just use the terrorist troubles as a pretext. In reality, for British imperialism it is a matter of constructing a durable base with a view to future military conflicts and the defence of the Empire.

d) The transformation of the *Middle East* into one of the main items at stake between the "three big powers". Before the war the Middle East was the sector of the world where the predominant influence of British imperialism was least threatened. Since then, Rommel's advance to El Alamein, the installation of American "observers" in the kingdom of Ibn Saud, the unleashing of the Anglo-American dispute over Iranian oil, the penetration of the Orthodox

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Why 'two states'?

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Jewish refugees arrive in Haifa

Church throughout the Middle East as a major agency of Kremlin diplomacy — all these developments have put exclusive British domination in question in this part of the world and transformed it into an area of constant conflicts between the great powers. Since, besides, the Middle East has the world's most untapped and greatest oil reserves, it is also becoming, in the present period, the main area of dispute in the world struggle for this strategic raw material, of which the US's and the USSR's reserves are severely reduced. The various "tactical" moves of American and Soviet diplomacy in relation to the Zionist movement should be seen essentially as elements of their intrigues aiming to replace British domination in the Arab world.

d) The demand for immigration to Palestine put forward by the mass of Jewish refugees in Europe, and supported by a powerful protest movement by American Zionism, culminating in the "peaceful" actions undertaken by the Haganah in Palestine, as well as the terrorism of the "Irgun Zvei Leumi" and "Stern" gangs.

10 The starting point of the position of the Fourth International on the Palestine problem must be the understanding of the necessity of the anti-imperialist struggle waged by the Arabs, to which it gives the objective of the constitution of the Union of

the Arab countries of the Middle East.

It is the Arab masses, the workers and the poor peasants, who constitute the revolutionary force in the Middle East and also in Palestine, thanks to their numbers, their social conditions, and their material life, which puts them directly in conflict with imperialism. The revolutionary party must base itself in the first place on the dynamics of the class struggle, waged for the defence of their interests. Developing as the Arab proletariat grows and becomes stronger, the Middle East section of the Fourth International, constituted on the basis of the existing nuclei in Palestine and Egypt, should lead the actions of the masses for the defence of their daily interests, raise working-class consciousness to an understanding of the necessity of political action, and work to forge an alliance of all the exploited around the revolutionary proletariat through the struggle for the following four basic demands:

a) Immediate withdrawal of British troops. Complete independence for Palestine.

b) Immediate convocation of a single sovereign Constituent Assembly.

c) Expropriation of the land of the effendis and administration of the expropriated land by committees of poor peasants.

d) Expropriation of all enterprises owned by foreign capital, and workers' management of nationalised enterprises.

It is through the struggle for these four main central objectives that

the revolutionary party will educate the masses on the necessity of more and more opposition to the Arab bourgeoisie, which is closely tied to the effendis. When the mass struggle reaches its climax, when worker and peasant committees cover the Middle East and the question of the seizure of power by the Arab proletariat is on the agenda, the revolutionary party will have educated the masses sufficiently to lead them also to the expropriation of the "national" bourgeoisie.

11 Can these four objectives be realised at the present stage in a common struggle by the Arab masses and the Jewish working-class masses?

To reply to this question, one must start not from abstract schemas, but from the social and ideological reality of Jewish life in Palestine. Apart from a few thousand Jewish workers employed on the railways, in the IPC, at the refinery and in the docks, the whole Jewish industrial and agricultural proletariat is employed in closed Jewish industry, working with constant inflows of foreign capital and guaranteeing the Jewish workers a much higher standard of living than the Arab workers. Besides, the Jewish community in Palestine lives in constant fear of an Arab uprising and in face of this danger puts all its hopes in continual immigration and in the maintenance of the British occupation. We can thus observe more particularly:

a) Far from wanting the immediate withdrawal of the British forces of occupation, the Jewish masses, on the contrary, want them to stay in the country. The only thing that the Zionist leaders, bourgeois and worker alike, do demand is concessions on immigration and the setting-up of a Jewish state. But the overwhelming majority of the Jews of Palestine (in the first place, the "Haganah") are ready to "act" against imperialism only to the extent that such "action" does not endanger the fundamental "security" of the Jewish community in relation to the Arab world. That is why an armed struggle, or even widespread sabotage action, undertaken by the Jewish masses is more or less excluded at the present stage. The aim of the current Zionist action is only to apply pressure on British imperialism to get concessions, and not to push for its expulsion from Palestine.

