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war



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SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

The new Europe:

POISONED

By Steven Holt

On 10 November Jörg Haider's fascist Freedom Party gained 23 per cent of the vote in Vienna, outstripping the traditional right and coming second the Social Democrats.

The fascists have gained support as refugees from poverty and racial discrimination in Eastern Europe have fled westwards, so that now perhaps a fifth of the people living around Vienna are foreigners. Foreigners and "outsiders" of all sorts have become scapegoats for the continued slump, depression, unemployment and insecurity of capitalist Europe. A recent opinion survey in Austria showed virulent anti-semitism on a mass scale, far broader than the support for Haider's party.

What is happening in Austria is only part of a frightening upsurge of racism all across Europe. As the governments of Europe politely negotiate about whittling down economic barriers, they are helping to build barriers of hate and violence against national minorities and against Third World immigrants.

In Britain, fascist groups like the British National Party are

Turn to page 2

BY



Two faces of the new Europe: Nazi goon emerges from the collapse of East German Stalinism; protest in England against the harassment of refugees

RACISM

For a Europe without frontiers!

The lie machine



Other theories aired about Robert Maxwell's death included assassination by Arab nationalists, or that he had faked suicide and was really still alive. On the whole, though, the tabloids were unusually sober in a situation crying out for lurid speculation. (Did Mossad, or the KGB, kill Maxwell to stop him spilling the beans?) The tabloids showed remarkable solidarity in the way they all commemorated Maxwell as a Great Man. Maxwell's own paper, the Mirror, looked like an old-style Stalinist sheet marking the death of one of the old tyrants who used to be Maxwell's friends.



Another case of tabloid solidarity: actor Bill Roache, who won a libel action against the Sun, has faced a united onslaught from all the tabloids, including the Sun's rival and enemy the Mirror.



Even the true-blue Mail has to recognise it: the Tories are clearing out the kitty in a cynical pre-election spree.

Thatcher's outrider lights the blue touchpaper...

Tories split over Europe

The Tory split over Europe has opened even wider. Nicholas Ridley, a former Minister and close ally of Margaret Thatcher, has called on people to vote for Labour anti-EC candidates in the

General Election against Tory pro-EC candidates.

Norman Tebbit has already threatened to vote against the government in Parliament, and talked of working with people of "other parties" and appealing to them "on the streets" over this issue.

Margaret Thatcher is reported to sympathise with Ridley and Tebbit.

John Major and the Tory leadership will try to limit the split, but European schedules beyond their control tie their hands.

The Tories' disarray creates great chances for

Labour. But Neil Kinnock is missing all the tricks. The Labour leaders have nothing to say about Europe — nothing at all.

Instead of putting a clear argument for a Europe without frontiers, and a united workers' movement to level up wages, conditions

and benefits across Europe, they have mumbled mealy-mouthed.

They have left the argument to Ridley's chauvinist ravings and Major's Euro-capitalist calculations, with no socialist alternative. The left in the labour movement must fill that gap.

Rig workers ordered back into inferno

Radio operator, Timothy Williams died in a fire on the Ocean Odyssey oil rig in 1989. He was ordered out of a lifeboat and back into the radio room by the rig manager while the rig was being evacuated.

The report of the inquiry led by the sheriff principal, Ronald Ireland, said that this death could have been avoided "if those in charge of the rig had exercised proper care and followed safe and correct drilling practice in the management of the well". The rig was owned by Odeco and operated by Arco British.

All this shows just how much the oil bosses care about the safety of 'their' workers.



Poisoned by racism

From front page

gaining strength in several areas. The Tories played the racist card in the recent Langbaugh by-election, by stressing the Asian background of Labour candidate Ashok Kumar, and they are playing it for the coming General Election by an outcry against refugees.

In Germany, the influx of refugees in the West and mass unemployment in the East have created conditions in which fascist and semi-fascist groups have grown. Extreme right-wingers did very well in elections recently in the area around Hamburg. In the last few weeks the frequency of racist attacks has increased tenfold — and the German government is planning to tighten the rules on asylum-seekers so that those refused asylum are expelled much more quickly. At present Germany accepts, at least temporarily, almost as many refugees per month as Britain accepts per year; expulsion from Germany would leave those refugees with nowhere to go.

In Italy, especially the South Tyrol, the long-moribund fascist MSI has become an electoral force again.

In France, support for the Front National, led by long-time

Nazi Jean-Marie Le Pen, is solid. The bulk of the mainstream right, and some Socialist Party politicians too, have swung over to saying that Le Pen is right about immigration.

In Eastern Europe, far-right groups have grown amidst the disillusion and disorientation caused by hard-line free-market economics after the collapse of Stalinism. In Poland, far-right nationalists won ten per cent of the vote in the recent general election. In Yugoslavia, the war between Serbia and Croatia has boosted the extreme right: in Serbia, Seselj's Chetniks are increasingly influential, and in Croatia many people look to Paraga's explicitly fascist Party of the Right and its Hos militia.

The new era of capitalist peace, prosperity, and harmony which the rulers of the West promised us after the collapse of Stalinism and the end of the Cold War is looking very ugly indeed.

Capitalism still produces slumps, unemployment, poverty and misery. If the labour movement offers no better alternative than the bland minimalism of

Kinnock and the other social-democratic leaders of Europe, and if the socialist parties and trade unions have no effective internationalism to counterpose to the growing international coordination of capitalism, then desperate and disoriented people will turn to the nationalist, racist, foreigner-hating right wing, which offers apparently simple and apparently radical answers.

The present growth of the European far right is unprecedented since the 1930s. As in the 1930s, if these people are not stopped now, they will crush all progress and all hope.

All the European Community leaders already agree on limiting immigration to the EC very tightly after 1992. John Major disagrees only because he also wants to keep tight controls on migration within the EC. And Labour's leaders have no answers.

We need a united working-class movement, right across Europe, to respond to the international plans of capitalism. We need a Europe without frontiers — a Europe where people are free to move, free to work together, free to live together, free to fight together for a better future.

The alternative is the spread right across Europe of what we now see in Yugoslavia: people of different nationalities or ethnic groups slaughtering each other in an escalating spiral of revenge, hate, and violence, while the economic causes of their misery grind on unhindered.

900 rally against the BNP

Anti-fascists from all over the North of England assembled in York on Remembrance Sunday to prevent the British National Party rallying at the scene of the largest Jewish Pogrom (massacre) in British history which took place in 1190.

This was the fourth year in which the fascists have been prevented from marching. They were restricted to skulking round the station and sticking a few lamp-posts.

Witch-hunt comes to Leeds

By Mike Fenwick

Last Saturday saw the Labour Party witch-hunt hit Leeds in a big way.

The local newspaper, the Yorkshire Evening Post, gave up most of its front page to an exposé of Militant in the Leeds Central constituency party.

The attack on the Militant is just a small part of an extended campaign against University Ward and its officers.

Recently, University Ward chair, Patrick Hall was removed from the local council panel because he had signed a local anti-poll tax leaflet. Selection meetings in the ward have been

held up and stopped when right-wingers have looked likely to lose, and the thrust of the charges against the Militant has been that the branch officers have allowed Militant to be sold, as well as Socialist Organiser, both now 'illegal' in the eyes of the NEC.

The likelihood is that the whole branch or its officers will be suspended and that the right is merely using the Militant issue in an effort to whip up support for these anti-democratic moves.

The local Campaign Group is attempting to organise a fightback, with a public meeting on the 9th December. Invited speakers include Ken Capstick, Nof Tofias from the Sheffield Defence Campaign and Terry Fields MP.

Nightmare in Yugoslavia

By Steven Holt

Yugoslavia's federal army has stepped up its war in Croatia. After increased shelling of Dubrovnik, on the Dalmatian coast, a direct assault by the federal army looks likely in the next few days.

In Slavonia (the eastern part of Croatia), the major towns, Vinkovci and Osijek, are also being heavily shelled. The federal army has entered the key town of Vukovar, and seems to be close to victory in street-fighting against the Croatian defenders. Many streets are littered with the corpses of civilians and soldiers from both sides.

The nightmarish slide into greater and greater atrocities by both sides is a smaller-scale repeat of fighting in Eastern Europe during the Second World War. Already this is the biggest violent conflict in Europe since that War.

The toll is difficult to assess. Both sides have played down their casualties. Tudjman's Croatian government has admitted 2500 Croatian dead, but the real number must be far greater.

It now looks as if the federal army may go further than the Serbian government wishes. The initial military incursions into Croatia were to wrest control of areas with substantial Serbian populations away from the newly-declared independent Croat state.

That was followed by fighting in Dalmatia, in Slavonia, and in the region south of Zagreb, in which the Serb-controlled areas were expanded to cover about one third of Croatia. (The areas in Croatia where Serbs are a majority amount at most to around a sixth).

Now it seems that the federal army may try to occupy the whole of Croatia and try to force it to remain in a Yugoslav state.

While the Serbian leader Milosevic has always argued for keeping a federal Yugoslav state, his real aim seems to be rather to carve out more territory for Serbia.

Serbia is putting into effect plans to form its own army, separate from the federal army. This move may also be a concession to the nationalist opposition parties in Serbia, both of which have welcomed it.

The EC, after the failure of twelve ceasefire agreements, is now talking of a trade blockade

"The nightmarish slide into atrocities by both sides is a smaller-scale repeat of fighting during the Second World War."

to try to halt the fighting, but this may be vetoed by Greece, which shares a border with Yugoslavia.

The EC, particularly Germany, is moving towards recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as independent states, but Greece is strongly against anything that could lead to a separate Macedonian state. The Greek government does not recognise the existence of Macedonians as an ethnic and cultural group within Greece, and does not want Greek Macedonians to be encouraged to secede by the creation of a Macedonian state to the north.

Ex Labour leader Michael Foot and current Labour front-bencher David Blunkett have urged that British ships should break the blockade of Dubrovnik. Others, ranging from French President Mitterrand to Yugoslav Federal President Stipe Mesic, have argued for a demilitarised zone between the opposing forces.

Free the poll tax prisoners!

According to the latest update from the Poll Tax Prisoners' Support Network, seven people are still in jail on Public Order Act charges after the Trafalgar Square police riot in March 1990, and to date some 70 have served jail sentences for not paying the Poll Tax.

The majority of those 70 were sent to jail by Labour councils. Hundreds more may be jailed before the Tax disappears.

Send letters of support to: Paul Jacob, RA0711, HMP Coldingley, Bisley, Woking, Surrey GU24 9EX. Brian Tavares, MV3239, HMP Camp Hill, Clissold Road, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30

5PB. Tim Donaghy, MW0105, HMP Downview, Sutton Lane, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5PD. Neil Bremner, MW0216, HMP Coldingley. Matt Lee, MW1054, HMP Featherstone, New Road, Featherstone, Wolverhampton WV10 7PU. Simon Russell, ND1666, HMP The Mount, Molyneux Ave, Bovingdon, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP3 0NZ. Michael Dalley, PF3098, HMP Wandsworth, Heathfield Road, Wandsworth, London SW18 3HS. Mark Hutchings, MW2737 [via Prisoners' Support Network], Poll Tax Prisoners Support Network, c/o Brixton Law Centre, 506 Brixton Road, London SW9 8EN.



Croatian National Guardsman surveys the ruins of an Osijek grainstore, bombed by Serbian guerillas

Yugoslavia: bloodbath after the thaw

The Serbs and the Croats are very similar peoples. They are divided by dialects, not by distinct tongues. Yet the civil war in Yugoslavia is the worst of all sorts of war: a "race" war.

It is a war between two peoples who have an ingrained hatred of each other, bred from a history of conflict and war from which the memories of terrible deeds still reverberate in the minds of the present generation.

It is perfectly understandable that the Serb minority in Croatia should refuse to let themselves become part

of a Croatian state which has seceded from Yugoslavia. In World War 2, half the Serbs in Croatia were murdered by the fascist Ustashe movement, allied to Nazi Germany. Fear was palpable among the Serbs in Croatia before war broke out, as they saw Croats using World War 2 names, slogans and symbols and were faced with demands to swear loyalty to Croatia and victimisation in their jobs when they were slow to comply.

It is understandable, in the light of history, that Serbia should refuse to leave the Serb minority at the mercy of the Croatian majority. It is understandable that they should fight to stop that happening, and it was a certainty that they would.

Croat secession from Yugoslavia was bound to spark conflict unless it was accompanied by an agreed peaceful secession of the Serb majority areas from Croatia, and guarantees for the rights of Serbs elsewhere in Croatia.

Yet that was easier said than done, for not all the Serb areas in Croatia are adjacent to Serb territory. And the idea of accepting Serb secession would outrage every Croat nationalist. They seceded from Yugoslavia in the name of self-determination; yet a people like the Croats seeking self-determination for themselves often sets its face like stone against the right of secession for minorities within its chosen area.

It is almost always thus. The struggle for their own independence tends always to blind nations to the rights of other peoples making a similar claim on them.

Exactly the same double standards can be seen from the Serbs.

They claimed to be defending their own people in Croatia, but had already suppressed the rights of minority areas, including overwhelmingly Albanian-populated Kosovo, in their own territory. Now they are plainly trying to carve out and grab for Serbia as big a part of Croatia as they can, irrespective of who lives there.

All these difficulties, and the Pandora's box of nationalism

"Socialists have to insist again and again that the only possible and acceptable solution will be the democratic one proposed by the Bolsheviks — self-determination for all nations, autonomy for all minorities, equality for all."

unleashed by the break-up of Yugoslavia, added up to the strongest argument against Croat secession and for the maintenance of the Yugoslav federation.

Yet the Yugoslav federation has now broken down irretrievably. Nothing but military conquest will bring the Croats back to federation with Serbia. It follows then that socialists champion the right of Croatia and the right of the Serbs in Croatia to secede.

The terrible possibility is that

Yugoslavia is no more than a small rehearsal for similar bitter ethnic and national conflicts all across the former USSR. The attempt by the one-million strong Chechen-Ingush people to leave Boris Yeltsin's Russian Republic is only the latest stirring in the nationalist cauldron.

Yeltsin's threats to respond to secession with military force — taken together with his earlier talk of revising the borders between the Russian Republic and the other republics of the ex-USSR — shows how easily Yugoslav-type situations can erupt in the USSR.

Everywhere in the former Stalinist world, the most malignant nationalism has sprung back to life in the newly open climate. The only possible answer is the one given by the Bolsheviks in 1913: "In so far as national peace is in any way possible in a capitalist society based on exploitation, profit-making and strife, it is attainable only under a consistently and thoroughly democratic republican system of government... the constitution of which contains a fundamental law that prohibits any privileges whatsoever to any one nation and any encroachment whatsoever upon the rights of a national minority."

"This particularly calls for wide regional autonomy and fully democratic local government, with the boundaries of the self-governing and autonomous regions determined by the local inhabitants themselves on the basis of their economic and social conditions, national make-up of the population, etc."

The Russian workers' revolution of 1917 started to solve the national and ethnic conflicts according to

the application of consistent democracy between the nations and fragments of nations. Stalin overthrew Bolshevism and returned the peoples to subjection for decades. He deported entire peoples (including the Chechen-Ingush).

Nothing was solved by the Stalinist policy. Now the price is being paid.

We cannot change that at will. But socialists have to insist again and again that the only possible and acceptable solution will be the democratic one proposed by the Bolsheviks — self-determination for all nations, autonomy for all minorities, full equality for all.

Despite all bourgeois propaganda, Bolshevism was not the cause of the problems the East European and USSR peoples face now. Stalinism was.

Bolshevism is the solution to these problems.

