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For socialist renewal!



For workers' liberty!



Malcolm X and how he changed

Manning Marable page 12



Yesterday's men? see pages 10 and 11

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left

## Public sector workers under attack:

# ONE MILLION JOBS FACE TORY AXE



At least a million public sector workers could lose their jobs in the next few years if the Tories manage to get away with their plans to massively extend the "contracting out" of public services to private companies. Wages will be driven down. Full-time workers will become part-time, insecur-

ity will increase as groups of workers bid with each other's terms and conditions in a desperate attempt to keep their jobs. The unions could be seriously weakened.

Yet this massive attack on public sector workers has not received the

attention it deserves from the leaders of the labour and trade union movement. Instead, we have had a deafening silence.

To find out what the attacks involve and how we can begin the fight back, turn to the centre pages.

## The lie machine



A Nigerian immigrant, working hard, married, bringing up two small children and expecting another, is threatened with being deported back to Nigeria, and the British-born children with him. He is "illegal".

But the Sun thinks that what's mad is that a Labour council employed him. The real madness is Britain's ruthless, inhuman and racist immigration laws.



Because the churches have to try to get people moving — at least out of their homes and on to the pews — they now often seem more radical than opposition politicians who rely on passive voters enlisted by TV soundbites.



Countess of Capitalism? Lady Lash 'em? Short of persuading Margaret Thatcher to stay in America for good, John Major has apparently decided to pension her off to the House of Lords.

## Trident costs £33 billion

The Trident nuclear submarine programme will cost £33 billion by the time it is complete, according to the "Greenpeace" group. That is as much as one year's spending on the whole of the National Health Service — or as much as the Tories calculated all Labour's promises, vague or definite, short or long term, would cost.



Local people in Grosny, capital of the Chechen area of the Russian Federation, on the first day of the invasion by Russian troops late last year. There is still a stand-off between Yeltsin's army and the Chechen militia. The one million Chechens want independence;

Yeltsin wants to control the oil reserves. Chechen leader Dudayev has said, "When we resist, it is the beginning of the end of Russia".

# Tories plan to stifle strikes

The Tory Government's plans, announced in the Queen's Speech on 6 May, include drastic new laws against trade unions.

Unions wanting to

strike will have to carry out postal ballots, and then give the boss seven days' notice. The TUC will no longer be allowed to deal with inter-union disputes. Payment of union dues by automatic check-off from wages will be

banned unless each individual worker gives written approval every three years.

Bus and rail passengers, and other users of public services, will be able to sue the service workers' unions for costs suffered through unlawful strikes. This move ties in with the "Citizen's

Charter", which aims to set service-users against public service workers hard pressed by cuts, and to push forward contracting-out.

British Rail and British Coal will be privatised.

The Queen's Speech had no mention at all of unemployment.

## Student protest for 28 May

By Alice Sharp

No benefits, no jobs, nothing to live on over the summer: that's the prospect for hundreds of thousands of students all over Britain.

Left Unity is calling a lobby of Parliament on 28 May to demand the reinstatement of welfare benefits for students and adequate grants for all students.

The Tories have taken away students' right to claim any benefits during Christmas, spring and summer vacations, approximately 18 weeks a year. In previous years students, like everyone else, were entitled to claim Income Support and Housing Benefit.

If, for instance, you were studying in London, then you used to be able to get around £85 per week during the vacations. Now you get nothing.

The Tories froze the student grant and introduced top-up in 1990. The "top-up" loan has to be paid back on getting a job. It is meant to be sufficient, in combination with a grant that is worth around 25% less than it was in 1979, to live on for 52 weeks a year. On average, a student will get about £2,980 a year (£3,775 in London).

The Tories have also scrapped the materials grant, along with the travel grant and the minimum grant.

The cuts in education have meant extra pressure on library and other facilities. Lecture theatres are overcrowded, courses have been cut, colleges have merged, and jobs have been lost.

Now tuition fees — on and

off the Tories' agenda for years — could well be coming in.

Higher Education students are no longer privileged. Further Education students never have been. They get no

**Lobby of Parliament: 28 May, mid-day. For further details of the lobby and/or the end-of-term Campaign Conference, please phone Jill on 071-639 7967.**

grants or loans. Many go to college simply because there are no jobs. The Government's Youth Training Scheme has a big shortfall of places. It's college or the scrapheap for many: 16 and

17 year olds get no Income Support or Housing Benefit at all.

The hardship experienced by students last summer sparked off a term and a half of occupations, shutdowns, and demonstrations last winter. The leaders of the National Union of Students failed to support that rank and file action.

Left Unity has been arguing since it was set up for a grass-roots activist campaign to take on the Tories. Occupations, demonstrations, shutdowns and pickets are the way to win. Lobbying MPs is the mainstay of all the NUS leadership campaigns, but it should be only part of the fight back.

The lobby on 28 May — at a time when occupations and shutdowns are very unlikely,

On Monday 11 May, Judith Ward was freed after spending 18 years in jail wrongfully convicted for the M62 coach building.

A series of collapsed frame-ups — the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six, the Maguire family, the Tottenham Three, and Stephen Kiszko — have exposed the shallowness of British justice.

Yet it still remains possible for people to be convicted on confessions alone. The police still remain immune from public accountability. And Peter Taylor, who prosecuted Judith Ward and, according to Ward's supporters, concealed crucial scientific evidence, is now Lord Chief Justice.

because of exams and revision for exams — should be the start of a new campaign. Left Unity is also calling a conference at the end of term for students to discuss and organise this campaign for the start of the new academic year.

## Fortress Britain

Even the walls of Fortress Europe are not high enough for racist Tory Britain.

The European Community is making entry into Europe harder, but in return wants people to be able to move freely from country to country within the EC.

Britain is refusing, and insisting that it will still check everyone coming to Britain from other EC countries. A glance at the passport queues at any ferry or airport will fill in the unspoken part of Tory policy: "especially those with dark skins".

The Tories, who plan to reintroduce their anti-refugee Asylum Bill, are worried that other EC countries are less illiberal about immigration than Britain.

## New cuts

After government cutbacks in local authority cash, Staffordshire County Council is making cuts of about £12 million.

Education will lose £7 million, and social services £3 million.

452 teachers have received redundancy notices. Every school in the country will be affected by the cuts.

In social services, one of the most infamous of the cutbacks is the closure of a holiday home for handicapped people. This provided vital breaks for carers, and was extremely popular among the people that used to go there.

In a number of centres across the area, handicapped people do simple manual work like packing or labelling, often for big and famous companies. For this, sometimes working four or five days a week, some people get paid as little as 50p. This money is being cut back, and in many cases stopped altogether.

Such cuts are not by any means limited to Staffordshire. They will be stopped only by linking up every sector of the local authority workforce in a struggle against the government, and linking that up to all other struggles against attacks upon working people.

## Yeltsin's jails

Two Moscow anarchists have been jailed for defending themselves against two plain-clothes KGB agents.

Alexei Rodionov and Alexander Kuvznetov, aged 17 and 18, were arrested on 12 March 1991 on their way to a Democratic Union demonstration. The KGB claimed that the two had attacked them with a knife and a razor, but friends of the prisoners say that there is no evidence to corroborate the KGB's version of events.

The two were kept in such bad conditions that by the time of their trial Kuvznetov was too ill to leave the prison hospital.

## Trotskyist murdered in Moscow

On 29-30 April protest pickets were held in 12 cities around the world demanding a serious and energetic investigation of the murder of Martha Phillips, an American Trotskyist of Jewish origin murdered in Moscow.

Phillips, 43, was the leading spokesperson in Russia of the International Communist League (in Britain "Spartacist League"). She was found brutally strangled and stabbed on the morning of February 9, just hours before a major demonstration against the starvation policies of the Russian regime of Boris Yeltsin.

12 weeks later, Moscow authorities show no progress in tracking down those guilty of this abominable crime.

"From the moment Martha was found dead, many questions were raised about the manner and cause of her death," said spokesperson Alison Spencer. When Phillips' body was discovered by her comrades in the apartment where she had been staying, an attempt had been made to make it look as though she had died in her sleep.

Moscow militia and medical authorities were immediately called to the scene. Despite a visible chest wound which was

brought to their attention, these professionally trained personnel initially and falsely declared that Phillips had died of natural causes.

Suspicious of this sudden death, her comrades demanded an autopsy. When the autopsy was finally conducted two days later, authorities confirmed that Martha Phillips had indeed been murdered. Only then did the militia even open an investigation into the cause of violent death.

Esteban Volkov, Trotsky's grandson, has declared: "We still cannot say clearly the circumstances in which she was murdered, but there are many elements which sug-



Martha Phillips

gest that it was a political crime of reprisal against the Spartacist group. And the actions of the Russian militia leave a lot to be desired and raise many doubts."

**Stop the retreat!**

# Unite the left!

Encouraged by their April 9 General Election victory, the Tories are again on the warpath.

There is to be another round of anti-union legislation. Many thousands of public sector jobs are to be butchered. The reorganisation of the NHS continues: the Tories are now creating a two-tier system in which those who can not pay will be at the back of the queue for inferior treatment. The mines and railways are to be denationalised. Teachers and working class children face a savage Tory drive

to turn the clock back 30 years on education. Unemployment continues to rise. The poll tax is still on the statute books. And the Tories are probably in power for the next 5 years. We can not "wait for Labour". The labour movement needs to organise now to stop the retreat and to begin the fightback.

A number of conferences are planned in the next few months in which the labour movement and the left will try to take stock after Labour's fourth General Election defeat in succession. The Campaign Group of Labour MPs has such a conference coming up;

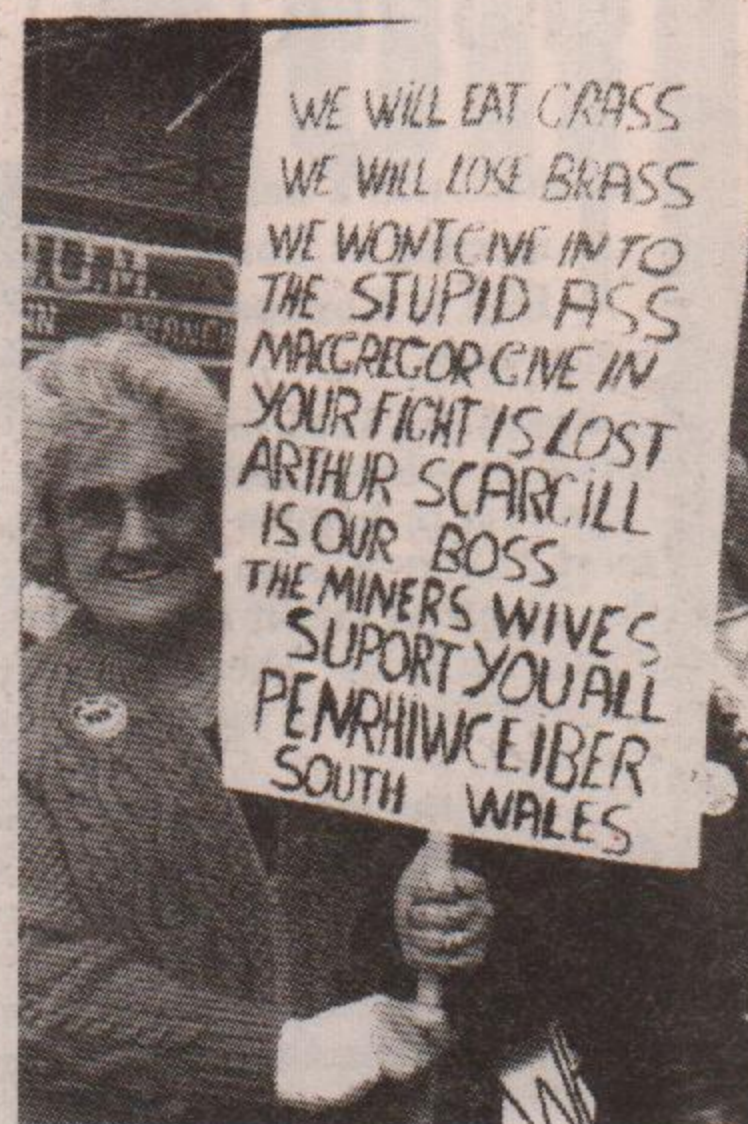
so have Tribune and the Kinnockite Labour Co-ordinating Committee. The Socialist Movement has a conference scheduled for September.

We need not many weak, sectional conferences but one properly organised, democratically-run conference, a great labour movement convention of those who want to organise and unite the working class fightback against this new Tory offensive.

We need to set up a representative organising committee able to organise such a conference.

In the early '80s the left - a Socialist Organiser initiative - united in the "Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy", and did great things in the Labour Party. We can do similar work now, organising the labour movement to *stop the retreat*.

The Campaign Group of MPs and, in the first place, Tony Benn, should now take the initiative in the setting up of a "Rank and File Organising Committee". We must "Stop the Retreat". For that, we must organise.



Lessons of the miners' strike: it's better to have fought and lost....

## Why the block vote should not be scrapped

"Block vote" are the dirtiest words in the dictionary to many socialists by the end of a Labour Party annual conference.

In debate after debate we hear strong and persuasive speeches for a left-wing motion, with the feeblest opposition. Then the General Secretaries get out their voting cards and the motion is crushed.

Now Bryan Gould and John Smith both hint, cautiously but definitely, at cutting back or abolishing the block vote. John

Edmonds, General Secretary of the General, Municipal and Boilermakers' Union (GMB), agrees.

Should we support them? No, for three reasons.

One. The way the block vote operates today should not be idealised, but it should not be caricatured either.

Not even the most bureaucratic General Secretary can do what he or she likes with the block vote. They are bound by their union's conference decisions and by the majority of their union delegation. The last general secretary to try to buck those rules was Sid Weighell of the NUR (now RMT), in the early 1980s, and he was forced out of his job as a result.

The block vote is no more democratic than the unions are generally, but no less so either. The way to make it more democratic is to make the unions more democratic - a task which is necessary anyway.

Two. The trade unions are not perfect organisations, but they are the mass organisations of the working class. Without the working class there can be no struggle for socialism; and without its organisations, the working class is not a force to change society, but only a collection of victims of exploitation.

If the Labour Party broke its links with the unions, it would transform itself into nothing better than a second-rate Liberal Party. In fact, John Edmonds doesn't want that. He wants to retain the trade unions' influence in the Labour Party. Only he wants that influence to be exercised more bureaucratically!



Democratise the block vote, don't destroy it

The block vote is embarrassingly public, and therefore open to accountability. John Edmonds wants everything stitched up behind closed doors in cabals of union leaders and Labour front-benchers.

Three. "One member, one vote", their alternative to the block vote, is not as democratic as it sounds.

Firstly, all Labour Party members have a vote *now* - which they can cast at a meeting. Secondly, they clearly mean "one member, one *postal* vote".

Democracy is about more than just voting. Look at America. There is more voting there than anywhere else in the world.

**"The trade unions are not perfect organisations but they are the mass organisations of the working class"**

Thousands of public officials, from local dog-catchers to the President, are directly elected, and even the main candidates for President are chosen by popular vote through the "primary" system.

Undoubtedly, it's better than the pre-Gorbachev USSR, with its compulsory 99.9% "votes" for bureaucratically-appointed rulers. But it's a very pale, corrupt form of democracy.

Politics is just a branch of show-

business. It has very little to do with informed debate on issues. Political campaigning consists of spending millions of dollars on TV advertising about your opponent's alleged sexual, medical, psychiatric or financial flaws.

Elections don't decide political issues in the USA. They just give some individuals a four-year lease to take part in the complex haggling among the powers-that-be (many of them, like big business bosses and Pentagon chiefs, unelected) who do decide. The people get a yes-or-no-vote on those individuals, that's all.

Parliamentary democracy in Western Europe is also limited. We too have our unelected powers-that-be in the boardrooms, the banks and the State machine. But there is more substance to West European democracy because of the existence of proper, organised, political parties, (the US Democrats and Republicans don't really count as such), and in particular of parties based on the organised labour movement.

People vote mostly for parties rather than individuals. And those parties have meetings, committees, delegates, conferences - imperfect but nevertheless real processes of collective debate, working out policies which cannot be discarded overnight without a kick-back.

Collective working class political organisation is the product of many decades of workers' struggles against the atomisation which the private-profit economy tries to impose on us. It has become

bureaucratised. But the answer is to democratise it, not to dissolve it back into a scattering of isolated individuals connected to politics only by the television screen and the postal vote.

"One member, one vote" in the Labour Party would mean policies decided by stitched-up, unelected, elite "policy commissions", and the members having a vote only to endorse the media-backed leaders.

The main reform needed in the block vote is not a reform in its formalities and mechanics, though those might be improved, but a comprehensive drive for democracy in the trade unions on which it is based. And the labour movement will never be ready to fight for socialism until it has carried through that drive.

