

French students:  
fighting back



page 2

Brazilian  
Workers  
Party  
programme



pages 10 and 11

For Socialist Renewal!



For Workers' Liberty!

Jozef  
Pinor:  
A Polish  
socialist



Centre pages

The sad story  
of the left  
and Europe



page 12

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

The main enemy is at home!

Fight  
for a  
general election



# Kick them

# all out!

Neil Kinnock was right when, during the Parliamentary debate on Geoffrey Howe's resignation, he demanded that Thatcher call an immediate general election.

Yes! Millions of people up and down the country plainly think the same. But Mrs Thatcher — or her successor, Michael Heseltine or whoever — won't call an election. They know, just as Neil Kinnock knows, that they would lose.

Either they'll call an election when they have no choice under law, that is, in 18 months. Or they might call one if unforeseen circumstances — dramatic events in the Gulf war they're preparing, for example — make them think they can win.

Like Neil Kinnock, millions of people want an election. But the Tories won't give it to us.



School students demonstrate in Paris

## Money for schools, not the Gulf!

By Chris Reynolds

As we go to press, representatives of France's rebellious secondary school students are meeting education minister Lionel Jospin to negotiate over their demands.

The government has already promised concessions, but demonstrations have been growing over the last four weeks, to 120,000 on the streets of Paris on 5 November and 200,000 on 12 November. Further protests are planned tomorrow (16 November).

The students' demand is for more money for schools — more teachers, more materials, better facilities. Discontent has been bubbling since the start of the academic year. France's school leaving age is now 18, but many students find themselves in oversized

classes, in crumbling buildings, with inadequate heating, where laboratories, workshops and canteens can't function for lack of resources.

The movement started in the rundown working-class suburbs of Paris, sparked by incidents where students were attacked or raped, and initially focusing on the demand for more supervisory staff. Teachers — often the victims of violence in rundown schools themselves — have generally supported the students' movement.

So far the school students' movement has not sparked wider action by the trade unions or by university students; the government is anxiously handing out concessions to try to make sure it doesn't.

The movement has been organised through students' general assemblies in each school, and two national coordinations. The more influential coordination is dominated by the Communist Party, the other by sections

of the Socialist Party and the Socialist-influenced anti-racist movement SOS-Racisme.

Some Socialist Party politicians, including President Mitterand, have taken advantage of the movement to help their factional struggle within the Socialist Party against prime minister Michel Rocard.

Most of the school student involved in the protests see their struggle as "not political" or even anti-political. On demonstrations, however, such slogans have been shouted as "I am Arab, she is Jewish, he is black! But it doesn't matter! Race doesn't exist!", or "Money for the schools, not for the Gulf war!"

In some schools the students' demands include the freedom to speak out, to put up posters, and so on; the present situation in that respect varies a lot from school to school. Demands are not yet being raised for students to have more say in the running of schools.

## The new Thatcherite manifesto

By Stan Crooke

The No Turning Back group of Tory MPs claim to represent the future of the Tory party. They may be right, if Labour loses the next election.

In 'Choice and Responsibility — the Enabling State' they have produced a new right-wing Tory agenda to continue the 'Thatcher counter-revolution'.

"Market forces do not destroy the environment... they protect it... The Brazilian rain forest is being burnt, and not replaced, because it is not owned by anyone... The generation of income by allowing big game hunting (in Africa) has stopped the fall in numbers (of elephants)." That's a sample!

This far-right grouping, which includes 11 Cabinet ministers amongst its supporters, are jackboot-licking Thatcherites ("The achievements of the Conservative government since 1979 constitute a record of which the nation can be

proud.") who have already seen many of their earlier policy proposals implemented by the government.

The pamphlet was produced in response to an appeal from Thatcher in May that the No Turning Back group should put forward its ideas for the Tory manifesto for the next general election. If re-elected, the Tories will doubtless proceed to implement much of the pamphlet's proposals.

At the heart of their philosophy lies the idea that state (and local authority) intervention is bad, and market forces are good. Thus, the remaining nationalised industries and provision of social services by the state and local authorities should be privatised. Everything should be left to the "free play" of market forces.

This is the lesson which they draw from the past ten years: "Britain has changed for ever from the down-at-heel nation it was in 1979... In 1979 Britain was a high-tax impoverished country and few things were possible."

"After only a decade its top income tax rates are among the lowest in the world, and it is once again a wealthy country... In ten years we have demonstrated that the free market can deliver sustainable prosperity and create a better quality of life."

The pamphlet advocates the privatisation of British Coal, the London Underground, British Rail, and the Post Office, as well as "road pricing" (ie. tolls) for all motorways.

The welfare state itself should likewise be privatised. The Tories should "make a great leap forward", suggests the pamphlet, and "encourage ordinary citizens to provide themselves with non-emergency health care, education, and pensions..."

The state benefits system should be converted into a "private insurance system". Those who fail to pay any contribution to this insurance system should receive benefits only in return for "a minimum routine of community work, on the basis of ability, aptitude and circumstances."

## Malcolm Muggeridge's 60 years of disillusion

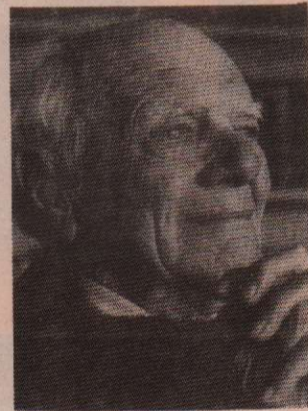
By Thomas Macara

Every generation of ex-socialists feels it is the first. Nobody is ever quite so justly and properly disillusioned as you yourself have become.

Sure, you know there were others in the past. But you feel that they didn't really understand. Only now, with your own experience, is true and final understanding and definitive disillusion possible.

The inverted utopians of anti-socialist disillusion usually believe that history begins with their own sad awakening to a sour 'New Times'. Each wave of disillusion is composed of a 'me-generation', you might say. Today's crop is, anyway.

Malcolm Muggeridge, who died this week at 87, could have told them a thing or two. He became disillusioned with socialism 60 years ago! He built a long career on his disillusionment. He didn't learn very much though. Someone who breaks with the semi-religious cult of



Malcolm Muggeridge

Stalin — and with the goal of human self-liberation — in 1932, and dies over half a century later as a famous propagandist for Christianity and a PR man for Mother Theresa of Calcutta can't be said to have advanced much.

Muggeridge was a nephew of the prominent Fabian Beatrice Webb. The Fabians were bureaucratic socialists, and the Webbs — Sydney and Beatrice — their high priests.

Not capitalists, not workers should run society, they said, but the state bureaucracy — middle class technocrats, recruited by ability.

The working class had no place except as "the people" in their vision of socialism. The Fabians found a prominent place in the new reformist British Labour Party, where they were the hated enemy of every brand of class-struggle socialist.

Then something strange happened. When Stalin set up his bureaucratic system in the USSR, lo and behold, said the Webbs, this is our very own Fabian socialism! The aged Webbs became outright propagandists for Stalin.

They remained reformists at home, of course. Sydney was chief jailer in charge of Britain's colonies as a Minister in the 1929-31 Labour government! He was in the House of Lords as Lord Passfield.

Malcolm Muggeridge travelled this far with the older generation. He went further — to Russia itself. There he sobered up quickly. He saw the horrors of Stalin's forced collectivisation with its man-made coercive famines. Unlike many other journalists he told the truth about it. Then he relapsed into a yearning cynicism, until in deep old age he found his god.

Socialists whose beliefs and aspirations do not depend on fantasies and illusions in some 'socialist fatherland', which is what the USSR was to a generation of socialists, owe something to Muggeridge for telling the truth about what he saw. In the '30s the hard facts about Stalin's Russia were a very rare commodity even, surprisingly, in the bourgeois press. In fact, it was a "Trotskyist" commodity.

## Swamp the poll tax courts!

By Ian Greaves, Secretary, Leeds Anti-Poll Tax Federation

Nobody likes courts, they're like dentists' waiting rooms and other places where you are unlikely to feel

comfortable and content with life.

Our campaign for people to attend court and contest their cases faces this natural obstacle. I doubted many would turn up so that courts would be able to churn out thousands of liability orders.

But turn-outs have been good. 450 people have been summonsed to each of four

sessions in Leeds with 30 to 80 turning up to contest their cases. Enough to keep the courts busy.

As it would have taken four years at this rate, the council is summonsing 10,000 in the next few weeks. The courtrooms they plan to use aren't substantially bigger than toilet cubicles, so they'll face problems, as the council has sent summonses out to the best organised areas.

In some places the courts can only be used to delay things and to get in touch with non-payers. But in cities like Leeds, Liverpool and Birmingham we could ensure that the enforcement machine seizes up. In these cities they will only attain liability orders for a small proportion of non-payers before they send out next year's bills.

This depends on a decent court turn-out, which is hard. But with grass-roots organisation you can get an impressive turn-out. It's the same grass-roots strength as can send the bailiffs scurrying off when the council tries to enforce all its liability orders. See you in court!

## Sheffield protest

By Nick Lowles

30,000 people in Sheffield have been sent court summons to appear over a space of two days for non-payment of the poll tax.

The first court day, Friday 23 November, is likely to see the largest anti-poll tax protest in Sheffield to date. The University and Polytechnic, whose students make up about 4,000 of the non-payers, plan a joint march to the court to

coincide with a city-wide picket of the court.

Sending out so many summons is a sign of desperation from a council that is facing mass non-payment and the prospect of making £40 million-worth of cuts.

The mood of defiance against the council is growing, not just among the community over the poll tax but also among the council's workforce. And, not surprisingly too: the threat of up to 4,000 redundancies looms over their heads.



More on Eastern Europe. 60p plus 32p postage from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

**Labour must fight for democratic controls**

# Who polices the police?



The police treat people like dirt

It has been announced that some members of the Surrey police force are to go on trial in connection with the frame-up of the Guildford Four.

The Four were released from 15 years in jail earlier this year when the authorities admitted that the confessions on which they were convicted were beaten out of them.

Only some of the police involved in some of questioning of some of the four are to go on trial. There is "not enough evidence" to charge any of the large number of other police officers who were involved.

We do not know, and anyway legally cannot comment, on specific charges against individuals. We do know that a large number of police officers must — on the implicit ad-

mission of those who released the Guildford Four — have committed the horrible crime of deliberately sending four innocent victims to jail for many years knowing that they were not guilty.

And the best the authorities can do is to charge some of those who "processed" the victims of the gross injustice? It seems so.

The Birmingham Six, who have now spent 16 years in jail for something they did not do, are, it seems, soon to be released. They, too, were beaten and forced to confess. And what will happen to those who were responsible in that case — at every level?

Probably very little. Police faking and fiddling of evidence to manipulate judges and magistrates is normal and routine practice in

most police stations in the land. Everybody knows that. Little is done about it. Even internal disciplinary action against bent coppers is rare.

It is rare because corruption is so widespread. Corruption continues to be so widespread in part because kickbacks are rare.

In the case of the investigation into the police who handled the Guildford Four there was, it is reported, a widespread feeling in the Surrey force that some people were being victimised. Any guilty police officer picked out for punishment is victimised — in a system where it is normal, in big things and little, to cheat and fiddle and frame up and lie to judges and magistrates.

The Labour Party should commit



Free: Gerry Conlan, one of the Guildford 4

itself to a radical overhaul of the police, and the creation of proper democratic accountability. Right now the police function as the

uniformed thugs of the ruling class. Naturally they treat people like dirt. Naturally they become dirt themselves.

## Heseltine: a rich man on the make

Michael Heseltine is a rich man on the make. He is the politician whom Thatcher put up in the early '80s to smash the local government left.

He is the smooth thug who, as Defence Minister, dressed up in soldier's clothes and gloated as troops broke up the peace camp at Molesworth. He is the hatchet man who prided himself on cutting civil service jobs faster than any other minister in the first years of Thatcher's regime.

Now he wants to rescue himself from the back benches by rescuing



The Sun attacks Heseltine

associates. The Tory Establishment, when rattled, gets the knuckle-dusters out even for one of its own.

Heseltine got just a small taste of the treatment the press routinely dishes out to the left. The brute savagery with which the press

treated Tony Benn and the left when they challenged the old leadership of the Labour Party in the early '80s was a useful indication of what we can expect when we get close to challenging the ruling class's control of society — and then it won't be just hard words.

The serious socialists are those who know that and are prepared for it. All the rest — one-time left-winger Neil Kinnock, and many others — are intimidated and kept in line by the vicious thugs and scoundrels who rule our society, set its standards, and control its media.

## Kick them all out

### From front page

So what are Neil Kinnock and the Labour Party going to do about it? They should organise a tremendous campaign of agitation all over the country, and force the Tories to call an election. They should make things so hot for the government that its masters in the boardrooms and the City will tell it to call an election to try to cool things down.

Vast numbers would respond to a campaign of meetings and marches to demand that this grotesquely unrepresentative minority government — which has now lost even the support of much of the minority that voted it into office in the first place — allow the people to exercise our democratic right to throw it out. The campaign would also

greatly increase Labour's vote in the general election.

Neil Kinnock and his friends are unlikely to launch such a campaign. For them it is all a matter of parliamentary games, of prancing and preening for the media, and passively waiting for the Tories to lose. A campaign in which tens of thousands of angry people would march to express their opposition to the poll tax and their anger that unemployment is once again rising dramatically — such an idea is frightening for the Labour leaders.

Softly, softly, they reckon — and the "prime minister in waiting" will inherit Downing Street. They are patient. They are not beggared by the poll tax. Their jobs and their comfortable salaries are safe.

They should not be so compla-

cent about winning the general election. The Tories have painted themselves into an electoral corner, and now we have an accelerating economic slump on top of it. Yet they also have vast advantages.

They know how to survive. The movement to get rid of Thatcher is a movement for Tory survival. Suppose Heseltine wins. He says he will cede ground on the poll tax. If Thatcher stays, she too knows how to manoeuvre.