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

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Foot in the door? Or sell-out?

Production at Toyota's new Derby plant will not start until next year. The bulk of the workforce has yet to be recruited. But their union representation has already been decided. The AEU won Toyota's "beauty contest", outdoing the TGWU, GMB, MSF, and even the EETPU in grovelling before the bosses.

The AEU/Toyota single-union deal includes such historic breakthroughs as:

- 39 hour working — despite the fact that the AEU itself led a three year campaign to make 37 hours the norm throughout engineering.
- No shop stewards. Toyota workers will be "represented" by a joint worker/management board which will not take votes.
- A "no intention to strike" commitment from Bill Jordan — which is, apparently, not quite the same thing as a no-strike deal.

Of course, AEU leaders Bill Jordan and Gavin Laird will argue that the deal was the best they could hope for under the circumstances. Another union would have

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper



Willis propounds the benefits of "Social Partnership" at this year's TUC. The Toyota deal tells us what all this talk really means

stepped in to offer the same terms to Toyota if the AEU had refused. Nissan's Yamoto plant on Tyneside has no union recognition at all.

But the fact remains that the deal represents a massive backward step for trade unionists throughout engineering and has already been seized upon by Ford bosses to reject the current claim for a 37 hour week in their plants. And, of course, not a single Toyota worker has been consulted about any of this.

The deal gives the AEU "bargaining rights" and access to the workforce for purposes of recruitment. But the experience of Nissan's first Tyneside plant (where less than five per cent of the workforce chose to join the AEU) suggests that workers will not join a union unless they see it actually winning concessions for them. Far from winning anything, deals like these undermine gains that have been achieved elsewhere in industry.

Deals like these might represent a "foot in the door" in plants that would otherwise be non-union. But so far unions like the AEU, EETPU, and TGWU have signally failed to use their "foot in the door" at greenfield sites to open up those doors to effective union organisation.

Might it not be better to tell employers to stuff their "beauty contests" and then campaign around issues like shorter hours once the workforce is in place? But perhaps that sounds too much like "old-fashioned", "non-consensual" trade unionism to appeal to the likes of Bill Jordan. And too much like hard work.

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A handbook for trade unionists

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The face of Tory Britain:

Outcast

Cate Murphy reports on the soaring homelessness resulting from 12 years of Tory rule

Richard Griffiths is a senior partner in the law firm of Farrer & Co., the Queen's solicitors. He earns thousands of pound a day, and has his chambers [offices, to me and you] in Lincoln's Inn Fields, the lawyers' part of town.

Nearby is the Royal College of Surgeons; opposite that the Sir John Soames museum; the LSE backs onto the Fields. It's the cultural heart of the British establishment.

Lincoln's Inn Fields is also a testament to the sickness of that capitalist British establishment: in the past year it has witnessed the growth of a shanty town of tents, cardboard box shelters and wooden huts, housing a couple of hundred of London's homeless.

During the 12 years of Tory rule, homelessness has soared, as those at the bottom of our society have paid for the "boom" enjoyed by those at the top.

As interest rates soared in the last couple of years, mortgage default has increased. The figures to August this year, show that one in 44 households are unable to keep up with payments. Those in arrears of 6-12 months — and thereby liable to imminent repossession — rose by a third on 1990 figures. That's 162,210 more people facing homelessness.

The much-trumpeted "right to buy" introduced by the Tories, coupled with restrictions in local government funding, had reduced

council housing stock by over a million homes since 1979. Local authorities have over one and a half million people on their waiting lists. These figures don't include some of the homeless — including young single people, not deemed a "priority" by many councils.

Added to this, is the Tory policy of "community care", where people in medical or psychiatric care are released into the "community". For some, this means the family provides — unpaid — care the State had provided.

For many, the community they rejoin is the homeless on the streets. For the Tories it doesn't matter: less money spent on such public services means bigger tax cuts for the rich. That's their overriding concern, not the well-being of the most vulnerable in society.

The introduction of the poll tax also led to a corresponding increase in homelessness.

Many young people, especially those unemployed, were forced to leave home in 1989 (in Scotland) and 1990 (England and Wales) because their families couldn't, or wouldn't, pay their poll tax. Bottom of the list for council housing, with unemployment rocketing yet again, and cuts in central government funding to charities providing aid to the homeless, many ended up on the streets.

In 1989, Shelter estimated, 147,290 young people were homeless. That figure rose to 168,880 in 1990, and in the first six months of this year, it topped 150,000. Under this Tory government, this situa-



Lincoln's Inn Fields, February 1991, 5 degrees below zero; cardboard boxes and old

tion is unlikely to change.

The government's answer to the plight of the homeless, those forced to spend bitter nights on London's streets such as the Strand, is... hose them down!

The homeless aren't genuinely homeless, you see. They're all con-merchants with mansions in Essex who find begging an easier way to make money than a 9 to 5

job. So said a Tory Minister last year.

The real blame for the plight of the homeless found in every tube station, on the Strand, in dooways in the City, in Lincoln's Inn Fields — and every other major city in Britain today — lies with the Tories.

It is their policies, their fostering of a dog-eat-dog society, where everything is geared to maximising profit, that has created homelessness on a scale that would disgrace Victorian England.

The Tories don't care about the homeless. And Labour can't promise anything better if they adhere to their promise to fund social programmes "only if we can afford it" (that is, only if the City says 'yes').

Camden's Labour Council is the landlord of Lincoln's Inn Fields. They're "very concerned" about people having to sleep rough in the Fields, but keeping within the bounds of Tory-imposed spending guidelines, they can't offer permanent housing to the unofficial 'tenants' of the shanty town.

We need a Labour government that puts the needs of people before keeping the City sweet, which will pledge itself to building decent homes for all.

But more than that. We have to fight to destroy the system which sees homelessness as an inevitable — and justifiable — by-product, and to fight for a socialism which relegates homelessness to a distant memory, which will provide housing for all.

"I can't see it getting better"

Lisa's tale is becoming all too depressingly familiar. Aged 17, she left home 16 months ago, as soon as she turned 16, to escape a violent home, and a father who abused her.

"I couldn't tell anyone about it, because I was scared what he'd do to me if I did. He said that if I told my mum or anyone, he'd say it was my fault for leading him on. He used to hit my mum too.

"So I just left. I came to London [from Southampton] because I thought it was far enough away and he'd never be able to find me here. I haven't even dared to ring my mum, let her know I'm OK, in case he answers the phone. Then he'll make my mum tell him where I am".

Lisa didn't know where to go for help, or accommodation, and was too scared to try, in case she was sent back home, or her family



were contacted.

She ended up in Lincoln's Inn Fields two months ago, with her boyfriend after sleeping rough "just around, anywhere we could" in London.

She makes what money she can by begging: some days she barely makes enough to buy a couple of cups of tea and some chips.

But there's never enough to buy her warmer clothes, shoes or blankets. Like most of the Fields' inhabitants, her home and bedding comes from skip-hunting, picking up bits of wood and cardboard boxes where she can.

"People think we are all dirt: drunks or drug addicts,

and we don't deserve anything better. Of course I'd rather live in a house, and have some money, buy nice clothes, and go out to a club now and again.

"The worst thing is, because I live here, some men think I'll sleep with anyone, and they pester you. That's the worst thing — you don't even feel safe.

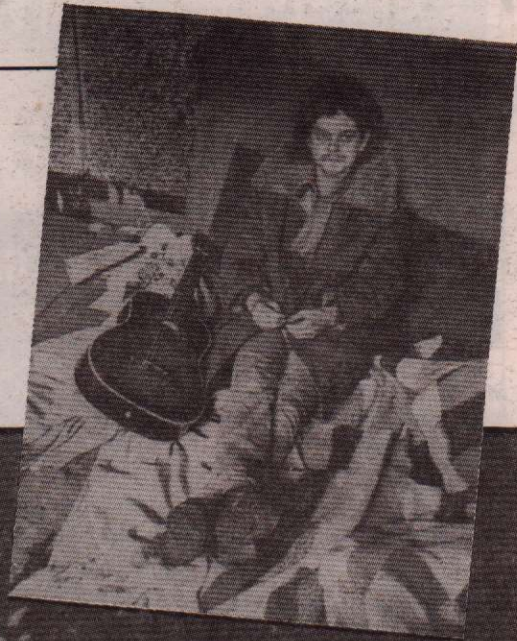
"I just don't know if it will ever change. I want to get a job, so me and my boyfriend can get somewhere to live, but who's going to give me a job if I say where I live?"

"I don't like to think about the future too much — because I can't see it getting any better".

London



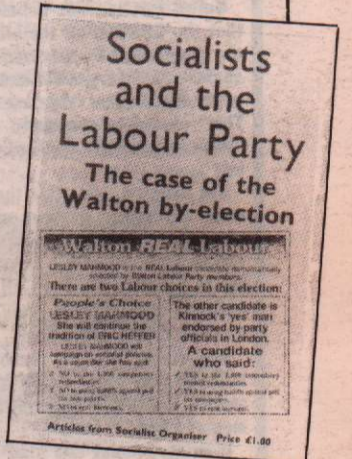
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"What other choice do we have?"

Frank is a relative newcomer to Lincoln's Inn Fields. He's been there a mere 10 months. Some of his fellow homeless have lived rough there for 18 years.

His route to the Fields began in 1989, when he lost his job as a miner at Frickley pit, just one of the thousands of victims of the Tories' relentless drive to

smash the NUM, and privatise the coalfields. Frank couldn't find another job in that part of Yorkshire. He believes he was blacklisted as a result of his part in the 1984-5 strike when he was out for 13 months.

Poverty and unemployment drove him to petty crime, and he ended up in prison for two years.

On his release, at the beginning of this year, he moved south in the hopes of

work, but found himself in the catch twenty-two situation of so many homeless.

With no job — and no spare cash — he was unable to find money for a deposit to rent anywhere to live. And as a single man in his early 30s, no council would put him on their housing priority list. Without a permanent address, it's hard to find a job. Or to get social security benefits.

Frank tried hostel accommodation, but found it too

institutionalised: "You can't have visitors, you have to be out in the morning at a set time; you're not allowed back in the evenings until a set time, and there's always someone watching you. I'm a grown man, not a helpless child, and I resented being treated like one".

The only avenue left: sleeping rough. So Frank came to Lincoln's Inn Fields and, along with hundreds of others, in late 20th century London, pitched his tent.

"It's not so bad. By and large the people who work and live here leave us alone — and we don't bother them. Some are very good. There's a young woman who works in an office nearby, who brings us cups of coffee every lunchtime.

"They're not all like that, of course, and some do turn their noses up at us, avoid us as though we're an infectious disease, but rather than attack us."

Frank reserves most of his anger for Camden Council, responsible for the upkeep of Lincoln's Inn Fields.

"You'd think we came here just to make life difficult for the council. Most of us don't want to be here any more than they want us here, but we've nowhere else to go. We can't get anywhere else to stay.

"You'd think a Labour council would be more sympathetic to our plight, instead of trying to sweep us away like rubbish. It's disgusting that Camden cares more about the rich lawyers and businessmen round here than it does for the likes of us.

"We're not asking for favours, just a chance to live life like anyone else. We don't want to freeze to death out here, or have to beg in the streets, but it's that or starve. What choice do we have?"



In the heart of the bastion of British "justice" lies the shanty town for up to 200 of the victims of Tory class war

Inaction, reaction and puritanism

GRAFFITI

This week's Reactionary of the Week award goes to Bill Jamieson writing in the *Sunday Telegraph*.

Bemoaning Norman Lamont's pre-election "autumn giveaway" he fears an "...economic vision for Britain [which] seems to consist of inexhaustible inventories of surgical stockings and replacement joints, Thatcherite economics buried in a 'mine's bigger than yours' pile of incontinence pads."

Bill Jamieson had some competition this week, though.

In the latest issue of *Socialist Action* Alex McLeod attacks *Socialist Organiser's* own Sean Matgamna for writing that the smashing up of that part of the Soviet state apparatus which called itself the CPSU was a good thing which should be supported by socialists.

Unfortunately, Alex believes that the CPSU is on the side of the workers and oppressed against the bourgeoisie and suggests that Sean's "Against the Tide" should be renamed "With imperialism, against the left".

But hang on, isn't this the same *Socialist Action* which attempted to keep *Socialist Organiser* out of the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf because, they claimed, they'd stopped taking affiliations.

And wasn't the real reason because they were trying to seduce the rather Stalinist Communist Party of Britain.

If being against this kind of sectarian manoeuvring in the face of bloody imperialist slaughter is being against what "the left" has become, as best shown by *Socialist Action*, then yes, we are against "the left". And if "socialists" support the oppressors in the USSR against the workers, then it is up to real socialists to rescue socialism from the hands of Alex McLeod and his kind.

So if, *Socialist Action*, we are suggesting name changes what about "Stalinist Inaction" ("With the Stalinists, against the workers")?

The audit of last year's government spending figures have revealed that for once in her life Margaret Thatcher caused a school to be built quickly at £½ million extra cost.

The Lord Byron school in Leninakan, Armenia, was donated by the British government after the 1988 earthquake. In 1990 the school isn't finished — but what is this on the PM's schedule? A visit to Armenia. Out come the stops and, yes, there was a photo opportunity for the oh-so-caring Tory PM opening the new school.

However, this is beaten by the sheer comedy of Princess Di opening a new £500,000 heart unit in Ottawa. You can't expose royalty to real sick people — so the



For Thatcher lite now is one long, expensive photo-opportunity

hospital drafted in ex-patients to fill the beds for the day.

Remember *Militant*, the group against all bans and expulsions?

Then surely this is a different *Militant* at CPSA Broad Left conference calling for the expulsion of any member standing against a BL candidate in an election.

Even if they were a *Real Broad Left* candidate?

While on the subject of *Militant*, they seem to have taken a further turn toward puritanism.

Militant have always been against the liberalisation of drugs laws and have recently taken several pages of their paper to denounce the demon cannabis — and in passing threw in that if alcohol were banned they'd be against its re-legalisation.

Now the new puritans have taken another step down the road to meeting the Mary Whitehouse brigade. They have come out in favour of the Campaign Against Pornography, who run the Off the Shelf campaign, whereby they go into WH Smiths and remove pornographic magazines from the shelves.

More level-headed socialists have complained that not only does this not fight sexism effectively, but opens dangerous doors to censorship. But no, *Militant* are going further and calling for "the right to look at limited bans, eg. Clare Short's Page 3 Bill."

The punchline to all of this is that *Militant* men are well known for being both beer-swilling and sexist. Anyone for a communion wafer?

A school in Birmingham has removed all references to pigs from its educational materials because they have been found to distress some Muslim students.

Islam rejects pigs as "unclean" and many hold images and references taboo. Fair enough, you may think.

No, think again. The headteacher at the school has received death threats and been accused of "destroying the English way of life."

Enter the local Tory MP: "The pig is a major part of British life" says Roger King. "These children are living in Britain not India or Pakistan and we are doing them no service sheltering them from the practicalities of British life."

It is not known whether images of Tory MPs are still used in educational materials at the school.

Highlights of last weekend's Young Fabians event at the University of London Union were certainly Neil McKinnon and Paul Boateng.

McKinnon, who is an adviser to John Smith and Gordon Brown, weighed in with "the Labour Party's economic policy is quasi-Thatcherite". It's good to see the right and left of party can agree on something.

But Paul Boateng wins out on sheer sharpness and clarity, saying, "the next Labour government will be the first post-modern socialist government".

And what is post-modern socialist government? One can only assume it will be apparently structureless, have all the plumbing on the outside, and everyone will want to get rid of it after a year.