*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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## Building from the ground up

There was a union meeting at Conway Hall in London the other week.

It was the kind of union meeting that isn't supposed to happen any more. There was no discussion of credit cards, holiday discounts, or cheap insurance deals. There was certainly no talk of "consensus" with employers or "partnership" in industry.

In fact the main speaker, Michael, seemed to take a distinctly dim view of employers. "We are virtuous, they are nothing. We become virtuous through struggle, through war".

When the discussion turned to the question of strategy, Michael stated: "We've got a strategy... total confrontation".

This was a meeting of the "Joint Sites Committee", a recently formed group of UCATT and TGWU activists in the London construction industry. They use only first names to minimise the risk of victimisation and blacklisting. No formal records or address lists are kept, so that the body is not a legal entity.

They have grown from a group of, literally, two or three building workers who got together at the end of last year, into a force that can now realistically talk about organising the 20 major sites in the capital and launching a "hot summer" of "forest fires" to defend wages this year.

In recent years there has been little or no organisation on most London building sites. Sweetheart deals with employers involving "convenors" being "elected" before the job even starts are commonplace — a legacy of the old right-wing leadership of UCATT. But, as Michael says, it wasn't simply the fault of the unions: "in the 'boom' times of the '80s, when some building workers were getting £70 or £80 a day, many weren't interested. When we stopped getting the pay — and conditions — we started wanting to organise".

The boom years of the '80s, when there were relatively rich pickings to be had on the London sites (provided you weren't too bothered about small matters like health and safety) are now definitely over: some labourers are earning as little as £124 for a 50 hour week, working 8am to 6.15pm.

The committee has been using leaflets, posters, individual contacts, surreptitious visits to sites and canteen meetings to slowly build up its strength on the sites. These are the methods of the early days of trade union organisation, but still as relevant as ever in an industry where the existing organisation has all but collapsed and employers will victimise an activists at the drop of a hard hat.

The main issue they have taken up so far has been pay, but, inevitably, other questions have also arisen. The JSC organised an indefinite strike across the Guys, Holborn Barrs, and Wimbledon sites against a rumoured pay cut. Management capitulated after one day, but a little later, Mark, one of the stewards who had led the strike, was victimised.

A picket was put on, and after three days he was reinstated with full pay. Mark commented: "it wasn't exactly a total victory... the job started winding down two weeks after I was reinstated. But what was important was the battle. Every time we stopped a delivery, every time a driver said, 'show me the way to the M1', that was a real victory."

Another steward has been sacked at the Vascoff site at Harrington Gardens/Gloucester Road. Chris, the steward in question, was one of the leaders of a six-hour canteen occupation that forced management to recognise the union. But two days later they hit back by sacking him for giving out UCATT membership forms.

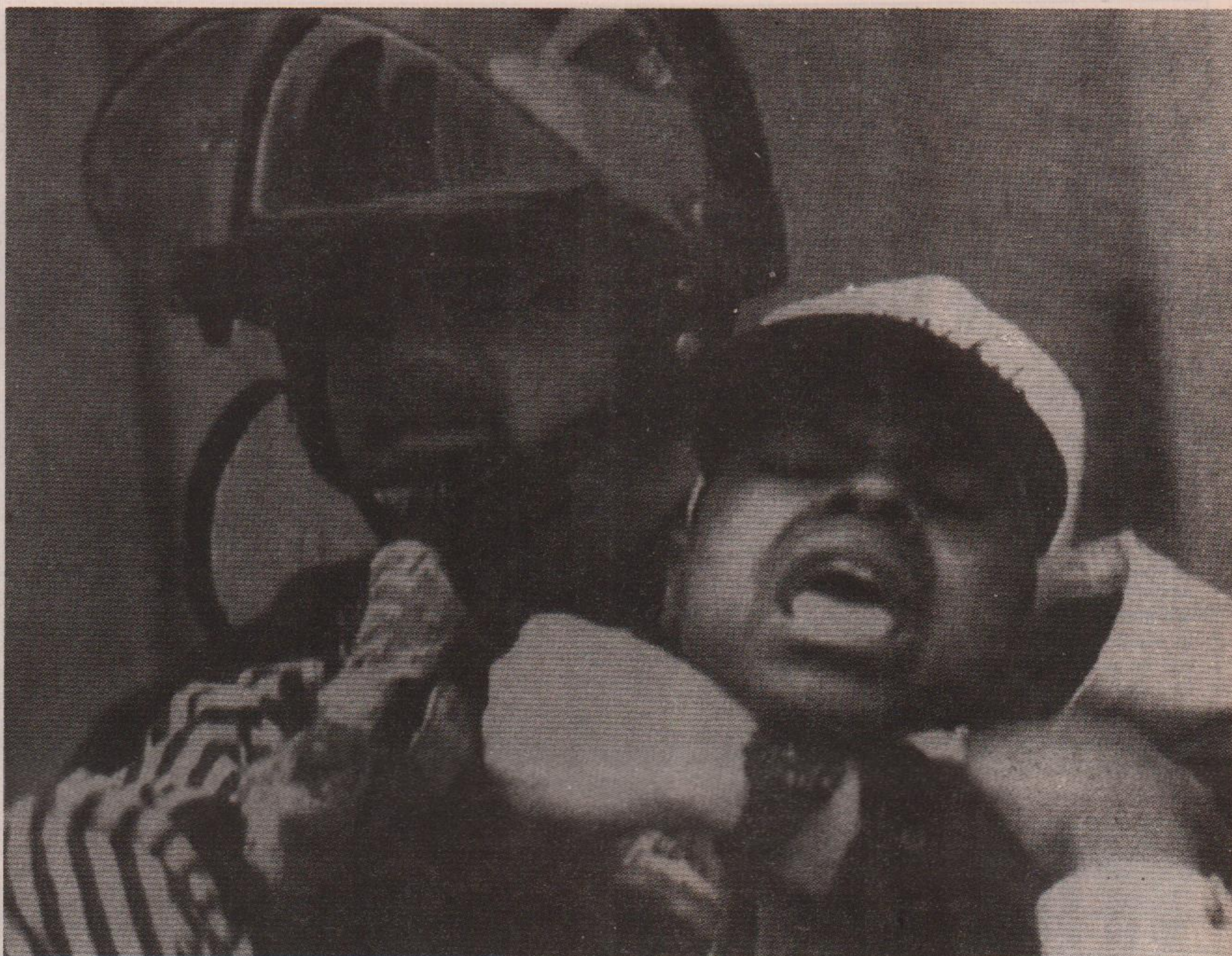
The next day a flying picket shut down the job and another nearby Vascoff site. The strikers used all the methods that have always been at the heart of effective trade unionism: flying pickets, solidarity strikes, and unofficial action. They won reinstatement of all the victimised stewards plus £55 pay for the strike period!

There are similarities with the early days of the Off-shore Industry Liaison Committee (OILC): a rank and file campaign for basic trade union organisation in the face of cowboy employers in a dangerous industry. As the official movement reels from the blow of the Tory election victory and ponders "the way forward", the JSC offers an inspiring alternative to the cowardice and grovelling of Willis, Jordan, and co.

In the words of Michael, at the Conway Hall meeting, "We are all links in an invisible chain... when a lorry driver who owes us nothing risks his job by refusing to cross our picket line, that is victory."

### INSIDE THE UNIONS

By Sleeper



"Los Angeles is the home of the 'choke hold', resulting in numerous deaths of black suspects"

# The fire next time

Barry Finger reports from New York

Dred Scott, the Scottsboro boys, Rodney King. These are the signposts charting a pilgrim's progress through American racism.

Responding to the spontaneous combustion after the Rodney King verdict, George Bush intoned that "We must understand that no one in Los Angeles or any other city has rendered a verdict on America".

That reality was denied twice. The Simi Valley jury denied the reality of 81 seconds preserved on film of an attempted police murder of a black man. Bush denied the reality of American racism, so deeply embedded that white jurors refused to believe their eyes.

White American had a rare glimpse at the reality of summary police "justice" as it's visited on African-Americans throughout the ghetto streets of this nation. Perhaps because of this and in the ever hopeful belief that such a glimpse would shock the conscience of the nation, blacks patiently allowed "the system" to run its course.

For months preceding and during the trial, despite almost daily provocations and despite constant television rebroadcast, not a match was struck, not a store window broken nor a business looted. The black community of Los Angeles, and not only of LA, held its collective breath.

But the outrage and frustration at the exoneration of the police, in effect a public, blank-check endorsement of official racist violence would prove

too much to bear. When the uprising was all over 58 people lost their lives, 9,500 were incarcerated and one billion dollars worth of damage was exacted. Central city Los Angeles was occupied territory patrolled by 10,000 members of the National Guard.

Only then did it dawn on the monumentally oblivious Justice Department that Rodney King's civil rights may have been violated. This "possibility" may be investigated.

The trial itself, and not just the verdict — an utter farce from beginning to

**"The LA inner city was a tinder box waiting to blow"**

end — will undoubtedly be studied for decades.

How was Simi Valley selected as a neutral venue? This is a town where less than 2% of the inhabitants are minorities. 2000 out of 8,300 of the LA's police force resides in Simi Valley.

Three members of the jury were National Rifle Association members. One juror later admitted that she would not have voted guilty under any circumstance. And the prosecution conceded that once the venue was selected this was the most favourable jury panel that could be concocted from the human material available!

The Los Angeles inner city was in any case a tinder box waiting to blow. Almost half the black families there live beneath the poverty line, 50% of the

youth are unemployed and on a per capita basis less is spent on ghetto social services and job retraining than on social services for the affluent of West LA.

The LA Police Department deploys the lowest ratio of cops to residents in the nation. What it lacks in numbers it compensates for in brutality. This is the home of the "choke hold" resulting in numerous deaths of black suspects. Chief Daryl Gates reasoned that such deaths occurred because the anatomy of blacks differs from that of "normal people".

This is the birthplace of SWAT teams, of motorised battering rams and of helicopter ghetto surveillance units — Gates' version of "community-oriented" policing practices.

Moreover, the King verdict came on the heels of a suspended sentence given to a Korean shop owner for murdering a 15 year old black teenager, also captured on the store's videotape security system and widely televised across the nation.

Tragically the Korean community became the scapegoat, with an encouraging wink from LA's blue knights, for white racism. This was not merely a fact of proximity. While the police protected white business enclaves, Koreatown was left to fend for itself.

But even this beleaguered community of small business people acquitted itself admirably compared to the official force of law and order. Gun-toting shop keepers — and it must be kept in mind that over 50% of such businesses are uninsured — patrolled on rooftops and behind barricades. Warning shots were fired in the air and not a

life was lost as a result of Korean self-defence. This is all the more remarkable considering the almost \$300 million in property loss sustained by this community.

What will be the political fallout from this? The 1965 revolts launched Ronald Reagan's gubernatorial career; the 1967 uprisings helped elect Richard Nixon. LA will evidently trigger a renewed assault on "liberalism", the all purpose culprit and champion of uppity blacks. We have learned from our President that Federal aid to the cities "hasn't worked in the last 10 years, hasn't worked in the last 30." Willie Horton, step aside!

Jack Kemp will be taken out of mothballs to devise a *laissez faire* plan for economic uplift of the poor based on China's Pearl River delta free enterprise zone.

Such social gibberish signifies that this nation's political elites have neither the moral wisdom, nor the political courage to come to grips with American's ongoing racist legacy. The flames of dispossessed rage have once again been ignited. The mere hint of such was enough to incite a mass exodus of whites on 1 May in cities such as New York, as if from Tokyo threatened by Godzilla.

Unless a consensus can be found for the eradication of racist inequality, whites too will come to recognise — as they did during their moment of panic — that as oppressors they too will have no rights that the black community will feel bound to respect. No justice for blacks will then have its grisly corollary in "street justice" towards whites.

## A victory for German workers

# German workers beat Kohl

By Bruce Robinson

The West German public sector workers have smashed through the pay targets set by the government to pay the costs of German reunification.

The strike was called off after the employers increased their offer from 4.8% to 5.4%, with more for the lower paid. While this is far less than the union claim of 9.5% and what could have been achieved, it is still a major victory which gives encouragement to a whole range of other workers now beginning strike action.

The public sector strike was solid throughout. At the end of last week 435,000 workers were out and the strike was growing while the negotiations were going on. As a result of the strike, thousands of new members have joined the public sector unions, with the main union OTV claiming 50,000 membership applications and several thousand in the Post and Rail.

Given the strength of the strike and the size of the original claim, the result of the negotiations is disappointing: there is considerable resistance among the rank and file to

acceptance.

If in money terms the result of the strike is disappointing, there can be no doubt of its massive positive impact throughout the German working class. It is a serious blow to the government's plans to pay for reunification on their backs.

Kohl put his credibility on the line in refusing to pay the public sector workers more than the official 4.8% rate of infla-

**"The strike was growing while the negotiations were going on. As a result of the strike, thousands of new members have joined the public sector unions."**

tion, and is now reduced to saying pathetically that the public sector settlement should not be taken as a basis for claims in the private sector.

The private sector is now the arena for the next big battles. In engineering, the employers have offered 3.3% in response to a claim of 9.5%. The union, IG Metall, has said



The strike was solid throughout

there will be a strike unless there is an offer of over 6%, while the employers have threatened a lockout if the strike goes ahead. These negotiations cover the strategic car and electronics industries.

Token stoppages have already taken place, involving 60,000 workers in Bavaria on Monday. While IG Metall has left the door open to some

last minute compromise, the employers are unlikely to offer more, and a ballot for an all-out strike is likely soon.

Similar disputes are brewing in the print, building and retail industries. In print, an 11% claim has been met with an offer of 3.3%. There have been warning strikes

**"The strike wave... marks a major break with the post-war consensus where a rising standard of living could be paid for out of high investment and productivity... Germany faces a much higher level of class struggle in the future."**

and spontaneous walkouts and the negotiations have broken down.

While the offer in the building industry has gone to arbitration, the union has called for a work-to-rule and overtime ban to bring pressure to bear. In the retail negotiations, the union has rejected an employers' offer of 5.3%.

The East has not taken part in the strikes. One reason is the promise that by this year they would reach 60% of western pay, the average being 44% now of western levels. With support from the government, the employers are now trying to tear up this deal, using the high unemployment rate to make the workers accept that it will take much longer before they reach the promised levels.

The government is increasingly unable to deal with the conse-

quences of the quick reunification, having won the election in 1990 on the promise that, after a short adjustment, there would be prosperity for all, east and west. There is therefore also a political crisis, which is most likely in the medium term to be resolved by a "Big Coalition", including the opposition Social Democrats.

This would not resolve the economic or political crisis, but would incorporate the main (if half-hearted) opposition

into taking responsibility for anti-working class measures in government.

The strike wave reflects massive discontent with rising inflation, taxes and unemployment. It marks a major break with the post-war consensus by which a rising standard of living could be paid for out of high investment and productivity.

Reunification has put an end to that and Germany faces a much higher level of class struggle in the future.

**'I see the Past, Present, and Future existing all at once'**

WILLIAM BLAKE



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## German bosses "humiliated"

**"A**fter eleven days, a humiliation", was the headline in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (German equivalent of the *Financial Times*). This is an abridged translation of their assessment of the public services strike.

"Maybe someone still understands it. At the end of the longest public services strike in the history of the Federal Republic, the negotiators present to the duped public a fine deal within a hair's-breadth of the arbitrators' wage formula.

"Obviously this wage round in the public service has been put under pressure by the thoughtlessness of the arbitrators. But if there was no possibility of avoiding the economically irresponsible proposal, then the employers should have accepted it immediately.

"After these eleven days the public services employers, as representatives of the citizens, have had to swallow a special humiliation. OTV leader Wulf-Mathies can carry the 5.4 per cent before her like a banner. She has no diffi-

culties about explaining to the union members why the strike fund had to be used: to force through this result and to teach the so-called master of the public service a lesson. The representatives of the State posed the question of power, and the trade union leader answered it.

"If power is unequally distributed, the system must be reformed. As much as possible should be privatised as quickly as possible, so that the weight and power of the OTV and the rail and post unions can be limited. We should see to it that the public service is manoeuvred to the end of the wages convoy in the calendar of the yearly round, so that it has no leading role in the determination of the going rate for the whole economy.

"Further lessons must be drawn. While fully upholding the freedom of association, the wages cartel [of trade unions] must be deprived of power. It does not fit in with the market economy. And it is too dear a price to pay for so-called social peace."



## What about some jobs?

**R**eactionary of the week is Tory MP Hartley Booth, sounding off about youth poverty. "We have to make sure that there is an incentive for 16 and 17 year olds to go and look for work". What would he suggest? Some jobs might come in useful.