The terrorist movement and the so-called "Hebrew committee of national liberation" do pose the objective of the expulsion of British imperialism from Palestine. But they can conceive of this expulsion only in the form of a general arming of the Jews of Palestine, who would hold the Arab world in check until such time as massive immigration by Jews would make them militarily capable of opposing the "Arab threat". Quite apart from the utterly utopian character of these views, they are ultra-reactionary and can only further widen the gulf which separates the Jewish and Arab workers in Palestine.

b) All the Jews of Palestine oppose the immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly which would put power into the hands of the majority of the population, which is Arab.

The terrorists claim to fight for a free, independent and democratic Palestine. But, being the most fervent partisans of a "Jewish state", they too must find a subterfuge to deny sovereignty to the majority of the population of the country. They say that they are ready to organise general elections only after having given the Jews in exile "an opportunity in a determinate period of time" to return to their country. In other words, they support general elections only if and when the Jews become the absolute majority of the population.

c) The Jews have no interest in the expropriation of the effendis, since this expropriation would in practice deny them any possibility of buying new land and expanding their "closed Jewish economy" in Palestine.

d) They are even more bitterly opposed to the expropriation of the enterprises built with foreign capital and to the closing of the country to the import of capital, because this would be a mortal blow to their Jewish economy.

All this leads to the conclusion that at the present stage the Jewish masses of Palestine, as a whole, are not an anti-imperialist force, and that the constitution of a Jewish-Arab anti-imperialist bloc cannot be a slogan for immediate agitation.

12 The question of Jewish immigration in Palestine must be looked at in the light of these considerations.

As long as the two economies, Jewish and Arab, are separate economies in Palestine, the Arab working population will consider each new influx of Jewish immigrants as an act of open hostility. When the whole population of Palestine lives with the perspective of the explosion of a bloody conflict in the Middle East, the Arab masses are bound to consider the arrival of new immigrants as the arrival of enemy soldiers, and besides that is confirmed by the way the Jewish masses see this immigration. That is why it is necessary to be aware of the fact that the continuation of Jewish immigration in Palestine widens the gulf between Jewish and Arab workers, strengthens the position and perpetuates the presence of British

imperialism, and can only pave the way for the complete extermination of the Jewish minority at the next stage, in the Arab uprising.

If, therefore, the Fourth International should do all it can to warn Jewish refugees against emigration to Palestine; if, in the framework of a world movement of solidarity, it should try to get the doors of other countries opened to them, and warn them that Palestine is a veritable death-trap for them; in its concrete propaganda on the question of Jewish immigration it should start from the question of the sovereignty of the Arab population. Only this Arab population has the right to determine whether or not immigration to Palestine should be open or closed to Jews. The question of immigration should be decided by the Constituent Assembly, elected by all the inhabitants of the country aged 18 and over. Such is the only democratic position on this problem, a position which also fits into the framework of the general strategy of the revolution in the Middle East.

In consequence, the Fourth International should condemn and fight British repression of Jewish immigration, denounce all the police measures, and counterpose concretely on each occasion the demand for the immediate withdrawal of the British troops. It is not difficult to explain to the Arab masses that this limited imperialist repression against the Jews is only preparation for much more violent repression against future Arab movements. It is in the interests of the Arab masses to take advantage of each outburst of anger against British police terror to pose concretely the question of the withdrawal of the British troops. It would besides be made clear in this case that the very "victims" of this repression would not at all accept this serious struggle against their "oppressors".

Likewise the Fourth International should oppose all the "solutions" which imperialism is proposing and may implement with or without the aid of its agents in the Jewish Agency. These solutions, such as the partition of Palestine, limited immigration of 100,000 Jews, or the handing-over of the mandate to the UN, all have the aim of perpetuating the presence of British troops in the country and still deny to the majority of the population its right to decide its own future.

13 At the present stage, general unity between Jews and Arabs in Palestine is unrealisable: only on a very limited scale, and to the extent that a section of the Jewish workers is employed outside the "closed" Jewish economy, have Jewish-Arab strikes like those of the last year been able to happen.