We don't know. Neither does Neil Kinnock. Speculation is not constructive politics. Complacent, passive waiting is not serious politics.

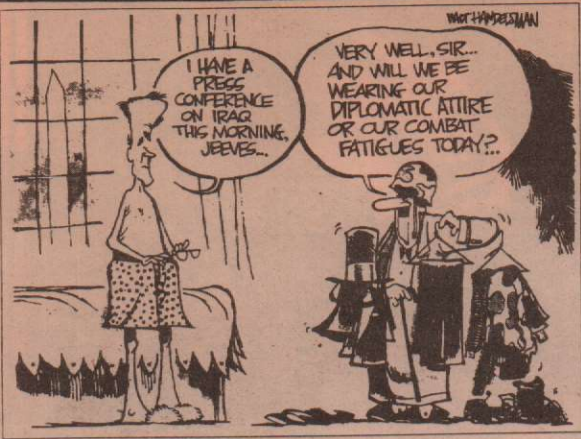
Neil Kinnock was right to call for a general election. The labour movement should tell him that he should now fight for it.

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

Karl Marx

Socialist Organiser  
PQ Box 823, London SE15 4NA  
Newsdesk: 071-639 7965  
Latest date for reports: first post Monday.

Editor: John O'Mahony  
Published by WL Publications, Ltd. PQ Box 823,  
London SE15 4NA  
Printed by Portobello CP  
Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office  
Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of  
Socialist Organiser, and are in a personal capacity  
unless otherwise stated



GRAFFITI

War minister Tom King exposed the Tories' deep racism this week when he visited troops in Saudi Arabia. Claiming that British soldiers there are better fed than Americans, he "jokingly" called the Americans' MREs ("Meals Ready to Eat") "Meals Rejected by Ethiopians". Millions of Ethiopians have died from starvation in the last five years, and millions more are starving this year. The British government has taken a hard line in the EC on refusing to send food from Europe's huge surpluses to help the starving. According to the *Daily Mirror*, the ranks of the Gulf forces — no academy for enlightened internationalism — were shocked by King's callous flippancy.

According to an opinion poll this week, only one Briton in four wants a war in the Gulf; but six out of ten think there will be war anyway.

79 per cent of women, and 38 per cent of men, said no to war.

British soldiers in the Gulf have now been exempted from paying poll tax at home during the time they're abroad.

But they have other troubles. Apart from Tom King's racist joke, the latest, reported by the *Daily Star* (15 November), is that Christmas celebrations have been banned, for fear of offending Saudi Arabia's Muslim fundamentalist rulers.

The *Star* splutters: "The mega-rich Royal family of Saudi calls in our Desert Rats to protect its kingdom from the Butcher of Baghdad. And how does it thank them? By killing their Christmas."

"For God's sake" — the *Star* (but which God?) — "whose side are we all on?"

The *Star* is on the side of the "mega-rich", and of killing people (if not Christmas) to keep them mega-rich.

Countries continued to lend to China... The Canadian soft loans were never suspended. They increased their business on the back of their soft loans policy," reports the *Financial Times* (15 November), quoting an unnamed diplomat.

According to the *FT*, companies from all over the West are now wiping away the crocodile tears they shed after the Tiananmen Square massacre in June last year and getting back to business in China.

The big US companies Dupont, Pizza Hut, IBM and Amoco have all recently signed deals. The EC and the World Bank have lifted sanctions. Australia has stepped up coal exports, and Japan has increased loans.

Belonging to a trade union benefits women more than men, according to a new survey.

The survey, reported in the

*Financial Times* on 9 November, found that unionised women earn 29% more than non-union women manual workers, all other things being equal, while the pay advantage for union men was 15%.

New evidence confirms that the "Thatcher revolution" and the "enterprise culture" have failed to take hold of most people's minds.

The latest British Social Attitudes survey finds that 56% favour increased public services even at the price of higher taxes. 37% opt for keeping services and taxes at the same level, while only 3% go for the Thatcherite line of lower social spending and lower taxes.

Support for social spending has increased markedly, from 32% in 1983 to 56% when the polling for this survey was done last year. The biggest change has come among professional and managerial people: only 28% were for more social spending and more taxes in 1983, but now 57% back that option.

The British Social Attitudes survey also confirms a continuing drift towards more liberal attitudes.

69% now reject the idea that a wife's role is to stay at home and look after the family. The score has increased from 50% in 1983.

The exception in recent years to the general drift has been attitudes to gays and lesbians, which became more bigoted, probably because of the media coverage of AIDS. According to the latest survey, the tide has begun to turn, with a slight relaxation of anti-gay bigotry.

Michael Heseltine must be hoping that jinxes work both ways.

A couple of weeks ago England footballer Paul Gascoigne ("Gazza") met Margaret Thatcher at Downing Street. They posed together for press photos, and brainless media-lout Gascoigne declared that the Tories' chief class warrior was "nice and cuddly".

This week, on 14 November, England football manager Graham Taylor left Gascoigne on the bench for a big European championship match and, pleased with the result, said he "would do the same again".

The county hospital — privatised in the early 1980s — recently placed armed guards in the street to dissuade uninsured pregnant women from entering.

There were 250 maternity beds for the uninsured and 500 patients already inside. Faith in government — finding common solutions to common problems — was once regarded in Orange County as the prologue to Bolshevism. But even [the local ultra-Reaganite state congress representative] now admits it may be necessary for government to be more active, not less.

The *Independent on Sunday*, 4 November, reporting on Orange County, California, the heartland of Reaganism.

# Labour councillors oppose the poll tax

## THE POLITICAL FRONT

By Councillor Liz Davies

1990 Labour Party Conference saw the establishment of a new body, Councillors Against the Poll Tax, launched by Labour Party Socialists with the Anti-Poll Tax Federation.

All over the country, Labour councillors are standing up against the poll tax. The May 1990 local elections were a massive victory for Labour, improving on our already highest-ever number of councillors. There was one overwhelming reason for our popularity — we were clearly identified as opposing the poll tax imposed by the government. The unfairness

of the poll tax was the single most common issue raised on the doorstep. The Labour Party were absolutely correct to concentrate campaigning on the poll tax.

Now Labour councillors who are seeking to convert that opposition to the poll tax into effective opposition are facing harassment from their own Party.

In Brighton, seven Labour councillors voted against imposing a poll tax. They were suspended from the Labour Group on the council. Their local CLPs passed motions supporting them, and the CLPs have now been suspended by the National Executive Committee.

In Islington, the Labour council has announced its intention to make a public show of taking the non-paying councillors and the local MP, Jeremy Corbyn, to court. Someone in the local Labour Party also paid the first instalment of the Mayor's poll tax. Islington must be the only borough in

the country where neither the MP nor the Mayor are paying their poll tax.

In Liverpool, 29 Labour councillors were suspended from the Labour Group for voting against a massive rent rise. The national party is now commencing proceedings to expel them from the party.

This is not a re-run of the 1984 rate-capping campaigns. Councillors are not being asked to make martyrs of themselves for the rest of the movement. 14 million people in England and Wales have not paid their poll tax. Labour councillors, elected on a platform of opposition to the poll tax, should be part of that mass movement. Labour councillors are acutely aware of the poverty imposed by the poll tax and by the cuts in local government services that go hand in hand with the poll tax; we see the poverty every week in our surgeries.

The poll tax was designed by the Tories to penalise so-called 'high-spending'

Labour local authorities. In practice, it increases government control over local authority spending, it ensures that cuts are made, and it cripples many, many people financially.

The Labour Party has a responsibility to be seen clearly to oppose the poll tax. That means supporting all forms of opposition to it, including non-payment. It means not distinguishing between those who cannot afford to pay and those who will not pay. It means concentrating campaigning against the poll tax, rather than concentrating on internal disciplinary measures against people who really are fighting the poll tax.

Councillors Against the Poll Tax was set up to provide information and support to Labour councillors across the country who are opposing the poll tax. Its first meeting will be on Saturday 1 December 1990 in Leicester. For further details please phone 071 733 3403 or 071 359 3043.

## Cashing in at the Apollo

### PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

the boxer's stroy. The hacks were ushered inside by tattooed bouncers for what amounted to an auction. The winning bid came from a joint team from the *Sun* and the *News of the World*, who offered £150,000 — a useful sum for Mr Marsh who has recently experienced some financial difficulties.

It would be unwise to offer any commentary upon the details of the Marsh/Warren affair as the latter protagonist is notoriously litigious and the former has just been found not guilty. I will, therefore, confine my observations to noting that since the *Sun* acquired exclusive rights to the Marsh story of "My 294 Days of Hell" on remand in Wormwood Scrubs, that newspaper has adopted an uncharacteristic interest in issues like police 'fit-ups': "Who shot Frank Warren? The police who arrested Terry Marsh might just as well have taken a name from a phone book. They produced nothing in court that should have taken them

within a hundred miles of the dock".

...And also penal reform:

"In his story in the *Sun*, Terry Marsh has made disturbing allegations of pettiness, spite and sheer cruelty by some warders. These charges of hell in jail, must be speedily and thoroughly investigated."

This from the same newspaper that called for the Strangeways rioters to be gunned down by the SAS; that has never concerned itself with the much more blatant police 'fit up' of the Birmingham Six; and which could only manage an embarrassed and half-hearted editorial comment after the Guildford Four were released. But then, none of these were colourful East-End 'characters' and the *Sun* didn't have exclusive rights to their stories.

Incidentally, no-one can accuse Murdoch's men of 'chequebook journalism' in their dealings with Terry Marsh: the brief-cases at the Phoenix Apollo apparently contained *cash*....

It would be rank hypocrisy to pretend that I was terribly upset to hear about the death of George Gale.

His columns (first in the *Daily Express* then briefly in the *Mirror* and finally in the *Daily Mail*) were invariably right wing and sometimes downright bigoted. Early in his career at the *Express* he attempted to witch-hunt Lord Mountbatten by revealing that he (Mountbatten) had once signed a hotel register as 'Louis von Battenburg'. During the 1975 Common Market referendum Gale was at the forefront of the anti-Market campaign, revealing in the Little England logic of that stance (unlike some of his 'left-wing' bedfellows in the anti-Europe camp).

But I always felt Gale was essentially honest and even his most reactionary tirades never contained the mean-spirited spite of, say, John Junor or Paul Johnson. Some right-wing voices are at least worth listening to: Gale's was one of them.

## Outlook ditch Briefing

### EYE ON THE LEFT

By Cate Murphy

Briefing and Socialist Outlook's three year marriage was officially declared ended at last weekend's Briefing AGM: Socialist Outlook went off into the arms of the Socialist Movement paper, Briefing to start a new life as a monthly magazine.

All in all it was an anticlimactic end to a coupling from which much had been expected by the partners.

Outlook had already taken

their decision to ditch Briefing. Over a month ago they played the heavy Victorian people of property and chucked them out of their offices, cut off the phone, and unilaterally closed down the paper.

The handful of Socialist Outlook people who were sent to the AGM were heavily outnumbered by Briefing loyalists, and showed little enthusiasm for a political fight.

But how do you justify such blatant opportunism?

Socialist Outlook's major defence was that the major class struggles to come will all be fought by those not only outside, but hostile to, the Labour Party, and whose natural home is the Socialist Movement. If you don't talk to the Socialist Movement,

you'll be talking to yourselves, said Alan Thornett, who, some believe, has spent the last decade or so talking to himself about the dangers of talking to himself.

I might have found his argument more convincing had Alan — who has a factional majority on the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee — not stymied an initiative to link up the SMTUC and rank and file ambulance workers earlier this year.

Another powerful argument advanced by Outlook was that, with the launch of a fortnightly Socialist Movement paper, the 'market' wasn't big enough for Briefing too. So that's why Outlook has decided to launch their own fortnightly paper. Is it?

# Ireland moves left

By Patrick Murphy

Last Friday Mary Robinson broke the calm exterior she had maintained during her election campaign to movingly thank the "Mna na hEireann" (the women of Ireland) who, she said, had been responsible for her surprise victory.

It was a big occasion, not least because long-suffering sections of the Irish people seemed to have given a shock to the political establishment. Women had, "instead of rocking the cradle, rocked the system".

Whether Mary Robinson will rock the system or be lulled to sleep by it is another question — but there was much to smile about in this result.

Mary Robinson represented three sweet firsts last week. She is the first woman to be elected President, this was the first national election victory for the left, and the first time Fianna Fail lost a Presidential election. Just to ice the cake, it was the worst election result ever for the main opposition, Fine Gael.

After the first round Brian Lenihan of the governing Fianna Fail party was just ahead with 44% of the vote, Robinson was second with 39% and Fine Gael Austin Currie was well behind with 17%. After Currie's vote had been redistributed Robinson had received the bulk of them and this put her 86,000 votes ahead of Lenihan.

Everyone, of course, has their account of the reasons for her

triumph. Labour Party leaders emphasise the slick middle-of-the-road campaign which concentrated on getting her image right and tried to avoid controversy.

At the level of conventional politics she certainly ran an efficient campaign, it started early, emphasised her distance from the pettiness and patronage of the major party system, and appealed to a 'rainbow coalition' of outsiders. Her opponents like to stress the extent to which she benefitted from the scandal surrounding Brian Lenihan and his subsequent sacking. Although it damaged him in mid-campaign, at the last moment he appeared to win a sizeable sympathy vote. There is something in all of these accounts, no doubt, but three other interlinked factors seem to be decisive.

One is the huge turnout of women, across the party system and the country, to support a candidate who spoke to them as people with specific interests and grievances. The second is the emergence of an urban vote which is clearly more radical and progressive. Dublin gave Mary Robinson her victory: she took nearly 50% of the vote there, sweeping the board in some constituencies. Its large and concentrated population made up for Lenihan's success in rural areas. He won in every western constituency bar Robinson's own of Galway West.