**B**omber Harris, the man responsible for masterminding huge bombing raids on civilian targets in Germany in the last days of World War 2, saw the limited military value of what he was doing - and he justified his blood lust with the words "I do not personally regard the whole of the remaining cities of Germany as worth the bones of one British grenadier". Even Churchill, not a man noted for his humanity, referred to Harris's "acts of terror and wanton destruction". Now a group of sad old men who insist on wearing their medals have raised a statue to Harris on the Strand, causing a diplomatic uproar. Then up pops Andrew Roberts in the *Evening Standard* - foam-mouthed, he demands that a statue to Harris should be "erected in the largest cities in Germany and Austria". Now there's an idea, especially with all the public urinals shut during the German workers' recent strike.

**A** downward spiral away from politics, a group of people cut off from the labour movement, under-educated and hitting out desperately at the system. No, not the LA rioters, but Socialist Worker.

"When black and white, Latino, Korean, Vietnamese and Jews unite and fight it becomes easier to focus on the real targets. Thankfully... that process began in Los Angeles last week".

Which Los Angeles was that? Certainly not the one in California where Korean shopkeepers guarded their livelihoods with Uzi sub-machine guns and the orthodox Jewish community fled en masse. No, this must have been a simpler LA someplace else.

"Leaders have no answers", proclaims a *Socialist Worker* headline about the Democratic Party - but looking through the article for any suggestion as to building working class unity, you realise that Socialist Worker might as well be writing about themselves.

Let go of your principles, comrade, I think I see another recruit.

**I**n Germany the neo-fascist Republican Party has found a new source of recruits - erstwhile members of the ruling East German Socialist Unity Party (SED), and particularly cadres from the armed forces.

According to the weekly "Der Spiegel", the ex-stalinists find that they have a lot in common with the Republicans - "a massive rejection of the liberal west, a preference for authoritarian practices, patriotic phrases and social demagoguery".

One ex-comrade of the SED is quoted as saying "the Republican programme contains many points for which I have always fought", while an East German ex-army officer recruited to the Republicans remains true to his long-standing ideal of "Prussian virtues, like order, discipline and punctuality".

So much for Marxism-Leninism and "real existing socialism".

**H**ave a good gloat department: according to the *Sunday Times* survey of the country's 300 richest people, the great success stories of the Thatcher revolution have run into a spot of financial trouble. Gone is former top-tenner, Gerald Ronson, as are the Saatchi brothers. Some of the most infamous speculators who have made vast sums without having visibly made anything have gone - men like Stuart Lipton and Peter de Savary. And disappearing below the waves - in more senses than one - is Robert Maxwell: if he had still been with us, he might have qualified as the world's first negative billionaire. An unlikely candidate for the poorest man in the world.

**T**he Socialist Movement newspaper, "socialist" faces a major financial crisis. With outgoings of £12,000 an issue and income of £4,700, it currently has a deficit of over £41,000. Sales, which started out at 11,000 an issue, are around 2-2,500.

The paper has gone monthly, and its publishers have had talks with the equally ailing "Morning Star".

It's another sad proof - after "News of Sunday", the "Leveller" and many other attempts - that being "independent", "non-aligned", and "non-sectarian" is no magic short-cut to a mass left-wing audience.

# Still taking the Cap'n's Shilling

## PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

**B**efore Robert Maxwell's last big flotation, no-one knew the full extent of his criminal megalomania. But plenty of people knew about some of it and most of them kept quiet until his watery demise.

Since then, there have been plenty of recriminations, mainly directed at the bankers, politicians and power-brokers who grovelled at the Court of the Cap'n. But the journalists who willingly took the Maxwell shilling seem to think that they are exempt from culpability - indeed Mirror journals have led the self-righteous chorus baying for the blood of Maxwell's business accomplices.

Roy Greenslade was better placed than most to expose Maxwell: he was editor of the Mirror for 14 months before the old crook took the big dip. He knew, for instance, that Maxwell had fiddled the Mirror's £1 million "spot the ball" competition so that no reader could win.

He had sufficient doubts about the Mirror pension fund to withdraw his own money from it. Yet it is only now that Greenslade deigns to let the rest of us in on what he knew about the Cap'n's life of crime - which gives his book "Maxwell's Fall" a distinct odour of hypocrisy.

The charitable view is that Greenslade was (and it) a fundamentally decent journalist who relished the challenge of reviving the Mirror to something approaching its Cudlipp heyday and who naively believed he could resist the interference of the tyrant. This is the view that most Mirror journalists take and there may be some truth in it: when he was sacked the Mirror NUJ chapel voted 139 to nil in his support. Paul Foot commented, "Roy was absolutely the best kind of editor for

*"Before Robert Maxwell's last big flotation, no-one knew the full extent of his criminal megalomania. But plenty of people knew about some of it and most of them kept quiet until his watery demise."*

someone like me. He's never rebuked me for opinions that have frequently been at odds with the paper. It's a rotten day for

the Daily Mirror

But Greenslade's book, for all its fascinating anecdotes and generally self-justifying tone, tells a different story. By his own admission, Maxwell's offer of the editorship met Greenslade's "lust for this chance". By his own admission Greenslade connived in the "spot the ball" scam (after speaking of resignation "only to my wife"). By his own admission he allowed the Mirror to be used to plug Vitachieve, a quack vitamin supplement in which Maxwell had a direct financial interest.

Perhaps Greenslade was, initially, motivated by high ideals. But the circumstance of the book's very publication attest to baser motives. Early on in their relationship, Maxwell had told Greenslade, "Roy, I want to make you a millionaire" adding "please don't defy me all the time". When Maxwell finally sacked him, Greenslade demanded a pay off: the Cap'n agreed, but on condition that his ex-employee signed a document preventing him from speaking about his sacking for six months. It later turned out that an apparently innocent clause in the agreement bound Greenslade from ever saying anything which could bring the Mirror board "into disrepute". Greenslade describes this six-figure sum (tax-free) as "hush money".

Now that the monster is dead, Roy Greenslade has the privilege of breaking his vow of silence and keeping



Maxwell

the Cap'n's shilling.

The book is dedicated to "all those Mirror staff, past and present, who were fooled and fleeced by Maxwell". The dedication concludes with the moving exhortation to Mirror staff not to forget the "thousands of other Maxwell employees who endured a similar fate". Tom Bower, author of the excellent "Maxwell The Outsider" commented on this in the *Guardian*: "Well, not quite. Unlike the Mirror's employees, most Maxwell Communications employees have actually lost their entire pensions and unlike the journalists those employees were both denied the immediate means to sound the alarm (namely through fellow journalists) and did not preen themselves by writing sanctimonious editorials condemning all the other ills of the world".

## Lessons from Glasgow and Liverpool

### THE POLITICAL FRONT

By Harry Tuttle

**T**he 'Scottish Militant Labour Party' won two seats on Glasgow District Council last Thursday. Tommy Sheridan won Pollok ward. He is still imprisoned for his part in successfully stopping a warrant sale in Glasgow. In the other two seats where they stood, SMLP came a close second.

As well as the 'official' SMLP, two Militant supporters, Jim MacVicar and Chic Stevenson, stood as independent Labour candidates backed by their ward parties - and both won, easily.

What are socialists to make of this side-show? Militant will doubtless hail their victory as an epic leap forward.

A more sober assessment needs to be made. It should be clearly stated that the main fault for the split in the Labour Party in Glasgow lies with the corrupt stalinoid clique that runs the

City. MacVicar and Stevenson were widely supported and selected by their wards, but both were expelled and had candidates imposed on their wards.

The ruling group has been craven towards the Tories, reserving its bile for poll tax non-payers in general and for the Strathclyde Anti-Poll Tax Federation in particular.

But now is precisely *not* the time to give up on the fight within the Labour Party. Of course, it is impossible to fight against the witch-hunt of socialists in the Glasgow Labour Party if you voluntarily absent yourself from the Party - and, despite their assertions to the contrary, this is what Militant have largely done: they have not been thrown out, they have dropped out.

There is now an urgent need to defend the trade union links of a working class party in Scotland, particularly as whole swathes of the "left" - led by yuppy "leftist", George Galloway - seek an accommodation with the superficially radical, but basically bourgeois Scottish National Party.

Meanwhile the local election results in Liverpool

such as those in Glasgow (and last year's Liverpool elections) can be.

In Liverpool, the Liberal Democrats won an extra ten seats on Liverpool City Council. Six of the gains were due to a split in the Labour vote.

22 of the 34 seats up for election in Liverpool were contested by independent "Labour" candidates in addition to the official Labour candidates. This duplication of "Labour" candidates was a product of purges by the Labour right wing, combined with "Militant"'s recent sectarian turn.

The independent "Labour" candidates often did very badly, polling only a few votes - but enough to allow the Liberal Democrats to come up through the middle.

Of the 22 independent "Labour" candidates only one won, in Everton. "Militant"'s Walton by-election candidate of last July, Lesley Mahmood, a sitting councillor in Netherley ward, lost her seat.

By calling themselves "Labour" candidates, "Militant" merely reinforced voters' suspicions that left-

wingers are incorrigible liars. Voters saw the "Militant" ploy of standing candidates under a "Labour" banner as a con-trick to deceive them into voting for the wrong candidate.

It is a sign of "Militant"'s growing estrangement from the real world that their supporters seemed to believe that their candidates really were "Labour" candidates! They used the name "Labour", according to one of their campaigners, "out of loyalty to the Labour Party!"

Yet when Liberal-Democrat victories over right-wing Labour candidates were announced, "Militant" supporters cheered enthusiastically and sang "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life".

Any chance of re-unifying the labour movement in Liverpool is now off the agenda for years to come. "Militant" and the "Liverpool Independent Labour Party" have driven themselves deeper into a sectarian cul-de-sac, and the Labour right wing is now baying for blood after the Liberal Democrat gains arising out of split Labour votes.

# AGAINST THE TIDE

The Left we have and the Left we need:

# The left and Ken Livingstone

AGAINST THE TIDE



By Sean Matgamna

**"Vote Livingstone? I'd sooner vote for Smith!"** - the editor of a small left-wing paper speaking to *Socialist Organiser* after Ken Livingstone announced his "candidacy" for leader of the Labour Party

**"Back Livingstone!"** - Labour Briefing

**"I have been a supporter of proportional representation for many years - Ken Livingstone"**

**"No to proportional representation!"**

**- Point One of the Campaign Group of MPs' platform imposed on Ken Livingstone, on the basis of which he sought support for Labour leader.**

**Labour lost the election because of its progressive taxation policy - Ken Livingstone**

**"Without solid commitments to progressive taxation, we will not be able to shift resources from the rich to the poor. Labour will lose its core constituency and its political identity"** - Point Four of the Campaign Group of MPs' platform for Ken Livingstone.

The undemocratic rule that a candidate for Labour Party leader must be nominated by 55 MPs has prevented Ken Livingstone from actually standing in the leadership election - as everyone knew it would. There might have been a serious left-wing leadership campaign around Benn - now there is nothing.

Livingstone's continuing "campaign" will be a few meetings - and a column or two in the *Sun* - at which Livingstone will put his own ideas. Mainly, he will be putting his peculiar idea that the Tories were, after all, right and that Labour's tax proposals in the General Election would have penalised workers (see *Socialist Organiser* 521).

The only surprise has been in the number of Livingstone's nominations. Though there are over 30 MPs in the Campaign Group, which "endorsed" Livingstone, only 13 MPs nominated him!

This ceases to be surprising when you know that there were only 7 MPs at the meeting which endorsed him and that only 4, including Livingstone himself,

voted for Livingstone: 2 voted against, and one (Tony Benn) abstained. Like everything else in this campaign, the "support" of the Campaign Group for Livingstone was not real; it was all sham, all trifling pretence.

Evidently, the views *Socialist Organiser* has expressed on Livingstone are not as "extreme" or as "unrepresentative" as our isolation on the left in giving public voice to them might lead you to believe!

Privately, very few people on the left - inside or outside the Labour Party - have a favourable word for Livingstone, or expect anything good from him, now or in the future. Privately, most people on the left say of Livingstone what we say of him, that he is an unreliable, self-serving cynic with few scruples and very flexible loyalties. Some add their own touches of personal venom. Yet, publicly, they rush to anoint his self-selected candidacy as a candidacy of "the left".

Where privately most of them agree with us about Livingstone, publicly they mutter darkly about our "sectarianism", or "self-indulgence".

When you take the almost unanimous public support the left

chance of a "Draft Benn" campaign, occupying preemptively the room of a serious and genuinely left-wing campaign.

- They knew that he might wind up throwing any support he had gathered to Gould. In fact, by nods and winks now, by repeatedly saying in every speech he makes that Gould is better than Smith, he is already campaigning for Gould.

- They knew that his ideas on Labour's tax proposals in the Election campaign - the political core of his "candidacy" - are just an ill-thought out, shallow, left gloss on Tory General Election propaganda.

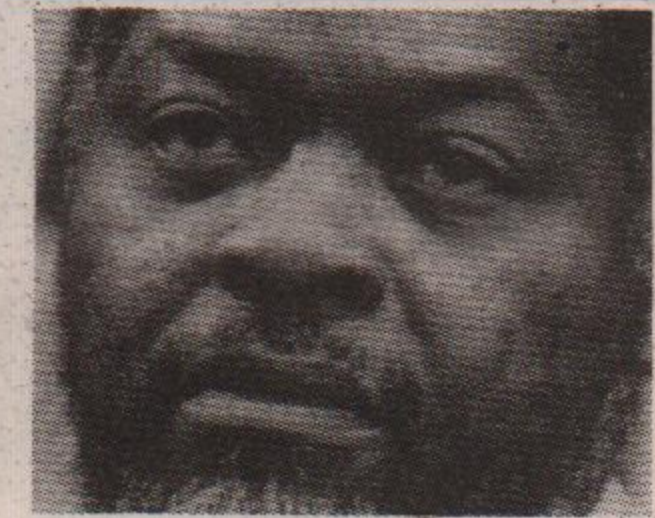
- They knew that he was backed by, and eagerly accepted the backing of, the *Sun*, which boasts, and not entirely ridiculously, that it won the Election for the Tories.

More than that, they knew Livingstone's record as Greater London Council leader:

- Retreat after scuttling retreat before the Tories.

- High taxes for workers (rates).

- Pioneering *Marxism Today* Lib-Lab politics with his campaign against GLC abolition which consisted of lobbying the House of Lords in company with Tory bigwigs like Edward Heath.



**"We really should have stood Benn and Skinner as our ticket but they wouldn't stand."**

Bernie Grant

expressed for Livingstone's "candidacy" - which everyone knew could not be a real candidacy at all - and compare it with what most of them really think of Livingstone, what strikes you most is how much sheer hypocrisy there is on the left now! The quotations at the head of this article illustrate the confusion and instability as well as the hypocrisy which vitiates the left now.

They know Livingstone and his record. Probably, without exception, they think Livingstone is a shyster.

- They knew he had no chance of breaking through the "55 MPs" barrier to become a candidate.

- They knew that by rushing in with his pseudo-candidacy Livingstone short-circuited any

They recall, as we do, Livingstone's public account of his GLC record: "The cynical soft-sell approach" (*Tribune*, 19 July 1985).

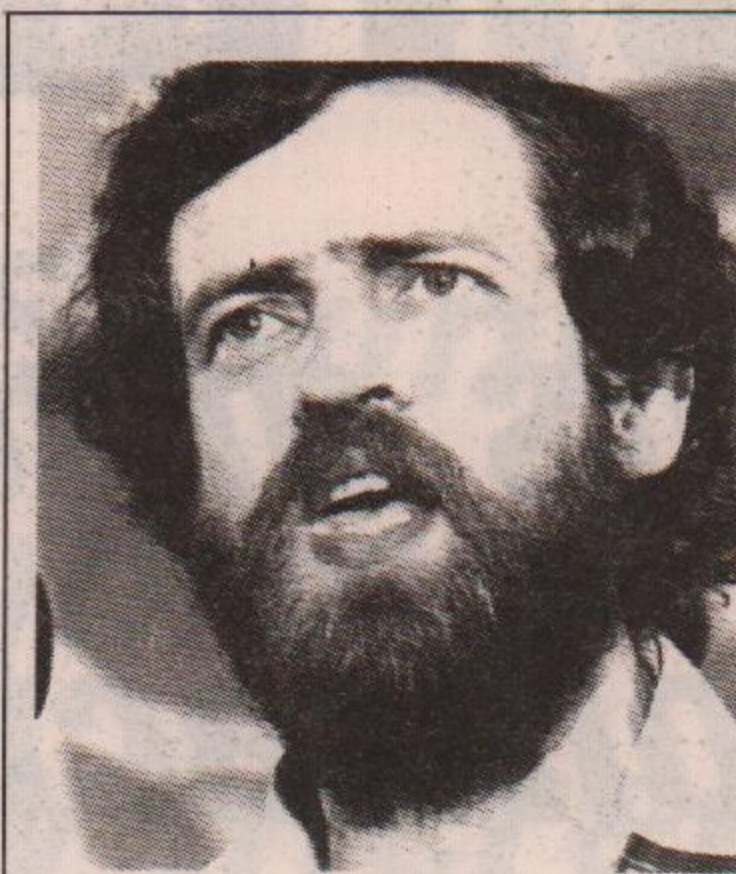
They know that by his weak-kneed policies on the GLC at a crucial turning-point for the labour movement - during the miners' strike - Livingstone did more than Neil Kinnock to bring down demoralising, needless defeat on the labour movement: all Kinnock did was draw his own conclusions from the consequences of the working class defeats Livingstone had helped bring about in the early '80s.