Ebullient, larger than life, er... that's it

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

Awakening on Tuesday morning to Radio 4's 'Today' programme, I gradually became aware of certain recurring leit-motifs: "ebullient, larger than life, dynamic, truly larger than life, remarkable, very much larger than life," etc., etc.

In my experience, such words can only mean one thing: the subject under discussion is Captain Robert Maxwell MC.

Nothing unusual about that, of course. Cap'n Bob has been in the news a great deal over the past few weeks, what with the 'Bloated Empire' revelations of enormous debts and then the 'Mirrogate' allegations of Mossad Links and arms deals. But why the stream of worthies, all reciting variations on the ebullient/larger than life theme?

Suddenly the answer became clear: Nigel Dempster, the *Daily Mail's* gossip columnist came on, saying something along the lines of "he was a braggart and a bully... He ruined the lives of hundreds of people... Anyone could have saved the *Daily Mirror* — all you had to do was sack half the workforce and that was easy after Wapping... Twenty-three Pergamon employees were sacked just for holding a union meeting... and this



Maxwell: a mountain of a man

man was supposed to be a socialist..."

This could only mean that the old megalomaniac was dead. No-one would have dared say that kind of thing over the air while he was alive, but even the litigious Maxwell can't sue from the grave.

Dempster was only saying out loud what most people know to be true. It needed saying.

So why did some of the media coverage of this deeply unattractive figure leave just a slightly nasty taste in the mouth? It was summed up in an article in Wednesday's

Mail, entitled "The Man Who Never Understood England". The basic theme of this was Maxwell the phoney: he wasn't really an Englishman and certainly not a gentleman. He was born in Czechoslovakia. He was a Jew. His real name was Jan Lodvik Hoch. He wore "dark Savile Row suits and spotless white shirts", but the effect was ruined by "overly large and flashy cufflinks". Even Headington Hall, his Oxfordshire stately home was, in fact, an enormous council house. In other words, he wasn't really one of us. He was a spiv, and a -

Jewish spiv at that. No wonder the *Independent on Sunday's* Wallace Arnold advised public figures to adopt the following policy if asked for a tribute to the Big Man: "Choose any two from the following lot — unique, larger than life, ebullient, dynamic, remarkable, tremendous appetite, enthusiastic, colourful; deliver your choice through your solicitor to the Press Association; issue no further statements".

Clearly, most of our leading public figures were wise enough to follow Arnold's advice to the letter.

Essex girl goes up West

WOMEN'S EYE



By Liz Millward

This week, the *Daily Mail's* "Femail" section carried the story of a swap between 'Essex Girl' and 'Knightsbridge Girl'.

The daughter of a working class family and a bourgeois family changed places for the day. Not that the "classless society" *Mail* pointed out the class difference. The *Mail* saw the distinction as geographical! 'Essex Girl' enjoyed her

day shopping in Harvey Nicholls and Harrods although she didn't reckon much to the manners of the West End clubbers. Asked to comment on her day, she said she would like to stay as herself, but have the money enjoyed by the Knightsbridge set.

Like Professor Minogue, who spoke at the 'Stand Up For Real Socialism' conference (see report in last week's *Socialist Organiser*), the *Daily Mail* regards the difference between Knightsbridge and Essex as part of the natural order of things. Some people live on council estates on Canvey Island, and some people have a flat on Sloane Street and a house in the country. That is just how things are.

People who live in Belgravia go to the opera. People who live in Brixton don't. And the argument goes that the people in Brixton would rather watch 'Neighbours' than go to the opera, so there is nothing unfair about the system which puts opera out of their reach.

Views like this are designed to keep the 'working classes' in 'their place'. The bourgeoisie is intent on hang-

ing onto its privileges so it mystifies them and ensures that they are only understood by people of similarly privileged backgrounds.

Take classical music — most easily enjoyed by people who have had some musical education — for example in identifying and distinguishing between the different instruments, playing an instrument and being taken to concerts. But Tory cuts have meant that this sort of musical education is now not available in most state schools.

When working class children grow up without any form of musical education, it's not surprising that they 'prefer' Radio 1. Nor is it surprising if they do not know that they have been robbed of something splendid and wonderful.

Professor Minogue said that only someone like him would want to spend the day poring over books in the LSE library. In fact, the doors are barred against anyone who has not had the opportunity of spending years and years at college taking degrees and doing research. Professor Minogue may regard an academic career as a choice

rejected by most of society, but it's a choice over 90% of society can't afford. The working class don't turn down the chance to study — they are never offered it.

So the pretence that everyone in society has a 'place' is used to hide the truth about class divisions. Miss Essex is studying to be a graphic designer and Miss Knightsbridge is a secretary. But the *Daily Mail* found nothing odd in the fact that an 18-year old secretary can afford to shop at Harrods and go partying in West End clubs every night or has her own car, or that Essex Girl will have to work hard all her life to get some of the luxuries that Knightsbridge Girl was given at birth.

The choices open to the two women are simply not the same. Miss Knightsbridge, for all that she is 'only' a secretary, has a head start that will last her all her life. And Professor Minogue — he chose to be an academic, a real choice in that no-one would have stopped him becoming a lorry-driver had he wanted to. But how many people driving lorries for a living would have chosen to be academics?

100,000 march against racism in Germany

Last Saturday, 9 November, a total of some 100,000 anti-racists demonstrated in cities across Germany. The date marked the anniversary both of the fall of the Berlin Wall and of the Nazis' "Kristallnacht" attack on Jews in 1938. The demonstrations were organised by local coalitions, which in some cities included the trade unions and the Social Democratic Party. In East Germany, on the same date, some 400 fascists marched openly in Halle. This article by Winfried Wolf, translated and abridged from the German socialist fortnightly *Sozialistische Zeitung*, describes the background.

"assaults and attacks" were registered on asylum-seekers' establishments and on foreigners, but in the first half of October alone there were over 1000.

Of fire-bombings directed against foreigners alone there were 210 recorded in the first two weeks of October. There were 110 cases of bodily injury committed "by extreme rightists on foreigners".

The dynamic of this development comes out clearly from the figures from the Interior Ministry of [the West German *Land* or province of] North Rhine Westphalia, for this, the biggest *Land* of the federation. Between 1 January 1991 and 30 September 1991, a total of 228 "criminal acts harming foreigners/asylum-seekers" were registered. Of these 228 criminal acts, registered in three quarters of a year, 40 per cent (103) were concentrated into the month of September.

The figures also verify that 75 per cent of the current criminal acts harming foreigners take place in the old [i.e. Western] federal *Länder*, i.e. they are distributed between East and

West Germany roughly in proportion to population.

In some cities of the ex-GDR a climate has already matured in which right-wingers can openly proceed against the local left in a terroristic fashion — with the indulgence of the police and the public.

In Leipzig tightly organised neo-Nazis attacked a left meeting (in the "Backwahn" cafe) and the homes of several leftists — without hindrance from the police. The "Leipzig People's Paper" brought itself to publish a report only after the third attack.

The mobilisations which have taken place in West Germany and in Berlin against the racist wave have been impressive as regards the numbers taking part; some of the demonstrations have equalled the biggest of recent years. And local campaign coalitions often report a relatively ready will by people to make themselves available for refugee homes as caretakers, guards, or coordinators.

Further, it has been announced that on 9 November, the anniversary



German neo-Nazi youth on the rampage, on the anniversary of Kristallnacht

of the Reich pogrom night, there will be decentralised demonstrations against racism across Germany in the various towns and cities. Jewish groups will mark this anniversary on the 10th, the 9th being ruled out as the Sabbath.

What, however, is still lacking, is a country-wide unitary orientation of the left, refugee groups, and committed organisations of foreigners, with which the current offensive of the right can be stopped.

According to official police statements, in August and September "only" 350

The start of clean, cheap, inexhaustible power?

By Les Hearn

Commercial nuclear fusion might only be 40 to 50 years away.

Last week's announcement that something like a million watts of power were produced for a couple of minutes from the Joint European Torus (JET) reactor at Culham, Oxfordshire, might not sound very impressive: we need many thousands of times more power all year round. But it represented a huge improvement over what had been achieved before.

Opponents of nuclear fission power (based on splitting atoms) should not fall into the trap of opposing everything "nuclear". Fusion reactors do not produce the sort of radioactive waste that is now cluttering up Sellafield while BNFL tries to find something to do with it. The reactor materials will become

radioactive but it will be a generally shorter-lived radioactivity.

Fusion processes are "fail-safe", so the danger of meltdown or of fire found in fission reactors will not arise. If the plasma escapes from magnetic control, it will lose pressure and heat and fusion reactions would cease.

It may be that we have witnessed the start of something that could be of incalculable benefit to our descendants — a relatively clean power source based on a widely abundant fuel.

The science behind the fusion is simple. If four hydrogen nuclei can be induced to join together, the resulting helium nucleus has a slightly lower mass. The missing mass has been converted into energy at a fantastic exchange rate.

According to Einstein's famous equation, $E = mc^2$, 1kg of mass is equivalent to

enough energy to keep 3 million one-bar fires burning all year round.

The important word, of course, is "if". Nuclear fission is going on constantly at the centre of the sun. But it can only do so because the temperatures are about 20 million degrees Celsius, and the pressures are millions of times greater than atmospheric pressure. The materials used to make a fusion reactor are unable to withstand those temperatures and pressures.

"What are the remaining obstacles to fusion power? More important than the technical ones, perhaps, are the political ones. Governments are suspicious of fusion research..."

Part of the problem is solved by taking a short cut in the fusion process. The fuel is not ordinary hydrogen but two heavier forms, deuterium (D) and tritium (T), which can fuse in just one step to make helium.

Deuterium is easily obtained from sea-water. Tritium is unstable and has to be made in a nuclear reactor, but that is a relatively easy task.

Then a charge of D and T is heated so that it becomes a plasma of ions and confined in an immensely powerful magnetic field. The field is doughnut or torus shaped. This type of reactor, being called a tokamak, was invented by the late Andrei Sakharov, in the days before he became a dissident.

The plasma is heated even more to make it attain temperatures many times higher than the sun, and fusion reactions start.

Even with Saturday's breakthrough, the power obtained was only a fraction of what was put in to power the magnets and to heat the plasma. More power can be obtained by increasing the proportion of T, but that also increases the number of dangerous neutrons that are released.

By 1996, scientists plan to be using a 50:50 mix of D and T but even then they will not have reached the critical "ignition" point where the power generated equals the power supplied.

That they hope to do with a bigger machine, the proposed International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). It is likely that the cost will be £3 billion, if approved, but it will, if successful, be capable of producing 1000 megawatts of heat energy for perhaps an

hour at a time, similar to the power of a large conventional power station.

At the next stage after that, a commercial reactor will be in sight.

What are the remaining obstacles to fusion power? More important than the technical ones, perhaps, are the political ones. Governments are suspicious of fusion research, having been caught out once before.

But now it seems that fusion may pay off, it would be criminal for the next stage to be aborted.

By no means is this to condone the undoubted underfunding of research into renewable energy sources. We are going to need all the energy we can get, whether or not we achieve socialism, as the fossil fuels will start to run out in the lifetimes of many readers of this article.

The anti-Zionism of idiots

By Duncan Chapple

Jewish students walked out of last week's meeting of the Manchester University Socialist Workers Student Society in protest at the statement that Zionism and Stalinism were responsible for the Holocaust.

This statement, made by an SWP member at the meeting, was instantly defended by SWP organiser Seth Harman, a former member of the National Executive of NUS.

Harman went on to liken the "two states" policy

argued by a *Socialist Organiser* supporter who remained in the meeting to that of George Bush.

Socialist Organiser certainly would agree that Stalinism — which refused to join a united workers' front against fascism in the early 1930s — did aid the rise of fascism into the position where the Nazis could commit genocide against Jewry.

Socialist Worker are wrong, however, to say that the responsibility for the Holocaust lies with Jewry or Stalinism. It is the fascists and the ruling rich who supported them who are responsible for both the Holocaust and anti-semitism.

Weekend school will restate socialist ideas

"The Future for Socialism" is a weekend school organised by youth and student supporters of *Socialist Organiser* for 30 November and 1 December, in Manchester.

The school is designed to clear away the increasingly fashionable nonsense that Marxism is outdated, and to present the basic elements that define modern revolutionary socialism.

We will look at some of the key actors and incidents in the history of the working-class movement, explaining why Karl Marx is such an important figure, and why the Russian revolution ultimately failed.

Sessions on the rise of fascism in Germany, and on the national questions, will help clarify the socialist attitude to the growth of the far right internationally and to the spiralling national conflicts in Eastern Europe.

Workshops on the "Politics of Identity" and the history of black liberation movements will help place the present-day struggles of the specially oppressed in the context of a class analysis.

We will be answering such questions as "Is the working class finished?" and "Will there be a third world war?"

In the socialist tradition of debate, we are inviting the Fabians to an exchange on "Is there a parliamentary road to socialism?", and the Kinnockites to argue about prospects for Labour in government.

A creche, food, and overnight accommodation will be available, and transport is being fixed from all major cities. Registration is from 11.30 on Saturday.

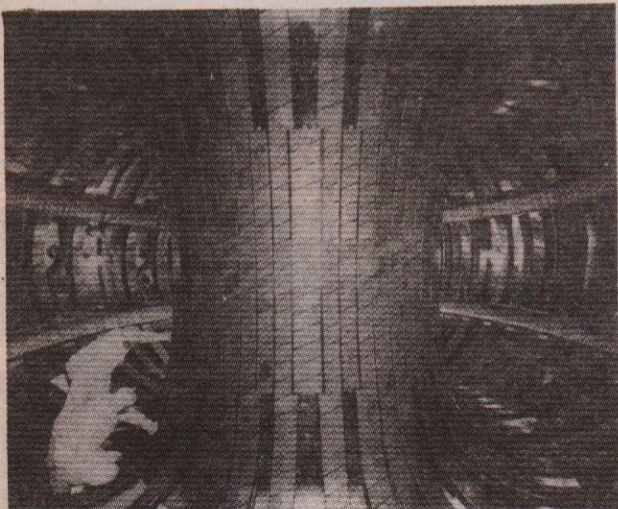
For further information, or to register, tear out the form below and send to "Weekend School", SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Name

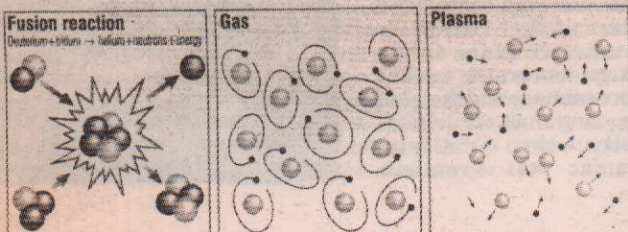
Address

Phone

Please send me more information about "The future for socialism" weekend school/ Please register me for the school and send me information on transport from my area. I enclose £4 (£2 if you have no grant: cheques payable to Socialist Organiser).



JET's giant fusion reactor



Witness to a

"Maxwell's life tells us a lot about twentieth-century capitalism"

By Jack Cleary

"He was a colossus in life", said the wife of the great man, looking down on his carcass after it had been recovered from the sea, "and he is a colossus in death".

No doubt Robert Maxwell was a big man in more than a physical sense. If he did not exactly bestride the media like a colossus, as Rupert Murdoch does, he was one of the big flesh-eating dinosaurs of capitalism, a modern Tyrannosaurus Rex of the boardrooms and printing plants of cities across the world, from London to New York to Budapest to Tel Aviv.

Robert Maxwell's life says a great deal about twentieth century capitalism. He was, as another obituarist put it, "a witness to his age".