Thirdly, and most importantly, there is a more long-term shift in Irish politics. Ireland has the youngest population in Europe and this young electorate is more demanding, less loyal to the old



party machines and more resistant to the prevailing values of Catholicism and populist nationalism. This development is the most worrying for the right-wing parties, because it will destroy them unless they can control it.

The implications of Mary Robinson's victory will take time to sink in. In the short term it is the traditional parties which are feeling the effects. The leader of Fine Gael, Alan Dukes, has resigned.

Charles Haughey has faced crises before but this time his intervention managed to both scapegoat a friend and ally and practically guarantee defeat to save his own skin. Haughey has failed five times in 10

years to get an overall majority for his party in the Dail. Even his Tammany Hall machine might creak under such pressure. The vote of Labour and the left should be boosted at the next election thought its representation is dominated by pale pink Springites and the even more rightward-moving Workers Party.

Finally, there is Robinson herself. In fact the President's job is a powerless one, but this victory has awakened expectations and Mary Robinson will be looked to as, in her own words, "a voice for the disadvantaged and marginalised". She will suffer the dual strategy of isolation and incorporation from

the establishment and there is no clear sign that her politics will protect her from either. With a dynamic, campaigning left the chances are better than for some time; with a defensive, 'respectable' left, many of the grievances Mary Robinson's victory represents will be absorbed by one of the other parties, most likely the populist and ever-adaptable Fianna Fail.

At the moment I prefer to be optimistic about overall developments. In a part of her acceptance speech which visibly disturbed Charles Haughey, Robinson declared that the Irish people had cast aside the dusty flags of the civil war. We need to see them torn up and buried forever.

## Reactions from Irish socialists to the Robinson victory

We asked two of Ireland's most prominent socialists for their response to the election of Mary Robinson as President of the Republic of Ireland.

Jim Kemmy is a socialist member of Dail Eireann from Limerick

Michael D Higgins is a long-time Senator and tribune of the left wing of the Irish Labour Party.

They talked to Mark Osborn.

**Michael Higgins**

I believe that the election of Mary Robinson represents a shift in Irish culture. The

election campaign brought together many groups who hoped for ethical change.

At its base much of the strength

of the campaign came from women's groups, groups which had campaigned for family planning rights and divorce rights.

Mary Robinson is an egalitarian and a feminist. She is driven by a strong sense of fairness.

It is possible to overestimate the division between town and country. In my West of Ireland constituency, Connemara, Mary Robinson topped the poll. She not only won in Dublin, but also in Cork City. There was a strong vote amongst

women. But that does not explain the whole story. There was a big vote amongst the young: they wanted a breath of fresh air. Neither the politics or language of the big parties relate to the young people; they do not have a coherent dialogue with the young.

Much of Mary Robinson's language in recent years has been against the principles of exclusion — for women on juries, for homes for the homeless. Mary Robinson is for participation and inclusion.

It is true that there is some backlash from the defeats on abortion and divorce. The campaign drew on a broader constituency than the left.

There has been a good deal of co-operation between Labour and the Workers Party during the campaign. Statements have already been made in favour of continuing work in this spirit. This is a welcome development.

**Jim Kemmy**

We are very pleased with the victory of Mary Robinson. The left here is very excited. This could herald a new era in Irish politics. This victory is good for women and good for socialism.

Mary Robinson has broken the Fianna Fail stranglehold on the Presidency. They have seen the post as an extension of their party. So the victory of Mary Robinson is good for democracy too.

The campaign against Mary Robinson was very dirty. Lots of mud was thrown at her — about her views on abortion and

contraception. The labour movement here is very fragmented and quite weak. We have lost a number of battles — including referendums on divorce and abortion. It is good to be on the winning side.

Obviously Mary Robinson's vote will not directly translate to us. But it will encourage more women to come forward. It has also boosted our morale. It proves there is a constituency out there that we can win. We have got a new appetite.

Fianna Fail were able to get out their traditional, strong vote in the country. This was surprising given the sacking of Brian Lenihan during the previous week.

One interesting, sad fact about the election was that although women of all classes came out to vote, one third of the electorate did not vote at all. Many of those who did not vote were working class men from the housing estates. Many are demoralised by unemployment and poverty.

Mary Robinson is a liberal socialist. By Irish standards this is good. Mary Robinson is a good person with a record of fighting for people's rights. She represents social progress.

Women are under-represented in Irish life and Irish politics. None of the Labour Party or Workers Party TDs are women. This is a good victory for women.

We are a country with a quarter of a million unemployed, a third of the people on or under the poverty line and emigration on the increase. Fine Gael's leader resigned yesterday. The likely replacement is John Bruton, a right winger. This will give Labour more space. The economic situation combined with a leadership change in Fine Gael will give new opportunities for Labour.



The corrupt old establishment Fianna Fail's Brian Lenihan and Charles Haughey shake hands

# Colleges back down on fees

By Jed Marsh (LSE Labour Club) and Ian Prenelle (UCL Labour Club)

Plans to introduce "top up" fees at the London School of Economics (LSE) and University College London (UCL) have been shelved, at least for the time being.

Both institutions have rejected bringing in the system for the next academic year, but this seems to be a short-term ploy, as both administrations see no other way out from the financial shortfall or other sources of funding for expansion.

In both cases the student union moved quickly, organising well attended general meetings, showing the depth of opposition to paying for education. The results are a victory for the student movement. However, evidence suggests that this is only the first round of a long battle.

If implemented, undergraduates could be expected to contribute up to £2,000 to their course fees. In the wake of the introduction of top-up loans, the new charges will make gaining a degree an even more expensive task.

Plans for increasing revenue to higher education via students themselves are widespread amongst the educational establishment. An LSE spokesperson was quoted in the *Independent* as saying: "I

would be surprised if a large number of colleges and universities were not considering a similar step."

In a recent joint statement by the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics (CDP) and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) entitled 'Financing the Expansion of Higher Education', various funding models are examined. It concluded that the target of doubling the number of people in higher education will necessarily mean students bearing part of the cost, "unless there is an early commitment from the government to meet in full from public funds [the expansion]".

Our learned friends know that the Government has no intention of providing the necessary money. Instead the Tories want more efficient use of funds, ie. depressed wages and conditions for lecturers and students, and an increase in income from industry, and have given the green light to charging tuition fees. Alan Howarth, the new government minister for higher education, recently said there was "nothing revolutionary...controversial or distasteful" about supplementary tuition fees.

A number of other factors are important to consider. Firstly, the recession is beginning to undermine colleges' ability to attract more private money. Industrial support stands at 7% of universities' recurrent funding.

Second, the "competitive



French students demonstrate. See article on page 2

bidding" system of university funding introduced last June as a device to cut unit costs is falling apart.

This has led to institutions becoming worried about their medium term funding, and increased the momentum towards charging fees.

Thirdly, John Ashworth, who chaired the working group that produced 'Financing the Expansion of Higher Education', is the new director of the LSE and seems intent on making students pay for the lack of ability of higher education institutions to win money from the government.

Ashworth is a founder member of the SDP and has a history of "pragmatism" including his stint at Salford University which, under his stewardship, increased its private backing to 50% after the round of cuts in 1981.

Funding educational expansion at least partly, and in the sort term for leading administrators lies in top-up tuition fees.

If other colleges move to introduce similar schemes, the student movement must move quickly if it is to beat the top-up plan. Already meetings have been held at the LSE and UCL and have attracted hundreds of students. Pickets and occupations are the most effective initial form of action. "Official" channels shouldn't be ignored either.

Academic boards, although largely irrelevant, should be lobbied to firstly build the campaign and secondly to convince students who may look to these official channels and who may reject the simple counterposition of direct action to lobbying academics and administrators.

The response from the Kinnockite-led National Union of Students is unclear. Lorna Fitzsimons, NOLS member responsible for education on NUS Exec, is reported as saying there is no time before NUS conference (8 December) to organise any action, promising a national demonstration next term.

Inadequate as this is, NUS

leaders will be under pressure to deliver after the flop of the loans campaign, and activists must be ready to build grass-roots action against local college administrations that are not prepared to give clear statements against top-up fees. Immediately NUS should call local demonstrations, rallies, pickets, and general meetings to organise action.

In the same way opposition to loans united the student movement, opposition to top-up fees will be widespread. The differences in strategy between NOLS and the left around Left Unity will again dominate NUS. This time the left must ensure it leads the fightback.

## Students and lecturers unite and fight!

By Paul Cooper

A sorry state of affairs indeed". That's how the NATFHE leaflet for students explained the pay and working practices suffered by those of us who now teach in colleges with massively increased student numbers, but with no corresponding increases in staffing and resources.

"A sorry state of affairs" would equally serve to describe the union's campaign so far. Lobbying of MPs and token

half-day strikes have never been the stuff to mobilise a membership, let alone roll back the assaults of a determined government.

A campaign to link NATFHE demands with those in the University and schools sectors if necessary, and one in which the student movement would play a central role, is necessary.

The issues that can unite a broad campaign of militant action to defend the interests of lecturers and students already exists. Any student of trade unionism will know that the time when a government is on the ropes and internally wracked by divisions is the time to go on a real offensive.

NATFHE's militants should raise at branches:

- Begin to campaign now for joint staff and student actions;
- NATFHE and other unions in education and NUS to build a conference on fighting to defend the right to education;
- A big national demonstration in the new year, like that in Paris;
- Unite the issues of grants, accommodation, understaffing and pay into a series of all-out strikes in 6th forms, colleges and universities.

## Occupation wins at Lancaster

By Tony Cooke, General Secretary Lancaster Student Union

Around 150 students at Lancaster University defied the majority of their union executive to occupy a university committee meeting last Wednesday afternoon.

After two hours the administration backed down from plans to build 165 luxury flats on campus. The new residences would cost students £40 per week, compared to the present average campus rent of £24 per week.

These new luxury flats would be built while the rest of the accommodation on campus is suffering from chronic decay.

The university was shocked that large numbers of students ignored the wishes of the moderate union

executive. The administrators expected students to ignore their proposals and follow the executive which already this year has headed off plans to organise a rent strike in opposition to a 13.5% rent increase.

Although it has taken a while, Lancaster students are fighting back and demanding decent, affordable housing. The message to the union is clear: fight for students' rights rather than selling us out.

### In Brief

The Tories are to investigate the student movement again. Replying to a parliamentary question, Alan Howarth, the Higher Education Minister, said he will be looking at "the pattern of membership and financing of local student unions and the NUS; and on the proper use of public funds by local student unions and the NUS...and the operation of the 1986 legislation on freedom of speech."

Whether or not this new investigation is a device to buy off the loony right dismayed at the lack of action against NUS in the Queen's Speech is unclear. NUS NEC are due to discuss the issue at the end of the month.

The victimisation of two Polytechnic of North London (PNL) students continues. The two, expelled for their part in an occupation last term, have been elected to the PNL union executive, as part of the campaign to get them reinstated.

Management have claimed that the election was unconstitutional and have threatened to withhold the union's block grant. Following a general meeting decision to back the executive and reaffirm its support for the expelled students, management suspended the payment to the full-time union officers.

The student loans system is in crisis. Only a tenth of the expected number applying for loans have done so. And with most institutions fearful of not covering the processing costs, the lay-off of staff at Manchester University is likely to spread.

It seems the "Marxist" leadership of the Merseyside Student Organisation (MASO) are in a panic about the recent departure of the Area's convenor. The Area has the reputation of being a simple adjunct of Militant, failing to run any campaigns, systematically changing its constitution to maintain its control and basically doing nothing for students. Run in the same top-down way that Liverpool City Council was, a change of leadership will be welcomed by any half decent student unionist.

NUS organised a housing "day of action" last week. It involved nobody and failed to help kick start a much needed campaign. It differs from the NUS housing day of action in being an even worse disaster.

#### Fighting for Workers Liberty

A Socialist Organiser weekend school for students  
Saturday/Sunday 1-2 December  
Manchester Poly

A series of discussions around the central questions of modern politics

Cheche and accommodation provided  
Tickets for the weekend: £4 (grant); £2 (no grant). Cheques to Socialist Organiser

Name.....  
Address.....

College.....  
Return to SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

NEWS

As winter brings chaos and collapse are we witnessing:

# Gorbachev's last days?

By Colin Foster

According to Boris Yeltsin, a new 'coalition government' will soon be formed in the USSR.

Yeltsin — president of the Russian federation, the biggest unit in the USSR, and a leading pro-free-market 'radical' — claimed that the USSR's President Mikhail Gorbachev had agreed to the coalition, which would be made up of representatives from all the USSR's 15 republics.

For certain the present government of prime minister Nikolai Ryzhkov is so discredited that its authority only exists on paper. President Gorbachev, despite taking greater formal powers than Stalin, is equally helpless.

A 500-day plan for moving to a free market economy was due to start on 1 November, but has already become a dead letter. Its own authors, including Gorbachev's closest economic advisers, say so many roubles have been printed that the plan is bound to collapse into three-figure inflation.

Free-market enthusiasts still plough on — setting up a new stock exchange in Moscow this week — but chaos and hunger is



There's already rationing in the Ukraine

growing around them. Even the simplest items, like bread, can often be got only after long queues. Sugar is rationed almost everywhere in the USSR. All basic foods have been rationed in the Ukraine since 1 November, and up to 70 per cent of wages is being paid in the form of ration coupons.

Moscow and Leningrad — long much better sup-

plied than the provinces — plan rationing of basic foods from 1 December. Both cities have pro-free-market majorities on their local councils, but have been forced to recognise (as Leningrad's chief food administrator puts it) that "raising prices will not stabilise the market. On the contrary, all it will mean is that the rich will be able to afford things

and the poor will starve." Leningrad has postponed a decision because some councillors say they cannot even guarantee enough food supplies to fill the basic rations. In Moscow, hundreds of people who have moved to the city 'unofficially' will get no ration coupons.