They know that in the struggle around the GLC, Livingstone openly broke with the left. He came back to the left as an MP only because it suited his career as a media "personality".

They know he worked for years with the Libya and Iraq financed Workers' Revolutionary Party, which subsidised the paper *Labour Herald* for him. Some know he continues to have strong links with one of the WRP splinters: it is no secret. They know that when GLC leader Red Ken kissed the Queen's hand as she opened the Thames Barrier, he was simultaneously holding hands, so to speak, with people who were kissing a different part of Colonel Gaddafi's anatomy.

They know that Livingstone carries on the WRP tradition of casually denouncing his enemies on the left - for example, the *Leninist* in the General Election - as "agents of MI5". (Though, come to think of it, Livingstone has never told us who, besides Gerry Healy of the WRP, gave him his "security clearance".)

They know that Livingstone uses his column in the *Sun* to snipe at sections of the left - for example, he has attacked the



Solid left-wingers, like Tony Benn, Bernie Grant or Jeremy Corbyn, could have rallied the left against Smith and Gould, at least on a limited range of issues. Livingstone's jumping in turned the left's intervention into a farce

SWP at least three times this year so far.

And so on and so on.

Now, you might remember and say all these things about Livingstone and yet, nevertheless, "support" him because he already was the leader, or the catalyst, of a left-wing movement better than he himself is; you might get involved in such a movement and try to help it outgrow Livingstone's political charlatanism. That is what *Socialist Organiser* would have done had Livingstone represented such a movement.

But nothing like that was going on or likely to be going on around Livingstone's pseudo-"candidacy". We repeat: Livingstone's jumping in may have played some part in heading off the development of such a movement, around Benn.

Those on the left who backed Livingstone can not plead that they were supporting a left-wing movement, or an honest left-wing candidate, or even a careerist candidate who, for his own reasons, promoted left wing ideas. There is no movement around Livingstone; Livingstone is neither honest nor genuinely left wing; the key ideas on which he is campaigning are not left wing.

Those who rushed to back Livingstone rushed to back someone they know will sell them out - perhaps within a few short weeks, to the Gould campaign - if and when he thinks it will advance the cause of Ken Livingstone, as he sold out the GLC fight in the mid-'80s. They know that the only "movement" Livingstone has behind him is a small cluster of "left" sects: the strange Stalinoid grouping *Socialist Action*, *Briefing* and the elderly legions of the *Morning Star*.

They jump in to support Livingstone - and inevitably to help push the "tax" and other nonsense he is talking - when there is no movement around him, helping this disarmingly candid charlatan help rebuild his credibility in the labour movement.

What does all this tell you about the state of the left?

The Livingstone affair reveals the left now to be:

- Politically confused and disorientated,

- Desperately lacking in self-definition and self-confidence,

- Politically eager to "purchase" even blatant charlatanism - like Livingstone's stuff on taxes - if it promises some "action",

- Incapable of taking itself seriously.

What kind of a "left" is this!

Take, for example, *Briefing*. Throughout the early '80s Livingstone led *Briefing* around by the nose (and they have been at a

loss to know what to do with their nose since Livingstone let go of it: most of the old guard have retired or half-retired). Mesmerised in the early '80s by their own fantasies that the left was "Taking Power" in local government, they followed Livingstone, endlessly making excuses and half-excuses for him, through all his GLC zigzags and sell-outs right up to the point in 1985 when he broke with the left.

They never, as far as we know, seriously criticised their own role in all this, but they were all the more fierce in their criticism of Livingstone in 1985. They know as much as we do about Livingstone! But, still, they back him. To form a sharp judgment of your own, hold to it, and speak and act on it - that, comrades, is sectarianism!

*Briefing*, now as in the '80s, when it fawned on the "powerful" Livingstone, is no more than a small group of friends who like to sniff around "power" and "influence", and are usually willing, like all groupies, to pay the price. Yet *Briefing's* approach, here as in the past, is symptomatic of the "left": it is part of the explanation why someone like Livingstone can, despite his recent past, still be taken seriously on the left.

**"Livingstone did more than Kinnock to bring defeat on the labour movement... all Kinnock did was draw his own conclusions from the working class defeats Livingstone helped bring about in the early '80s."**

People who call themselves left and yet behave like this will never rebuild a real left - a "left" confident enough to learn from its own experiences and honest enough to draw the indicated lessons from them.

Such a left might support a movement led by a Livingstone: it would not rush to endorse a Livingstone in whom it does not believe, with whom it does not agree, and who stands at the head of nothing substantial!

It would be a left which would not be afraid to tell itself the truth.

We in the Alliance for Workers' Liberty exist to promote, develop, regroup and build such a left. We tell the truth about Livingstone's "left" sideshow at the carnival of farce the Labour Party establishment made of the Labour leadership contest. It is an irreplaceable part of our work now.

**LEAGUE IS IN LEAGUE**

A SURPRISINGLY large number of Socialist Workers Party members read *The Sun*.

They have written to me complaining since I exposed the fact that the re-launched Anti-Nazi League is a front organisation for the SWP. But now my expose has been confirmed by Peter Alexander, a leading member of the SWP and former ANL national organiser.

**Party stirs to thug tactics**

MY column in last week's *Sun* exposing the Anti-Nazi League as a front for the Socialist Workers' Party has stirred things up. I revealed the SWP had conned people into signing up for the ANL by claiming famous name supporters who had never agreed to join.

Ken Livingstone has repeatedly used his column in the racist, sexist, anti-union *Sun* to attack the left. Above: three of his attempts (15, 22 January; 26 February) to "expose" the Anti-Nazi League. For Livingstone, these "exposés" serve to help the Anti-Racist Alliance (in which he is active) by doing down a left-wing rival. For *Sun* readers, force-fed every day with newspaper racism, they probably only confirm the notion that all anti-racist and left-wing activity is to be distrusted.

# The Tory war on public

## Millions of jobs to be "contracted out"

By Angela Sweet

The re-election of the Tories has paved the way for the wholesale contracting out of public services presaged in last November's misnamed White Paper, "Competing for Quality".

The thrust of the White Paper is to reduce the public sector to the role of purchasing private sector services (with a policy making elite at the centre).

The White Paper outlines in careful formulas what Graham Mather, Director of the right wing Institute of Economic Affairs, explicitly stated some five years back: "The Government of Britain is moving towards a series of contracts, in which a core of fewer than 10,000 civil servants will specify and buy public services from outside agencies, private contractors, and consortia of former public sector managers".

Contracting out and privatisation have long been features of the Tories' rundown of the public services. But the latest proposals are not just more of the same. The attack now looming will not leave a single part of the public sector untouched: in introducing the White Paper, former Treasury Minister Francis Maude promised the Tories would "Extend competition in the provision of public services further and faster than ever before right across the public sector".

The Tories plan to extend central government contracting out from "traditional support services" to "new areas, closer to the heart of government". The White Paper identifies "promising areas for contracting out" in virtually every sphere of central government.

In local government the Tories want "to ensure all local taxpayers reap the benefits" (!) of contracting out - irrespective of the wishes of the local elec-

**"But the latest proposals are not just more of the same. The attack now looming will not leave a single part of the public sector untouched"**

torate. They intend to force councils to submit more manual and direct services to "competition" under existing legislation and to extend contracting out to professional services which are underpinned by large numbers of basic administrative staff (architecture, engineering and property management); and in the "longer term" to the "core" areas such as legal, financial, personnel, and computing services.

Health Authorities and NHS trusts will be required to follow

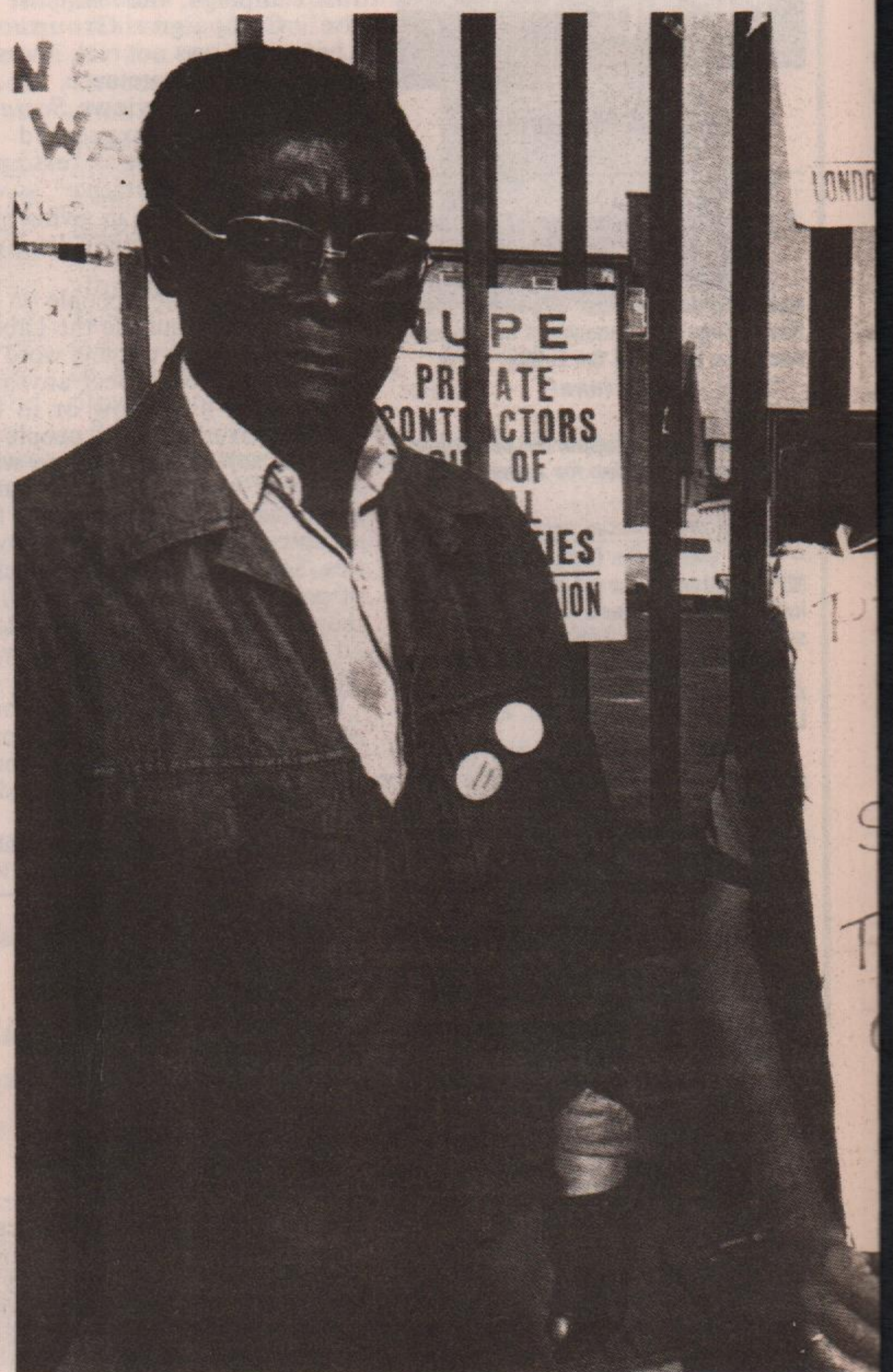
a "good practice" guide, setting out their "market testing plans in annual reports" and reporting on the progress in implementation. A national data base on awarded NHS contracts is being established.

The government issued "guidance" in December stating, "in general... it is anticipated that (health authorities) will subcontract" non-emergency transport for patients, and urging them to employ a variety of services including the NHS Ambulance Service, private ambulance operators, vehicle hire, taxis and voluntary car services", taking into account "the availability of private or public transport" and "cost".

If the Tories succeed in their plans, service users will suffer; hundreds of thousands of public sector jobs will be destroyed; the pay and conditions of over a million workers will decline; many thousands will be cast into poverty now and in their old age; a major social change will have been effected as workers are moved from historically secure to immensely insecure employment; and a major base of British trade unionism will have been cracked.

The Queen's speech has left no room for doubt about the Tories' intentions: "...the Citizen's Charter... will be at the centre of decision making... throughout the public service."

With the decline of manufacturing industry, the public sector is now the biggest base



Wandsworth refuse collectors, first victims of contracting-out

for trade unionism than the private sector. NALGO, CoHSE, NUPE (all due to merge as UNISON), UCATT, T&G, G&M, CPSA, NUCPS and other unions are all heavily based on public sector members.

If the public sector is broken up into competing elements, some at least will be fighting for their survival. The Tories know this, and they are determined to break up the public sector "monopolies" in order to break the unions resting on them.

Trade unions which have recruited and organised public sector workers on a relatively easy basis will not find things so easy with private contractors who are vehemently anti-union and whose contracts are dependent on cutting labour costs and keeping the workforce docile.

Breaking up of trade unions, and refusal to recognise them, has been a central feature of contracting out to date. Indeed in some cases (civil service computing, notably with the employment of CFM and EDS) it seems to have been the major factor for contracting out.

Even where work remains in-house, contracting-out squeezes serious trade unionism. The day after the General Election the Financial Times was explicit "In practice the ability of unions to

hold individual councils to ransom has been considerably weakened by compulsory competitive tendering. Council or health authority manual workers must now work to targets they agree in contracts with the employer. If they take industrial

**"The day after the General Election the Financial Times was explicit. In practice the ability of unions to hold individual councils to ransom has been considerably weakened by compulsory competitive tendering."**

action and fail to hit those targets, they may lose the contracts to the private sector.

"In the 1991 Liverpool strike, the council's manual workers abandoned their action before the white-collar staff, after losing some contracts to outside companies. It is unlikely that white collar staff will be able to hold out as long as they did in Liverpool with the imminent extension of compulsory competitive tendering to their jobs. The formation of Unison, increasing as it does the potential for abuse of union power, make it essential that compulso-

## The quality swindle

The Tories want all public sector workers to experience the joy of "competition", not just cleaners, security guards, porters and manual workers.

The contracting out of profession services (and their administrative support) will not be easily justified just by reference to "price": private sector accountants, for instance, tend to be a lot more expensive than civil service auditors. Hence the talk of competing for .... quality!

By tying "quality" to talk of "no hiding place for the second rate" the Tories hope to deflect criticism of the rundown of the public services onto public sector workers, and to enhance the prospects for contracting out some services despite the private sector being more expensive.

The government wanted to include a clause in the Local Government Bill stipulating quality as a criterion for awarding contracts for white collar services but not for manual services. The clause was defeated last December in the Lords, which

preferred quality to be taken into account for all services, but the government seems intent on having its way.

By hook or by crook the Tories intend to contract out as much of the public sector as possible. Meanwhile in-house contracts will be won by piling on the pressure on public sector workers. No public sector worker is safe.

The public sector has long been a relatively stable source of employment. Even the Thatcher years have left the great majority relatively untouched. (There have been few compulsory redundancies).

If the Tories are allowed to proceed unchallenged now they will place over one million workers into conditions of extreme uncertainty. People will find their employment hanging on one customer (the council, a hospital and so forth) for a one, two or three year contract.

Over and over again, workers will find their pay and conditions under the pressure of the tendering

process. These workers will not be manufacturing goods which can be sold to one customer or another.