He began life as the hungry child of a Jewish farm labourer. Half way through his teens he was on the way to becoming a citizen of the Czech state when the Nazi German state gobbled it up in 1938.

Now Jan Ludwig Hoch, the future Robert Maxwell, found himself at the mercy of Nazis who denied his right to live because he had, they said, the "wrong genes", and who would murder him if he let them. He fled. His mother and sisters, who did not flee, would die with all the others in the death chambers at Auschwitz.

Maxwell made his way to Britain and joined the army. He rose to the rank of captain, and won the Military Cross for bravery.

An accomplished linguist, he found himself helping to run conquered Germany after 1945. He seized his chance, and soon set himself up as a publisher in England of German scientific material.

He married a rich French woman. He expanded his scientific publishing business, doing deals to get a monopoly on translating Soviet and East European scientific research. He prospered and got rich. Eventually he got very rich. At his death he was worth billions, and owed billions.

All the time he was a go-between,

a middleman, a huckster, a fixer, almost a technician who knew how to juggle bank accounts and was financially "big" enough to do it.

He had no scruples about breaking the rules: he was a pioneer of 1980s piratical capitalism. His business methods were condemned by Board of Trade inspectors in 1971, but he survived. He kept his money, and he got hold of more and more of it.

He thereby got control of tens of thousands of people's lives. His brutality with his employees was notorious. A couple of weeks before his death, for example, he sacked a secretary for failing to be available when he

"Maxwell was one of the big flesh-eating dinosaurs of capitalism, a modern Tyrannosaurus Rex of printing plants across the world"

phoned her at one o'clock in the morning. He could buy a former British ambassador to Washington, and have him as factotum and office-boy.

Maxwell was political. Defeated by anti-semitism in the 1950s in his attempt to find a Tory seat in Parliament, he settled for a Labour seat, which he held between 1964 and 1970. He was scorned and jeered at by much of the Establishment. He lost his seat. Then the Board of Trade condemnation discredited his stock.

His political career was over. He bought the *Mirror* group of newspapers, the only mass circulation papers backing the Labour Party. He broke the power of the unions in those newspapers, and turned them into a megalomaniac's plaything.

The man who Mrs Thatcher said publicly was "really one of us" used the papers to put pressure on the Labour leaders, pushing to the right. He conducted savage vendettas against the left. His papers slandered Arthur Scargill.



But the very rich Mr Maxwell could get away with slander and intimidation. One of his weapons was the libel courts. He used his wealth to suppress both free comment about himself and the facts of his early life.

Some of his connections were very strange. He published in the West the official hagiographies of the Russian dictators and their East European satraps. Obviously that was lucrative, but he went further than commercial links. He defended and championed some of those tyrants.

When the Polish state banned the free trade union movement *Solidarnosc*, Maxwell justified it in his newspapers.

At his death, allegations were flying around that he had close links with the Israeli secret service. For a much longer period there was a lot of circumstantial evidence suggesting that he had links with the KGB.

His Jewishness, like everything about Maxwell, was complicated. He renounced it when young. The "Jan Ludwig" in his name, replacing Jewish names, is said to have been the first stage in cutting off from his background.

When he was found unacceptable by anti-semitic Tories in the late '50s, despite his English name and upper-class English accent, he did not, it seems, consider himself Jewish.

But he went back to Jewishness. He bought his way, finally, to a privileged burial place in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives.

Maxwell was a colourful, brutal, predatory bandit who was able, things being as they are, to corner vast wealth and thus control over vast numbers of lives and, by the end, vast influence in the Labour Party. Others, less brutal, less colourful, more cautious and therefore less visible, control all our lives.

Maxwell the bullying megalomaniac was twentieth-

century capitalism without the mask and with little of the conventional hypocrisy.

No socialist will mourn the union-busting robber baron. It

Maxwell led in union-bash

Maxwell used threats, intimidation, and divide-and-rule tactics to beat the print unions.

In the summer of 1985, he announced that production at Mirror Group headquarters at Holborn Circus, London, was to cease unless the unions agreed to drastic cost-cutting.

The unions eventually caved in, allowing Maxwell to sell the *Spor-*



Tyrants Jaruzelski and Ceausescu found allies in Maxwell

profiteer, union-buster

a crazy age

Martin Thomas looks at the Maxwell empire

A tycoon of the 1980s

Already this year the Maxwell empire has sold around \$1 billion of assets to satisfy the banks to which it owes money.

The best estimates now of financial journalists are that it still owes nearly \$2.5 billion. The empire may even be broke, strictly speaking, owing more than it owns.

A crunch is coming at the end of this month when the Maxwell Communications Corporation, one of the key companies in the empire, announces its half-yearly dividend to shareholders. A big dividend payout will mean raiding MCC's thin reserves; a small payout, or no payout at all, will cut the already-sliding value of MCC shares, and the income and assets of other Maxwell companies whose main property is the MCC shares they own.

By the time of Robert Maxwell's death, his businesses had become yet another showpiece of 1980s capitalism, a money-making machine based on ballooning credit. Like other 1980s boom businesses — BCCI, Polly Peck, Salomon Brothers — they may be heading for a fall.

Maxwell's business career was launched when he was a British Army officer in Berlin after World War Two. He bought up stocks of German scientific literature which had never been published abroad, and used them to launch a scientific publishing company in Britain, Pergamon Press.

Pergamon got a new boost after the USSR launched the world's first satellite ("Sputnik") in 1957, and Maxwell won exclusive rights to publish Soviet scientific literature in English. In 1969, Maxwell lost control of Pergamon, and in 1971 Board of Trade inspectors condemned him as "not in our opinion a man who can be relied on to exercise proper stewardship of a publicly quoted company"; but by 1974 he had regained his position.

Later, in the 1980s, Maxwell published glossy and flattering biographies of such East European tyrants as Leonid Brezhnev, Erich Honecker, Nicolae Ceausescu and General Jaruzelski. It is unlikely that he made much money from those ventures, but Pergamon's translations of Soviet and East European scientific research were highly profitable.

In 1981 Maxwell bought the British Printing Corporation, Britain's biggest printers but then almost bankrupt. By vicious union-bashing, he restored it to profit. In 1984 he took over the Mirror group of newspapers.

In summer 1985 he issued an ultimatum to the print unions: he would shut down the Mirror unless they agreed to drastic cuts in jobs and changes in work conditions. By January 1986 he had blackmailed the unions into agreeing to 2,100 job cuts.

It was the same sort of operation as Murdoch did through his move to Wapping, but with less drama. Maxwell was to use similar union-

bashing at Pergamon Press, where he sacked journalists for going on one-day strike.

The cuts made the Mirror highly profitable, despite a continuing fall in its circulation as Maxwell used the paper as a personal mouthpiece.

In 1988 he used the Mirror profits as a springboard to buy the US publisher Macmillan and "Official Airline Guides". He had to sell the British Printing Corporation to raise cash, but bought wider and wider.

At the time of his death Maxwell was the biggest foreign investor in Israel, his businesses there including the mass circulation paper *Ma'ariv*. His contacts with Eastern Europe were still profitable, despite the ousting of many of his friends in the revolutions of 1989; he owned a major Hungarian newspaper, a

also included special dealings with the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which led to Pergamon Press being on a list (dated February 1991) of "friendly firms" owed much money by the Central Committee. The other "friendly firms" on the list seem to be companies in Western countries run by associates of the local Communist Parties and used as channels for sending Soviet subsidies to those Parties.

It seems unlikely that Pergamon was used as a channel for money going to the British CP... but equally unlikely that the debt recorded on the Central Committee's special list was just from Pergamon's regular scientific publishing business.

The defenders of capitalism claim that it allows an individualism which would be crushed by socialist equality. Maxwell was evidently a person of unusual talent, energy, drive and independence of mind; and capitalism did give this poor Jewish peasant boy from Eastern Europe the chance to get rich.

But he got rich by crushing others. And in the end the flower for the sake of which so many others were weeded out or trodden down became not much other than an identikit 1980s tycoon.

Perhaps uniquely among British billionaire capitalists, Maxwell backed Labour rather than the Tories. But even that was a hollowed-out difference, perhaps mostly a matter of finding that he could buy more political influence with his dollar from Labour than he could from the Tories. Maxwell, so journalists report, used to cite his part in defeating the 1984-5 miners' strike as one of his great political feats.

Aside from that, his individualism came to not much more than eccentricity — things like his cufflinks, apparently always considered too flashy by the Establishment.

The core of his life was standard 1980s capitalism: smashing unions, cutting jobs, rising on a precarious spiral of loans heaped on loans, enjoying petty personal tyranny and arrogance, siphoning off millions for personal indulgence, show, and luxury. Like other 1980s tycoons, he contributed nothing useful to the business — in his case publishing — from which he made his fortune.

"The core of Maxwell's life was standard 1980s capitalism: smashing unions, cutting jobs, rising on a spiral of loans heaped on loans, enjoying petty personal tyranny and arrogance, siphoning off millions for personal indulgence, show and luxury"

joint venture in German newspaper publishing with the German firm Gruner and Jahr, and Bulgaria's Balkan Films.

Other Maxwell interests include the Que computer company, Berlitz language schools, AGB Market Research and Oxford United, Reading and Manchester United football clubs.

Like some other 1980s tycoons, Maxwell became increasingly vain and self-indulgent, wasting millions on pet ventures like the disastrous *European* newspaper and the abortive *London Daily News*. His purchase, earlier this year, of the *New York Daily News*, also seems to have been motivated by egotism as much as calculation, but (so experts reckon) may yet yield profits.

This welter of wheeler-dealing is tied together by a web of secretive arrangements, operating through private companies, trusts and foundations based in Liechtenstein and Gibraltar. The complexity of the web helped Maxwell to evade taxes and probably to keep up appearances of greater profits and growth than really existed, thus giving him more access to bank loans.

According to the *Independent* (9 November), Maxwell's business



Pergamon

Among those who have reason to remember Robert Maxwell with bitterness are the National Union of Journalists chapel at the academic publishing company Pergamon Press. They were sacked after a one day strike in protest against Maxwell sacking an employee without using the disciplinary procedure. The "Pergamon 23" are now in the third year of their strike. This year they saw Pergamon sold to the Dutch publisher Elsevier as Maxwell tried to raise cash to fob off the banks. Undaunted, the strikers are continuing their campaign for reinstatement, and are working on getting support from the Dutch unions against the new owner.

would be a mistake, however, to think anything has been gained in the way of freedom from what he represented by Maxwell's overdue demise.

the way ing

ing Life and cut many jobs. He then got the union leaders to fight each other by floating the idea of a single-union deal. NGA union general secretary Tony Dubbins believed (or so the *Financial Times* reported) that this was just "traditional Fleet Street give and take". But in fact Maxwell's tough-guy tactics were the prelude to Murdoch's move to Wapping and the all-out offensive of the print bosses against union organisation.



Union-buster Maxwell was hailed as a saviour by Daily News unions

Debate: Leninism

Stalin's triumph, Lenin's tragedy

Bill Lomax, author of *Hungary 1956, an inspiring study of the Workers' Councils and the anti-Stalinist revolution, takes up the debate on the meaning of Leninism. He argues that Leninism can provide no alternative to Stalinism. Bill was speaking at the 'Stand Up For Real Socialism' event on 2nd November*

Leninism in power was not real socialism. Consequently Leninism does not provide the basis for a real alternative to Stalinism.

Did Lenin lead to Stalin? From one point of view, obviously yes.

Without Lenin there probably would not have been an October revolution, because there were very few people in the Bolshevik Party who believed that a socialist revolution was possible in Russia in 1917.

Without Lenin it is questionable whether the Bolsheviks would ever have come to power. And so without Lenin Stalin would never have found himself in a position to usurp and create a tyrannical system.

But then if Stalin's parents had not had sex we would not have had Stalin or Stalinism — so were Stalin's mother and father responsible for the terror and purges and the gulag?

In fact, Lenin was no more responsible for repression in Russia in the 1930s than were Stalin's mother and father.

The curse of Stalinism was the historical situation. Russia found itself in at the beginning of this century: the economic and social conditions and Russia's position in the global economy. I hope all Marxists would agree with this.

Where I disagree with *Socialist Organiser* is that I would argue that the necessary pre-conditions for socialism — the social, economic, cultural and psychological pre-conditions — did not exist in Russia

at the start of the century. Paradoxically, the necessary pre-conditions for capitalism did not exist either.

Both Lenin and Trotsky, at different points, recognised that the orthodox Marxist view, that Russia was ripe only for a bourgeois-democratic revolution was wrong. In the early years of the century, Russia was not even ripe for that type of revolution.

The view of the liberals and the Mensheviks, that it was possible to have a liberal capitalist development in Russia, was a big illusion. Equally, the view propagated by Lenin and Stalin, that the conditions for capitalism were not ripe, but perhaps the conditions for socialism were, was also false.

It reminds me of the person who goes into a bar saying, I have not got enough money for a pint of mild, but perhaps I'll have a double gin and tonic!

In order to establish a socialist society we need a higher stage of development than that needed for a capitalist society.

That is the major problem for the Marxist movement of the 20th century. Russia was not ripe for a socialist revolution. What Russia was ripe for was an authoritarian, bureaucratic, largely state-owned development.

The argument "did Lenin lead to Stalin?" is in fact completely academic. Something like Stalinism was almost inevitable in the Russian conditions of the first half of the century.

The possibilities for the development of capitalism in Russia in 1917 were very similar to capitalism's prospects in the Russia of 1991. They were very limited.

The paradox and tragedy of 1917 is that the factors which made the Bolshevik revolution possible — the limited possibilities of bourgeois development — also undermined the chance of success of that revolution after Lenin came to power.

Lenin, however, was far from being unaware of the situation. Once in power I think Lenin struggled valiantly, in theory and in practice, to realise socialist aspirations. I want to argue that he did not succeed in doing so.

Towards the end of his life Lenin, more clearly than the rest of the old Bolsheviks and Trotsky, recognised



Stalin contemplates Lenin's corpse: was Leninism no alternative to Stalinism?

the dangers to the revolution were not just from outside Russia, but were also from developments *inside* Russia. These were the danger of creeping bureaucratisation, of the creation of a Soviet "organisation man", the danger of Stalin.

Many of Lenin's critics see his major fault in the theory of the vanguard party. He believed — so it is said — that a party of professional revolutionaries was the only way the working class could change itself into a revolutionary force.

I think there is a misinterpretation of Lenin, both by his supporters and his antagonists, when it is said Lenin only saw two types of class consciousness — firstly, trade union consciousness, limited to bread and butter issues, which in *What is to be Done?* he argued is all the workers can achieve on their own; secondly, socialist consciousness, which he argued had to be brought to the workers from outside by socialist intellectuals organised in a vanguard party.

In fact Lenin recognised that in a revolutionary situation, when workers became involved in revolutionary struggles, the workers often could attain a level of revolutionary class consciousness in advance of the vanguard party. That was the case in 1905 when the workers of St Petersburg created the first soviet long before the idea had entered any Bolshevik's head.

It was again the case in 1917, when Lenin had to struggle against his own party to argue the case for a socialist revolution in Russia. In 1917 he even threatened to go over the heads of his own party's leadership to appeal to the masses in favour of revolutionary action.

The message of Lenin's *State and Revolution*, written in the last weeks before the October revolution, was that working people could themselves take over all the functions of state power after the example of the Paris Commune of 1871. Marx had seen the Commune as a model for realising the political emancipation of Labour.