But that does not mean that this unity is ruled out for all time. At

Turn to page 10

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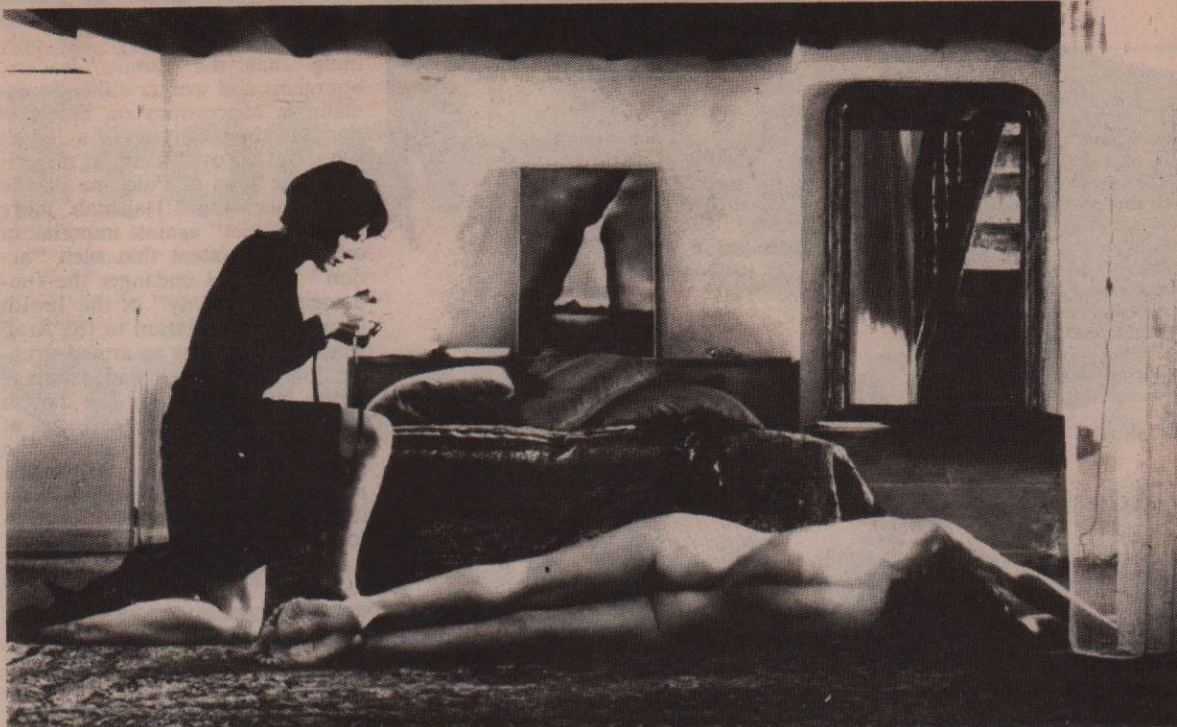
The heaviness of betrayal

Belinda Weaver reviews 'The Unbearable Lightness of Being'.

Watching 'The Unbearable Lightness of Being' resulted in the Unmistakable Discomfort of the Bottom. At three hours or so, it's the first film I've seen in a while that had an interval — just an excuse for the cinema to flog a few drinks and sweets and show us the same twenty ads we saw before the film started.

But I still enjoyed watching it. Once you've made the mental adjustment for the more than one and a half hour's worth, you settle back and hope that what you see will justify the extra time. The film did take you into quite a different world, and I felt a bit odd emerging into rush-hour Baker Street. I expected to find myself in sixties Prague.

Based on the novel by Milan Kundera, the film charts the sexual history of Tomas, a young, single brain surgeon in Prague. Tomas isn't political, and neither are his friends. They are doing well by Czech standards. They find the regime absurd rather than horrifying. As the liberalisation of the 'Prague Spring' develops prior to the Russian takeover, they view the bureaucrats as an inept and almost comical bunch who'll soon be seen off by the bright young things.



The film objectifies women

In the meantime, Tomas get on with having it off with as many women as he possibly can. He has an established mistress, Sabina, an artist. While on a visit to a spa, he meets another woman, Tereza, who ends up moving into Tomas's flat and tying him reluctantly down to a sort of monogamy. Tomas loves Tereza, but monogamy to him is unbearably weighty. He feels lightest and happiest when he can follow up a chance encounter with a woman, any woman.

Lightness and heaviness are the words which express the characters' feelings about life and relationships. Sabina feels lightest when she is carrying on secret affairs; she'd feel weighted down if people knew. Tereza can't take infidelity lightly like Tomas can.