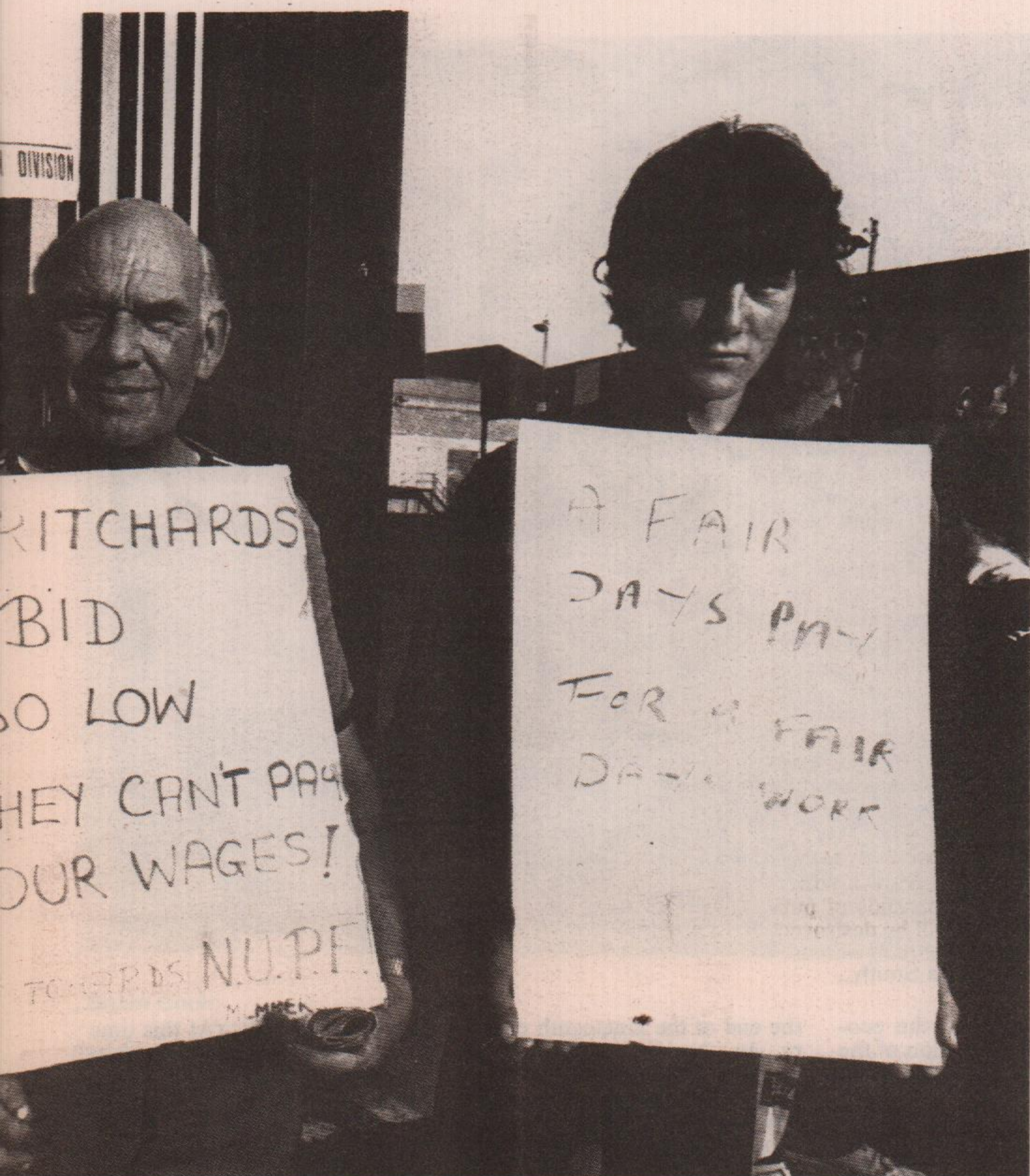
Either the particular public sector body will continue to require their service, or they will be redundant, in many cases on minimum terms rather than those currently applying in the public sector. The competition will turn to be competition between workers - constantly under pressure to freeze or cut their conditions to retain employment.

In whole areas of the country public sector organisations are now the largest employer. Throwing thousands of public sector workers onto the dole, boosting the ranks of the unemployed, will increase the pressure on the employed.

If public sector workers lose this fight, then the pay and conditions of other workers will be dragged down with them. The Tories will cut wages and conditions for all workers, producing a pool of relatively disciplined, mobile and low paid white collar and blue collar workers.



# Public sector workers



## "Saving money" by increasing exploitation

**C**ontracting-out "saves money" by increasing exploitation

In their publication "Disaster for Quality" the Public Services Privatisation Research Unit (PSPRU) have pinpointed the source of the Tories' alleged savings from "competition" - the smashing up of the conditions previously won by workers in the contracted-out services.

The PSPRU estimate a "net loss" of 20,000 NHS full-time ancillary jobs since contracting-out began in 1983. But the "net loss" is the figure they arrive at after taking into account jobs subsequently "created" by the companies winning the contracts.

The ACTUAL number of full and part time ancillary jobs lost from the NHS is 111,000, most of it directly attributable to contracting out.

2PS estimate that compulsory competitive tendering was responsible for many of the 114,000 manual job cuts in local authorities in the three years to September 1991, as councils made cuts to prepare for the commencement of compulsory tendering in April 1989.

10,000 cleaning jobs were cut from the civil service between 1980 and 1991, with only partial "replacement" in the private sector and a dramatic worsening of conditions for already low-paid workers.

Contractors will continue to cut the number of workers employed to provide a service -

only now their target area will be the whole public sector and the potential job loss is astronomical. Contractors will continue to smash up conditions because that is how they minimise prices to win contracts.

Private contractors have typically cut the hours of part-time workers to below 16 per week, in order to rob them of statutory employment rights (including maternity pay and the right to return after maternity leave; redundancy pay and employment protection) and national insurance rights (statutory sick pay, state pensions and unemployment benefit).

Only eight out of the 83 civil service cleaning contracts employ cleaners for more than 16 hours.

With full-time workers the "incentive" is to increase hours to enable fewer staff to undertake the work for less cost than the public sector. Refuse collection contractors (for example Biffa, BFI) and security firms (like Centurion) have typically resorted to longer hours to reduce "costs". The effect is to ratchet up the pressure of work - not just on those whose hours have been increased but on those who have to work alongside them. Thus the cuts in NHS ancillary workers have inevitably increased the pressures on nursing staff.

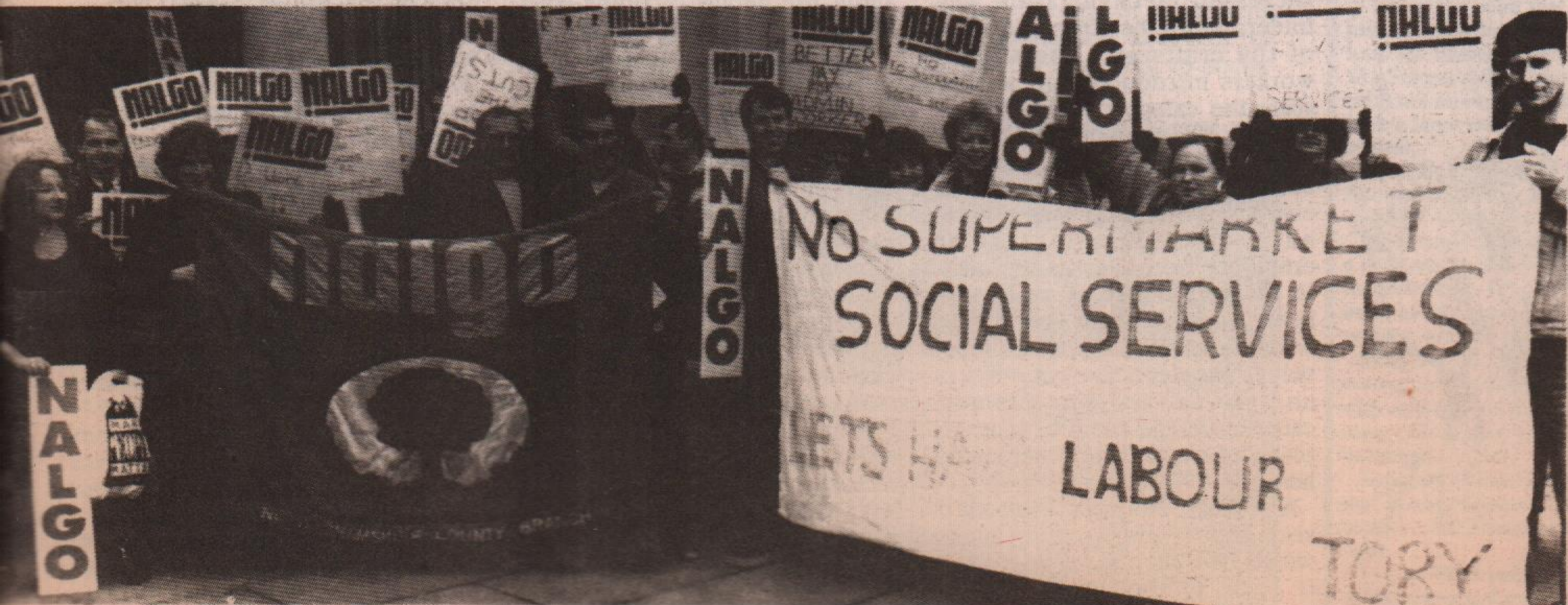
The Treasury conceded in a 1986 report, "Using Private Enterprise in Government" that "most of the savings from contracting-out arise because contractors offer poorer conditions of employment... they eliminate costly bonus schemes and overtime working, provide little or no sick pay and avoid national insurance payments by means of more part time working. The difference in total labour cost may be of the order of 25%. Pensions are the main single element in it."

If the Tories succeed they will consign thousands to poverty in their old age! A relatively decent pension scheme is the one thing most public sector workers have prized in their employment, but it is now up for grabs.

competitive tendering should continue in public services." Of course, the Tories cannot break up the public sector overnight. Our task is to mobilise opposition to the Tories' plans, not to demoralise people with apocalyptic tales that will appear untrue in the early stages of the Tory attack. That attack will have to come piecemeal, come in waves by dint of the sheer size of the public sector.

But the left must see this fight as a crucial one. We must convince the labour movement of that, beginning with public sector unions. We must fight for:  
\* unity of public sector workers  
\* within particular areas of the public sector, a serious fight-back to be coordinated nationally rather than sectionally. Councils, hospitals and civil service departments and agencies should not be left to fight

alone.  
\* unity of public service workers with service users;  
\* A determined and clearly defined political/industrial strategy, including a commitment to a national demonstration and a national public sector day of action to kick-start the campaign.  
\* A conference of militants in the public sector to build up rank-and-file pressure on this issue.



How contracting out is set to spread

**How the Labour Party came into being:**

**Why Smith and Gould are**

Cautiously but clearly, Bryan Gould and John Smith are proposing that the Labour Party should cut loose from the trade unions.

The idea is not new. It was canvassed after Labour lost its third General Election in a row in 1959. This reply by Brian Pearce, part one of which we publish this week, first appeared in the Trotskyist weekly *The Newsletter* in January 1961.

The attempts then to cut links with the unions came to nothing: with a mass movement developing for unilateral nuclear disarmament, the rise of the Young Socialists, and increasing rank-and-file industrial militancy, the Labour Party's shift in the early 1960s was to the left rather than the right.

The revisionists around Gaitskell tell us that the Labour Party has outlived itself in its traditional form, that it needs to break with socialism and perhaps also with its trade union basis, and go 'over to a non-socialist, non-class, quasi-Liberal position.

Though put forward as 'new thinking', these ideas amount to a reversion to the 'Lib-Lab' position which preceded the emergence of the Labour Party. Some revisionists frankly say that the conditions and factors which led to the formation of the Labour Party are now without relevance to the present time, that a political line which may have been wrong seventy or so years ago is correct now; history having, so to speak, come round to it. It may be illuminating to examine how and why the Labour Party did in fact begin; this can help us to judge how far the reasons for having a Labour Party have ceased to apply, to estimate what the consequences of liquidating the party would be, and to see more clearly what forces fought for the creation

and development of the party and what forces resisted it as long as possible and thereafter tried to restrict and weaken it from within.

Down to the 1880s there was no 'labour movement' here in the continental sense at all. There were strong trade unions (of the skilled workers), and these unions were politically-minded - but the only parties were the two ruling-class ones, the Tories and the Liberals. The trade unions expressed themselves politically by serving as the arms and legs of one or other of these parties - usually the Liberals, though in an area such as Lancashire and Cheshire where the employers were strongly Liberal the trade unions might retort to this by supporting the Tories! The political prospect of the trade unions was to get one or other of the ruling-class parties to pass laws favourable to the workers; and they tried to consolidate their 'poor-relation' influence with these parties by persuading the Liberals to accept a few trade union officials among their parliamentary candidates.

During the 1880s there occurred, in a very small way at first, the rebirth of socialism in Britain after an interval of forty years. Old Chartists, reinforced by immigrant workers from Germany, had kept the flame burning in obscure clubs, but now a certain expansion began, with the establishment of the Social-Democratic Federation. In part under the guidance of Frederick Engels, pioneer socialists began a twenty years' propaganda for the launching in Britain of an independent class party of the workers with socialism as its aim. The setting-up of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900 constituted the first break-through to success of a campaign which for long had seemed to many just the bee buzzing in the brains of a few cranks and fanatics, inspired by antiquated (Chartist) and foreign (German) notions. The workers learnt the hard way the need for a Labour Party. The eventual success of the socialists' efforts was made possible by



Yesterday's men: John Smith...

profound changes in the economic and social situation of the British workers. It is important to get clear just what these changes were, as against the legend spread by the revisionists. Was it that the workers were 'getting poorer' in this period between 1880 and 1900? On the contrary, these years saw a drop of about 50 per cent in the cost of living: even allowing for increased unemployment there was a big advance in real wages. In that important aspect the workers had never had it so good!

But there was more unemployment than there had been in the previous period, and this led to a new feeling of insecurity and doubt about the social system. There was also a big drive on for speed-up and stricter discipline in the factories - 'American methods' as the phrase was. Increased mechanization was undermining the strong position of the craftsmen, the skilled workers introducing on a large scale the category of the 'semi-skilled'. The growth of the scale of industrial ownership, the concentration of capital into ever-larger holdings, was reflected in greater remoteness of employer from worker and also in the appearance of an important new stratum of office workers who interposed themselves between the employers and the manual workers and came more and more to take the place of the old 'aristocracy of labour'.

All these changes unsettled sections of the working class which had been most uncritically loyal to the 'great Liberal party of Mr. Gladstone, the people's friend'. Other factors which came into play were a growth at

the end of the nineteenth century in lavish, ostentatious spending by the ruling class, providing clear proof that whatever was happening to the poor the rich were certainly getting richer; and the rise of a generation of workers educated under the Act of 1870, who knew a lot more

**"The setting-up of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900 constituted the first break-through to success of a campaign which for long had seemed to many just the bee buzzing in the brains of a few cranks and fanatics, inspired by antiquated (Chartist) and foreign (German) notions."**

about the details of ruling-class life than their fathers had done.

The socialists sought out the most politically-minded rank-and-file workers in the places where they were - especially in the Radical (left-wing Liberal) clubs in traditional working-class centres of that time like the East End of London. Besides their propaganda, the socialists carried on agitation around issues of interest to these workers and fights which would help them to clear their minds of the confusions that kept them in the Liberal ranks. Struggle for trade-union organization in trades and factories where the employers were well-known Liberals; struggle to defend and extend the right of free speech for street-corner orators and in places like Trafalgar Square, against police attempts to encroach on this right; above all the campaign for

the eight-hour day. (At this time many workers worked a ten-hour day or more, and with the appearance of unemployment and the intensified strain of speed-up and so on the need for a shortening of hours was felt more and more keenly.) The battles fought around these issues made many questions clearer to the workers who were involved in them, and prepared their minds to understand a great deal in the socialist message which previously had seemed strange and unreal to them.

A factor of very considerable weight in helping the idea of an independent workers' party to take root was the example provided by the Irish nationalist party at this time. A small but well-disciplined group of members from Irish constituencies kept themselves independent of both of the British parties, concerned themselves exclusively with pushing Ireland's claims for 'Home Rule', and by their obstructive tactics compelled attention to their case. Increasingly, many politically-minded British workers came round to the view that British labour needed a party of its own that would act like this.

What made up the minds of a wide section, and in particular influenced a number of trade union leaders who had no wish to take any new step unless they were obliged to by unbearable pressure, was the employers' offensive which began in the 1890s. It was as much, or more, under the blows of the employers that these people came round as under the pull of their militant members. This was the time when the ending of Britain's former monopoly posi-



The drive for unionisation in the 1880s was spurred on by increasing unemployment and poverty and a new feeling of insecurity - the same kind of conditions exist today.

# yesterday's men



...Bryan Gould

tion in the world's markets, as 'workshop of the world', became apparent in a big way, with the rise of German and American competition.

To safeguard their developing industries the Americans even put up a tariff barrier against British goods. The reaction of British capital was twofold: on the one hand, the path of the export of capital to backward countries, with a shift from textiles to railway materials as typical goods exported, the path of 'imperialism' accompanied by political and military grab; on the other, an intense drive to force down the standards of the workers at home, to make them accept unrestricted speed-up, abolition of 'restrictive practices' and lower wages all round.