It was in the spirit of radical democracy advocated in *State and Revolution* that Lenin proceeded to act in the first days of the Bolshevik revolution. The first decrees of Lenin's soviet regime did not seek to impose solutions from above, for the reordering of society, but rather sought to empower the working

people themselves to create a new society by their own efforts.

Appealing to the population of Russia, Lenin declared: "Comrades, workers, remember that from now on you yourselves are administering the state. No-one will help you if you do not unite and take over all state affairs."

In so doing Lenin argued that the masses would be creating a new type of state. In his words: "a new type of state, without a bureaucracy, without a police force, without a permanent army, which replaces bourgeois democracy by a new democracy, causes the labouring masses to act as vanguard, confers upon them legislative, executive and military power."

Up to that point I am very much a supporter of Lenin and the socialism he was advocating. But

"It was in the spirit of radical democracy advocated in State and Revolution that Lenin proceeded to act in the first days of the Bolshevik revolution. The first decrees of Lenin's soviet regime did not seek to impose solutions from above but rather sought to empower the working people themselves to create a new society by their own efforts."

Russia was backward. And everything hung on the revolution spreading to the rest of the world.

There were strong revolutionary waves throughout Europe in the wake of World War 1, but they were bloodily defeated. Increasingly Lenin and the Bolsheviks were

forced to seek one breathing space after another in the hope that the international revolution would come to save them.

Soviet Russia was turned from being the spark of international revolution to the bastion of international revolution. In other words, it had to be defeated at all costs.

It is a mistake to believe that the notion of "socialism in one country" originated with Stalin. Almost all the Bolsheviks were in favour of trying to build socialism in one country. On the other hand, very few of them believed that the attempt could survive for long, let alone be completed, without the international revolution.

But in the interests of defending the isolated socialist state, the first steps were taken that contradicted the original socialist ideas. Some of these steps date from the earliest days of the revolution.

As early as November 1917 a national congress of factory committees was banned from meeting. Demands for workers' control previously supported by the Bolsheviks were now declared "anti-proletarian".

The death penalty was reintroduced. In December 1917 the Cheka, the Bolsheviks' secret police, was set up. In the first year of the Cheka's existence it carried out over 6,000 executions.

Not all these people were right-wingers. Some were Social Revolutionaries, social democrats and anarchists.

So much for Lenin's "new type of state without a police force".

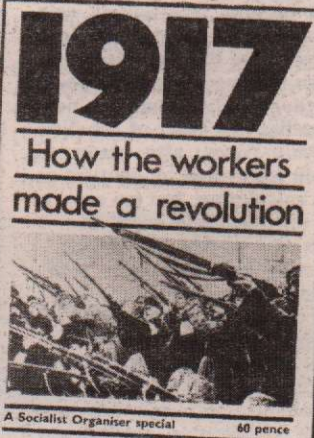
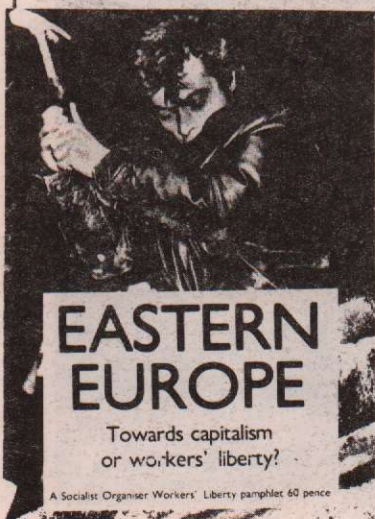
During the civil war Trotsky reintroduced hierarchy and discipline into the Red Army. The election of officers, achieved during the revolution, was abolished. Many former Tsarist officers were reinstated in their old posts. Ranks and saluting were restored.

Trotsky was responsible for introducing the first special shops. These shops made luxury goods (or basic goods which were scarce) available to members of the privileged classes.

Under war communism, major industries were nationalised. But the factories were placed under one-man management. The Workers' Opposition who espoused workers' control were defeated and banned.

By the spring of 1918 the system

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An ignorant and sectarian attack on the JSG

LETTERS

As a longstanding member of the Jewish Socialists' Group (JSG), who only a few months ago was invited in that capacity to contribute a feature article for your paper, which you published, I am astonished by Sean Matgamna's ignorant and sectarian attack on the JSG (SO 406).

He describes the JSG as a "strange and loose political group organised around an ill-defined Jewishness rather than precise political ideas." This is nonsense.

1. The group, which has existed for considerably more years than *Socialist Organiser*, is organised around a manifesto (available on request) and precise political positions adopted by majority vote at an annual members' policy conference.

2. What Matgamna calls "loose", we call non-sectarian. We make no apologies for being "all too tolerant". We are proud that we attract members across a wide range of Left groups, who manage to coexist precisely because we openly reject rigid, hierarchical, Stalinist-style organisational politics in favour of internal

democracy.

3. There is nothing remotely "strange" about the JSG. The specifically Jewish socialists of the Bund were the first Marxists to organise in Tsarist Russia. Today, autonomous Jewish socialist groups exist in many countries organising around the needs of Jewish and other minorities in relation to the general struggle for socialism, emphasising in particular, secular and anti-fascist traditions.

4. While orthodox Leninists, religious fundamentalists and Zionists have effectively colluded in reducing Jewish identity merely to religion and/or state nationalism, the JSG has developed a sophisticated, pluralistic understanding of contemporary Jewish identity. As someone with a fondness for pseudonyms, Matgamna is ill-advised to brand our Jewishness as "ill-defined". Though Matgamna often labels his opponents as "anti-semites", his refusal to countenance Jewish self-organisation and his dismissal of Jewish socialists' own conception of Jewish identity is deeply suspicious, if not something worse.

He hangs his attack on the JSG on a sectarian dispute with the one JSG member affiliated to the "Workers Press" (Charlie Pottins) and makes the incredible claim that through this member, the JSG were led into an association with "mercenary antisemites" and

"potential pogromists".

Even the most bitter enemies of our group on the far right of the Jewish community have not made such an outrageous accusation, although given the cosy relationship that seems to exist between *Socialist Organiser* and the Union of Jewish Students, no doubt this charge will reappear in public and private Jewish community organs.

For the record, Charlie Pottins is a much-respected and highly valued member of the JSG who has been in the forefront of our group's work against antisemitism, right and left, and other forms of racism in the last 10 years.

Just as our group is a thorn in the side of the Jewish establishment, so our insistence that the Left takes a deeper look at national and cultural questions relating to minorities has irritated certain vanguardist Leninist groups.

Not surprisingly individuals from both these areas have sought to enter the JSG and impose their hidden agenda on the group.

Thankfully our group has resisted these attempts, including one by a person who was a member of *Socialist Organiser*. In contrast, Charlie Pottins has operated within the JSG with 100% openness, accountability, commitment and integrity. Matgamna owes the JSG an apology.

David Rosenberg, Jewish Socialist Group

Reply on page 14

Socialists must use their brains

The beginning of Pat Murphy's rejoinder to Gary Kent creates the impression of a reasoned analysis of the situation in Northern Ireland. But after two paragraphs it's the same old story. It's all the fault of the British imperialists.

IRA violence is a symptom of the British presence. A response to repression by the British State. If the Brits withdraw, the problem is solved.

In his opening paragraphs Murphy criticises the "IRA's choice of a nationalist (his emphasis) military campaign" as an "essentially inappropriate counterproductive weapon". In his fifth paragraph he switches tracks. The "para-militaries are a product, a symptom... not the cause". He accuses Kent of falling into "the oldest of liberal traps, the para-militaries are terrorists", whereas Murphy identifies the State as the real terrorist. The IRA are just reacting.

Murphy's second method for shifting the line of his argument is

his selective use of language. Instead of writing of the IRA having a choice, he now writes of them being a symptom. They are not a "cause" of violence, they are an effect. This enables him to shift from criticising them to justifying them, and then coming down on their side in the argument. The fact is, as Murphy said in his earlier paragraphs, the IRA chose. Symptoms don't have a choice.

The point to note here is that the IRA of which Murphy writes is the Provisional IRA. In 1962, the original IRA made a change in policy, from 'physical force' to constitutional politics. A minority disagreed and some left, others became inactive. The IRA played an active role in the creation of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. In 1969, the IRA split. The precise issue need not concern us here. But the upshot of this was that there were now two IRAs. The Official IRA and Sinn Fein committed to 'armed struggle'. Why is it the Provisionals who are blessed with the euphemism, a 'symptom'. Not their own fault.

The Provisional IRA has

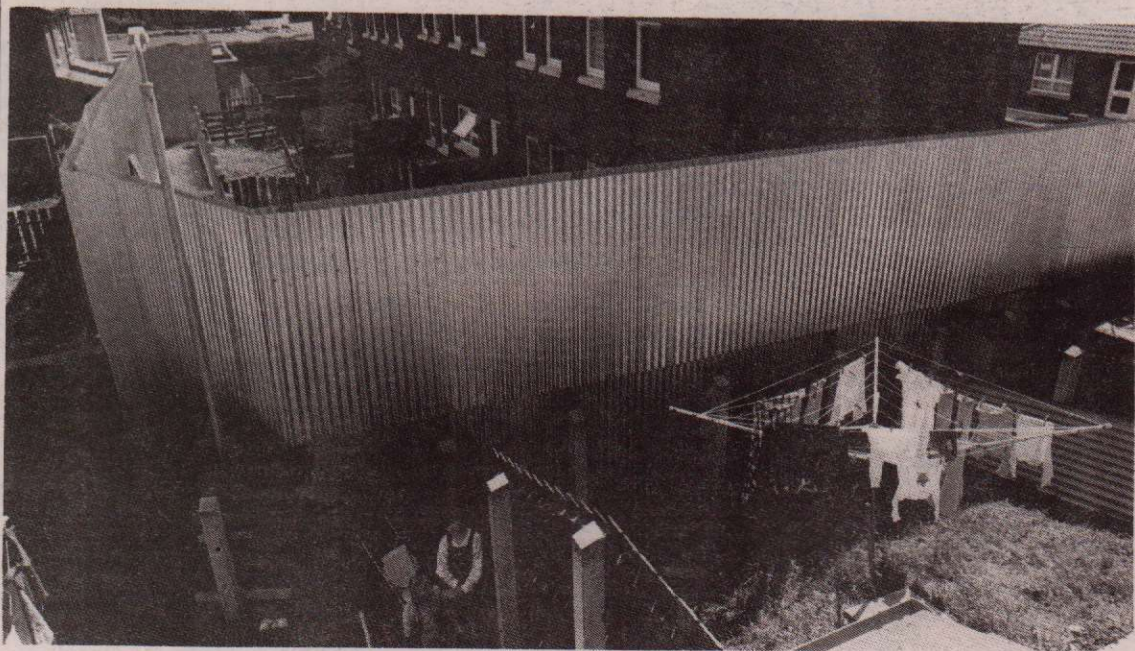
declared that its 'armed struggle' is setting the agenda in Northern Ireland. It will continue until the Brits and Unionists submit. They must therefore be responsible for the consequences of that 'agenda'. They are a 'cause' despite Murphy's protestations to the contrary.

Murphy's potted history is not only, inevitably, inadequate. It is downright misleading. For example, he makes no reference to the role played by the ultra-left in sidelining the Civil Rights Movement.

The first priority for socialists is not, as Murphy proposes, "supporting moves to reunify Ireland". It is to gain an understanding of the situation which is not based merely upon a simplistic nationalist point of view. "Over 80% of the Irish people put peace before unity", *Irish Times*, Dublin, 23/4/1991. "The majority of Catholics in Northern Ireland wish to remain in the United Kingdom", public opinion poll, 19/2/1989.

Socialists must use their brains, and not be stampeded into a policy which could lead to a major disaster for these islands.

Bert Ward, Middlesborough



A divided working class

of payment by piece-rate, long denounced by Marx as the most vicious form of capitalist exploitation, had been introduced. "Taylorism", the American system of labour discipline, earlier denounced by Lenin as "man's enslavement by the machine", was

labour process."

Believe it or not, socialism became increasingly defined as the best method for increasing the productivity of labour. "Socialism", Lenin was to declare, "is nothing but state capitalist monopoly which has been turned in the interest of the whole people, and therefore ceased to be capitalist monopoly."

This is a nice piece of conjuring. But if I had been a Soviet worker I would not have been impressed. For Lenin there was no longer any room for workers' control under socialism. Rather he calls for "less chatter about industrial democracy. Industry is indispensable, democracy is not. Industrial democracy breeds some utterly false ideas."

Finally, for Lenin, the superiority of socialism over capitalism is that "socialism creates a much higher productivity of labour". In plain words, increases the rate of exploitation and the extraction of surplus value.

Socialism for Lenin is no longer a question of transformation of the relations of production; no longer the abolition of wage-labour and slavery of the worker to the machine; no longer a question of the emancipation of the working class.

What Lenin seems to be saying here is that socialism is the highest stage of capitalism. He does not seem to be concerned that, except in name, the status of a worker under such a system would be hardly different to that under capitalism. Nor does Lenin seem to recognise that such a system would inevitably place power in the hands of a new managerial class of specialists, experts and administrators — a new class of slave drivers.

I agree most forcefully with Angelica Balabamov, an Italian Communist who spent the early years of the revolution in Russia. She wrote a generally sympathetic account of Lenin, with the judgement that his life was one long tragedy, that he desired good but created evil, and that he used or suggested methods that could not fail to produce deleterious effects on the movement to which he dedicated his whole life.

Leninism was not the same as Stalinism, but Leninism did not provide an alternative.

brought into Soviet industry. These systems were used with the clear support of Lenin.

Under the New Economic Policy, with the introduction of private trade and private enterprise, Lenin came to rely more heavily on capitalist techniques and exploitation of the labour force.

This was justified by the statement that: "the revolution demands that in the interest of socialism the masses unquestionably obey the single will of the leaders of the



Those who do not learn from history are condemned to relive it

Civil war in the Young Socialists

Jack Cleary continues his series on the seedbed of today's left. Earlier articles have described how the Labour youth movement was relaunched after 1959. The labour movement was dominated by the right wing, but being livened up by the nuclear disarmament movement. In the Young Socialists, radical factions came to the fore: *Keep Left*, associated with Gerry Healy's group (then sectarian, but not yet crazy), *Young Guard* (dominated by the future SWP of Tony Cliff and Militant).

Throughout 1961 the YS continued to grow, but slowly. At the Blackpool Labour Party conference, the right wing reversed the policy on unilateral nuclear disarmament, overthrowing the pro-unilateral resolution of the 1960 Brighton conference.

The experience of an important left victory then, which the left (like Michael Foot and Frank Cousins) did nothing to consolidate, and thus lost, was a decisive one for the Healy tendency. Not to emulate the 'fake left' — Foot and the *Tribune*-ites — but to fight the battle against the right wing through to the end, became their driving goal in the youth movement.

They began to talk and act as if all that was necessary to defeat the right was the will to do it — as if the relationship of forces between the Marxists on one side and the right and soft left on the other, could be magically transformed by shouting the right slogans and "demands". In practice, they ignored such questions, and denounced those who said they were impatient as "fainthearts", "sell-outs", "fake lefts", "scabs" and "right wing finks".

At the second YS conference, in 1962, there were 356 delegates from 772 registered branches. It reiterated unilateralism, opposed the Tory immigration control Bill then being pushed through Parliament, and demanded that Britain withdraw all troops from overseas and quit all military alliances.

Only three *Keep Left* supporters were elected to the National Committee; with one supporter of *Young Guard*. But there was a left, unilateralist majority, which was maybe what spurred Transport House to act.