The only place a variety of food can be bought

easily is in the special supermarkets open only to foreigners and high-ranking officials. It can only be a matter of time before these special shops are looted.

This year's harvest was excellent. The shortages have grown because the old economic mechanisms have collapsed and no new ones have started working.

The delicate game of threats and bluffs called 'central planning' has lost credibility. But the market mechanisms are cumbersome, and transport arrangements to get goods to market ineffective. Result: a vast expansion of hoarding, speculation, and waste, made worse by a breakdown of cooperation and communication between the different nationalities of the USSR.

Winter is likely to bring three developments: increased national tensions; an increased chance of a military coup as the only way to restore stable government; and working class resistance, strikes and other trade union struggles.

Everything depends on whether the working class resistance can grow fast enough, and find a political voice soon enough, to take the initiative from the nationalists and the military.

## Riots in Berlin

Three thousand police, with bulldozers and water cannon, stormed a barricaded street in East Berlin this week (14 November) to clear out squatters.

They arrested over 300 people. Later in the day, 5000 squatters and supporters marched in protest. Riot police used tear gas, water cannon, baton charges and warning shots against the protesters.

With unemployment soaring in East Germany as its merger with the free-market West goes ahead, both anarchists and neo-Nazis are reported to be recruiting fast among young East Berliners. The squatters are taking advantage of the fact that much property in East Germany now has no clearly-identified owner.

The German government has responded, not with measures to ensure decent jobs and housing for all, but with riot police.

Socialist Organiser  
London Forum

## South Africa: can the deal work?

Speaker: Bob Fine (author of 'Beyond Apartheid')  
8pm, Monday 26 November  
London School of Economics,  
Old Building, Houghton St,  
Holborn, London

## The sins of the fathers

The Tories' latest proposal to reduce the already meagre amounts paid out as welfare benefits involves chasing men to pay for the maintenance of their children.

At first sight the proposal is a reasonable one. It can sometimes seem very easy for a man to walk away from the responsibility of children, leaving the woman holding the baby.

An acquaintance of mine has recently done just that — walked out of his marriage for a younger woman. At the moment he is paying maintenance — all he can afford — to his wife who gave up her job several years ago to care for their two pre-school children. He is giving his wife almost everything he earns, and she needs it all. Feeding and clothing two rapidly growing children is not cheap, and nor is the mortgage on the house where they live.

He can afford to pay because he has moved in with the new girlfriend who is not short of money. But what would happen to them all if his new girlfriend got pregnant? What would happen if he decided not to pay his wife any more? What if he just disappeared? What if he lost his job?

The answer to any and all of those questions is that the family would be plunged into immediate poverty. One person's earnings could keep the wolf from the door whilst they were all under one roof, but once split up, the same earnings

can't keep two households going. The wife and children are forced to turn to the state for help.

The single mother often has no other choice from the beginning. Regardless of who has left whom, the person with a pre-school child cannot just go out and get a job. Childcare, where it can be found, has to be paid for, and many employers do not see a single mother as a reliable, committed employee. Whatever the circumstances, many single mothers and their children are supported entirely by the state.

Part of the problem is of the Tories' own making. Single parents are only allowed to earn a pitiful amount without losing benefit. The extra often won't cover the cost of childcare. So women who would like to work for extra money, or to gain the experience to get a job which might get them off benefits, can't.

The lack of childcare facilities in every town and city in Britain is also the Tories' own doing. Decent, free childcare would enable thousands of women to support their families themselves. In the long run it would probably cost less to provide free nurseries and allow women to work (and thus pay tax and National Insurance) than pay them benefits (however mean) to stay at home.

But the Tories hate the thought of providing facilities like childcare free to the user — even when it makes economic sense. People claiming benefit are an easy scapegoat, ideologically and

## WOMEN'S EYE



By Liz Millward

economically. Because the like of the unemployed and single parents have little political clout, the Tories can blame them for high public spending, and accuse them of being lazy scroungers.

The existence of a few dole-fiddlers makes it easy to keep cutting the amounts paid out in benefits — and also helps keep society divided. Those who have are praised, and the have-nots are punished.

In the context of the Tories' attacks on claimants the proposal to 'make fathers pay' falls neatly into place. The individual rather than the state has to pick up the bill —

even when he can't afford it. There is also someone to blame for the scandal of so many mothers and children living in poverty.

Of course the fathers will not all appear, wallets in hand, down at the DSS. The mother will be made to name him on the pain of losing part of her benefit. Then he will be tracked down and be forced to pay up to half his income to support the children he has left.

That he may not be able to pay, that the loss of income may force a subsequent family onto benefits or that the mother may have very good reasons not to name him are all points glossed over by the Tories.

It is a rare individual who chooses to throw herself and her children on the mercy of the DSS. Quite apart from the dehumanising effect of queuing and form-filling, and being treated like dirt, and threatened with prosecution if you don't reveal the £20 you got from Aunt Sally for your birthday, even if you claim absolutely everything it isn't enough to live on.

Now single mothers will have to go through another bureaucratic nightmare before their claim can be processed. Even though no-one wants to have to claim benefits — the alternative of seeking maintenance from a violent or abusive ex-lover may be even worse. In reality it will be the women and children who will suffer — either by losing money, or having their whereabouts revealed to someone they had tried to leave behind.

To return to my original point,

there may be (and probably are) men with plenty of money who have left their children in poverty to move on to pastures new.

There is a case for the government providing legal aid to mothers to pursue such men for maintenance, and giving the courts powers to force them to pay by distraining income or whatever. At the moment, some men probably are 'getting away with it'.

But the vast majority of single mothers who are claiming benefit should be helped, not punished. Whatever the faults (if any) of the mothers, the children have the right not to live in poverty.

The state could and should provide enough money to feed, clothe and house them decently. It should provide childcare facilities which would allow their parents to work without losing out financially.

Above all, the state should allow people dignity. The world, and even this country has enough wealth for everyone. Yet women and children are deliberately maintained in poverty, to be made an 'example' of, and then blamed for their situation.

Mrs Thatcher holds every individual 'responsible' for their lives. She does not believe in the concept of society, and only grudgingly provides an inadequate 'safety net'. But people can only be 'responsible' if they have choices.

Mrs Thatcher's idea of a 'choice' for the poor is the equivalent of choosing between the devil and the deep blue sea.

## "Fresh energy comes from the rank and file"

By Jozef Pinior of the Socialist Political Centre (Poland)

There is a lot of talk here in the West about the end of history. Over there, in Eastern Europe, everything has the feel of a new beginning.

Nothing has been finally settled and the dominant feeling, in spite of weariness and frustration, is a profound aspiration for emancipation: the human desire for freedom and justice.

Over there in the East, there are no ready remedies. Victories are continually being mixed with disasters and with new problems.

The Round Table Agreement in 1989 between the Democratic Opposition gathered around Lech Walesa and the Post-Stalinist bureaucracy around General Jaruzelski led to the destruction of the system of one party dictatorship and bore fruit in the form of wide political freedoms — first and foremost the legalisation of Solidarnosc, the possibility of organising workers to deal with their problems in the workplace.

On the other hand, the agreement accepted a free market reform, economic changes which were a departure by the Solidarnosc leadership from the programme of self-management held by the union in 1980-81; a departure from the vision of democracy and self-management which tried to link together planning, workers' self-management and the market. This was possible because of the weakening of the workers' movement under martial law, when it experienced repression and persecution.

General Jaruzelski did not succeed in destroying Solidarnosc. He

did however succeed in smashing the self-organisation of the Polish working class, in driving Solidarnosc underground, into conspiracy. The effect of this was to cut off the conspiratorial leadership from its base in the workplaces. This leadership was then put under heavy pressure from free market ideology.

### IMF prescriptions

The programme of economic change agreed at the Round Table eventually took the form of the Balcerowicz plan — a plan completely dependent on the prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund, ideas acceptable to the IMF and to the Western governments, in particular the United States.

The emancipation of the Polish people, at the moment of their greatest success, encountered new limitations and new challenges. Political democracy had been won, but month by month it became apparent that the bureaucracy, which had been in power up until that time, was in the best position to exploit the conditions of the free market, that a new elite and new forms of exploitation and domination were emerging.

A pitiless confrontation followed between the dreams of the opposition about human rights and "capitalism with a human face" and the hard reality of a country subject to the experiment of marketisation.

The Balcerowicz plan provided for a fall in production of 10-15%. The actual decline in production between January and May this year amounted to 30%. Prices for consumers in April this year were 150% higher than in December of the preceding year. Real wages however fell by about 43%. Unemployment at the end of October stood at

about a million. Half of these were women.

It must also be remembered that we have not yet entered a period of closure of factories and the sacking of whole groups of workers. Average monthly earnings in the Polish economy between January and September were about nine hundred thousand zloty, which works out at about 94 US dollars. In comparison with the preceding year, about 9% less flats were made available and lack of housing is a fundamental Polish problem. The railways carried 29% less goods this year and road transport was reduced by 59%.

The process of transforming state ownership of the workplaces is proceeding slowly. This process is complicated and unclear, although the post-Stalinist bureaucracy is very active in using market mechanisms for its own benefit, to preserve its dominant position.

In general, the Polish economy appears to be defenceless in the face of the pressure of Western capital and its financial institutions. The process of marketisation is being directed centrally by the government and a Ministry for the Transformation of Ownership has been specially set up, at the head of which is the chief economic adviser to Prime Minister Mazowiecki, Janusz Kuczynski. This Ministry's plans provide for a four year period of transition to a Western-style economy.

### Dumping ground

One of the first Western concerns to establish itself in Poland is the Swedish-Swiss firm Asea-Brown-Boveri, which aims to employ 20,000 people in Poland, in joint enterprises with a number of large Polish firms. At this moment ABB is involved in joint enterprises with two factories, one in Elblag and one in Wroclaw.

In the joint enterprises in Elblag, ABB has a majority shareholding and four of the seven members of the board. In Wroclaw, where two joint enterprises have been created in partnership with the Polish firm 'Dolmel', ABB's share will rise progressively so that after three years it will hold 67%.

Up until now concerns of the ABB type have been extremely cautious. They are looking to the long term and if they do enter this market they will not be sacking people right away. Probably the most important thing from their point of view is to create division in the working class itself.

For example, in Elblag, in the new joint enterprise, wages were raised by 50%.

The recession ruining the economy also reduces the ability of

the entire society to offer any effective resistance. Others in the West are more impatient and require further changes in Poland as conditions of investing their capital. These include things like the right to transfer all profits out of the country, or the right for foreign nationals to buy up land.

Hans Peter Stihl, the West German President of the Chamber of Industrial Trade, at a press conference in Warsaw on the occasion of the opening of the German Economic Office, on 2 November, described this last factor as a fundamental obstacle to the inflow of Western investment.

For others, Poland is a good place for the disposal of troublesome waste, which will further deepen the already catastrophic environmental situation.

From July 1989, ie. from the introduction of the ban on the import of waste, proposals have been made to Polish firms for the disposal of 18m tons of waste. It is known that thirty seven thousand tons of such waste has arrived in Poland. The biggest contract for the import of waste from Poland has been concluded with the West German firm HTA from Duisburg.

According to the agreement, the Polish enterprise will accept and deal with three hundred and eighty five thousand tons of 'zinc concentrate'. In reality this 'concentrate' is a mixture of various waste products from German steel works. A consignment of it has been stopped at the border in Szczecin and is waiting for it to be recovered again by the senders. Will the border between Poland and Germany, on the Oder, become a new Rio Grande? Will a new wall be built on the Oder, a symbol of exploitation and domination, a gulf dividing the world at the end of the 20th century?

### New struggles

There is still much hope in Poland. There are still many tough struggles to be resolved. Fresh energy continues to be generated by the lowest level structures of Solidarnosc, which is still a symbol of emancipation for the workers.

From January to the end of August there were about 130 strikes in Poland. Most of them were in May, when there were 70 and in September when there were 29.

The period of support for the Mazowiecki government has gone forever. There is a rising wave of dissatisfaction with wage levels and the character of the economic reform. The trade unions are demanding discussions and negotiations with the government. Strikes or other protest actions have involv-



Polish workers must build a political alternative

ed or currently involve, the municipal transport workers, bus and train workers, workers in the glass industry, the police force, the dockers, lignite and sulphur miners, and above all the coal miners. Strikes in the mines are creating an entirely new situation.

It was miners' strikes in Upper Silesia in August 1988 which led to a wave of national strikes, which in turn finally won the Round Table negotiations and the legalisation of Solidarnosc. There were two hour warning strikes called by Solidarnosc in sixty five coal mines on 6 November, and the leadership of the mining section of Solidarnosc has called for a general strike on 20 November — five days before the Presidential elections. This may be an occupation strike. The miners will decide this in a referendum.

**"To set up our Centre for Independent Information we need financial support. To equip our printshop and TV studios we need the equivalent of US\$20,000".**

**Jozef Pinior**

**Please make cheques payable to 'Polish Socialist Party Appeal', and send them to Polish Appeal, c/o Kensington Labour Party, Basement, 92 Ladbroke Grove, London W11 2HE.**



# ist speaks out



Fascist graffiti in Warsaw

## Unstable situation

In this situation Lech Walesa has once more become a symbol for the discontented. He has consolidated behind him Solidarnosc's working-class base. It seems very unlikely that he will lose to Mazowiecki.

Walesa's whole programme is around the slogan of "acceleration". He represents a populist authoritarianism, which promises everyone what they want to hear. He promises swifter privatisation to the individual entrepreneurs, and at the same time full employment and shares in their enterprises to the workers.

Will Walesa subordinate Solidarnosc to his own wishes, or will Solidarnosc win greater autonomy and Walesa as President have to take account of the strength of the working class? There are many unknown elements.

On the one hand there is a great deal of frustration and disorientation. Stalinism has left behind it a disastrous legacy in political culture, a complete misunderstanding of the problems of the contemporary world. There is a demoralisation, the most striking manifestation of which is the mood of anti-semitism and racism. These are phenomena which provide a fertile soil for all kinds of authoritarianism.