A wave of lockouts and provoked strikes swept the country in the 1890s. A body called the Free Labour Association was set up to organize mobile squads of assorted strikebreakers ('finks' is the American term), ready to go anywhere and do anything. (Mr. Martell, of the New Daily, seems to be ambitious to carry on where Collison, the leader of the FLA, left off.) Not only police but also troops were used against strikers on a scale unprecedented since Chartist times. There were shootings and killings - one case, at Featherstone, became a bitter byword in the movement, especially as a Liberal Home Secretary was responsible.

In response to this sharp dose of basic political education, the idea of an independent workers' party began to catch on in areas where it had been resisted by traditional 'Radical' prejudices up to then - in particular in Yorkshire and Lancashire, key

areas then (if not now?) for the working-class movement. 'Independent Labour Unions' arose in centres like Bradford and Manchester, and working-class papers like the Workman's Times organized to bring them together in a national association. In 1893 a big step towards the Labour Party as we know it today was taken when the Independent Labour Party came into existence as a national party aiming to win the labour movement for independent class politics.

Contrary to the legend which has been cultivated by the Right wing, while the small group of British Marxists *did* play a part in the creation of the ILP, the Fabian Society had nothing to do with it. This latter group of reformists were still at that stage devoted to achieving socialism (or what they called socialism) through 'permeation' of the Liberal Party, and they regarded the ILP as 'wreckers'. Only as it became apparent that the cause of Independent Labour was

going to succeed in spite of them did they change their line. The band-wagon was rolling along before they climbed on it!

At first the ruling class of this country, or its responsible representatives, did not realize the significance of what was happening. We have a very acute and very flexible ruling class, but they weren't born that way, they had to learn it by being taught some disagreeable lessons by the workers. They don't enjoy having to be so acute and flexible in their dealings with their workers, and would like to get rid of what forces them to act like that - especially now with the prospect before them in the next few years, the blocking by the colonial revolution of one channel after another for an imperialist solution of their problems, and the intensification of rivalry with other imperialisms and with the countries in transition to socialism...

Part 2 in the next issue

**Gaitskell:** Hugh Gaitskell, right-wing leader of the Labour Party from 1955 to 1963.

**Old Chartists:** The People's Charter movement, which flourished from 1838 to 1848, was the world's first mass working-class political movement. Its demands - universal male suffrage, annual parliaments, secret ballot, payment of MPs - were revolutionary at the time.

**Social-Democratic Federation:** The first Marxist group in Britain (but its "Marxism" was always very sectarian, and heavily criticised by Marx's comrade Frederick Engels).

**The Act of 1870:** The Education Act of 1870 made schools a public responsibility for the first time. Previously, the only schools had been church-run. Local school boards were empowered to raise local taxes to set up schools. Elementary education became compulsory in 1880.

**The colonial revolution; countries in transition to socialism:** Pearce, like most other Trotskyists at the time, saw the USSR, China and similar states as "as in transition to socialism", although bureaucratically deformed. The colonial revolution - the struggles by which the colonies were then winning independence - was expected to cause serious harm to the big capitalist economies by depriving them of easy profits in the colonies.

## A. S. Neill for the 'nineties

### LETTERS

The Marxist left in education has had its back pinned to the wall for a long time now, fighting back against the Tories' ideological onslaught. It is heartening therefore that the recent TV programme about A. S. Neill's anarchistic Summerhill school should have sparked off a debate in this paper. (Martin Thomas, SO 519; Mark Nevill, SO 520). For, whatever Neill's faults, his ideas about the education of the whole child are fundamentally subversive and akin to the spirit of socialism.

Mark states that adults will and

**"But there are ideas there that we need to hang on to for they will still be vital long after the Tories' National Curriculum has crumbled to dust."**

must take decisions for children; he also talks about placing boundaries and decisions upon children [my emphasis]. Now, Summerhill takes children aged 10 to 16; it seems to me that we should be talking about taking decisions with children at this age, if not before, as indeed is the best practice in state primary schools, certainly from the age of eight.

The fundamentally democratic decision-making process of the school meetings is in the socialist tradition and stretches right back to Makarenko and the Gorky Colony he founded in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution.

Unfortunately, not all state schools adopt best practice. It is worth remembering, therefore, that Summerhill still takes more than its share of kids who have had a hard time elsewhere and

take time in Summerhill's relative freedom to work out their frustrations. These kids no doubt formed part of Mark's "unhappy children, potentially violent, cruel adults." Having said that, many urban classrooms in the state sector could probably show Mark a fair cross-section of such children.

Mark may well have a point about lack of adult intervention over the decapitation of the supposedly diseased rabbit.

Mark is right to remind us that A. S. Neill's ideas are now quite old, but I would rather we tried to update them than condemn them as outdated. I do think Martin was a bit misty-eyed when he saw "the absence of fear and bullying, and the absence of tension between children and teachers".

The fact is that recent developments in the state sector, in particular the attempted implementation of equal opportunities, have brought many state schools, especially primaries, tremendous distances forward. The vigorous application of equal opportunities policies is going a long way to eradicate fear and bullying. Remember Culloden School?

It's easy to condemn Summerhill as Utopian self-indulgence for the privileged few. But there are ideas there that we need to hang on to for they will still be vital long after the Tories' National Curriculum has crumbled to dust.

As Engels said of some of the Utopian socialist systems set up in the last century: "The more completely these systems were worked out in detail, the more they could not avoid drifting off into pure phantasies... We can leave it to the literary small fry to solemnly quibble over these phantasies, and to crow over the superiority of their own bald reasoning, as compared with such 'insanity'.

*"For ourselves, we delight in the stupendously grand thoughts and germs of thought that everywhere break out through their phantastic covering, and to which these Philistines are blind."*

Ian Hollingworth,  
East London

## Liberal and outdated?

Mark Nevill should have read my review of Channel 4 TV's programme on Summerhill school (SO 519) more carefully before writing his polemic against it (SO 520).

I did not write "I wish I could send my daughter to Summerhill". I wrote "I wish my daughter could go to Summerhill". I hope it is unnecessary to labour the point that my wish is not just for Daisy but for all children to have the chance of going to a school like Summerhill, where adult-imposed rules are minimal and the children have a large measure of democratic control.

Mark claims that the ideas on which Summerhill is based are "outdated and very much liberal".

Summerhill is liberal in the sense of a generous concern for the rights of the individual. But socialists should build on and extend that aspect of liberalism, not just denounce it.

Mark objects that the film showed a teacher responding neutrally, and not with criticisms of the cruelty and violence, when a boy captured and beheaded a rabbit.

Summerhill does not stand or fall by that teacher's response in that instance, but I think she was probably right.

Yes, as Mark points out, there is unhappiness and even potential violence at Summerhill. But there is more outside! No school operating within present-day society, or maybe even within a future socialist society,

can turn young teenagers into calm, dispassionate philosophers.

The idea that it is wrong to behead rabbits is not innate. In many human societies, catching and butchering animals are highly-prized skills. Even in a modern capitalist city, every child sees that butcher shops are a normal part of life.

Children may come to feel that beheading rabbits is wrong. A moral lecture on that, given that the child's comparative inability to keep up an argument, is simply an exercise of superior force.

It could have had the same effect as a beating - compelling the boy not to catch rabbits again, or, more likely, to make sure that the teacher did not find out when he did - but it could not have made the boy develop his own moral sense. Summerhill's regime is designed to help children develop their own moral sense for themselves.

Mark also saw "spoiled brats". It would be amazing if Summerhill did not have some children marked by over-indulgent and wealthy families. But children are necessarily more absorbed in their own desires than are adults, and usually they are hemmed in by a continual uproar of condemnations and instructions. Children should be what is conventionally called "spoiled".

As socialist and libertarian experiments within capitalism go, Summerhill has been remarkably successful. We should cherish it.

Martin Thomas  
Islington

# Malcolm X and how he changed

**The US Black socialist and academic, Manning Marable, spoke in London last Friday 8 May, about the life and ideas of the 1960s Black leader, Malcolm X**

In the last five years there has been an explosion across the black world of interest in the militant and charismatic Malcolm X.

I argue that Malcolm's popularity is very simple: in the wake of Reaganism and the rise of European racism there is a need for an articulate voice for black empowerment. There is a need for a symbol of uncompromising black pride, dignity and assertiveness.

With the exception only of Martin Luther King Jnr, Malcolm X ranked as the most influential African-American political figure since Marcus Garvey.

There is a tendency to say that Malcolm represented violence and "by any means necessary" and Martin favoured non-violence and racial integration. This does a disservice to both Malcolm and Martin.

*Do not write of Martin Luther King Jnr because of something you read in a white history book.*

Both Malcolm and Martin were profoundly religious men. They were activists. They opposed all human oppression.

Malcolm became disillusioned with conservative, apolitical black nationalism. Martin Luther King Jnr became aware that his earlier ideas of gradual integration would not advance the struggle of his own people.

Martin believed in going to the United Nations to oppose racism. Who set the trend? It was brother Malcolm X.

Malcolm X was black nationalist when he was in the Nation of Islam; he was a black nationalist the day he died. But there are different types of black nationalism.

The basis of black nationalism in the US is the national identity of African-American people. The basic identity of our people comes from a consciousness of oppression and struggle against racism. This is at odds with white culture, ideology and institutions of white capitalist America.

But there is both radical and conservative black nationalism.

Conservative black nationalism assumes African-American people must build cultural pride. But many conservatives support the use of capitalism. Campaigns in the US have said: "support black busi-

nesses and don't buy where you can not work".

Radical black nationalism starts with the same assumptions but says that the only way to achieve black identity, dignity and power is to fight not only racism but capitalism too.

The radical black nationalist position says that we must align ourselves with other oppressed people: the Native Americans, Hispanics, Chicanos.

Malcolm X's father was a member of Marcus Garvey's Negro Improvement Association. His father was murdered by racists.

By the age of 21 he was amongst the worst of us, a product of backwardness and self-hatred. In prison he was so troublesome he was isolated.

In prison, Malcolm learned to fight his own weakness. He found the Nation of Islam.

The Nation of Islam was founded in the Depression, and blended black nationalism learned from Garvey with Islam.

The Nation targeted the most oppressed. It grew from 5,000 in 1945 to 100,000 by 1960. Its leader was Elijah Mohammed.

In 1954 Malcolm became Minister of Harlem's Temple Number 7. When Fidel Castro came to the US, triumphant after defeating Batista's corrupt regime, he went to Harlem to visit Malcolm. He understood that Malcolm was important for the world revolution.

By 1962, Malcolm had come a long way. But we must focus on his last years from 1962 to 1965. He moved from being a conservative black nationalist to becoming a revolutionary, pan-Africanist black nationalist.

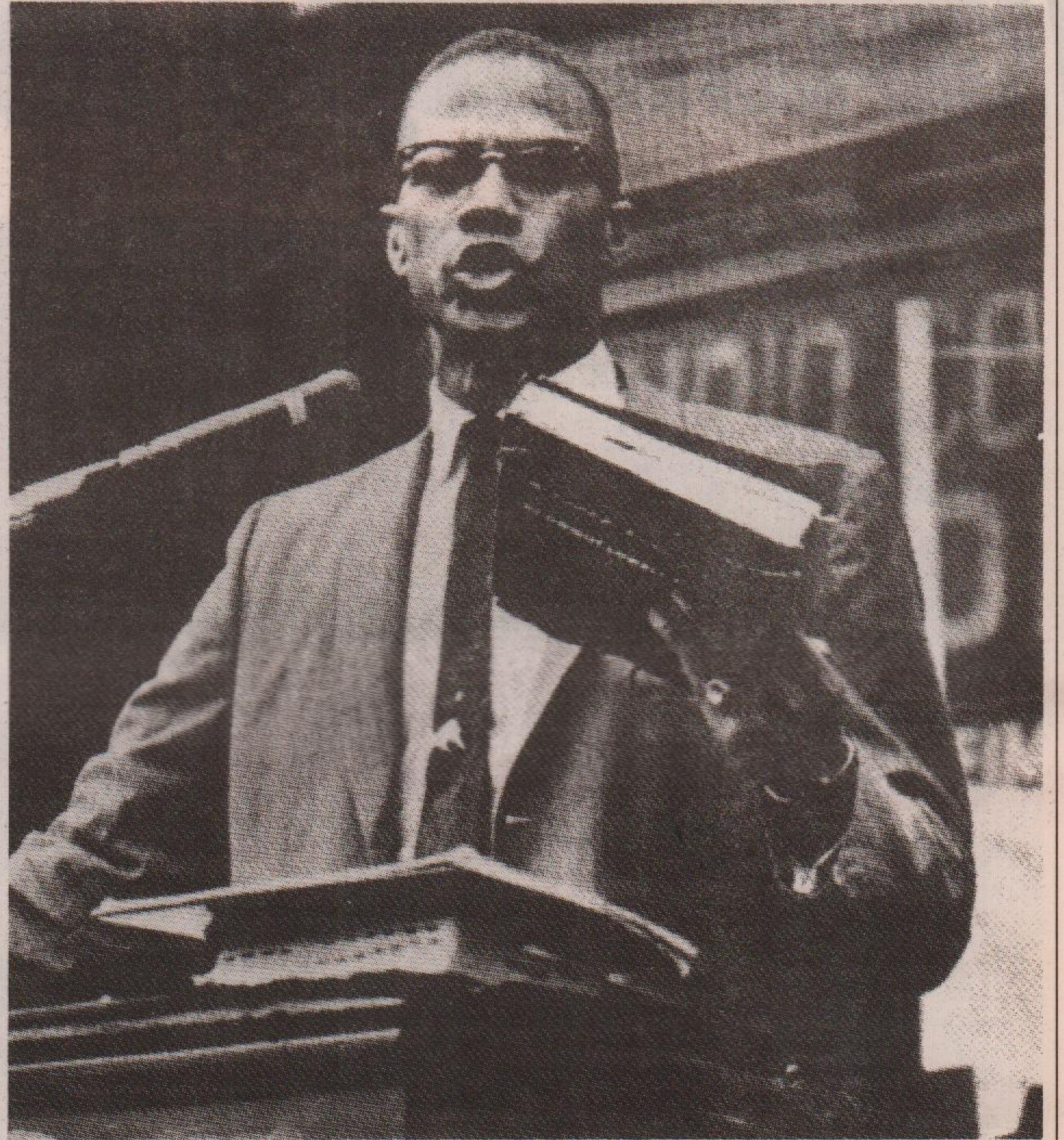
Why did Malcolm change?

From 1962 the Nation of Islam newspaper stopped covering Malcolm's activity. Tension was developing between those who looked at the Nation as a solely religious organisation and more radical black nationalists who also wanted to unite with others outside the organisation.

Part of the difference focused on personalities. In July 1963 the newspapers carried a story about two former secretaries of Elijah Mohammed who had filed paternity suits against the 67 year old leader.

Malcolm was shocked. He began to speak less on religious issues and more on political questions. In November 1963 John F Kennedy was assassinated. Malcolm was asked by the media what he thought of the assassination. He spoke what was on his mind. Speaking the truth he said, "the chickens have come home to roost".

Elijah Mohammed ordered him to be silent for 90 days. And Malcolm learned



Malcolm moved from being a conservative black nationalist to being a revolutionary, pan-Africanist black nationalist

the word had gone out to assassinate him.

Malcolm was silent for the 90 days. After that period he was not reinstated by the Nation.

In March 1964, Malcolm left the Nation of Islam. He developed his own organisation, Muslim Mosque Inc., a religious group mobilising people who had been in the Nation of Islam. Later, in May 1964, he formed the Organisation of Afro-American Unity (OAAU).

In the last year of his life Malcolm tried to develop a progressive black nationalist position.

Malcolm travelled to Mecca and adopted Sunni Islam. But he carefully avoided trying to impose his religious beliefs on those he was trying to lead politically.

Malcolm began a campaign to take the US and its racism to the UN. He began to openly criticise the support of black middle class leaders for Lyndon Johnson's re-election bid. He said: you cannot have capitalism without racism.

Anyone who says Malcolm X was not a socialist is lying.

Three weeks before his assassination, in February 1965, Malcolm said "we have had two kinds of Negro - the old house Negro and the field Negro. The house Negro looked out for his master... the field Negro lived in a hut and had nothing to lose... he caught the sting of the lash on his back." Malcolm said he was a field Negro.

Malcolm realised that black liberation had to be pan-Africanist, embracing sisters and brothers in the Caribbean, Africa and Europe too. This was a struggle for human rights for all oppressed people.

Malcolm also realised, by the end of his life, that he had to move away from the sexism that had been a part of the Nation of Islam.

Malcolm was assassinated on February 21 1965. A week before his house had been firebombed.

We do not have a "smoking gun" amongst the FBI documents - but there is a mass of circumstantial evidence. Malcolm was shot 21 times. There are discrepancies between the police records and those who were actually arrested.

One former Nation of Islam member

who said he had evidence about the crime was found dead.

Why is Malcolm important? The black freedom struggle in the US has reached stalemate.