The right wing got a resolution through conference condemning *Keep Left* and asking for an investigation into allegations that some of its supporters had used violence against opponents. David Todd, who made the allegations, later retracted them and said that the whole business had been a plot hatched by Gaitskellite MP, George Brown.

In fact violent clashes did occur in London and Glasgow on May Day, when Young Socialists rushed the platforms: those involved were *Young Guard* (IS), not *Keep Left*.

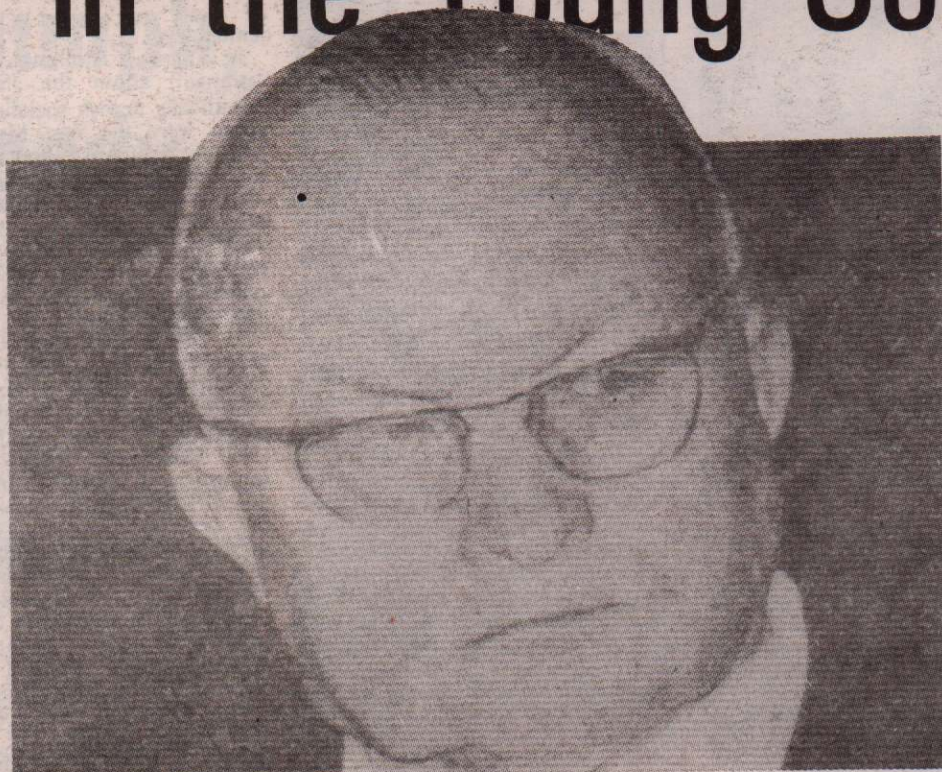
In May 1962, following the conference vote and the May Day clashes, *Keep Left* (which claimed a circulation of 10,500) was proscribed. An investigation was started into *Young Guard* (which claimed 3,000). *Keep Left* editor Roger Protz was expelled by St Pancras North Labour Party. In June, four members of the National Committee were suspended: Liz Thompson, Mike Ginsberg and Dave Davis (KL) were eventually expelled, while Malcolm Tallantire (YG) was reinstated. The remaining seven NC members were told to either accept the NEC action or have the YS disbanded.

Keep Left was banned. *Young Guard* was not. In July 1962 the NEC interviewed YG representatives (among them Keith Dickinson of the Grant tendency) and threatened to ban the paper unless:

- YG's 'tone' improved,
- YG included in its aims a statement of unconditional support for the return of a Labour government (this was *Keep Left* policy) and a declaration that the YS was part of the Labour Party,
- YG was made open to all YS opinion,
- YG ceased to have speakers at readers' meetings, as that gave the impression that YG was a faction.

The National Editorial Board of *Young Guard*, meeting in September, accepted these conditions, stating, "We have always rejected the arguments of those who say that we should be building a faction within the YS. The YS, in its federations etc., has all the necessary organisations which we can utilise for the spreading of socialist ideas".

This was hypocrisy, of course, and just a little obscene in the face of the triumphant Gaitskellite faction. Though it might have been necessary tactical bowing to superior forces, in fact it was also a very pointed differentiation and separation from *Keep Left*, which fought without hypocrisy for the right



Gerry Healy: not as nice as he looked

of factions, and was moreover, the faction being targeted by the right wing just then.

But it was not only just hypocrisy! They meant it about the Labour Party: the Granites had a long, long-term entry project; the Cliffites — today's quasi-syndicalist sectarians — explicitly anti-Leninist and recruiting libertarian-minded youth on that basis had an even longer one, more vague and even more indeterminate.

The subsequent editorial in *Young Guard* explained that at their meeting with the NEC representatives, they "laid great stress on the democratic organisation of the paper and denied being a faction within the YS, pointing to the large disparities in the view between YG supporters". Read: 'unlike the Trotskyists'. In fact, *Keep Left* too had a general meeting open to its supporters, though operating under tight control. When all is said and done, what *Young Guard* said about the differences between the two factions, was true.

The Cliffites would remain an open, democratic organisation until the special conference of December 1971, which barred factions which had basic differences with the group around Tony Cliff.

They had a right to point this out, if it was to their political advantage. To do it at the moment *Keep Left* was being banned was to repudiate all left solidarity against the right wing and to greatly embitter the already very bad relations within the YS Left.

After this relations between *Keep Left* and *Young Guard* were extremely poisoned and rancorous. It did not require malicious invention to put the story in circulation that YG had done a deal with Transport House as the price of tolerance, or for it to be widely believed. Despite *Young Guard*'s statements in defence of the rights of *Keep Left*, their acceptance by Transport House as the 'good', 'nice' left-wingers after they had made big efforts to present themselves as such, seemed to many YSers the decisive thing in characterising them. This reduced the credibility of *Young Guard*'s subsequent criticisms of *Keep Left* — many of which gained point as the *Keep Left* leadership made serious errors, and span off into the outer space of ultra-left unrealism and sectarianism. In their own way, they helped Gerry Healy lead the youth off into the wilderness.

1962-63: *Keep Left* steers towards building its own YS

Though banned by the Labour Party, *Keep Left*, a paper of the left wing of the labour youth movement, continued publication. This, as we shall see, had massive implications.

In July 1962 the first issue of *Keep Left* since proscription appeared, announcing that the paper would continue despite the ban. *Keep Left* supporters made tremendous efforts to maintain circulation: it was sold in "safe" YSs and by people who travelled out of their own areas to sell where they were unknown to potential witch-burners.

In the following six to nine months big ad-

vances were made in building YS branches, as *Keep Left* turned to a big campaign around youth unemployment, which reached a freak level at the end of 1962. (So did general unemployment, because of an exceptionally cold winter). In those campaigns, and despite the ban, the basis was laid for *Keep Left* to become the majority at the 1963 conference. Operating with a paper the selling of which merited expulsion from the Labour Party increased the tension, the rancour and the — justified — feelings of persecution of the *Keep Left* youth.

They were at the mercy of Gerry Healy's bureaucratically enforced fantasies and delusions of grandeur.

In retrospect it can be seen that the decision to defy the ban and continue *Keep Left* was a decisive turning point for *Keep Left* and the YS. It succeeded spectacularly in maintaining the forces of *Keep Left* and even in building up the YS in defiance of the witch-hunters and bureaucrats. But it implied a YS separated from the Labour Party, and in the next two years, step by step, the logic spelled itself out.

Keep Left put forward policies for the YS that more and more implied casting off the links with the Labour Party and having the YS act as an open outright revolutionary party. This in turn meant that, to maintain the organisation's momentum, all sorts of pretexts for agitation and action had to be sought or invented. It pushed the forces of *Keep Left* more and more into a self-sustained mental ghetto, and encouraged unrealism in assessing the state of the labour movement. Ultimately it led the SLL into counterposing its own small "party", and a small segment of youth whose radicalisation went quite a way ahead of the working class and even of the militants of the working class, who were looking hopefully towards a Labour government after a dozen years of Toryism in power, to the actual development of the real labour movement.

When there was a very big radicalisation of youth in the late 1960s, the SLL cut itself off from that too, mistaking its own wishes for reality and going over into a style of politics reminiscent of third period (ultra-left) Stalinism.

Ultimately this was to lead to the more or less complete self-destruction of the entire cadre of the old Trotskyist movement, for the second time in 15 years, and to Trotskyism not being capable of capitalising on the great opportunities for the growth of a revolutionary party that emerged in the late '60s and early '70s.

Keep Left's policy in the YS only reflected the political crisis of the Trotskyist movement. We can only deal briefly with that crisis here. The SLL had been the British representative of the tendency led by James P Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism. Despite terrible weaknesses, faults and errors, after 1949 no other group deserv-

ing the name Trotskyism — if Trotskyism is irreplaceably an attempt to build a movement, and it has to be — existed in Britain. In the early '60s the SLL was in the course of breaking with Cannon, who, with remarkable perception, diagnosed as early as mid-1961 that the SLL was off on an "Oehlerite (ie. sectarian) binge". Disappointed by the reversal which Gaitskell inflicted on the Labour left and the Tribune left's failure to fight seriously, the SLL began more and more to counterpose itself artificially to the labour movement, expressing itself more and more in a formalistic leftism and a destructive organisational sectarianism.

The discovery that a YS movement could be maintained and built against Transport House after the proscription of *Keep Left* led them to forget how limited were the forces involved in the YS, compared to the task for Marxists of transforming the labour movement. The SLL's break with its international mentors gave free play to the SLL leaders' characteristic wishful thinking and tendency to mistake their own desires and assertions for reality. Responding to both the impatience of the ex-CPers with Labour Party work, and the patience and experience of Cannon, Healy had added the experience of a valuable innovation to the arsenal of the movement, by forming an open organisation without abandoning entrism. In the early '60s he cut loose from Cannon.

Healy's make-believe and irresponsibility was to dominate the YS, especially in 1963-64.

More than any mistakes in assessment and analysis, more even than their political subjectivism, it was the bureaucratic nature of the SLL which led them and a section of the YS to destruction. A democratic organisation allows the correction of mistakes, reassessment, the removal of leading people who persist in costly errors or pernicious practices. The SLL had a savagely repressive internal regime which excluded all but a very small group of the top leaders, or maybe all but one person, from effective policy-making and initiatives. This situation had been generated by the long drawn out factional struggles in the Trotskyist movement of the '40s. At the end of the '40s, most of the cadres deserted the movement, leaving the Healy faction, which had fought a five year struggle for an orientation to the Labour Party, in control. It was a period of massive defeat for the Trotskyists throughout the world, which took its toll everywhere. It threw the British Trotskyists back to a sectarian and authoritarian form of organisation of the sort often to be found in the workers' movement in period of immaturity, weakness or defeat.

In the early 1960s, the influx of raw young people freed the Healy leadership from the limited restraints imposed by the relatively educated and experienced cadre of the earlier period, those who had been formed politically in the battle against sectarianism. The dictatorial Healy regime, vigorously asserting its prerogatives at every point, linking its subjectivism and wishful thinking with the politically healthy impatience of the youth, and at the same time building its organisation with considerable ability, locked itself more and more away from reality and from any consideration about reality it did not want to face: everything in the structure of the organisation was designed to do this as completely as the leadership should want to. There could be no feedback from the membership other than what the leadership wanted to take into account.

As time went by, Gerry Healy would want to take less and less into account except his own fantasies and appetites, locking himself into an infantile solipsism, and the organisation first into grotesque sectarianism towards the labour movement and then, in the '70s, into lucrative mercenary political odd job work for Libya, Iraq and some of the Sheikhs.

The story continues next week

Yves Montand 1921-1991

Wasted by Stalinism

Cinema

By Mick Ackersley

The 70-year life of Yves Montand was inextricably entwined with the history of the left wing of the working-class movement in Europe.

He was born in Italy in 1921, the child of Communist parents. He went with them to France in his infancy when they fled triumphant Italian fascism.

After working on the docks in Marseilles, the young Montand became a singer and then a movie actor. In the mid-'50s he played in movies such as *The Wages of Fear*, a tense account of men driving unstable gelignite in primitive trucks over rough roads.

Montand and his wife and co-thinker Simone Signoret became very prominent French Stalinist celebrities. They were dining with Nikita Khrushchev in the Kremlin on the night 35 years ago when Khrushchev sent the tanks to crush the Hungarian Revolution!

In the '60s and '70s Montand played in a series of radical movies, mostly made by Costa-Gavras and written by Jorge Semprun.

The first of them, *Z* (1963), depicted the murder of the leftist Greek MP Lambrakis, a key event in Greek politics in the turbulent years before the army colonels' coup of 1967 which imposed seven years of military dictatorship on the country.

In *The War Is Over* (1966; directed by Alain Resnais and written by Jorge Semprun), Montand played an emigre official of the Spanish Communist Party in exile — someone who had, in parallel to Montand himself, grown up and begun to grow old in exile. He is weary, but he keeps going, making dangerous trips into fascist

Spain.

Just as *Z* reflected the hopeful mass-CND "new left" politics of the early '60s, and *The War Is Over* reflected the rise of ultra-leftism and Maoism in the later '60s, *Stage of Siege* (directed and written by Costa-Gavras) reflected the influence of Guevarism and guerrilla warfare in the left-wing politics of the early '70s.

Based on a true story, it dealt with the capture and killing of an American official and torture expert — played by Montand — by the Tupumaro guerrillas of Uruguay.

Then in the early '70s, in another Costa-Gavras film, *L'aveu* ("The Confession", written by Semprun), Montand played Artur London, a Czech Stalinist who was one of the group around Czech Communist Party general secretary Rudolf Slansky tried in the heavily anti-semitic ("anti-Zionist") purge trial of 1951.

They were tortured into confessing and then hanged (like Slansky) or jailed (like London, on whose memoirs the film was based).

L'aveu, a fine and true film, depicted a far-gone state of exasperation and hatred of Stalinism. It reflected the evolution of a whole layer of European left-wing intellectuals. The writer, Jorge Semprun, was one of a group of ex-CP intellectuals which included such political writers as Claudin.

They broke, slowly, over years, with Stalinism, not in the direction of real socialism but towards bourgeois democracy.

Montand went with them, after many years as a prominent public face of the French Stalinist movement.

Liberal bourgeois democracy was seemingly stable, and it was expanding. The decrepit and decayed fascism of General Franco, imposed on Spain by a bloody civil



war in the '30s, gave way peacefully in the mid '70s to a liberal bourgeois democracy, crowned by a restored monarchy. The Stalinist parties were rotting and disintegrating. The working-class movement had been ground down and weakened by Stalinism.

In those conditions the tired and the disillusioned — and the conscience-stricken, as Montand seems to have been — do not move to the left.

Montand's move to the right was far from complete, though. He came out against the Gulf War earlier this year — as he had come out, and at considerable risk, against France's wars in Indochina and Algeria in the '50s and '60s — and at the age of 70 campaigned against France's part in this latest bloody imperialist atrocity.

Radicals of Montand's and Signoret's generation spent their political lives in and

around a powerful malignant sect, the Stalinist French Communist Party.

It took their commitment to socialism, their hopes, their youth, and their spirit of revolt, and harnessed them to the interests of the USSR abroad and to the service of a passive, sterile, time-serving and organically right-wing bureaucratic party at home. It gave them nothing back, neither victories, nor the hope of victories, nor even a stable self-respect-inducing sense of honourable struggle.

As the truth about Stalin's rule in the USSR became more widely known, and then in 1968 the Stalinist armies snuffed out Alexander Dubcek's "socialism with a human face" in Czechoslovakia at the same time as the French CP betrayed the great workers' strike movement of 1968, they were left with the sour and bitter taste of disgust and

disorientation.