Tomas would probably have carried on his feckless, charming way but for the rather heavy clampdown of Russian tanks in Prague. He finds it too oppressive, and flees to Geneva and 'freedom'. But Tereza

hates it there. Having no ties makes her feel weightless and invisible. Better the familiar Prague with all its new terrors than the lightness of Switzerland.

The characters try to change to fit in with the new times and new relationships, but they only succeed to some extent. Tomas is weighted down by one small misdemeanour, which costs him a lot. Though the matter is small and insignificant, it grows to dominate his life. It weighs him down, but to cast it off would

cause even greater heaviness, the heaviness of guilt and betrayal. All the characters' lives are shaped by the Russian invasion. Shown close up, with real footage cut into the film, the tanks are an abomination. When they first arrive, Tomas is chasing Tereza, who has fled the flat after a quarrel. As he follows her down the narrow, cobbled street, he sees and hears the oncoming tanks. The street is barely wide enough to allow the tank to pass. Graceful, lovely Prague is invaded, by what seem to be barbarian hordes. In the first days the Czechs surround the tanks in protest, there are demonstrations and photographs taken of the monstrosities. But then the authorities start to pick people off in ones and twos, and the betrayals and denials begin.

The film evokes the atmosphere of the era well — the excitement and hope of the liberalisation, then the outrage, disbelief and despair of the invasion, followed by the confusing 'normalisation' where people are asked to denounce others, sign oaths, recant their views and conform.

My main quibble with the film is the extraordinary amount of female nudity. Sex was a large part of the book, and so can't be left out of the film. But in the book, both characters were equally naked; in the film, the women alone are exposed. The film objectifies the women in a way the book didn't.

Kundera didn't strip the female characters as bare as director Philip Kaufman does. Kaufman seems to gloat over the women in a way that leaves a nasty taste in the mouth.

The Trotskyists and the formation of Israel

From page 9

present the Jewish population of Palestine has bent all its efforts towards the strengthening of its autonomous economic and political positions. But already the radical section of the Jewish nationalist youth has become aware of the pointlessness of these efforts of "conciliation" and "manoeuvre" on the part of the Jewish Agency to obtain from imperialism or from the great powers unlimited immigration and the setting-up of a Jewish state.

The current wave of terrorism by the "Irgun Zvai Leumi" and "Stern" gangs constitutes acts of despair by this minority, used and then abandoned by the bourgeois

leaders of the Zionist movement, and coming from the impasse into which the whole movement has strayed. Of course, this terrorism of despair does not in itself constitute the path to a solution to the Palestine problem. Quite the contrary. In the face of the terrorism, the Arab feudalists and bourgeois can manage to create an atmosphere of artificial "solidarity" between the masses and imperialism, and sharpen the hostility between Arab and Jewish workers. From the military point of view, these acts can only accelerate the establishment of an alien British police force in Palestine, which is the aim of the whole post-war imperial policy. But as the last stage of Zionism, terrorism, yielding no concrete result, can make the most conscious and active elements of the

Jewish masses open to reconsidering the whole question of Zionism and the solution of the Jewish question. It is this reconsideration which the Fourth International should prepare for at the present stage.

Eventual unity between Jews and Arabs should first come through the abolition of all racist ideology and practice on the part of the Jews.

• Down with exclusively Jewish enterprises! For the hiring of Arab workers in all the industry of the country!

• Down with separate Jewish and Arab trade unions! For the setting up of Jewish-Arab trade unions!

• Down with the camouflaged boycott of Arab or Jewish products. Down with the "closed Jewish economy"! For the mutual integration of the Jewish and Arab

economies.

• Down with the idea of a "Jewish state" imposed on the majority of the population of the country! For the elimination of Zionist ideas from the workers' movement! For the integration of the Jewish workers into the movement of the national-democratic revolution of the Arab masses.

• For a break by the Jewish trade unions and workers' organisations from the Jewish Agency, and the full publication of all the secret minutes of this organism.

• For a break by the Arab trade unions and workers' organisations from the Arab League and the Arab High Committee for Palestine, and the full publication of all the secret minutes of these organisms.