Some of the black middle-class leaders are unsure about the 1992 Presidential campaign. We have seen some African-American people rallying behind a black man, Clarence Thomas, who is undoubtedly the whitest man in America.

Thomas is black by racial terms. But in terms of his consciousness, politics, lack of ethnic pride and his behaviour he is as white as the driven snow.

**"Malcolm... said: you cannot have capitalism without racism. Anyone who says Malcolm X was not a socialist is lying."**

If Malcolm was here he would firstly say we need to revive a critical black perspective. He would point to the hypocrisy of Western society and to the great accumulation of wealth, power and privilege for the few and poverty, hunger and unemployment for the many.

Second, Malcolm would say that we need to reclaim the integrity, identity and soul of our people. Before any people can fight they must first know who they are as a people.

Thirdly, Malcolm would emphasise the need for struggle. You are not going to get black empowerment through parliamentary negotiations, by sipping tea with those who do not respect you. This is a long term commitment to protracted struggle.

Finally, Malcolm would have something to say about all these T-shirts with his face on. He would say: do not turn me into a God or an icon.

Malcolm was important because he was just like us. Malcolm was great because we as a people are great.

## Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it

LAYING DOWN THE LAW.



Special Constable. "NOW MIND, YOU KNOW-IF I KILL YOU, IT'S NOTHING; BUT IF YOU KILL ME, BY JESUS IT'S MURDER."

From *Punch*, 1848. The authorities mobilised 150,000 special constables, as well as many thousands of soldiers, to overawe a planned Chartist demonstration at Kennington Common.

Professor George Rudé, author of "The Crowd in History", states that, between the Porteous Riots of 1734 and the Chartist demonstration of 1848, 609 people were killed in riots by the authorities. Only seven policemen and soldiers died in these encounters.

Raymond Challiner



The wicked nanny worms her way into the family's trust

"Backlash" message from new film:

# Stay home! Be scared!

## Cinema

Belinda Weaver reviews  
"The hand that rocks the cradle"

In the eighties, two myths were used in America to force working women back to the home. They were the "man shortage" (women over thirty had more chance of being killed by a terrorist than of getting married) and the "toxic" day care threat

(working women who put their kids into childcare were exposing them to neglect and abuse).

A third myth, the infertility "epidemic", warned women who postponed childbearing that they risked missing out on children altogether.

All were untrue.

Susan Faludi nailed the lies in her book "Backlash", but the myths still found their way into the movies. "Fatal Attraction", with Glenn Close's mad, murderous career woman invading a married man's home, was the film of the man shortage. "The hand that rocks the cradle" is a hybrid, straddling both the

"empty womb" syndrome and the supposed risks of day care. Its message to women is simple: Stay home.

In this film, as in "Fatal Attraction", the home is a refuge, a sanctuary to be protected at all costs. When the "selfish" mother, Claire, hires a live-in nanny so that she can get on with her gardening, she opens the door to chaos and retribution. By stepping out of her mothering role, she brings the family to the brink of disaster.

This is backlash enough, but "The hand that rocks the cradle" goes even further. The nanny Claire hires, the deceptively sweet Peyton, is not sweet at all. Peyton's husband, an obstetrician, sexually assaulted Claire on an ante-natal visit. When she complained, he killed himself, and Peyton, distraught, miscarried the baby she was carrying and had an emergency hysterectomy. In her misery, she decides to revenge herself on Claire.

The film never questions this, never implies that Peyton's husband, not Claire, should be the target of rage. It just gets on with Peyton's attempts to wreck Claire's life. Thus Claire bears a double burden; not only is she shown as a bad mother, but she is made responsible for Peyton's madness as well. Peyton, denied her "natural" role as a mother, turns into a vengeful fury.

Peyton is a sly homewrecker,

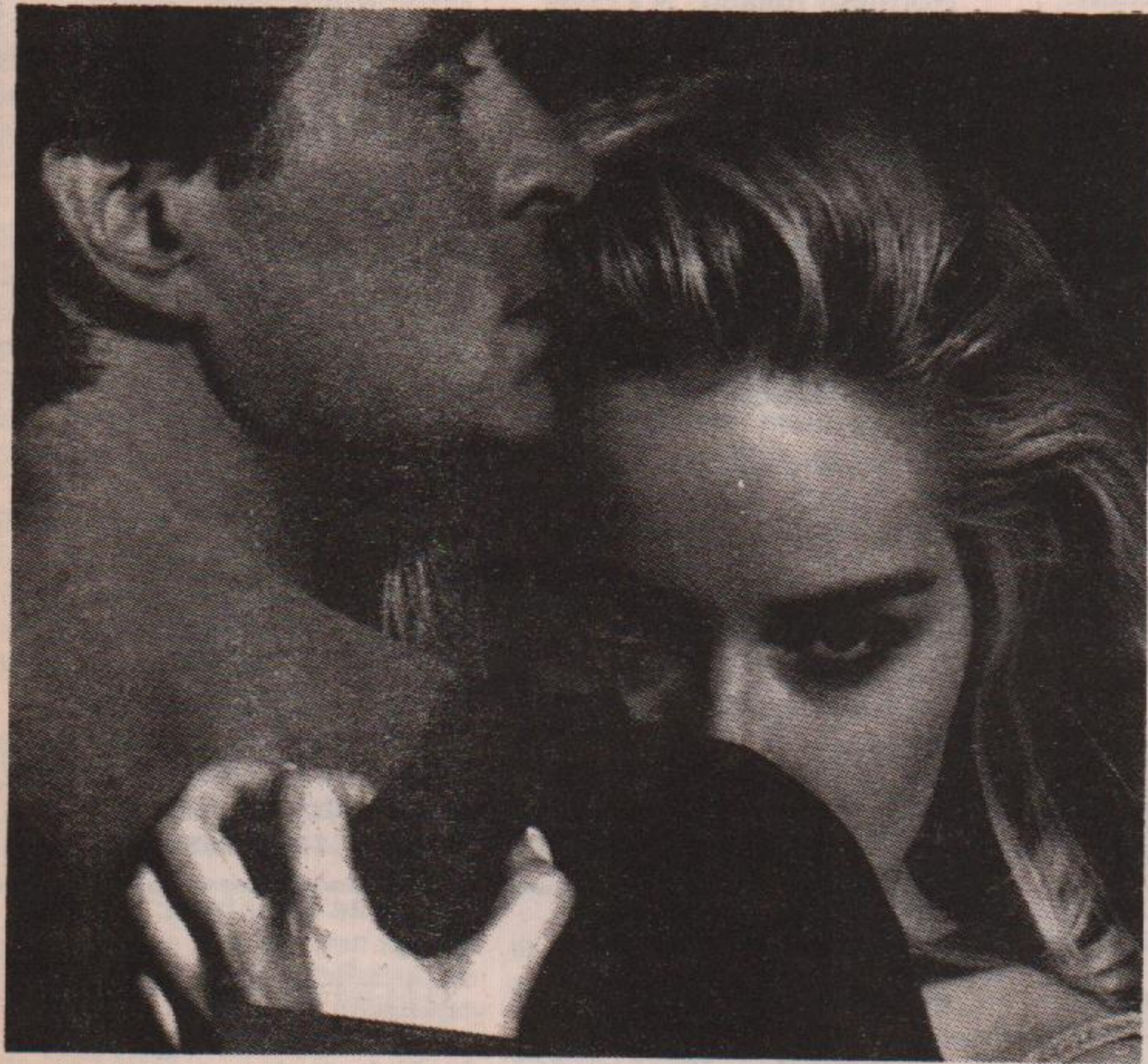
worming her way into the trust of Claire's daughter, sending packing the saintly black gardener who sees through her, sidling up to Claire's husband.

"The hand that rocks the cradle" is a genre picture, nothing more, but it's efficient enough. It builds the suspense, it has pace and, with its shots of Peyton breastfeeding Claire's baby, it's structured to make the female audience bay for blood, the way men called out "Kill the bitch" during "Fatal Attraction".

It can get away with that, and with the neat wrap up at the end, precisely because it's a genre picture, with cardboard characters who haven't really touched us.

The film has two brief scenes that women might find upsetting - Peyton's panic as she realises she's losing her baby, and Claire's growing discomfort as the creepy obstetrician examines her. These are much worse than the standard horror-pic frights at the end, but they're over too quickly for us to fully sympathise with either woman.

All we're left with is a host of backlash messages - that women denied children are potential crazies, that mothers must give up their own lives to protect their children, and that women who complain of sexual assault are the guilty ones, not the men who harass them. That's the real horror story.



"Basic Instinct", Hollywood's latest sex thriller, is news. It stirred up a storm of controversy in the US and now it's here. The tabloids can't believe their luck. The *Sunday Mirror's* headline "No knickers love shock for Sharon" was typical.

The fuss started when some American gay and lesbian activists, irritated that the film's murder suspects were bisexual, complained about Hollywood's homophobia. They picketed the set, and demanded script changes.

The campaign continued after the film opened, with pickets outside cinemas showing the movie.

Also in the news were the film's sex scenes. Actress Sharon Stone, who plays the bisexual murder suspect, not only has bouts of simulated sex with Michael Douglas, but also reveals she is wearing "no knickers" during police interrogation. Another of Douglas's sex scenes caused cries of "date rape" from critics.

So it's open season on "Basic Instinct". It's everywhere. I'll see it, to review it, but I already think the hype is just a ploy, cashing in on the public's "basic" curiosity to serve the even more "basic instinct" of the film's actors, director and screenwriter - to get very, very rich.

Belinda Weaver

## Obituary

With the tabloids already gearing themselves up for steamy revelations, and with a "shocking" book by her daughter about to be published, Marlene Dietrich, who died last week, aged 90, won't be allowed to rest in peace.

I liked her, or rather I liked the younger Dietrich, the actress in films like "Morocco" and "Blonde Venus". She was different from the home-grown American stars; she had character as well as looks.

Though presented as a goddess,

there was always something earthbound about Dietrich. She had irony, and a sense of humour. She never took love tragically, as Garbo did.

She played a range of roles from spy to housewife to femme fatale ("It took more than one man to change my name to Shanghai Lily"), but she never gave up her independence. If the roles were stereotypes, she wasn't.

Even in films that did little more than celebrate her looks, she was not just an icon. There was a human being in there somewhere, having a laugh at the expense of the men who worshipped her.

Women responded to her

## Postmortem 1992

... and how did you like it?

The result of the General Election, I mean!

A shock to the nervous system; A trauma!

But, was it only a defeat for Kinnock?

The Tories breathed a sigh of relief.

They, and Big Business in the saddle

Once again!

Smiling John Major

Picking up Thatcher's legacy.

The City, Money, Gold:

Mammon Incorporated still in command!

An electorate could not even trust

A milk and water Labourism, this time,

Just as it had rejected a more abrasive past.

Still, had Kinnock won

He would have inherited

A sluggish economy;

Desertion by the Capitalists

Petty and Gross

For foreign shores!

We cannot dodge the issue;

It was, is and always will be

Either them or us!

Their wealth is our poverty

We fight them to win

Wherever they appear.

They will not go away of their own accord,

They are still there, triumphant; Lording it over us.

But, be not too despondent!

Rally our forces, talents and sensibilities.

We'll knock the smile off their faces yet

Let us start anew,

We have no other choice

We should not have been surprised

There was little or no sign

Of the desire for Change,

Let alone Revolution.

The Tories seemed to think it would be

Just that, if Labour won!

Few stickers in the windows

No demos in the streets

No excited talks in the shopping centres

Not even in the pubs!

No shouting of KIN-NOCK!

KIN-NOCK!

As they do in Athens when the throng

Wanting socialism shout

PA-SOK! PA-SOK!

So, it's as you were

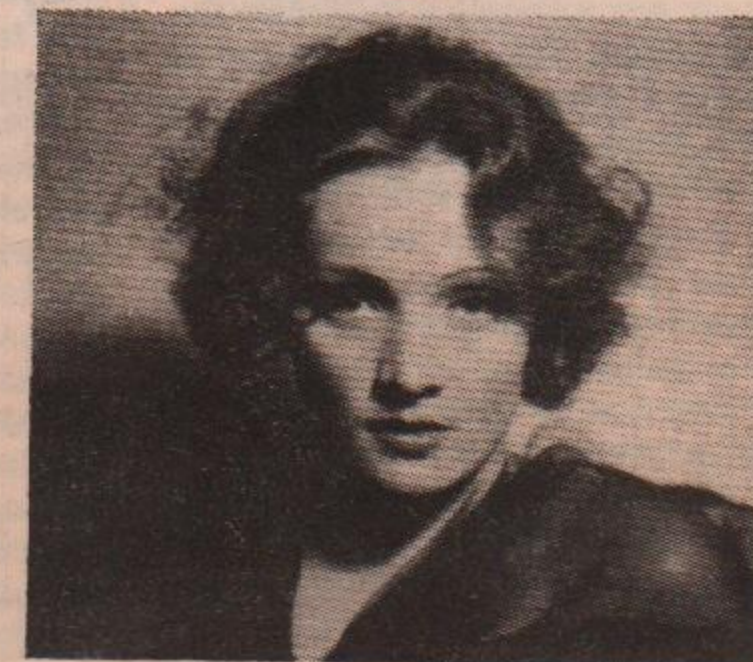
And, once more

Get stuck into their guts, dear friends.

John Mathieson

## More than an icon

strength, to the way she broke the rules. She made trousers for women fashionable. Her very image, smart, ironic, her own person even in the throes of love, was liberating.



Marlene, the trend-setter

# £8,000 fund target for Socialist Organiser

We have raised £1,050.53 towards our £8,000 expansion target.

Our paper and the Alliance for Workers' Liberty are raising extra monies to develop our strength in the Labour Party and the trade unions. We believe that the labour movement needs a strong voice for socialism.

It is particularly important

in the wake of the Labour election defeat that socialists stand firm against Gould, Smith and the rest of the Labour right. *Socialist Organiser* is a vehicle which can help to bring the socialist left together.

If you agree that *Socialist Organiser* plays a useful role in the labour movement, why not help us grow?

Thanks this week go to a supporter in London for a £50 donation and to a supporter in Nottingham for £25.

You can make a donation by sending cheques or Postal Orders payable to "Workers' Liberty" to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

## Getting organised...

### "The Case for Socialist Feminism"

Alliance for Workers' Liberty College Meetings

Thursday 14 May  
Essex University, 6.30.  
Speaker: Julie Mitchell  
Royal Holloway and Bedford, 7.30. Speaker: Alice Sharp  
Kent University, 1.00.

Alliance for Workers' Liberty public forums  
Monday 18 May

"Which way for the Labour left?", Wallasey Unemployed Centre, 7.45

Wednesday 20 May  
"Germany and Los Angeles: lessons from the rebellion", LSE, Houghton Street, 7.30

Thursday 21 May  
"What next for the Labour left?" Swarthmore Centre, Leeds, 7.30

"The politics of the AWL", Brighthelm Centre, Brighton 7.30

"How to fight fascism", Manchester Town Hall, 8.00. Speaker: Dan Judelson.

Wednesday 27 May  
"Race and Class after the LA riots", Lambeth Town Hall, London SW2. Speaker: Mark Osborn. 7.30

Thursday 28th May  
"What is working class culture?"  
City Halls Glasgow 7.30 pm

Speaker: Jeni Bailey  
Friday 15 May  
Lancaster University, 1.00. Speaker: Alice Sharp

Richmond College, 1.00. Speaker: Jeni Bailey

Monday 18 May  
Bath CHE, lunchtime. Speaker: Alice Sharp

Wednesday 20 May  
Dundee University, 2.00. Speaker: Janine Booth

Thursday 21 May  
QMC London, 5.30. Speaker: Janine Booth

Birmingham Poly, lunchtime. Speaker: Alice Sharp

Friday 22 May  
Oaklands, St Albans, 11.15.

Speaker: Alice Sharp  
Tuesday 26 May  
WISHE, Sussex, lunchtime. Speaker: Alice Sharp.

North Riding College, Scarborough, 12.30. Speaker: Jeni Bailey

York University, 5.15. Speaker: Jeni Bailey.

Ripon and York St John, York, 8.00. Speaker: Jeni Bailey.

Wednesday 27 May  
Lewis Tertiary College, 1.00. Speaker Alice Sharp.

Brighton Poly, 5.30. Speaker: Alice Sharp.

Selby College, 12.30. Speaker: Jeni Bailey

Thursday 28 May  
Nene College, Northampton, 1.00. Speaker Alice Sharp.