Politically, most of them had neither knowledge of the real history of the socialist movement to fall back on, nor belief in a new start. They went, when they cut the cable with Stalinism, with the temporarily dominant currents, to the right.

Their state of mind — and the reason why their break with Stalinism, when it came, proved sterile for socialism — is perhaps best portrayed in an interview which Signoret, Montand's wife, gave to an American socialist magazine in the early 1970s.

She told her interviewer about the struggle she had recently had with herself to make her finally read the anti-Stalinist writings of Arthur Koestler, the author of *Darkness at Noon*, who broke with Stalinism in the late '30s. Yet she was formally well educated, and had then been in and around the French Communist Party for thirty years!

A law unto themselves

Television

By Geoff Ward

Last week's "Critical Eye" programme on Channel 4 focussed on two of the police's worst acts of brutality in recent years.

In the "Battle of the Beanfield", in 1985, police smashed up a peaceful convoy heading for Stonehenge.

And there was full-scale class war in the miners' strike, during the Battle for Orgreave in June 1984.

In both cases, no public inquiries were held. There was no public scrutiny of the use of the police force as a political weapon of the state.

The People's Free Festival of Stonehenge in Wiltshire had been established for a decade, and had grown in popularity each year. In 1985, English Heritage and the National Trust brought court injunctions to prevent it taking place. In collusion with the

county council and landowners, the police conjured up "Operation Solstice", despite the fact that no law could be used to keep the travellers out.

Rather than seeking compromise and accommodation between the local community and the festival organisers, the Wiltshire establishment decided to bust up the convoy, in the process destroying people's mobile homes.

1,363 police ambushed the convoy several miles from Stonehenge. After brief 'negotiations', police pounced on the trucks, smashing windscreens and terrorising the occupants.

One woman, Helen Reynolds, had her head pulled through broken glass from a smashed window. The police allowed the convoy to break through into a beanfield in order to have a pretext for arresting everyone and sending in the riot police.

One traveller, Phil Shakesby, recounted the events at Nistrell Priory, where 250 people were arrested and many homes, including his own, were wrecked.

The riot police were finally let loose in the early evening. TV journalist Kim Sabido, was visibly shocked by the ferocity of the attack, but much of the

nastier footage at the scene went "missing".

Out of 420 arrests, 241 were charged with unlawful public assembly (maximum sentence life), with only a few being proven.

When the travellers brought a civil court case against the police for false imprisonment, assault and unlawful

"The media had branded the miners 'thugs and bullyboys' but now the BBC has admitted that news footage was altered 'by mistake'."

property damage, the judge so rigged the proceedings that the actions failed on the "false imprisonment" count and £25,000 costs awarded to the travellers disappeared into legal costs. The copper who assaulted Helen Reynolds was promoted.

The Peace Festival had grown too big, and lasted too long, and anyway was full of weird hippies with an alien culture. The police took it upon themselves to wipe it out.

Early in June this year, the South Yorkshire police paid out £420,000 to miners in damages for assault, false imprisonment and malicious prosecution during the Battle of Orgreave.

The original court cases against the miners charged with riot collapsed in 1985 when it emerged that the police had perjured themselves and made false statements, with no action taken against the officers responsible.

The media had branded the miners "thugs and bullyboys", but now the BBC has admitted that news footage was altered "by mistake" to make the miners out to be the antagonists.

Ian MacGregor, then boss of the Coal Board, has admitted that the Tory government was involved. His letters to the miners denying massive pit closures have been shown to have been a pack of lies.

On 18 June 1984, the police led the striking pickets into a field to batter them, deploying tactics from a secret manual, "Public Order Tactical

Operations". The film exposed the central motive which lay behind the attack. The state was at war with the miners; they had to be broken and beaten back to work.

The police were acting largely outside the law, but could rely on the courts to ensure blanket bans on further picketing. The Police Complaints Authority, set up to monitor the police, has been utterly ineffective in bringing disciplinary actions.

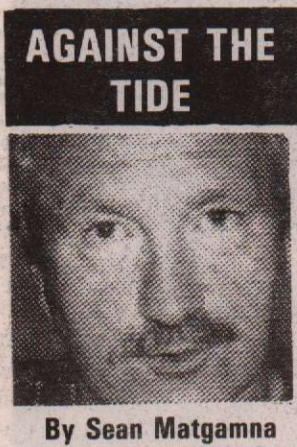
Striking miner, Russell Broomhead, shown on television being repeatedly clubbed by riot police, has had to seek psychiatric help as a result of the experience. Arthur Critchlow, featured on the programme, was denied medical treatment by police and only had fluid drained from his head wounds after he was bailed.

The programme showed clearly how the public are forbidden to inquire too closely into the police. No real accountability exists.

The claim that the police stand above politics and represent the public interest is a great myth. The labour movement needs to learn how to defend itself from the thugs in blue, and develop an alternative.

Gerry Healy, left anti-semitism, and Jewish socialists

The Octopus School of polemic



David Rosenberg, whose letter is printed on page 11, evidently belongs to the Octopus School of polemic writing.

He comes out kicking and swinging wildly and spewing clouds of ink. Unfortunately, he does not believe in dealing with the real points in dispute: his chosen technique is to lose them in inky clouds of general abuse and hope no-one notices.

Though Rosenberg throws everything he can into this letter, almost all of it is beside the point.

Some of it is mildly paranoid. SO has no especially friendly links with the Union of Jewish Students, though we have united and do unite with them against anti-semitism in the National Union of Students. The fact that a young SO supporter took a holiday job in the Jewish Socialists' Group [JSG] office six years ago — and she was known to be SO — is now cited as a take-over plot!

We do not throw around the charge of anti-semitism loosely. We have argued at length that the dominant attitude to Israel on the left — that it should not exist — leads in practice to a comprehensive hostility to most Jews, who identify with Israel. We have never called anyone on the left an anti-semite without spelling out why in terms of that assessment. Does David Rosenberg think that it is a wrong assessment?

And much of Rosenberg's polemic is silly. Thus, I wrote that the Jewish Socialists' Group [JSG] is politically ill-defined. Back comes Rosenberg to remind us that I, his critic, have used a few pen-names ("pseudonyms") over the years. Now, he demands sternly, who is ill-defined?

I can think of many good things to say about the JSG: the JSG's sharing a platform with the Palestine Liberation Organisation, advocating conciliation, compensating for a lot of the political woolliness exposed in David Rosenberg's letter. But woolliness takes its toll.

The article David Rosenberg replies to said: "The JSG [s] a-political solidarity with Pottins meant that they allowed themselves to be used as camouflage for Healy's WRP, who were the paid agents of

various Arab governments... mercenary anti-semites". Let us review the basic facts in simple, brass-tacks, question and answer form.

Q. Was Charlie Pottins publicly associated with both the JSG and the old WRP in the years before that shattered in late 1985?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. What did he do for the Healyites?

A. His name was prominent in *Newsline*, the daily paper Healy put out.

Q. Where did Healy's money come from?

A. Funds were provided by Arab governments such as Iraq, Libya and others.

Q. Why did they subsidise Healy?

A. For a number of reasons: to have an English-language propaganda organ putting their point of view, and because Healy provided other services for them.

Q. What other services?

A. According to the WRPs who fell out with Healy in 1985, Healy's WRP was contracted to spy on Arab dissidents in Britain and to provide reports on Jews prominent in British life. Healy helped get a number of Iraqi CPers shot in 1980, it seems.

Q. Did outsiders have to wait until the WRP broke up to know these things?

A. Not at all! It was obvious from the WRP's press that they were paid propagandists. For example, they published in 1980 a glossy pamphlet about the rise to power of Saddam Hussein that might have been produced by the Iraqi government, and surely was paid for by that government. They publicly justified in their press the killing of the Iraqi CPers mentioned above.

Q. What grounds are there for the charge that the Healy WRP were anti-semitic, and not just anti-Zionist?

A. They printed rabid "world Jewish/Zionist conspiracy" explanations of events. See, for example, the editorial in the illustration accompanying this article. Some of the stuff, about the world Zionist conspiracy stretching from SO to Reagan's White House for example, was on the level of open clinical lunacy. It was unmistakably modelled on the old "world Jewish conspiracy", with "Zionist" substituted for "Jewish".

When the BBC put out a mild programme about the Healy WRP's financial links with Libya, *Newsline* conducted a months-long campaign accusing "Zionists" in the BBC of smearing them — and accusing SO too, because in reviewing the programme SO had said it was only part of the truth.

Q. Specifically, what did Charlie Pottins do in this connection?

A. When I wrote a short piece in SO about the anti-semitism of the WRP, in response to the crazy *Newsline* editorial about the "world Zionist conspiracy", Pottins wrote, or at least lent his name to, a three-page diatribe against SO and in defence of the WRP. It was later included in a WRP pamphlet.

Pottins's membership of the

Arabs, Jews and socialism
The debate on Palestine, Zionism and anti-semitism (including "Trotsky and Zionism")
£1.80
A Workers' Liberty pamphlet

Debate on Palestine, Zionism and anti-semitism

£1.80 + 28p postage from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA



WRP allowed people who explained world events by "Zionist conspiracies" stretching across the globe and into both the cabinets of imperialist powers and the editorial board of SO, to more plausibly deploy a hypocritical indignation against the patently true charge that they were engaging in anti-semitic agitation.

The Healy WRP, too, belonged to the "ink in the eyes" school of polemic. The "much respected" Charlie Pottins — if it was Charlie Pottins; but certainly it was Charlie Pottins's name on the polemic — was particularly indignant because I wrote somewhere that the Jewish community might rightly see the WRP as future pogromists, and its agitation as the preparation of pogroms. From a "much respected" member of the Jewish Socialists' Group, that indignation was probably very useful.

Q. Did the JSG do anything about these activities by Charlie Pottins?

A. Not in public they didn't; nor, as far as I can judge, was anything done in private. The JSG allowed him both to front for the anti-semitic agitation of the WRP and to be in the JSG.

Q. Did the "non-sectarian" JSG, whose other members had as much right to autonomy as did Charlie Pottins, denounce the WRP, or take any specific stand against it?

A. Not that I know of. In response to the BBC programme on their finances, the WRP for months ran a half-page or page a day of testimonials to themselves, denouncing SO as "Zionists" and "agents", etc. They had the public support of prominent leftists like Ken Livingstone; they even got trade union branches and Trades Councils to pass resolutions denouncing us.

While all this was going on, the JSG's contribution to the fight against anti-semitism in the labour movement was to provide the WRP with a captive "Jewish socialist", David Rosenberg's "much respected" Charlie Pottins.

Q. Has the JSG reconsidered any of this?

A. No. Its leaders do not even seem to have taken it in.

Rosenberg is bitterly angry at what I wrote concerning the strange story of how the JSG's "much respected" and "highly valued" member Charlie Pottins was used by the anti-semitic WRP.

Yet Rosenberg does not even try to deal with what I wrote except by a few flat assertions. He neither refutes the facts I alluded to and here spell out, nor seriously disputes the construction I put on them. Essentially, he confines himself to telling us that Pottins was "much respected" and was the only JSG member also to be in

"The JSG tolerated a member in common with Gerry Healy's WRP because they have not faced the fact that the 'anti-Zionism' of the left is the most important form of anti-semitism in Britain"

the Healy WRP. ("Just one. We only had one stooge of the anti-semites in the JSG. Just one little muddlehead, Guv'nor!")

Rosenberg does not notice that here he reinforces the mystery I described: for how could the Jewish Socialists' Group, of all people, "respect" Charlie Pottins — even if they felt sympathy with him, a man torn by terrible contradictions and conflicts, as I do, having known him since we were both troubled adolescents — when he was up to his neck in Healy's dirty anti-Jewish propaganda?

I queried their "tolerance" of Pottins; Rosenberg "explains" it by saying that Pottins was "much respected". It is not an answer; it raises an additional question.

What is oddest about Rosenberg's letter is that he seems to believe it is a sufficient answer. It is as if he does not realise that there is anything out of the ordinary in this extraordinary story. In face of the facts I cite, he contents himself with a few lit-

tle self-satisfied sneers and clichés about "sectarians" as distinct from broad "democratic" organisations like his own; but the point here, David Rosenberg, is that by way of Charlie Pottins your "non-sectarian", "democratic", all-inclusive organisation was annexed as convenient camouflage by the most vicious sectarians in the history of the British labour movement. Your virtuously anti-Leninist Jewish socialist organisation was used as a cover by anti-semites!

This seems to me to have a bearing on the dispute between the Leninists and the others about how best socialists should organise, and I said so. Ah, says Rosenberg, so you question the right of a group of Jews to define themselves? Is this because of hostility to Jews?

According to the anything-goes rules of Octopus polemic, there is nothing weird in Rosenberg, defending Pottins, and himself for tolerating Pottins's links with the crazy anti-semites, thus turning things on their head and accusing those of us who fought the real and open "left" anti-semites of... anti-semitism. It's all in the game. But it is not serious.

The reference to anti-semitism is a two-edged weapon for Rosenberg because I think one of the reasons why people like himself tolerated having a member in common with Gerry Healy's WRP was that they have not faced the fact that the "anti-Zionism" of the left is currently the most important form of anti-semitism in Britain.

A number of questions are entangled in Rosenberg's defence of the "Bundist" JSG: the sort of organisation that socialists of any sort should build; whether ethnic or national minority groups should organise separately from the rest of the socialist and labour movement; if there is a case for a distinct organisation to work with a certain constituency, whether it should be completely autonomous or a sub-section of the general socialist movement.

This latter question was disputed at the 1903 congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, where the majority — including the founder of the Jewish socialist Bund,

the future Menshevik Julius Martov — wanted the Bund to be a sub-section of the general movement rather than fully autonomous. I cannot for space discuss the dispute here. If there is a case for a separate Jewish socialist organisation, there is no possible case for one so loose that it includes a stooge of anti-semites!

A Jewish socialist organisation which includes a member of Healy's organisation — a political organisation defined by its Jewish identity which includes a befuddled stooge of mercenary anti-semites — is surely loose and ill-defined. Saying it is just "democratic" is no answer, and neither is a reference to the group's political manifesto. A political programme is not just words on paper; it is the totality of what the organisation does in life.

Yet Leninist truths about loose organisations like the JSG do not answer all the questions raised here.

Sympathy for Charlie Pottins; "tolerance"; phillistine dismissal of the dispute between the WRP and SO as "sectarian"; old Bundist obsessions with old anti-Zionist polemics and thus, I guess, the half blindness to the fact that "anti-Zionism" is now the cutting edge of anti-semitism, especially on the left; a rare, only-once-in-a-life-time, political obtuseness — these are the elements which led them to tolerate Healy's advocate Charlie Pottins as a "much respected" member of the JSG. But what was the mix? And why does Rosenberg mark "tolerance" of "anti-Zionism" a virtue? I wish he would tell us.

If apology is due, then it is due SO from Rosenberg for helping cover for the WRP at a time when they were dragging us through the courts and conducting a lying campaign against us in the labour movement. For myself, I would settle for a plain no-bluster explanation!

Yet the JSG is, I think, owed an apology — from David Rosenberg and any others of its members who knew what Charlie Pottins was doing for Healy and let him get away with it, being "all too tolerant" of Healy's crazed anti-semitism and its "anti-Zionist" Jewish stooge Pottins. Or, maybe, they like me would settle for a candid explanation.