On the other hand, there is in Eastern Europeans a very deep rooted aspiration to emancipation, a belief in the possibility of a better

world. The situation is unstable. It is characterised by a social dynamism and a strong need to retain and develop the wide democracy which has only just been attained.

The workers support Walesa. They are under the influence of the church and the ideology of the free market. However these same workers do not hesitate to resort to strike action against a government which has emerged from Solidarnosc.

A year has been long enough for Mazowiecki and his Ministers to lose their enormous prestige and popularity.

The working class is influenced by fundamentalist Catholic influences. However, this same working class is sceptical and disinclined to be co-operative to the new political and economic elite.

The left must find its role amongst those antinomies. It must point the way to the new horizons which also exist within the recent changes. It must link up with the interests of the oppressed and with society's quest for the control of its own destiny, with its efforts to free itself from all forms of exploitation and domination.

In the everyday hopes of the oppressed and in their struggle for a better future lies the meaning of human history. This is where the left must take up its task once again to struggle for the as yet unrealised goal of the emancipation of Eastern Europe.

speech to be delivered by Jozef Piniór of the Socialist Political Centre, Poland, at the Socialist Conference in Manchester, 17-18 November 1990. Translated by David Holland.

The miners are demanding wage increases and the elimination of wage differentials between different mines. The miners are also demanding the revision of the Budget and the allocation of 3.5 billion zloty to investment in the mining industry. The situation in the mines is so desperate that the mines have taken the unprecedented decision to end spending on the workers' canteens and even on safety, in the hope of gaining economic benefits from reduced costs.

### Political alternative

The drama of the Polish situation is this, that this militant working class has up until now

not produced any kind of serious political alternative to either the previously prevailing post-Stalinist structures, or to the new free market mechanisms of domination.

At the moment the whole political scene is overshadowed by the struggle for the Presidency between Lech Walesa and Tadeusz Mazowiecki. Concentrated around Mazowiecki are all the prominent Solidarnosc intellectuals: Adam Michnik, Jacek Kuron, Bronislaw Geremek and Jerzy Turowicz. The most vocal in the 'ROAD' (or Democratic Action) group supporting Mazowiecki identify themselves with the political philosophy of the government, with the IMF economic programme for Poland. They argue that society must tighten its collective belt and march submissively towards the free

market.

'ROAD' relies upon liberal and democratic values, but it is the Mazowiecki government which has introduced religious education to state schools, without any reference to parliament, without a referendum, simply by decree of the Minister of Education. It is the Mazowiecki government which has introduced changes to the regulations in the health service so as to obstruct abortion as quickly as possible, in accordance with the wishes of the church. This has taken place entirely without parliamentary approval or debate in society at large, although formally there is still free abortion in Poland. Finally, it is the Mazowiecki government which has decided upon the use of force against the protesting farmers.

## Workers' Liberty

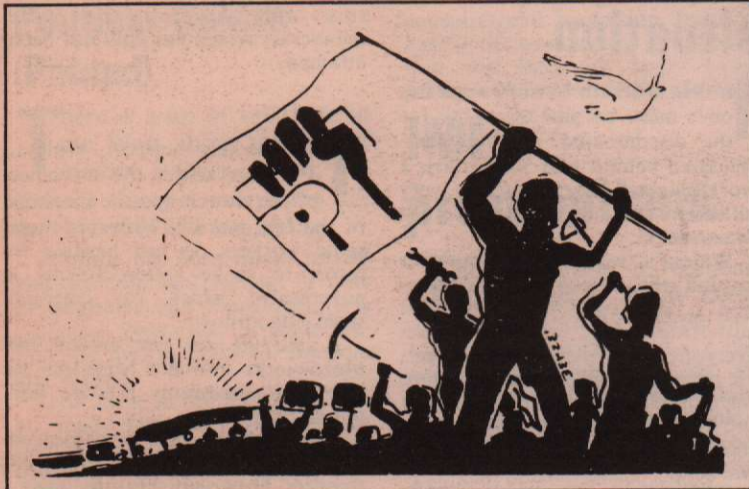


In this latest issue: articles on the new left opposition in Eastern Europe and why Stalinism collapsed in Eastern Europe.

£1.20 plus 38 pence p&p from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

Brazilian Workers Party programme

# A socialist vision from



PT cartoons

The Brazilian Workers' Party (PT) was formed out of the rank and file workers' struggles which erupted in and around the huge industrial city of Sao Paulo in 1979. It played a leading part in the struggle against the military dictatorship, helping to build a new independent working-class politics while much of the Brazilian left supported the tame 'opposition party' set up by the generals to provide a safety valve.

The tensions between the different political trends within the PT — which range from advocates of a left version of Eurocommunism

The PT was born with profoundly democratic objectives. For the PT, democracy has a strategic meaning. It is both a means and an end, an instrument for transformation and an objective.

We have learned from our own experience that the bourgeoisie has

through Catholic radicals to various Trotskyist currents — have become sharper as Brazil has gained civilian rule, the PT's influence has grown, and the PT has won positions in local government.

As this programmatic document — edited from the Paris-based magazine *International Viewpoint* — shows, the PT remains, however, one of the most promising socialist movements in the world today. The document was adopted by 600 delegates, representing 600,000 members, at a PT conference in June.

no historical commitment to democracy. It uses it in a strictly tactical, pragmatic way. Primarily, it is the working people and the poor masses that have a stake in democracy. Today, they need it to widen their social and political gains.

Tomorrow, they will need it to go beyond the unjust and alienating

society in which we live. In the future, it will be necessary to establish a qualitatively superior democracy, so that the social majority can really govern the socialist society that we are fighting for.

In its internal organisation also the PT concretely fulfils its commitment to democracy. Its leadership and its ranks seek to make the party a free society, in which all participate, as the precondition for creating the larger free society that they want to install in Brazil.

Rejecting the monolithism and hierarchical structure of the traditional parties — and of many left organisations as well — the PT strives to put internal democracy into practice. This is a precondition for guaranteeing its democratic attitude in social life and in its exercise of political power.

Having come out of the mass movements and trade unions, the PT maintains close links with them, takes its inspiration from them, and seeks to offer them political leadership. The PT in no way wishes to stifle the autonomy of these movements and still less to have clientist relations with them or use them as transmission belts.

Ideological and cultural pluralism are characteristic of the PT. We are the product of a synthesis of different currents devoted to freedom, united in their diversity — social Christians, various sorts of Marxists, socialists who do not claim to be Marxists, radical democrats, secular democrats and so on.

But the party programme is not the prerogative of any of these currents. The PT has no 'official'

## An oppressed nation fights against Moroccan rule

# The struggle for Saharawi independence

By Liz Philipson

To reach the Saharawi refugee camps we drove across completely featureless desert.

The sand has been blown away, so there's just a layer of fine dust on rock, and a straight-line horizon. It's very oppressive, very exposed to heat and cold.

The Saharawi struggle is in essence anti-colonial. The Spanish were the colonial power and ceded half the country (then the Spanish Sahara) to Mauritania and half to Morocco. The Saharawi mounted a war of independence against both countries and Mauritania was beaten back. Morocco now occupies all the coastal areas and has built a huge wall across the country; about one-third of the population live in the occupied territories behind that wall, and two-thirds in five refugee camps just over the border in Algeria, where they fled after being napalmed by Morocco.

In those refugee camps, the Saharawis have achieved a tremendous amount in the most difficult conditions. In any other place I've been where there's been a war of liberation, the whole ethos has been war, but it's not like

that in the camps.

There's no military strutting at all. When the soldiers came back to the camps, they were welcomed back, but we never saw a gun in the camps, other than on the sentries.

They look forward beyond the war, and the camps are set around the idea of planning for the future beyond the war.

The conditions they are in are horrendous. They're in what is called, literally translated, the desert of deserts, and the Algerians didn't believe it was possible for anyone to survive there. The Saharawi are recognised as refugees, and they are dependent on international aid; but they are extraordinarily independent within the inherent dependence.

Inside each camp they have a delegate democracy. All the municipal committees are based on little street groups. They're trying to involve the whole community in decision-making.

When the Spanish left in 1975 the nation had only one teacher. Now, in the desert, they have built themselves hospitals and schools. They train themselves. They ask people to go for three or six month stints of training

elsewhere, and then come back to train others.

They've also developed a way of growing things in the desert, aided by War on Want. They grow cabbages, onions, tomatoes and beetroots under the palm trees.

This is very important for their diet, but extremely difficult, as the soil is saline, and they have become innovators in desert horticulture.

The Saharawis have developed tactics which make the Moroccan soldiers on the wall sitting targets for them. It's their country, and they aren't going to go away. The soldiers are not fighting for any cause they believe in.

Military aid comes from the Algerian government, but the Saharawi army has no outside military advisers.

The Saharawi are trying to look after themselves in their own way. People coming from our culture just ask the wrong questions. They're dependent on International Red Cross aid, and they have distribution committees. To get a measure of how the committees worked, I asked one woman: "If your little boy is on his last pair of trousers, do you have to wait for the next month's distribution, or can you go to

the distribution committee straight away?" She looked astonished and said: "If he's on his last pair of trousers, my neighbour will give me a pair".

They are Muslims, but it's very different to what you'll find in Algiers. They don't have mosques, presumably because of their nomadic background, and they see religion as a private thing.

Everyone is dedicated to learning. Everyone seemed to speak at least three

**"It's their country and they aren't going to go away"**

languages, maybe four. They now have high schools in the camps, teaching up to 15 years, though they have to go outside for further education. They have set up training centres, which teach administrative skills as well as sewing, knitting, car maintenance and so on.

They don't have their own printing presses, so they're dependent on school books and literature from outside.

Health is a very high priority too; they're building up a mix of traditional medicine and Western technology.

As far as I know, they have

no very fixed ideas about how they will organise their economy when they get their country back. They say, "We're not communists, we're not capitalists, we're developing our own way forward".

The Western Sahara is mineral-rich. They're very alive to the danger of neo-colonialism, but as far as I know they have no particular prescriptions for avoiding it.

I don't really know what would happen if people wanted to organise politically outside the nationalist movement, Polisario. While we were there, there was evidence of individuals being able to dissent, but of course that's very different, and much less threatening, than a group getting together.

At the moment they're in a state of war, and I don't think Polisario would feel able to allow independent political organisation. I'm not sure, because they've already done the impossible in so many areas. But there are open discussions, with a lot of conflicting views, in the local committees.

They're mostly women and children in the camps, because the men are fighting, and although the president is a man, women are in positions of responsibility

right through the structures. Women are responsible for most of the outstanding progress made by their nation within the refugee camps. One woman who spoke to me said: "We know what has happened in Algeria. We know that the women were very strong during the revolution, and now they've gone back behind the veil. We'll have to stay strong and find a way for ourselves".

Polisario is recognised as the legitimate government of the Western Sahara by a majority of the countries of the Organisation of African Unity. The United Nations is committed to organising a referendum regarding independence from Morocco amongst the Saharawi in the camps and the occupied areas, and is supported in this by Polisario.

It is a vote that the Polisario will undoubtedly win. Morocco has been obstructive at every stage, but now it looks hopeful.

At a current UN meeting, chaired by the UK, members will be asked to agree funds for the referendum process. If this is agreed, the Saharawi could be in their homeland by the end of the year.

However, there are fears that Britain may jib at the financial cost of peace.

# the shanty towns



Volkswagen workers San Paulo

philosophy. Different positions coexist within it in a dialectical relationship, which does not predetermine the dynamic syntheses that may emerge in the elaboration of concrete policies. What unites these various political cultures of freedom is the common project of creating a new society favourable to ending exploitation and oppression.

Our commitment to democracy makes us anti-capitalist militants. This choice has profoundly marked our struggle for democracy. The discovery (which for many of us was empirical before it became theoretical) of the structural perversity of capitalism has been a very strong stimulus for most PT activists to organise in a political party. We have represented, and continue to represent, an angry response to the pointless suffering of millions of people that flows from the logic of capitalist barbarism.

Our concrete historical experience — the other side of the coin of the 'Brazilian miracle', and many other tragic circumstances here and in other countries have taught us that capitalism, whatever its material power, is unjust by nature, that it marginalises millions of people and blocks a fraternal division of social wealth, which is a mainspring for any real democracy.

The founding documents of the PT — the Manifesto and Founding Programme — already explained that the end of Brazilian capitalism was an essential precondition for genuine democratisation of Brazilian life. Even if these first documents made little progress in defining an alternative society, the PT's historical project was already clearly socialist. The ten years since the founding of the party — years of bitter but inspiring struggle — have confirmed our anti-capitalist options and redoubled our determination to transform society.

This anti-capitalist conviction, generated by the bitter experience of Brazilian society, also impels us to take our distance from the projects of the social democracy, which historically have not led towards disengaging from capitalist society. The past social democratic ex-

periences prove that even if you get into the government or the institutions of the state — notably, the parliament — without a mass mobilisation at the grassroots it is impossible to reach socialism.

The social democrats believed in the neutrality of the state apparatus and thought that capitalist efficiency was compatible with a peaceful transition toward a different economic and social logic. Over time, this current abandoned the perspective of a parliamentary transition to socialism and even the aspiration of socialism, without however leaving the state institutions.

Critical dialogue with social democrats doubtless has its usefulness for the workers' struggle internationally. But the social democrats' ideological project does not correspond either to the anti-capitalist convictions of the PT or its objectives of emancipation.

## Our model of socialist democracy

Our strategic fight for democracy — *our very identity* — has also led to us rejecting the models of the so-called actually existing socialism. We have always known that this appellation was false. The conservative ideologues are using the crisis in the East to combat any project that might run counter to capitalist domination. According to its detractors, socialism is in fact incompatible with the ideas of progress and freedom. We challenge this reactionary conception.