All these slogans, which can only be defended at present as slogans of

general propaganda, necessarily come up against bitter opposition from the Zionists, not only for ideological reasons but also and above all because the privileged material situation of the Jews in relation to the Arabs is thereby put in question. But to the extent that the collapse of Zionism becomes more and more evident in the eyes of the masses; to the extent that immigration slows down and the extreme danger of the Arab explosion comes closer; to the extent that our propaganda helps the masses to realise that it is a question of life and death for them to find a basis of agreement with the Arab masses, even at the cost of a temporary abandonment of certain privileges — our slogans will be able to go from the propagandist level to the level of agitation, and will be able to encourage a split between the workers' movement and Zionism. That is the condition *sine qua non* for achieving Jewish-Arab unity of action against imperialism, and it is the only way to stop the Arab revolution in the Middle East proceeding over the corpse of Palestinian Jewry. Here, as among the Jewish masses in the rest of the world, a firm position against the current at the present stage is the only way to prepare a reversing of the current at the next stage.

It also implies the need for the sections of the Fourth International to carry on preparatory propaganda work inside the far-left Zionist organisations. By showing that the slogan of a "bi-national state" is a nationalist and anti-democratic slogan, going against both the right of peoples to self-determination and the immediate needs of the anti-imperialist struggle in Palestine, our militants should at the same time put on the agenda, on each occasion, the question of the concrete realisation of the slogan of Jewish-Arab unity. They should put the centrist leaders up against their responsibilities, put on the agenda the adoption of the anti-racial programme detailed above, and thus accelerate the development of the Jewish working-class vanguard beyond Zionism.

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S&T action off



Homeopath hokum

A few weeks ago, the prestigious journal *Nature* set the scientific world buzzing with the publication of an incredible piece of research.

Carried out in Paris under the direction of Professor Jacques Benveniste, the research claimed to establish the validity of one of the tenets of homeopathic medicine. This holds that homeopathic drugs are 2s active when diluted as when undiluted.

It strains credulity to breaking point, contradicting many scientific laws, as well as common sense. It is as if a cup of tea with ten lumps of sugar were as sweet as a cup with one. Or more: dilutions of one part in a trillion trillion are claimed to be efficacious, even though that level of dilution is equivalent to one sugar lump in the Pacific Ocean, and you would normally not have even a single molecule of the drug in a dose of the 'medicine'.

Benveniste's group took things much further, finding activity in solutions of an antibody at dilutions of one part in a trillion trillion (equivalent to one molecule in the Earth's oceans), and even at one part in a trillion (ten times) — one molecule in a volume considerably greater than the entire universe!

Clearly, the antibody's activity was lingering in the absence of any of its molecules, Cheshire Cat style.

Homeopaths speculate that the substance somehow 'imprints' its structure in the water. Let us examine this claim.

Water does have some structure, despite its liquid state, with small regions of ice-like arrangement. Water molecules around dissolved substances adopt a *different* structure, but it has always been thought that water goes back to its usual structure once the dissolved substances has gone.

If water *can* be 'imprinted' with homeopathic medicines, we have to ask why it doesn't also become 'imprinted' with other substances, such as sewage or pesticides.

Homeopaths say their medicines have to be prepared not by ordinary stirring but by a particularly vigorous agitation. A sceptical letter to *Nature* suggests this is how James Bond could distinguish Martinis that had been shaken or stirred.

In view of the challenge to fundamental laws of science, the editor of *Nature*, John Maddox, deemed it necessary to take a team to Paris to examine the group's work. Other members were Walter Stewart, centre of a furore in the USA over scientific fraud, and James ('The Amazing') Raudi, magician and exposé of 'paranormal' claims.

Last week, they reported in *Nature* that Benveniste's findings were a delusion:

- due care had not been shown in the experiments;
- contamination of the test tubes was possible, since they were kept in rows next to each other;
- the results were not always repeatable (a sign of uncontrolled factors affecting things);
- numerical results agreed with each other more closely than would be expected even with a genuine homeopathic effect (a sign of observer bias);
- the *Nature* squad's own experiment showed no homeopathic effect.

Benveniste's response was bitter and angry, accusing Maddox's group of amateurism and incompetence, exerting psychological pressure, and implying dishonesty.

Letters to *Nature* suggested ways for the so-called effect to have been caused accidentally, criticised *Nature* for printing the report in the first place, or supported Benveniste's results (from a team who had shown a homeopathic treatment for hayfever to be effective).

Other comments on the affair range from 'a load of crap' (from a professor of immunology) to more measured observations that the *Nature* squad had not in fact disproved Benveniste's findings.