Left: "The Zionist Connection", a crazy "world Zionist conspiracy" editorial from the Healyite *Newsline*. Above it: Sean Matgamna's comment in *Socialist Organiser*. Above: Charlie Pottins's reply to SO's comments; 1980 WRP/*Newsline* pamphlet glorifying Saddam Hussein; *Newsline* advertisement for recruits to the Libyan army.

COHSE, NALGO, NUPE

The left debates the new union

By Tony Dale,
Manchester NALGO

One hundred activists from NALGO, NUPE and COHSE gathered in Manchester on 9th November for the "Campaign for a Democratic, Fighting Public Service Union" conference.

The initiative for the Campaign came from Bury and the North West Regional Health Authority NALGO branches. 40 NALGO, COHSE and NUPE branches sponsored the event.

The conference adopted a number of points as a basic set of principles to campaign for:

- 1. That the supreme ruling body of the union should be the annual conference,
 - 2. that branches should retain similar financial control in the merged union to that currently enjoyed in NALGO,
 - 3. that the new union should be membership-led and under lay control at every level,
 - 4. that the right of individual branches and groups to organise and campaign within the union should be retained,
 - 5. that there should be recognition of the rights of self-organised groups of black, women and lesbian and gay members.
- The organisers of the conference also put forward a document which went through these points in more detail.
- This document went through, point by point, the details raised in the new union discussions. As such, it is essential as a guide to activists responding to the merger negotiations.
- A number of speakers drew attention to the positive set of industrial demands entitled "The Industrial Aims of a New Union". These aims included a 35-hour week, minimum wage, harmonised pay and conditions and opposition to cuts. Demands like these can lay the foundations for real unity between white collar and manual workers, local council and health service workers.
- The only weakness of the conference was the absence of in-depth discussion on many points raised by the merger proposals.
- Socialist Organiser supporters had proposed to the planning meeting a working conference based on workshops. This proposal was defeated and the conference, as we had warned, did at times tend towards rally-style generalities.
- The SWP, who had championed the cause of turning the conference into a rally, also edged closer to adopting an anti-merger position.
- They proposed to the con-

ference, a statement which if carried would have wrecked the possibility of building a non-sectarian, broad campaign for a democratic merger.

They proposed that: "Conference recognises that the fight against the Tories has been, and is, being compromised by the electoral politics of Labour and the compliance of our leaders.

"We believe the merger must be seen in the context of trade union leaders looking forward to a sweetheart deal with a future Labour government.

"We believe the campaign for a merged union being waged by the leaderships of the 3 unions, is not being waged in the interests of the rank and file members, but in the separate interests of the bureaucracy.

"We believe the leaders see the merger as an opportunity to dismantle existing democracy and gain greater control over members, the better to be able to police us. We oppose attempts to drag union members into making sacrifices to elect or sustain a Labour government.

"Our efforts should be aimed at preventing a merger on the bureaucracies' terms, and instead fighting for the unity of the rank and file of all three unions in the struggle against the Tories and any future government."

This motion is sectarian rub-



Liverpool council stewards burn redundancy notices

Support this strike!

CPSA strikers at Newton DSS in mid-Wales are now in the eighth week of their action.

Management have just announced that they are to create 3 extra posts at Wrexham to cope with the increased workload, but have offered nothing to the Newton strikers.

Another slap in the face. The strikers need your support. Rush solidarity messages, donations, requests for speakers to: Lawrence Chapplegill, CPSA c/o TGWU, 2 Commercial Street, Newton, Powys SY16 2BL.

CPSA Broad Left conference Self-congratulation won't stop the Tories

By Mike Grayson, CPSA British Library

"**C**onference recognises the unique political awareness of workers in Liverpool where the ideas of socialism, practically demonstrated by the Labour Council of 1983-87, have an influence unparalleled in any other area of the country."

Thus began one of the motions submitted by supporters of *Militant* to the annual conference of the CPSA Broad Left, held in Blackpool last weekend (9-10 November). It will give readers a flavour of the event, where *Militant* use their numerical superiority to push through self-congratulatory and self-serving

motions.

With no more than 180 activists attending, the conference was smaller than in previous years. That this should be the case at a time when pay and conditions in the civil service are under such severe attack, is cause for concern.

However, critical self-analysis and ability to learn from past mistakes are not notable features of the Broad Left. Instead we get length motions detailing the *Militant*'s position on recent events in the USSR, and Lesley Mahmood as a guest speaker.

A (brief) highlight of the conference was the five minutes allowed to a speaker from the new offshore workers' union OILC to address the meeting. An emergency motion moved by a *Socialist Organiser* supporter was carried, pledging the Broad Left's full support for OILC.

Speakers from the new union were also able to outline their case in greater detail at a

Socialist Organiser fringe meeting on the Saturday evening.

In the light of the government's decision to withdraw from the various long-term pay agreements it had signed with the civil service unions, and the generally complacent response of CPSA's right-wing leadership, the Broad Left has now called a pay rally and conference for 7 December in Liverpool.

Despite the date and venue being fixed with no consultation, all activists should now seek to build this conference and ensure it being a successful event.

Socialist Organiser supporters argued that the pay meeting

should be a working conference, not just a rally that would make us all feel good about doing very little. We also argued that the event should be organised jointly with Broad Lefts in NUCPS and IRSF, rather than simply by CPSA. It remains to be seen whether these suggestions will be seriously taken on board.

Although many of the decisions taken at this year's Broad Left conference were contrary to *Socialist Organiser* supporters' policies and arguments, we are not going to go away. Along with independents in the Broad Left who also want to democratise and reinvigorate the existing

organisation, we have set up the Campaign Group.

To quote from the Group's conference bulletin: "We need a more democratic, bigger broader-based Broad Left. The Broad Left slate should be more reflective of the different strands of opinion within the Broad Left. It should encompass the best activists, not just the favoured few of a particular group."

CPSA members who wish to join or find out more about the Campaign Group should write c/o 91 Burford Road, Forest Fields, Nottingham.

Onshore unions forget about safety

The Offshore Information Centre has, over a period of two years, participated at all levels in the process of improving offshore safety:

- The Offshore Information Centre contributed to this formulation of EC Directive Com (90) 663 whilst the Inter-union Offshore Oil Committee did nothing.
- The Offshore Information Centre made three major submissions to the Parliamentary Energy Select Committee in its investigation into the management of offshore safety. The Inter-union Offshore Oil Com-

mittee contributed nothing.

Speaking from the third North Sea safety conference, organised by Technology Forum in conjunction with the Health and Safety Executive, Ronnie McDonald said: "It is indicative of the relevance of the Inter-union Offshore Oil Committee that they are not present in any form at this conference, preferring to expend their time and resources in inter-union faction fighting."

The offshore workforce will now see the only relevant bodies providing them with two effective representatives are the Offshore Information Centre and the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee. The Offshore Information Centre is wholly and totally funded by the offshore workers' union, the OILC.

WHAT'S ON

- Thursday 14 November
"The politics of identity". Brighton SO meeting. 7.30. "Great Eastern" pub. Speaker: Dion D'Silva. "Socialists and the Labour Party". Newcastle SO meeting. 7.30. Rossetti Rooms. Speaker: Mark Osborn.
- Friday 15 November
"Labour and the General Election". Huddersfield Poly SO meeting. 1.00. Speaker: Richard Love.
- Saturday 16 November
"Socialists for Labour" conference. 11 to 5, Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, London.
- Sunday 17 November
Labour Party Socialists AGM. 10 to 4, Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, London.
- Monday 18 November
Demonstration in support of the "Colchester 16" (arrested anti-poll-tax protesters). 9.30, Crown Court, Bishopsgate, Norwich.
- Tuesday 19 November
"Arabs, Jews and Socialism". QMW college SO meeting. 12.30. Clubs and Societies Meeting Room. Speaker: Mark Sandell.
- Wednesday 20 November
"Socialists and the Middle East peace conference". Socialist Organiser London Forum. 7.30. University of London Union, Malet Street. Speakers include Israeli socialist Udi Adiv. Southamton Socialist Organiser Marxist educationals start on 20 November and continue every other Wednesday, 7.30 at the Portwood Housing Advice Centre, opposite Blockbuster Video.
- Thursday 21 November
"Behind the Middle East peace conference". Glasgow SO meeting. 7.30, Partick Burgh Halls. Speaker: Steve Macleod. "The fight against racism". Northampton SO meeting. 12.30, Nene College.
- Friday 22 November
Richmond College SO meeting. 1.00.
- Saturday 23 November
"Women in the Unions" conference. 10 to 5 at Wesley House, Wild Street, London WC1. Organised by Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee. Registration £5.
- Sunday 24 November
"Sara Thornton: the issues". North London SO meeting. 7.30. Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7. Speaker: Liz Dickinson.
- 30 November and 1 December
"The future for socialism", weekend school organised by youth and student SO supporters. Starts 11.30 Saturday. Creche, food, and overnight accommodation available; transport is being fixed from all major cities. Registration £4, £2 unwaged/without grant. For further information, or to register, contact "Weekend School", SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Liverpool job cuts

By Dale Street
Liverpool City Council voted through another 286 compulsory redundancies on Wednesday 30 October.

About another 120 jobs are to be axed through early retirement and "voluntary" redundancies.

The latest job losses are the result of the Council winning the street cleansing contract for Liverpool, which had been put out to tender in line with Tory legislation. In the summer the Council lost the contract for refuse collection and axed over 400 jobs. Now the Council has won the cleansing contract — and axed 400 jobs again. Slashing the workforce was their way of winning the contract.

At the Labour group meeting held two days before the Council meeting, a resolution was passed which, whilst not preventing job losses, would have prevented redundancies by ensuring re-deployment and re-training for street cleansing workers.

But even that resolution was too extreme for the right-wing leadership of the Labour group. On the morning of the Council meeting itself, an unconstitutionally convened Labour group meeting, which was inquorate to boot, overturned the resolution passed less than 48 hours beforehand.

Although even traditionally moderate members of the Labour group are known to be incensed about such manoeuvring, the Labour group clearly now feels that it can be a law unto itself.

And not without reason. There is not much left of the Labour Party in Liverpool to call it to account at the moment. The list of suspensions grows ever longer.

In place of the District Labour Party, a "Merseyside Labour Forum" has been set up. Its members are hand-picked: right-wing MPs, right-wing councillors, and right-wing Party officials.

In late September NALGO had called off its action on condition that its eleven redundant members received fair interviews for Council vacancies. But strikers who went back to work were victimised, and the redundant NALGO members did not receive fair interviews, so NALGO remains on partial strike. But the Labour group leaders are opposed even to negotiating with them.

The manoeuvrings of the Labour group leadership in the run-up to last week's Council meeting may well lead to a realignment of forces in the Labour group. But the key issue remains that of rebuilding the left at the grassroots level of the Labour Party, and building an alliance between this and trade union militants in the council workforce.

Victory for the NCU

By Maria Exall, NCU Broad Left Steering Committee

Two Post Office engineers in Merseyside have won their jobs back after being sacked.

NCU members in "Romec" (Royal Mail Engineering) came out in support of their two colleagues who were sacked for going home early after completing their work for the day.

They were only following "custom and practice", but unfortunately this came to the attention of higher management and they were scapegoated.

Because of the strength of feeling and the collective action taken on their behalf by fellow trade unionists the two won the right to reinstatement dependent on the outcome of an industrial tribunal.

Last week the industrial tribunal found in their favour and now they are back at work.

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Help us reach £10,000!



We must commit a Labour government to an amnesty for poll tax non-payers. Anti-poll tax demo, March 1991.

If you owe the bank a thousand pounds", said John Maynard Keynes, "you have a problem. If you owe the bank a million, or a billion, the bank has a problem".

The banks have problems with the Maxwell empire. We have problems with the bank.

This week a car boot sale in Manchester raised £32 for *Socialist Organiser's* expansion fund. A second-hand book sale in Hull fetched £30, and a bonfire night in South London, £17.84.

Thanks also to Jenny Evans, £25; Newcastle readers, £65; Leeds readers, £50; York readers, £50; Merseyside readers, £30; and Glasgow readers, £17.

We have reached £3594.42, or just over a third of the way to the total of £10,000 we need for new equipment.

We also need an extra £1,000 a month in regular contributions to meet the paper's regular costs. Robert Maxwell could run up £2.5 billion in debts to the banks... we can't!

Please:

- send a donation (cheques payable to "Socialist Organiser") to SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.
- Make out a standing order for a regular monthly contribution, as large or as small as you can manage. The standing order should be made payable to "WL publications", account no: 50720851, at the Co-op Bank, London N1 (sort code: 08-90-33).
- Send us the details of your regular monthly contribution, and we will put your name into our monthly draw for a £100 prize.

Build "Socialists for Labour"!

Saturday 16 November
"Socialists for Labour" conference.
11 to 5, Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, London.

Sunday 17 November
Labour Party Socialists AGM.
10 to 4, Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, London.

For more details, contact LPS c/o 58 Florence Road, London SE14, or phone Cate Murphy on 071-277 7217.

By Cate Murphy

The seeping stain of racism, fast spreading across the fabric of European and British politics, makes especially urgent the organisation of a clear socialist voice in the coming General Election.

The far right is setting the pace. Nicholas Ridley, Norman Tebbit (of the infamous "cricket test"), and others on the Tory right wing are waving the flag of narrow-minded nationalism bold and high.

Major disagrees with them to the extent that he sees the realities of Europe moving towards a single capitalist market-place, and thinks that British capitalism has to get in there; but, as the current Tory moves against asylum-seekers prove, he is as willing as any Thatcherite to use chauvinism and racism.

As the slump drags on, the dole queues get longer, homelessness increases, and public welfare services wither, British and European politics is becoming more feverish and brutal. The Labour Party leaders' bland, respectable, cautious timidity is more and more irrelevant.

Their inaction and their cringing mealy-mouthedness could still hand the election to the Tories. And, on present trends, if Labour wins and Kinnock keeps Labour to his policy of slightly-softened capitalism, we will see a re-run of the racist and fascist upsurge we had in the last years of the 1974-79 Labour government, but ten times worse.

The argument for working-class unity, for a Europe without frontiers, against immigration controls, has to be got across — and socialists must organise to get it across.

That is one of the tasks that *Socialists for Labour*, which meets this Saturday (16th) in London, has set for itself. *Socialists for Labour* will also campaign for socialist policies across the board:

- Against any coalitions or pacts with the Liberal Democrats;
- For a shorter work week, and training and retraining at trade union rates of pay, to create decent jobs for all;
- For the restoration of all cuts in the Health Service and other public services;
- For immediate scrapping of the Poll Tax and an amnesty for non-payers and Poll Tax prisoners;
- For unilateral nuclear disarmament and workers' plans to convert the military economy to useful civilian purposes.

Socialists for Labour is also trying to organise socialists against the diversion and blind alley represented by *Militant's* current moves to split from Labour and run in elections against Labour.

Like it or not, Labour is the only real working-class-based alternative to the Tories. It is the party based on the trade unions. Socialists must fight to get Labour in and to change the Labour Party. As the Walton fiasco proved, going off to run mickey-mouse "Real Labour" or "Militant Labour" election campaigns is a policy of impatience, demoralisation, and futility.

Socialists for Labour will organise socialists to be the best Labour campaign workers, as well as the best advocates of policies which offer some real advance to the working class.

Sponsors to date of *Socialists for Labour* include Jeremy Corbyn MP; Ronnie Macdonald of the emerging Offshore Workers' Union; Joe Marino, general secretary of the Bakers' Union; and many prominent trade unionists, Labour councillors, and other Labour activists (in their individual capacities).

The conference on the 16th will set plans to campaign for fresh sponsors and to prepare material for the election itself.

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