The abstract term, 'actually existing socialism', does not take account of the special features of countries, of different revolutionary processes nor of economic and political differences. It equates experiences of social transformation that are by their nature heterogeneous. It minimises certain historic gains that are definitely im-

portant for the peoples that have won them.

Some so-called socialist regimes came out of popular revolutions. Others were engendered by the defeat of Nazi Germany and the Soviet army's occupation of a series of East European countries. In some of these processes, the masses managed to exert an influence on the national life. A foremost and special place has to be reserved for the Sandinista experience in Nicaragua, despite its difficulties. The Sandinistas were able to establish and maintain a political and civic equality that the people never knew before.

The PT supports the struggle of the workers and the peoples for liberation. It defends genuine revolutionary processes while maintaining an independent attitude and reserving the right to make criticisms. Since its founding, the PT has known that the theory and practice of the experiences of so-called actually existing socialism are incompatible with the project of liberating socialism that it proclaims. We reject the lack of political, economic and social democracy; the monopoly of power by a single party, even when there is formal acceptance of multipartyism; domination by the bureaucracy, transformed into a privileged layer or caste; open or veiled repression of ideological and cultural pluralism; and the management of production by top-down authoritarian and inefficient planning.

We have always criticised these regimes from the standpoint of revolutionary struggle and in the light of the various international socialist processes. The PT was the first Brazilian party to support the democratic struggle of Solidarnosc in Poland, even though it had no other ideological affinities with this union movement. We have denounced the violations of trade union, political and religious freedoms that have occurred in the so-called socialist countries in the same way as we have fought for public freedoms in Brazil. We have denounced the crimes against humanity committed in Bucharest

or elsewhere, such as the premeditated murder of agricultural workers in Brazil. For the PT, there can be no socialism that is not genuinely democratic.

The movements that have led to reforms in the Eastern countries have rightly rebelled against totalitarianism and economic paralysis, seeking to establish democratic regimes and to end the bureaucratic, ultra-centralised management of the economy. The outcome of these changes is not yet determined. Political and social struggle will mould these new regimes.

The PT is convinced that the upsets that have occurred in the East and are continuing in the countries of so-called actually existing socialism have a positive historic portent, even if reactionary currents favourable to capitalist restoration are in the majority today.

These movements — even if they do not put forward a project for renewing socialism — are breaking the political ice and bringing the various political and social forces back to the front of the stage. By encouraging democratic gains, they can offer new possibilities for socialism. The political energy that has been liberated by social mobilisation will not be easily tamed by the recipes of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the false paradises of capitalist propaganda.

## A rich tradition of struggle

The movement we want to build takes its inspiration concretely from the rich tradition of mass struggles in the history of Brazil. It must base itself on solidarity among human beings and be a sum of specific aptitudes for solving collective problems. It will have to be a collective democratic subject, without negating the rich and

necessary individual specificities.

It will have to perfect the fundamental equality among citizens, while jealously safeguarding the right of political, religious, cultural and other differences.

This society will fight for women's liberation, against racism and all forms of oppression, and foster the emergence of an integrating and universalist democracy.

Pluralism and self-organisation will not only be permitted but encouraged at all levels of social life. They will be an antidote to the bureaucratisation of government, minds and wills.

While affirming national identities and independence, the new society will reject any imperial pretension and foster cooperative relations among the peoples of the world.

As we defend Cuba or Grenada against US imperialist aggression, we defend the right of self-determination of the peoples, and we encourage internationalist action. Democratic, socialist internationalism will be a constant source of inspiration.

The socialism that we want to build will only be achieved if it establishes an authentic economic democracy.

It will have to be organised therefore around social ownership of the means of production — which cannot be confused with state ownership — that will take forms democratically decided upon by the society (individual, cooperative, nationalised, and so on).

Such economic democracy must overcome the perverse logic of the capitalist economy as well as that of the autocratic state commandism that prevails in many so-called socialist economies.

Its priorities and objectives will have to be subject to the will of the society and not to any supposed strategic interests of the state.

It will have to combine — and that is the greatest of the challenges it will face — increasing productivity and satisfying material needs with a new organisation of work that will end the present alienation.

It must strengthen the management of the units of production — factory councils are an essential reference point — and the entire system through strategic planning under social supervision.

In the political field, socialism will have to preserve the democratic freedoms won with such difficulty in capitalist society but also broaden and radicalise them (freedom of opinion, freedom to demonstrate, freedom of civic and political organisation for the parties).

Such freedoms concern all citizens, being limited only by the democratic framework.

Instruments of direct democracy that preserve the participation of the masses at the various levels of political leadership and economic management will have to coexist with the instruments of representative democracy and flexible mechanisms for consulting the people that can express collective interests without the interference of the capitalists.

In its fight for socialism, the PT does not minimise the theoretical and practical obstacles it will have to overcome.

It knows that it has to make an enormous effort in the field of programme and social struggle.

It is more than ever ready to undertake this, along with all of the forces striving for democracy and transformation in Brazil.

# The sad story of the left and Europe

## AGAINST THE TIDE

Sean Matgamna



**"The Common Market is here to stay... Socialists must realise that it is impossible to build even a decent welfare state in isolation.**

The idea of having a Chinese Wall around Britain, or any other country, is absurd.

To the large multi-national and transnational companies, national boundaries mean little in an economic or political sense...

I want those of us who are democratic socialists to work for a European federation of sovereign democratic socialist states... Like-minded socialists should be forging a socialist perspective and strategy for the whole of Europe. I am convinced that a point has been reached where socialism must be rescued from its imprisonment within national boundaries.

There is a need for a crusade of dedicated socialists in every country who will put their international concepts before purely national interests. I hope that a start in this direction will be made at the forthcoming Socialist Conference [in Manchester on 17-18 November]..."

Eric Heffer's *Guardian* article excerpted above may help the left to rethink its attitudes to the European Community.

Heffer, of course, has always been more sensible on the EC than most of the Left, though he did for many years share their conclusion, that Britain should be withdrawn from its European entanglements. His *Guardian* piece comes to pretty much the same conclusions as our editorial in last week's *SO*.

The would-be revolutionary left is more

tardy in facing up to the situation created for us by Mrs Thatcher stealing the left's clothes on Europe. If Thatcher is ousted and the "pro-Europeans" are again in undisputed charge of the Tory Party, then much of the pressure on the left to come to terms with European integration will fade.

Most likely they'll leave well enough alone, muting (as now) and then dropping their long-time anti-Europeanism, neither acknowledging their shift nor attempting to learn from the experience. Before long, you'll find SWPers and *Militant* supporters who will call you a liar if you recall that for 20 years they played their little "socialist" tin whistles on the fringes of the great loud last parade of the "little Britishers".

It is a terrible story, the record of the British far left on Europe. In the history of socialism it belongs to the book of political pathology in which are recorded such episodes as the Communist International's flirtation in the early '20s with German nationalism and even anti-semitism ("national Bolshevism"), and the efforts of honest communists in South Africa in the same period who organised a workers' insurrection and raised the slogan, "Workers of the world unite for a white South Africa!"

A whole generation of would-be Trotskyists have been educated in an anti-Europeanism and anti-internationalism, in which slogans like the Socialist United States of Europe were advocated as a *centrist cover* — no, a deodorant — for practical politics that were the purest little-Britainism.

And the story is even stranger than it seems. When the European Community first became an issue in Britain, in the early '60s, the entire revolutionary left — the groups now known as the SWP, *Militant*, *Socialist Action*, *Socialist Outlook*, and the WRPs, all without exception — responded with the same politics as *Socialist Organiser* now argues. I repeat: all, without exception. *Socialist Organiser* — and its predecessors like *Workers' Action* — have seemed freakish in the last two decades because we didn't change, and the others did.

**W**hen the EC was set up in 1958, Britain stayed out. Britain had its own

*Those who do not learn from history are likely to repeat it*



## The Treaty of Versailles, 1919

After four and a half years of carnage and slaughter during the First World War the victors, the British, French, and Americans sat down to dictate the peace Treaty of Versailles, to re-divide the world. American President Woodrow Wilson's plans for a liberal settlement, based on American aspirations towards equal access to markets were thwarted by the dyed-in-the-wool imperialist/colonialist attitudes of the French and

British — keen to maintain overlordship of their dominions, and impose a crippling and ultimately catastrophic settlement upon Germany. Only the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917 held out hope for a genuine working class internationalist solution to imperialism's machinations for the working class and oppressed nations of the world. That revolution was defeated outside Russia.

Commonwealth trade links, and its own looser rival EC of peripheral West European countries, EFTA.

Staying out was soon shown to have been a mistake. The EC showed tremendous dynamism. The Tory government decided to join in 1961. De Gaulle's France blocked British membership. From then on it was an issue. The Labour government decided to join in 1967, and was again blocked.

A sizeable chunk of the capitalist class opposed EC entry — those with ties, including ties of sentiment, with the Commonwealth. In the Labour Party, the traditional left, represented by Michael Foot and *Tribune*, were traditional patriots. The Labour Right, too, initially opposed entry. Labour, too, had ties to the Commonwealth. The trade union establishment wanted to keep undisturbed its cosy links with the British state, which continued, even under Tory governments, into the '70s.

The Communist Party, too, was anti-European. The CP then had perhaps 30,000 members, and great strength among both the trade union bureaucracy and rank-and-file leaders in industry. It reflected Russia's foreign policy on this as on everything else (it would make its first important break by opposing the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968).

The CP opposed the EC. CP and Labour responses combined to produce a powerful current of working-class, and even left-wing working-class, nationalism. It was part of the same complex which, in the late '60s, set militant London dockers marching through the streets in support of the Tory race demagogue Enoch Powell. The broad left lined up with the "nos" in the "great debate" about Britain joining the EC.

The revolutionary left held their ground, refusing to join the "No to the EC" camp. We poured bitter scorn on the little-England patriots like Michael Foot, with their vision of a "British socialism" modelled on wartime Britain, and on the Stalinist "patriots".

**T**he Socialist Labour League — then a serious though sectarian group, later to go mad and take the name WRP — explained:

"What in fact has happened is that labour and trade union 'personalities' and journals have found themselves quite naturally taking sides on the question: what is best for British capitalism? In most cases that is not surprising, but it exposes the misleadership or lack of leadership of both the Right wing and the *Tribune* and other Lefts.

"It is scarcely necessary for the labour movement to get involved in a detailed and necessarily inconclusive discussion about the

pros and cons of the Common Market. This cannot inspire the rank and file or build its strength... Consistent socialists should be unequivocally in favour of breaking down national barriers, not under the auspices of the trusts seeking to exploit labour power more methodically and play one section off against another more successfully, but by working for a workers' government which alone can do the job in a genuinely internationalist way.

"Taking sides for or against the Tories joining the Common Market means arguing about just how Europe's workers should be exploited. Instead, the working class movement must unite around a programme for the socialist planning of European industry... Whether or not Britain enters the Common Market the same principles will govern our approach". (Tom Kemp, "Socialism and the European Common Market", *Newsletter*, 24 June 1961).

The future Socialist Workers' Party declared: "In or out of the Common Market, the problems facing the British labour movement are likely to be very much the same. Indeed, the point is that the issues facing us are more similar to those facing European and American workers than at any time in the past 40 years". (John Palmer, *International Socialism* journal, Spring 1963. *Labour Worker*, the group's fortnightly paper, was "softer", reflecting some of the pressure from the broad left).

The future *Socialist Outlook*, *Socialist Action*, and *Militant* were all then in one pod. Ernest Mandel summed up their views:

"For revolutionary Marxists, this conflict [about Britain's application to join the EC and De Gaulle's opposition] is a typical inter-imperialist competitive struggle in which the working class has no reason for supporting one side against the other. To the policies of both sides, they must counterpose the struggle for a Socialist United States of Europe, for a really unified Europe which could effectively surmount the antagonisms bred by capitalist competition; that could only be a Europe which has abolished both capitalist property and the bourgeois state...

"It would be pure suicide for the working class to solidarise itself either with its own bourgeoisie or with that of the opposing camp. Its only effective reply can be to affirm its basic class solidarity: 'Workers of all European countries unite against the Europe of the monopolies, whether it raises the slogan of the Europe of "fatherlands", the "open" Europe, or the European "community"...' (From "Crisis in the Common Market", *International Socialist Review*, spring 1963).

Next week I'll cover how the far left changed its line, why, and the implications.

## History read backwards

Paul McGarry reviews 'Trotskyism' by Alex Callinicos, Open University, £6.99

**T**o face reality squarely: not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right name; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one's programme on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives — these are the rules of the Fourth International."

Trotsky, 'The Transitional Programme'

On every count SWP hack and sometime intellectual Alex Callinicos fails. "...examining the origins...

exploring the crisis and identifying the continuation of Trotskyism" in 90 pages isn't the easiest of tasks. But weighed down by a mixture of pomposity and sycophancy, a serious survey of Trotskyism becomes impossible for Callinicos.

The shortness of this book is its saving grace, in fact. Three volumes of the history of Trotskyism (a partial guide to

the politics of the SWP) in the tradition of Cliff's Lenin trilogy would have been unbearable.

The book's framework is established in the introduction. Modern Trotskyism has been saved by the International Socialist tradition led by guru Tony Cliff, "whose critique of orthodox Trotskyism was conceived rather as a return to classical Marxism".

Cliff's critique, of course, is his own peculiar theory of state capitalism in which competition between the superpowers through arms production defines the internal dynamics of the Soviet Union. Competition as such is carried out via use values, a revision of Marxism rather than a return to it. Callinicos also omits to tell us that many of Cliff's formulations were borrowed from Max Shachtman and the Johnson-Forrest tendency of the SWP-US.

And we're not treated to an explanation of how Cliff's infamous article 'Trotsky on Substitutionism' fits into this "classical Marxism".