By a railworker

The S&T workers' action against British Rail has effectively ended. The NUR Executive decided to 'suspend' industrial action following a recall delegates' meeting on Thursday 4 August.

The action was originally called after BR imposed a new pay and grading structure over the heads of the union. The union's claim is for: four basic grades; improved pay relations compared with outside industries; classification of grades; and training.

The imposed structure answered none of these demands adequately.

After a ballot with 82 per cent voting for industrial action, an overtime ban was started. The NEC thought that this

was enough to get British Rail back to the negotiating table.

BR's response to this pussyfooting was the proverbial two fingers. After two one-day strikes, management did offer some minor concessions over training and grievances. The National Executive rejected these as inadequate and called two further 24 hour strikes.

But support, particularly in the South and South-East, was waning, and the impetus had been lost. At that point, a heightening of the action, possibly to a five-day stoppage, would have made all the difference. The members might have believed that the NEC was serious about winning the dispute.

On Wednesday 27 July, after the last 24 hour strike, a directive was issued to continue with the overtime ban and to recall delegates from all around the

country — another buck-passing exercise. At the delegates' meeting the vote was taken on escalating the dispute to all-out action or suspending it. Many delegates had been mandated to suspend the action, and the vote went that way by 168 to 131.

Negotiations will now take place, but no substantial changes will be on offer.

There are several lessons to be learned. We should not waste time or effort with management, but use the muscle we have. That 82% vote was a massive show of feeling, and should have been used much more strongly from the beginning, e.g. through five day stoppages.

Our leaders should never have said that the threat of industrial action would be enough. We need to be as serious as management over these things.

The Head Office should make funds and other support available to local activists so that they can put the case over. Activists from the stronger areas should send support to the less solid and organised areas. That way management lies about scabbing could be checked and counteracted — and where there really is scabbing we could organise picket lines.

We should congratulate those areas which stayed solid throughout the action but were ground down by ineffective national leadership. What is needed is a meeting of activists to draw together the lessons of this dispute and act on them.

The whole of BR is being reorganised in October, and this test has found the union organisation wanting. We still have time to fill the gap.

'Beat the Blues' protest

By Mark Sandell

On Wednesday 3 August the Universities South East Regional Council of the National Union of Students voted unanimously to support the 'Beat the Blues' demonstration on 13 October outside the Conservative Party conference in Brighton.

The meeting saw the demo, organised by Sussex Area NUS, as a central focus for the first term's campaigns and a great opportunity to involve new students.

The council included not only representatives of universities, but also members of Area NUSs in the South



East, thereby ensuring the involvement of Further and Higher Education student unions in this South-East mobilisation.

The NUS National Executive, however, has tried to damp down the enthusiasm. Cosmo Hawkes put the National Executive position. He opposed the demo on the basis that it had not been "organised at a national level", and added that it would fail because the

ruling group on the National Executive, the National Organisation of Labour Students, and their allies such as the Communist Party, will actively try to stop people supporting the demo.

To anyone unfamiliar with NUS politics this may seem incredible, but for the Kinnockite-controlled NUS National Executive it is standard procedure. The ruling clique has consistently ignored national conference decisions calling on them to organise 'on a national level' a first-term demonstration, and this year their hostility to the 'Beat the Blues' demo is again combined with a refusal to carry out policy for a first-term demonstration.

Worse was yet to come at the meeting. In further discussions on the Government Review of student unions,

the National Executive line was not only to comply with the Review — i.e. help the Tories to see how to smash up our unions — but to argue that the Tory Government would not attack student unions if we showed ourselves in the Review to be 'fair and democratic'. This position was pushed so far as to suggest that the Review is not a real threat, but only a token to keep the Tory backbenchers quiet.

The decisions and feeling of the meeting were that NUS must build a fighting student movement, involving more people and building links with the labour movement to defend student unions and NUS. We must integrate that struggle with our other demands, such as a statutory decent level of grants, decent housing, and resistance to Tory attacks like loans, the Housing Bill, and poll tax.

In drastic contrast to this, the message from the NUS clique in control of our National Executive is that they will continue to ignore policy passed at conference and will try to sabotage action organised by the unions' more responsive bodies such as Areas.

In this year, when the very existence of NUS is threatened, a continuation of this demagogic response is bad enough on its own; but to be also promoting a position that the Review is no real problem and that we just need to prove ourselves 'worthy' of our unions is suicidal for the student movement.