In the '60s Cliff and the Socialist Review Group was explicitly anti-Leninist and firmly planted in the Labour Party. Cliff cites Trotsky's 1904 'warning' about the dangers of the centralised party replacing the class, the central committee replacing the party, etc, etc. Cliff laments "Trotsky never returned to it [anti-Leninism] again". Trotsky, of course, admitted he had been wrong, too much of a tall order for

Cliff and Callinicos. Was Cliff's anti-Leninism an aspect of the "reorientation" of modern Trotskyism? Callinicos remains silent.

Elsewhere Comrade Alex points an accusing finger at Gerry Healy and his role in the purges of the early British Trotskyist movement. It comes as a surprise then to turn to the "family tree" on pages 36-37 to find that none of the six or so groups expelled from the SWP in the '70s are denoted.

Despite his intention to focus on Anglo-American Trotskyism, Callinicos also fails in his family tree to note, never mind explain, the splits from the SWP-US or the extent of the break up of Cliff's American organisation and blandly comments on the International Marxist Group "disintegrating" in the early '80s.

Strange, I thought the IMG "reorientated" to the Labour Party. *Socialist Organiser* doesn't appear in the family tree at all! In fact, according to the "tree", there are no Trotskyist groups in Britain today except the SWP and *Militant*.

Which reminds me of the story of Callinicos presenting himself to a group of South African shop stewards as "Alex Callinicos, a revolutionary from Britain". He was immediately asked, "where's your machine gun then?"

A nightmare of a book, and a very strange one for the Open University to publish as a textbook.

# A small town Mafia

Cinema

Paul Cooper reviews 'Goodfellas'

A young boy of Irish/Italian descent dreams of escape from the dreary regime of school and the worse regime set to follow it — that of work.

He knows and watches people in his community who have escaped, people who do what they want, and take what they want. They call themselves Goodfellas. We call them the Mafia.

He begins running errands for them. The ease in which young Henry Hill is shown becoming immersed in this world is part of the power of this film. What this world rests on, the nature of the power it wields, is graphically shown in the first sequence of the film.

A comic situation: driving at night, a bemused look comes over the faces of Hill and his two friends as a stage bumping sound begins to emanate from the car. They stop.

We see them looking with apprehension at the boot of the car, and then open it.

The man inside, who was supposed to have been kicked to death earlier that night, is dispatched with eight vigorous thrusts of a large kitchen knife to the neck. Four shots are then emptied into his stomach by Jimmy (Robert de Niro) as an expression of his continuing irritation with the now dead meat in the boot.

There are lots of scenes about meat in this film. Beef, pork, covered in rich thick red Italian sauces. The Goodfellas eat well. They also feed on one another. The man in the boot was a Goodfella. The ready-made family and the strong male groupings exact a big price from members.

Rivalry and reputation between the men demand elaborate rituals for containing the violence that is the basic currency of everything else they do.

All time off in the film is an exercise in bonding the men together. It works — mostly. The way men laugh, with such determination, seems often to bring them from an edge.



Henry Hill, played by Ray Liotta (left), is a small-town gangster

Scorsese's Mafia are not the large powerful baronial families of the 'Godfather' series. They are neighbourhood, medium scale — yes, human scale. They are very easy to like. When they come to kill you they come as friends — smiling!

The film contains very strong performances from Ray Liotta playing Henry Hill, Paul Sorvino playing his 'surrogate father' Paul Cicero, and the 'homicidal' (a relative term here) Tommy Devito played by Joe Pesci. And of course there is De Niro. He's astonishing.

# Old jokes and maybes

Cinema

Cathy Nugent reviews 'My Blue Heaven'

'My Blue Heaven' is a mediocre film from a very talented comedian — Steve Martin.

The trouble with comedians is they always have to be the star attraction. Films they make are mere vehicles for their glorious talents. No-one seems to pay much attention to plot or character. It's always how many jokes per inch of film tape can we get in.

That's typically Hollywood I suppose: if you maximise the product sell you'll maximise the profit. It's a disposable product too. I have seen quite a few film comedies this year. All I can remember from any of them is the tiniest image: Eddie Murphy's suit.

'My Blue Heaven' is quickly summarised: mafia gangster (Steve Martin) turns stool pigeon. He is about to testify against his mafia

bosses. He is living in a small town 'somewhere in America' under the protection of an FBI agent whose brief is to keep Martin out of trouble.

Martin becomes a one-person crimewave, of course. This is an excuse for multiple gags, pranks and one threatened horrendously farcical event.

The gags are pretty obvious (eg. flushing baby turtles down the sink); the pranks are dull (playing Cupid for Mr FBI with the stuffy but pretty Assistant DA) and the farce? Didn't happen.

Comedy has to have an edge to it — something vulgar or odd — to be successful. Maybe if Martin's mafia character had been nasty as well as stooped (sic), maybe if instead of relying on shortness to produce a gag they had done something a little less obvious... Maybe sums up 'My Blue Heaven'.

It's a shame because Martin is really a very talented comedian. He does have the kind of plastic face that can create characters and tell stories.



Indian troops serving in the First World War

# Letters home

TV

By Tom Macara

One of the most terrifying things I've experienced sitting in a Manchester cinema — in which there were a lot of youngsters — as newsreel shots from the Nazi death camps were shown in some item preliminary to the main film.

As the big-eyed, skeletal figures, dressed in the regulation striped pyjamas, moved jerkily around the camera, a layer of the youth started to guffaw loudly!

Too many horror films, I suppose. It was all unreal to them.

So it is with war. Too many descriptions in familiar half-dead stereotyped words, too many familiar images, which have long ago lost the power to evoke more than a fraction of a normal human response to the things they should convey.

'A War Far From Home' (Timewatch, BBC2, 13 November) consisted of letters sent home to India by soldiers serving in the war trenches of Europe during World War I.

These letters — read out on Timewatch by wonderfully dignified Indian actors — conveyed the impact of war on them in blisteringly fresh and immensely powerful language, the poetic and vivid language of hill tribesmen, professional warriors bred to value human qualities like bravery and loyalty and personal skill in the use of arms, who found themselves in the trenches reduced to cattle being slaughtered by distant machines hurling maiming and death at them from across the plain and out of the sky.

130,000 Indian 'sepoys' came to fight, and 30,000 left their bones behind.

They had been sent to fight for England by Indian princes and politicians, who thereby hoped a grateful Britain would grant India Home Rule. In fact, the British distrusted them so much that all letters were translated, copied and censored. (Very little 'disloyalty' was discovered.) But this wonderful record exists because of the fear of these warriors' colonial masters.

The letters should be published.

# Deliberately disgusting

Books

Clive Bradley reviews 'The War Zone', by Alexander Stuart. (Vintage £4.99)

Alexander Stuart has previously been a writer of children's fiction and there is, in this self-consciously shocking and repulsive book, a rich flavour of adolescence.

The narrator is a middle-class teenager with delinquent angst, who discovers that his father and sister are screwing. I choose my words carefully. It is a story of incest; but Stuart does not tell the story we expect. It is not a story of paternal abuse. The daughter, Jessica, is not just her father's victim.

It could be argued, to a certain limit, that this inversion of what we expect is fictionally justifiable. By turning the tables, Stuart tells a more interesting, more unusual

tale. Writers have the right to tell whatever story they want, whether or not it mirrors reality.

But there is only the most passing nod in the direction of reality, only the most passing suggestion that real incest is not like this. Jessica is an almost omnipotent, sexually voracious monster; the father is merely pathetic. This may be only the narrator's perception, but we are given no other. Jessica has rejected 'normality' and set out to break all the rules, and in the process manipulates and corrupts. Maybe her father made her like this. But she is also her own creator.

The most revolting scene in the book focuses the deep misogyny that runs through it. Jessica takes her little brother to 'get laid', in Brixton (where else?) The woman who is to 'lay' him turns out to be Jessica's girlfriend, a man-hating black lesbian apparently prepared to indulge Jessica's most extraordinary sexual requests and to subject our traumatised narrator to the most appalling humiliation: he thinks at one point they are

going to cut his dick off.

Another dyke pops into the story later, with it would seem, a similar relationship to Jessica, different only in that she is very Germanic and white.

We are dealing here in an image of lesbians lifted without modification from male pornography.

Lesbianism, treated as it is here, in a scene of such brutal pornographic excess, serves only to illustrate Jessica's wickedness. The story stinks of male hatred.

Alexander Stuart has set out to shock us, disgust us. It is not a novel that disgusts because it accurately expresses a disgusting truth. Vivid and revolting descriptions are a feature of much modern fiction. There can be a point to it: but in this, I find little or no truth at all.

That it is, nevertheless, a marvellously well-written and readable book only makes it more infuriating. He writes in astonishing, acid prose that could surely be put to a finer purpose.

# Art Blakey — the jazz messenger

Music

By Jim Denham

Art Blakey, who died last month aged 71, will be remembered for many reasons: he was one of the pioneers of the 'be-bop' revolution of the 1940s; in the '50s he led the movement to put blues and gospel feeling back into jazz; he was a father-figure and inspiration to hundreds of young musicians; he played a major role in sparking the current revival of interest in jazz amongst young people in Britain and America.

So numerous and varied were Blakey's accomplishments that it is easy to overlook the fact that he was first and foremost a drummer — and an exceptionally fine one, too.

He learned his craft from the great 1930s swing drummers Chick Webb and Big Sid Catlett and never forgot the simple rule that jazz has to swing and appeal to the feet as well as the head. This early grounding surely helped him drag the music out of an increasingly effete rut in the 1950s, when his band, the Jazz Messengers, developed a style (sometimes called 'hard-bop') that combined the harmonic sophistication of be-bop with a return to the blues and gospel roots of jazz.

Like many of his contemporaries, Blakey was drawn to a version of black nationalism. Be-bop itself was in part a deliberate attempt to develop a style so fast and complex that 'the white boys can't steal it'. Along with many other black musicians in the '50s and '60s, Blakey became a Muslim and identified with the most militant wing of the civil rights movement around Malcolm X.

But Blakey was not anti-white and the recruitment policy of the Messengers was always 'colour-blind' in the best sense. His 'family' of young protégés included musicians of all races and also encouraged young female players (sexism is traditionally a bigger problem than racism in jazz circles).

A list of young musicians who received support, and an early break from Blakey, would read like a virtual 'who's who' of post-war jazz: Clifford Brown, Freddie Hubbard, Horace Silver, Wayne Shorter, the Marsalis brothers and (thanks to a series of visits to Britain in the '80s) Courtney Pine and many of the present generation of leading British musicians.

Blakey was a proud man but (everyone who knew him agrees) a kindly one. He lived for jazz music and played a huge personal role in keeping it alive during difficult times. Not only the musicians he inspired but all of us who love jazz owe him a huge debt.



The Be-bop king: Art Blakey



# PSA: Strikers stand firm and overturn officials

By John Moloney, PSA CPSA striker, London

They say a week is a long time in politics. The same could be said of industrial disputes.

Certainly it is true of the Property Services Agency dispute. NUCPS/CPSA members are on selective strike over Tory plans to convert the

By Trudy Saunders, CPSA DH HQ, editor of 'The Activist'

This year's CPSA Broad Left conference should have been a serious gathering. In the face of Thatcher's attacks on civil servants and the right-wing CPSA leadership's refusal to lead a fight it is vital for left activists to get together and hammer out strategies.

Yet with Militant in control any hope of a rank and file fightback led by the Broad Left looks completely off the agenda.

From the word go, the Militant leadership of the Broad Left unashamedly flaunted their political bankruptcy, hypocrisy, incompetence and gross sectarianism.

The first motion at National Broad Left Conference was an indication of things to come. DHSS Section Secretary, Militant supporter Terry Adams (an appointed post reaping £20,000 per year) was put on the spot when a motion demanded he issue an official retraction to a section circular signed (although not written) by him, calling on CPSA members to cross NUCPS picket lines in the current DHSS staffing disputes.

In a vitriolic 15 minute speech (everyone else got 3 minutes) Adams made it clear that he would not issue such a retraction and, further, did not consider himself accountable to the Broad

PSA, the department responsible for constructing and maintaining government properties, into a private company. This will mean stripping civil servants of their pensions and redundancy money, as well as involving large job losses.

On Monday 5 November, strikers across the country unanimously voted to remain out. The strike was really biting, with PSA losses now nearing the £100 million mark. Then on

Thursday 9 November a bombshell fell: NUCPS decided to call off the strike action in fear of allegedly imminent sacking notices which have never been issued!

CPSA, faced with NUCPS' return to work, decided to stand firm and keep their members out. At the joint strike meetings, NUCPS strikers who were told to go back to work exploded with

anger. Their rebellion has been crucial in persuading the NUCPS GEC to repudiate its decisions in an emergency meeting on 14 November.

Strikers attended the aforementioned GEC meeting with motions of censure and the meeting decided to overturn the previous decision.

The task now is for NUCPS activists to fund and back those PSA members who want to fight. Most urgently, staff in

Birmingham and Hastings who were so shamefully sent back to work, must now be allowed to return to official strike action. Activists in both unions must pick up the pieces, get out to the members and escalate the action.

If sacking notices are issued, CPSA and NUCPS must respond with civil service-wide action. We cannot allow management to pick members off department by department.

## Civil servants need a serious left

Left. "I don't care what anybody in this room says," he told conference.

In the debate it became clear that those defending this overpaid jumped-up little bureaucrat feared such a retraction would lose Adams his precious position.

For Militant, any position is sacrosanct, and they defend them at any cost. Just how the Broad Left could gain the confidence of the rank and file and lead an unofficial fight in the DHSS when one of its leading members refused to retract a scab circular sent out in his name was a question Adams and his supporters failed to answer.

One speaker in Adams' defence said: "You don't shoot the messenger." Precisely. Adams is functioning as the right-wing's messenger boy. This allows the right wing to put the Broad Left in an ambiguous position in the eyes of many members.

Militant went on to oppose motions calling for continuing support for Branches Against Agencies (BAA), the broad branch-based campaign set up to fight Agencies, which was initiated by Socialist Organiser and Socialist Caucus supporters and drew over 200 to its fringe meeting at this year's conference.

Since BAA was set up nearly a year ago, Militant have

attempted to wreck it by setting up their own campaign. When this failed they attempted to take it over. This too failed. Now Militant, in barefaced arrogance, have stooped to denouncing BAA. Happily, at Broad Left conference, forces united to support the motion and defeat Militant.

Militant were again defeated on the Gulf when they urged conference to vote against a motion calling for support of the national demonstration against the

*"In a union where the right wing constantly calls for ballot re-runs members are beginning to feel that their vote is worth nothing."*

war in the Gulf on 24 November. Militant supporters themselves were clearly split on the issue. More confusion was thrown into their sheep-like ranks when a Socialist Organiser supporter pointed out that by composing their motion with an SWP motion (to deny the SWP a speaker), Militant were in effect supporting Saddam's occupation of Kuwait!

The debate on the CPSA merger with NUCPS clearly exposed the hypocrisy of the majority of the Broad Left with the notable exception of Socialist Organiser and Socialist Caucus supporters.

The result of the merger ballot is a small majority of CPSA members in favour of merging. As in any ballot, there have been some administrative cock-ups. Militant National Executive members have been quick to use these to line up with right-wingers opposed to the merger to put a motion to the NEC demanding an investigation into the ballot, as a result of which the result has not yet been declared. At Broad Left conference, Militant put an emergency motion on the merger, endorsing the action of their NEC members. Even the ultra-revolutionary SWP supported this.

Socialist Organiser and Socialist Caucus have been the most vehement and consistent campaigners against a merger with NUCPS. Yet the basic fact of the matter is that members have voted for a merger — and that result should be declared. Militant are using the excuse of some irregularities (which take place in any ballot) to attempt to force a re-run of a result they do not like. If the result had been against the merger, whatever ballot irregularities, Militant would not have demanded a re-

run. In a union where the right wing constantly call for ballot re-runs, members are beginning to feel that their vote is worth nothing. The majority of the Broad Left have now opportunistically jumped on this undemocratic bandwagon. This will only discredit the left as a whole. Of course, the bandwagon won't stop with an inquiry, but will inevitably roll on to the courts. Does the BL really want to be associated with another fiasco in which the bosses' courts are brought in to deal with internal union matters?

Broad Left conference 1990 was smaller than in previous years: the total registration was 196. With the Militant at the helm it is unlikely the Broad Left will reverse the decline.

The left in the CPSA needs a better leadership than that provided by Militant. It needs candidates for office who can be trusted, and who will fight. Minimally the Broad Left slate should be genuinely broad, not monopolised by one faction as Militant seek to do at the moment.

Until this changes, cynicism about the Broad Left will continue to grow amongst the ordinary members. If the left in the union is to be strengthened then it needs to be genuinely broad, open and accountable.

## BR bosses fight dirty

What a difference a day makes. Last Monday, 12 November, British Rail guards at Manchester Piccadilly voted at a mass meeting to return to work after a successful and well-organised three-week strike.

Management had agreed to withdraw the new rota system that sparked the action.

By Tuesday night the bosses had reimposed the hated new rotas.

The RMT should declare another dispute immediately and build for national action as the new rosters are a threat to the working conditions of every guard.

## Every engineer on 37 hours!

By an AEU steward

We shall set a deadline. Companies who have not yet conceded will have to concede by that deadline date or face the consequences of strike action."

So says Alex Ferry, general secretary of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) talking about the engineers shorter working week battle.

There are still around 500,000 engineers who have not yet won a 37-hour week.

At the CSEU general council meeting on 26 November it is vital that a campaign of co-ordinated national strike action is mapped out to win 37 hours for every engineer.

CSEU districts should organise regional stewards meetings now to discuss the next stage in the campaign. As Bill Jordan's AEU shop stewards bulletin put it:

"Any members who has not yet won a shorter working week should ask their union official, 'why not?'"

## Town hall battles

An all out strike by strategic groups of Haringey local government workers has forced the council to withdraw 14 compulsory redundancy notices.

Wandsworth council unions are set to ballot for a one-day strike on 5 December against the cuts.

Greenwich council has rejected an ACAS finding in the union's favour and over the victimisation of strikers and therefore the NALGO branch are set to extend the strike in their defence.

## Miners overtime ban ballot

As we go to press miners are balloting across the country for action over pay and NUM negotiating rights. Next week's SO will carry full details and analysis of the result.

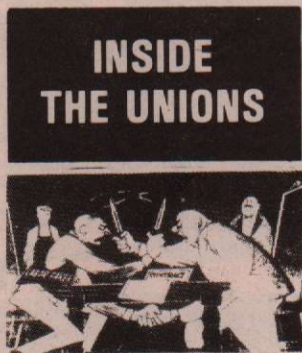
## A bureaucrat and proud of it!

Like me, you have probably met people claiming to be left-wingers who reckon that us 'Trots' go on too much about union 'bureaucrats'.

The more sophisticated of such people will argue that the concept is sociological and not political; that it substitutes personalised vilification for a political critique; that it draws an artificial line of divide between the 'bureaucracy' and the 'rank and file' that fails to take crucial questions like ideology into account.

Very often, the people you hear these kinds of arguments from, have a fairly obvious axe to grind: they are bureaucrats (or would-be bureaucrats) themselves. Sometimes they are honest socialists who had the misfortune to receive their political education at the hands of the IMG.

Anyway next time you hear such arguments being used, whip out a well-thumbed copy of "All Against the Collar" by Clive Jenkins (Methuen, £14.99). Brother Clive, you may remember,



By Sleeper

was the ebullient General Secretary of ASTMS until, having merged his union with Ken Gill's TASS a couple of years ago, he took off to devote his energies to the Tasmanian rain forests or something like that.

The great thing about Jenkins is that he has no shame. While still General Secretary of ASTMS he bought a luxury cruiser, moved it to the bottom of his riverside garden and named it "Affluent Society". He was a habitué of joints like the Reform Club and L'Amico, favourite watering-holes of leading Conservative politicians. He once arranged a

meeting with Eric Hammond of the EETPU at Covent Garden ("I booked a box through being a GLC nominated Governor of Sadlers Wells and invited Eric to come along").

And yet, in TUC terms, Jenkins was on the 'left'. Throughout his career, he worked closely with the Communist Party and with union leaders who were part of the semi-Stalinist 'Broad Left' within the TUC. Before quitting the labour movement, he ensured that ASTMS linked up with the last bastion of unreconstructed Stalinism within the British labour movement, TASS, to create the MSF (which is still suffering from the 'culture clash' between the tightly-knit structures of TASS and the more open, branch-based traditions of ASTMS).

Jenkins amassed a fortune during his years as a union official and is probably the first man to have become a millionaire on the back of the British trade union movement. But he was not actually corrupt — just very shrewd, especially when it came to property speculation.

In many respects he was a very good (or, at least, effec-

ive) bureaucrat; he built up the ASTMS from a small, struggling staff association to a position of pre-eminence within the TUC. He pioneered the use of press advertising to promote trade unionism; he understood the importance of the political link with the Labour Party.

One of the most telling passages in the book describes how Jenkins, together with Moss Evans of the TGWU and David Barnett of the GMB, decided that Neil Kinnock should replace Michael Foot as Labour leader after the disastrous 1983 general election. Rank and file consultation is notable for its absence in this episode, as it is throughout Jenkins' book.

In many ways the book is an extension of Jenkins' personality (or should we say, ego): it is vain, self-promoting and arrogant. Norman Willis gave it a lambasting in the *Independent on Sunday* a few weeks ago. But what Willis didn't like about it (apart from the personal criticism of himself) was that the brash, boastful boyo gives the game away.

Jenkins was always out for Number 1 and he makes no



secret of it. Sure, he defended his members' interests and often delivered the goods in terms of wages and conditions. But the aim of the exercise was to further the power, influence, wealth and lifestyle of Clive Jenkins. His personal interest co-incided with those of his members only insofar as he depended upon their membership dues to keep him in a job. The fact that Jenkins makes no secret of the nature of his relationship with his members — just as he always loved to flaunt his caviar and champagne lifestyle — makes this book so useful. Jenkins even boasts of how he played a big role in getting Jim Prior made chairman of GEC!

We owe Bro Clive a great debt: he's produced the most candid account of the role of the bureaucracy in the British labour movement ever written from the 'inside'. Which is why he isn't popular amongst his former colleagues these days. It's essential reading for every rank and file trade unionist.

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

## Dessie Ellis faces death

**D**essie Ellis, on hunger strike since 9 October, has now been extradited to Britain. He intends to continue his

hunger strike here. That means he may be dead in 2 or 3 weeks time.

The charges he faces in

Britain are that he had control of explosives in Britain between January 1981 and October 1983 and that he conspired to cause explosions in Britain during the same period.

But at that time he was in jail! In May 1981 Dessie Ellis was arrested in Ireland on charges of possessing explosive substances (in fact, electronics units it was alleged were used in IRA bomb-timing devices). The Dublin non-jury Special Criminal Court accepted these charges.

During this trial it became apparent he had been under garda surveillance and it is clear he could not have been in England.

The only explosions to have occurred in Britain during the period covered by his extradition warrants were in autumn 1981, and summer 1982 — when he was in jail or frequently reporting to the gardai, under bail conditions.

In February 1982 he jumped bail and on 6 February was arrested while crossing illegally into the US from Canada. He was held in custody pending deportation proceedings lasting for over a year.

He was finally deported and re-arrested on arrival in Dublin in March 1983. Convicted at the Special Criminal Court he was sentenced to eight years in jail, several in Portlaoise.

24 hours before he was due to be released he was taken to Bridewell Garda station and re-arrested by gardai on two extradition warrants.

He went on hunger strike on 9 October in protest against his extradition.

He faces trial for something he could not physically have done. He will face trial in a situation in which his background and beliefs can be used by the British press and media to stir up public opinion and the jury into an atmosphere of hysteria in an attempt to circumvent legal proceedings and ensure both a conviction and a maximum sentence.

That is why Dessie Ellis remains on hunger strike. He knows what happened to the Guildford 4 and the Birmingham 6.

His case must urgently be taken up by labour movement activists in Britain.



# All out against a Gulf war!

By Mark Sandell

The Americans and their allies still hope they can gain a bloodless victory. They are still engaged in diplomatic manoeuvres and propaganda exercises.

At the same time, their preparations for war are being fine-tuned. If they don't win a bloodless victory, then they are going to go for a bloody one.

Mrs Thatcher is playing the "I'm-a-war-leader" card shamelessly in her attempt to hold onto the leadership of the Tory Party.

The main danger for opponents of the war continues to be that we will be lulled and disarmed by the diplomatic toing and froing — and then caught by surprise when the propaganda war gives way to the shooting war.

Nothing would be more foolish than to believe we can trust Bush and Thatcher to go on like this indefinitely. They are preparing for war and — as they say themselves — they will go to war when they think war best serves their interests.

We must use this time to build a strong anti-war movement. The British anti-war movement lags behind the American movement, which is already a power in the land — such a power that it is probably one of the factors inhibiting and slowing down Bush's drive to war.

It is tragic that the anti-war movement in this country has so far been dogged by factional in-

**Campaign Against War in the Gulf demand US British troops get out of the Gulf**

**Picket & Vigil** outside the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London (tube: Bond St)

**6.00-7.00, Wednesday 5 December followed by Public CAWG Meeting** to discuss future campaigning and the Gulf situation.

**7.15, Wednesday 5 December, Mayfair Library, 25 South Audley St — near to Grosvenor Square**

fighting.

There is disagreement between those who believe an anti-war movement can be best built around the slogan "No to war", and those, like Socialist Organiser, who believe that the minimum basis for an effective anti-war movement should be the demand for the withdrawal of British and US troops from the Gulf.

That disagreement is very important. It seems to us it is ridiculous to believe that a real anti-war movement — one which can affect what the ruling class does — can be built around a vague and unfocused wish "No to war".

We recall that the movement in the USA which tipped the scales against the American war effort in Vietnam took shape around such slogans as "US troops out now".

We have some difficulty in even understanding why some respectable people — Tony Benn for ex-

ample — believe that the more amorphous focus is the better one for building the anti-war movement.

Nevertheless, this dispute, important though it is, does not have to disrupt unity in action between those who have this disagreement, in the building of an effective anti-war movement.

A united and representative committee of all active anti-war forces should be organised immediately. The majority should decide the "official" slogans under which a given action takes place. Minorities should have complete freedom to carry whatever slogans they like on demonstrations.

**Unity in action to oppose the war is what we need above all else.**

Those who try to create a movement on the "No war" slogan and who drive out of any common

movement advocates of the "Troops out" slogan are not building the anti-war movement. They are disrupting and crippling it. They are sectarian in the worst sense of the word.

The time we gain while Bush and Thatcher manoeuvre is precious time. We must not waste it.

What we do now may make the difference between war and peace and if we can't stop war breaking out, the existence or non-existence of a serious anti-war movement will determine our ability to hinder the ruling class's prosecution of the war.

The stakes are too high to let stupid squabbling get in the way of doing our duty!

Build an anti-war movement now!

Troops out of the Gulf!  
Iraq out of Kuwait!

## Stop War in the Gulf!

### National Demonstration 24 November

Assemble: noon, Embankment  
March to rally in Hyde Park

## Advisory Editorial Board

Vladimir Derer  
Terry Eagleton  
Jatin Haria (Labour Party Black Sections)  
Eric Heffer MP  
Dorothy Macedo  
Joé Marino  
Peter Tatchell

Members of the Advisory Committee are drawn from a broad cross-section of the left who are opposed to the Labour Party's witch-hunt against Socialist Organiser. Views expressed in articles are the responsibility of the authors and not of the Advisory Editorial Board.