So loud were the bombastic speeches at the Easter conference by NOLS and their allies on the need to save our union that some of us even dared hope that they would be forced to act. Perhaps we should have taken more note of outgoing president Vicky Phillips when she welcomed the Review, saying that we had nothing to hide.

Perhaps if the NUS leaders had a bit more to do with the labour movement at rank and file level, they would take account of what has happened to the P&O strikers, and understand the Review for what it is, an attempt to smash our unions.

DHSS

Fight needed over new technology

By Steve Battlemuch

On July 14 the CPSA and NUCPS held special DHSS New Technology Conferences to discuss the introduction of the "largest computerisation project in Western Europe" into the DHSS. By 1992 all DHSS local and central offices will be linked up by Mainframe computers. To pay for this project the Treasury are demanding job cuts totalling at least 18,500 (this comes on top of the 8,000 to be lost this year).

The CPSA Conference rejected the report from the newly elected Kinnockite/moderate Executive in

DHSS, to limit our objectives to only defending members jobs — the Conference clearly restated Union Policy of no-overall job loss.

The crux to any campaign is not if you fight but how you fight. The Executive strategy was woolly and vague. The only specific proposal are Regional rolling programmes of selective one-week strikes to be repeated indefinitely. This was clearly rejected by the Conference as being a totally inadequate form of action and one that management could sit out until our members got fed up with the futility of it.

The next motion to be discussed came from the Socialist Caucus Supporters (it also gained majority support from the Broad Left at a Conference held three weeks previously). The motion clearly spelt out that action must begin in the six offices being used to trial the

project in October — to be supported by a section wide one day strike and a levy towards the action in the pilot offices. The motion was also clear that should this action fail to bring management back with serious concessions, that an all-out DHSS Strike ballot should be held in February 1989.

The motion was carried but now the problems really begin. The Section Executive and probably the National Disputes Committee are opposed to the strategy. NUCPS (the union representing middle to senior management) is opposed to the strategy and will be calling for the Regional rolling programme. Branches in DHSS will have to pressurise the Section Executive to ensure that the campaign is carried out and that no deals are done with NUCPS which break the Conference policy.

Why the French miners are right to fight

The strike by the French mineworkers, although it has its differences with our strike of 1984/5, is basically about the same thing — protecting jobs and keeping pits open.

International capitalism is working towards the same end. In France, Belgium, Germany or Britain they are determined to screw the mineworkers, privatise the pits, and extract every ounce of profit by introducing flexible working, etc. There are lessons not just for French miners but for every other miner — there is an attack on the standards, practices and conditions that have been taken for granted for years.

We have got a duty, whichever country we happen to live in, to support one another.

One of the reasons advanced on the left for going into the Common Market was that we would be able to support one another as international socialists a lot better. I don't think that has come to fruition, but



it has certainly got to be argued not just in the pits but throughout industry.

One of the big differences between the French miners' dispute and ours has been their ability to pull in support from power workers who recognise that it is a threat against them.

I'm glad to see that at last some miners who were assaulted by the police during the miners' strike are now receiving compensation. I know one case very well — Sid Richmond, an ex-NACODS man who was a pensioner at the time of the strike.

It was disgraceful what they did to him. They dragged him out of a car, roughed him up and handcuffed him so tight that his hands began to bleed. So I'm glad to see that they've got victory at last.

It's taken over three years since the end of the strike to make the

Notts Police pay out a few thousand pounds in compensation, and that's how the state wriggles out of its blunders. Still it's a magnificent victory for Sid and the lads and I congratulate them.

There are demands for the re-introduction of internment. What workers need to bear in mind is that what is being done in Ireland today could well be introduced into Britain tomorrow. Internment isn't just a way of trying to break the IRA. It's an attempt by the state to legalise whatever action it chooses to take against people who oppose it. That includes trade unionists, political activists and not just "terrorists".

For a long while I have said that Ireland is an Irish problem and will be solved by the Irish. International arms have never brought peace to a country. The Americans learnt that to their cost in Vietnam. The Soviet Union found that out to its cost in Afghanistan.

A political solution is needed, not a military one. One of the greatest tragedies I see about Northern

Ireland is working class people killing working class people, and working class lads from Britain sent in to stand between them.

Sitting round the table negotiating a solution is what is needed, but the state doesn't want that. The state is quite prepared to use Northern Ireland as a training ground and a battlefield so long as it stays across the Irish Sea.

People have to recognise that there can be no military solution in Ireland. It has to be a politically negotiated settlement. The introduction of internment will not damp the situation down. In fact it could well exacerbate it.

I've no comment to make on the birth of the royal baby except to say that the whole royal family are parasites on society. While I have no axe to grind against them personally, I am opposed to the institution of Royalty being used against us.

Paul Whetton is a member of Manton NUM, South Yorkshire, and a former Secretary of Bevercotes NUM, Notts.

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.

ORGANISE THE LEFT!

By Alan Johnson

"THE LEFT in the constituencies must organise together. It is a question of who rules — the Parliamentary Labour Party and the kitchen cabinet at Walworth Road, or the rank and file Party members in the constituencies?"

Wallasey CLP is saying: this is our Party. Let's reclaim it for socialism! The conference is the first step". So said Richard Aplin, secretary of Wallasey Constituency Labour Party, speaking to *Socialist Organiser* about the CLPs' Conference to be held in Manchester on 17 September.

The decision to hold the conference was taken at an enthusiastic fringe meeting at the Chesterfield Socialist Conference called by Wallasey CLP. Members from over 25 CLPs were present at the meeting. The CLPs conference aims to link together activists from CLPs, provide a forum to meet, exchange experiences, and discuss plans to fight back against the attacks on Party democracy and the Party's political drift to becoming an SDP Mark 2.

"The need for a broad, representative conference of CLPs", argues Richard, "is now vital for the Left in the Party. The Labour Party is changing before our eyes. We've seen the witch-hunt of socialists from the Party.

We've seen the LPYS conference closed down and the youth paper abolished. We've seen right-wing candidates imposed on constituencies against their will. We've seen constituencies suspended.

The National Constitutional Committee sifts and suspends Party members for protesting against local government cuts. We have the NEC proposing, in effect, that MPs have a veto over the election of the leader and deputy leader, making a mockery of the electoral college.



We have the threat to veto Prospective Parliamentary Candidates."

"There is", Richard continued, "little attempt to hide the fact that the aim is to stop the hard left. We have Kinnock demeaning Party Conference to the press, saying that it only lays down 'general principles' that 'might' be 'taken into account' by a Labour government. We have the continual denial of democratic rights to Black Sections and to the Women's Organisation.

And how many CLPs have had a chance to participate in the Policy Review process? Kinnock started it off by saying that nothing is sacred. Well, one thing was sacred — exclusion of ordinary Party members! Where was our place in this great re-think? Now we are told that the Policy Review document has the status of an NEC statement, and is not even open to amendment!"

Richard argues that the Policy Review represents "a repeat of Gaitskell's attempt in the '50s to gut the Labour Party of its socialist policies, especially Clause Four and unilateralism, to embrace the capitalist market, and to reduce our vision of change to being more efficient managers of the system.

If there is no organised resistance



The rank and file of the Party need to organise against Kinnock's drift to the right

from the CLPs we face the danger of demoralisation, disillusionment, and a drift away from the Labour Party by many Party members. And with that poverty-stricken vision, we also face electoral defeat."

So what is the CLPs Conference about? "Ending the isolation of CLPs from each other. Working out a Charter for Party democracy, to restore the Party to its members. Beginning the campaign to defend Clause Four and unilateralism. Building a network of CLPs that are not at the mercy of *Labour Party News*, Larry Whitty's mailshots, and the *Independent* for information about what's happening in the Party."

Richard Aplin argues that the Benn-Heffer campaign has been a shot in the arm for the Labour Party — blowing the whistle on the right wing, allowing the left to

organise together, and opening discussion in the Party.

Now "we want the Conference to be broad-based. We want CLPs to send delegates, to sponsor the conference, and to help to organise it.

It really comes down to whether

you think that the Labour Party should fight for a new society — socialism — based on the creativity and power of working-class people, or whether we give up on that and make our peace with capitalism. The Party rank and file must make our voice heard, and quickly".

George Galloway

In the last issue of *SO* we printed a letter sent to us anonymously through the post and allegedly written by Labour MP George Galloway. This letter, if genuine, showed Galloway to be involved in a computerised witch-hunt of Labour leftists. In our centre pages this week, George Galloway responds.