## Labour Left

Thursday 7 May  
Students for Bernie Grant. SOAS, ULU Complex, London, 7.30

Monday 11 May  
"Where now for Labour?" Speaker Bernie Grant. Grosvenor Ball Room, Wallasey, 7.30

Thursday 14 May  
"Where now for Labour?" Newcastle LPS meeting, St John's Church Hall, Granger Street, 7.30

Tuesday 19 May  
Socialist Campaign Group meeting, with Bernie Grant, Ken Livingstone, Alice Mahon. Civic Hall, Leeds, 7.30

## The Unions

Socialist Movement Trade Union Conference. 18-19 July, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London

## Anti-racist convention

The Anti-Racist Alliance is holding a conference, Saturday 13 June at ULU, Malet Street, London, WC1  
Registration is £6 (delegates)/£4 (individuals)/£1.50 (unwaged) in advance. Get your organisation to delegate you. Write to ARA, PO Box 2578, London N5 1UF or phone 071-607 3988.

# Fiddling the facts

## EYE ON THE LEFT

By John O'Mahony

In the future, when the left has rebuilt a large, revolutionary, working class organisation, some scholar of the movement, some David Riazanov or other, will compile a textbook for the education of young militants under the title: "Why the 'left' in the last decade of the twentieth century was so sterile".

It will print on the title page the words Karl Marx hurled at the fierce revolutionaries Willich and Schapper in 1851, when he told them that the working class and the socialist movement needed to go through 20 years in the wilderness in order to purge itself of nonsense and to make itself fit to take power.

That textbook will reproduce examples of articles and headlines from the left press today to illustrate the characteristic faults of the left during the period. Certain of a place in this future textbook will be the headlines and articles with which the weekly "Socialist Action" - a forerunner of both Socialist Outlook and the quarterly magazine *Socialist Action* - greeted the vote won by Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland in the 1983 General Election: 'Sinn Fein wins 42%'.

That was what the headline told the paper's readers. The article offered no qualifications about the 'information' in the headline, 'Sinn Fein wins 42%'.

In fact, it was 42% of the Catholic vote Sinn Fein had won! (The rest went to the Constitutional Nationalist

Social Democratic and Labour Party). The Catholics are 1 in 3 of the 6 County population: 42% of the Catholic vote was about 12% of the total vote.

This excerpt from *Socialist Action* will, we confidently predict, find a place in the future textbooks because it is a classic of its kind. It does not deserve to be forgotten.

The key question in Northern Ireland is the division - political, social and religious - between the Catholic-Nationalist and the Protestant-Unionist communities. That is what determines what Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA can achieve of their Catholic-Nationalist aspirations.

Everything Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA have done for 20 years has only made the Protestants more obstinate in their hostility to what Sinn Fein and the Provisional IRA want to do - unify Ireland under an independent Dublin government. Yet, they cannot achieve it without Protestant agreement.

If Britain were to withdraw without a political settlement, the issue would then be settled between the two Irish communities, by way of Yugoslavian-style civil war. At the end you would not have a United Ireland but, still, two Irelands, though probably with redrawn boundaries.

These are hard facts for romantic, vicarious, Irish nationalists to face up to. They prefer to pretend that "Northern Ireland" is a clear case of an Irish national liberation struggle against British imperialism.

In fact it is impossible, outside of the ideas of mystical Catholic nationalism, to maintain that view. But British 'left' romantics need that view. So?

Ignore the facts that do not fit! Tell yourself ideological

lies. Pretend, even in your news reports, that the Protestants do not exist.

Count Sinn Fein votes not as a proportion of the votes cast in the actually existing six counties, the political entity in which the Protestants are a big majority, but as a proportion of the vote in the minority community and then, in reporting it, pretend it is a proportion of the whole. Hey presto! The problem of the Protestants is gone. Sinn Fein - with 12% of the vote - is only 8% behind the magical electoral 50 per cent.

Classic late 20th century Toy Town left fare!

*Socialist Outlook's* Irish coverage is plainly in the hands of people who want to continue that memorable tradition. Their report of Gerry Adams' defeat in West Belfast did not this time ignore the Protestants. It could not, in the circumstances. But it blamed Protestant workers who voted SDLP for Adams' defeat, thereby implicitly proclaiming that Protestant voters should not count, echoing the obscene Catholic sectarianism of Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein supporters demonstrated at the count, chanting that the Constitutional Nationalist who beat Adams was, because he got Protestant votes, the candidate of the Orange murder gangs.

Under the headline 'Loyalist vote defeats' Gerry Adams, *Socialist Outlook* offered a pale echo of the Sinn Fein diagnosis.

The writer hastened to point out that Adams' share of the nationalist vote - the real vote, the vote that matters! - had risen.

It is a pity that people who call themselves Marxists should - even in the typically small and faltering voice of *Socialist Outlook* - echo Sinn Fein's increasingly blatant Catholic sectarianism.

# The politics of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty

We live in a capitalist world. Production is social; ownership of the social means of production is private.

Ownership by a state which serves those who own most of the means of production is also essentially "private"

Those who own the means of production buy the labour power of those who own nothing but their labour-power and set them to work. At work they produce more than the equivalent of their wages. The difference (today in Britain it may be more than £20,000 a year per worker) is taken by the capitalist. This is exploitation of wage-labour by capital, and it is the basic cell of capitalist society, it very heart-beat.

Everything else flows from that. The relentless drive for profit and accumulation decrees the judgment of all things in existence by their relationship of productivity and profitability.

From that come such things as the savage exploitation of Brazilian goldminers, whose life expectancy is now less than 40

years; the working to death - it is officially admitted by the government! - of its employees by advanced Japanese capitalism; and also the economic neglect and virtual abandonment to ruin and starvation of "unprofitable" areas like Bangladesh and parts of Africa.

From that comes the cultural blight and barbarism of a society force-fed on profitable pap.

From it come products with "built-in obsolescence" and a society orientated to the grossly wasteful production and reproduction of shoddy goods, not to the development of leisure and culture.

From it come mass unemployment, the development of a vast and growing underclass, living in ghettos and the recreation in some American cities of the worst Third World conditions.

From it comes the unfolding ecological disaster of a world crying out for planning and the rational use of resources, but which is, tragically, organised by its ruling classes around

the principles of anarchy and the barbarous worship of blind and humanly irrational market forces.

From it come wars and genocides; two times this century capitalist gangs possessing worldwide power have fallen on each other in quarrels over the division of the spoils, and wrecked the world economy, killing many tens of millions. From it comes racism, imperialism, and fascism.

The capitalist cult of icy egotism and the "cash nexus" as the decisive social tie produces societies like Britain now where vast numbers of young people are condemned to live in the streets, and societies like that of Brazil, where homeless children are hunted and killed on the streets like rodents.

From the exploitation of wage-labour comes our society in which the rich who with their servants and agents hold state power, fight a relentless class struggle to maintain the people in a condition to accept their own exploitation and abuse, and to prevent real democratic self-

control developing with the forms of what they call democracy. They use tabloid propaganda or - as in the 1984-85 miners' strike - savage and illegal police violence, as they need to. They have used fascist gangs when they need to, and will use them again, if necessary.

Against this system we seek to convince the working class - the wage slaves of the capitalist system - to fight for socialism.

Socialism means the abolition of wage slavery, the taking of the social economy out of private ownership into common cooperative ownership. It means the realisation of the old demands for liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Under socialism the economy will be run and planned deliberately and democratically: market mechanisms will cease to be our master, and will be cut down and re-shaped to serve broadly sketched-out and planned, rational social goals.

We want public ownership of the major enterprises and a planned economy under

workers' control.

The working class can win reforms within capitalism, but we can only win socialism by overthrowing capitalism and by breaking the state power - that is, the monopoly of violence and reserve violence - now held by the capitalist class. We want a democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system - a workers' democracy, with elected representative recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

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

What are the alternatives now? We may face new wars as European and Japanese capitalism confronts the US.

Fascism is rising. Poverty, inequality and misery are growing.

Face the bitter truth: either we build a new, decent, sane, democratic world or, finally, the capitalists will ruin us all - we will be dragged down by the fascist barbarians or new massive wars. Civilisation will be eclipsed by a new dark age. The choice is socialism or barbarism.

Socialists work in the trade unions and the Labour Party to win the existing labour movement to socialism. We work with presently unorganised workers and youth.

To do that work the Marxists organise themselves in a democratic association, the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

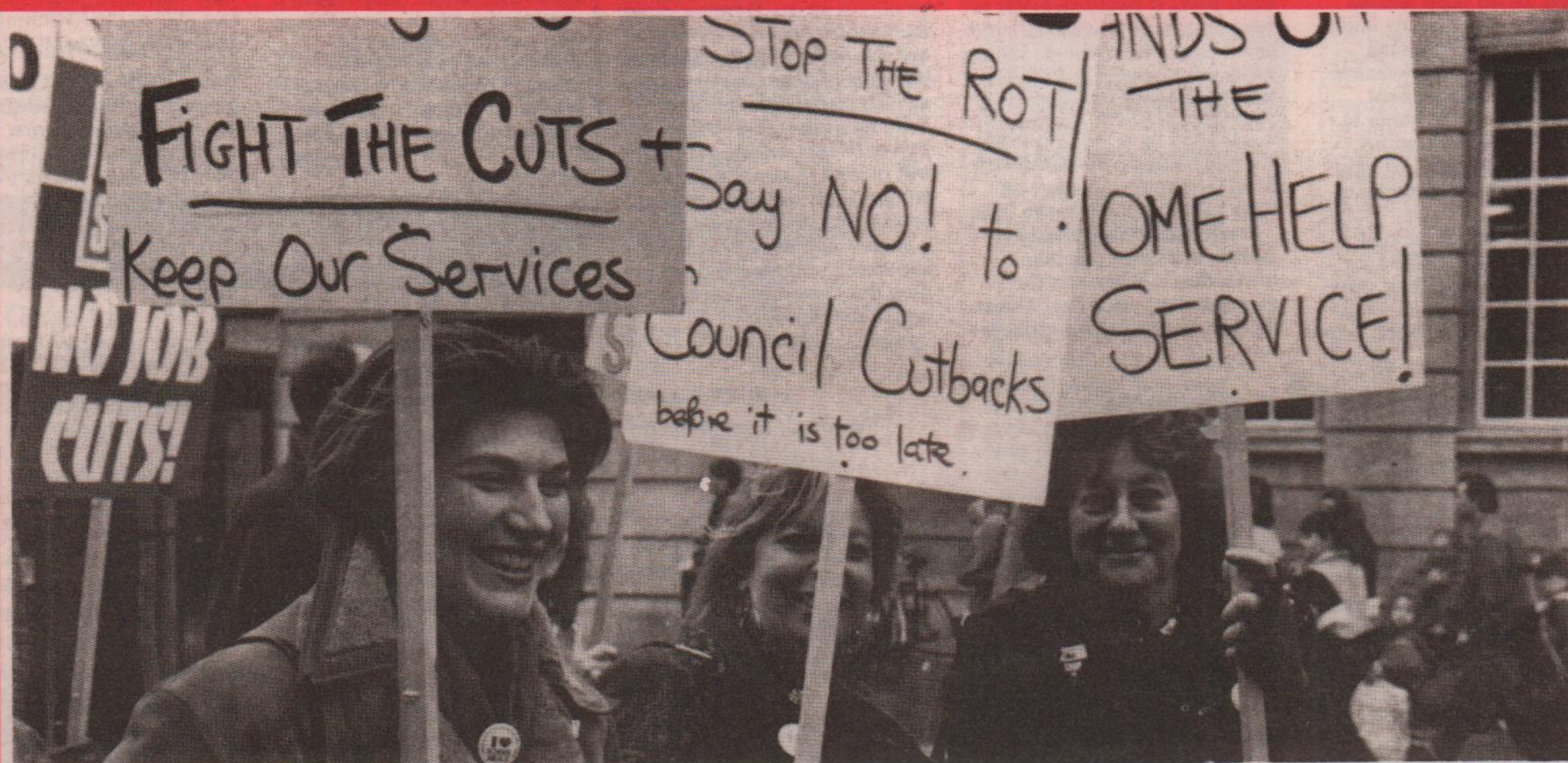
To join the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, write to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



CPSA conference must debate pay:

## Reject Ellis's dirty deal!

By a Civil Servant



Labour councils' "toughness" against workers and servility towards the Tories discredited Labour. Photo: John Harris

# To change the world, start with ideas!

**D**emoralisation after the Tory victory on April 9 took its toll in the local government elections last week, with heavy Labour losses.

But Labour local government must itself share some of the blame for the General Election result. Labour was promising a fairer, more caring government - but voters could see what Labour councils had done.

Without exception, they have acted as local agents for the Tories, cutting services, axing jobs, enforcing the poll tax.

In the early '80s, local government was a stronghold of Labour's left. Now, in councils across Britain, ex-leftists are outdoing each other in efforts to prove themselves as Kinnockite "new realists", tough against squatters, tenants and council workers, and servile towards the Tories.

Even though the average Labour council does still manage a bit better than a Tory administration, some ex-leftists outdo even Tories, let alone old-fashioned Labour right-wingers, in their "toughness".

Camden council, in north

London, sacked all its social workers after they struck to demand implementation of a national agreement. Southwark council, in south London, has plastered the borough with posters promising to evict 1,250 tenants this year for rent arrears - and the illustration, showing the typical tenants it plans to throw onto the streets, shows four people, one a baby and another a small child!

Most of the ex-leftists started on their way to right-wing "new realism" from a left-wing "old-realism". Back in the early '80s they would tell Marxists, like those around *Socialist Organiser*, that our theoretical ideas were all very fine, but that we were sectarian ideologues and they were practical people who were going to get real power and get something done rather than theorising.

Their experience is another proof of an old truth: if you plunge into activity without working out clear ideas that you will stick to against all odds, your environment will change you more than you change the environment.

The Workers' Liberty '92 summer school, "Ideas for

Freedom", on 3-5 July at Caxton House, Archway, north London, is designed to help socialists work out and absorb clear ideas so that we can change the world.

### Workers' Liberty '92

### Ideas for Freedom!

The discussions at Workers' Liberty '92 will cover every major issue facing socialists - including our attitude to the Tory election victory.

Three courses will introduce various aspects of Marxism: Marxist economics; classic Marxist writings; questions of everyday life.

- questions of everyday life will examine: Does God exist? Is this the End of History? Their morality and ours; The Battle of Ideas - and how to win it.

- John O'Mahony, the editor of *Socialist Organiser*, will examine the lessons from the rise of the Nazis during the 1930s.

- socialists from France and Germany will discuss the politics we need to defeat the Euro-fascists.

- the Israeli socialist, Michel Warshawsky, will speak about the crisis in the Middle East.

- other head-to-head debates will take place on: Scottish nationalism, the answer to the conflict in Ireland, pornography, the way to solve the environmental crisis, the nature of the Stalinist states.

A professionally-staffed crèche is available, and so are accommodation, entertainment and food. Activists from the AWL will be organising transportation from many areas.

For more details, 'phone Mark on 071-639 7965.

Workers' Liberty '92 ticket offer:

A ticket for Workers' Liberty '92 is cheaper if you buy now. Rates for three days are £16 (waged), £11 (students and low-waged), and £7 (unwaged). Subtract £1 unwaged/£2 other for tickets for Saturday and Sunday only.

For your ticket, send cheque/Postal Order (payable to "Workers' Liberty") to: Workers' Liberty '92, Alliance for Workers' Liberty, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Tickets are also available from your local AWL branch.

Last Friday, the National Executive of the Civil Service Union, CPSA, voted to recommend to its members the new Treasury pay deal. This would mean: the extension of performance pay, the right of Departments/Agencies to opt out of National Pay Bargaining and, wait for it, a 4.25% increase on people's basic. While CPSA is recommending "Yes", NUCPS, the other main Union, is recommending "No".

To punish them for this, the government is offering them only 4.1% on their basic. Yet again, the divided nature of Civil Service trade unionism reduces the possibility of a serious fight and shows how short-sighted was most of the left's campaign against the merger of the two unions last year.

It is hard at the moment to tell how serious the leadership of NUCPS is, in fighting the new pay proposals. They could be putting on a left face, while secretly hoping that CPSA members will vote to accept the pay deal. This week's NUCPS conference will give an indication. Whatever their motives, it is vital that CPSA vote "No" to the pay offer.

Militant, of course, will be campaigning for such a vote but from an odd angle. While rightly pointing out how bad the pay deal is, they are urging activists not to mention strike action. That is, campaign for a "No" vote and only when that has been delivered, campaign for the sort of action that can win more pay.

We have arrived at the two-stages theory of industrial action!

Militant must obviously think that none of the membership will ask awkward questions about stage two, while stage one is being discussed. If they do, what will Militant comrades say? Sorry you have to vote "No" first, then we will tell you what is to be done? Of course, it is all nonsense. The only way we can get an improved offer without strings is through industrial action. To pretend otherwise is to deceive members.

The way in which the executive right-wing in CPSA has handled the pay negotiations is quite instructive. Although the NEC met on Tuesday (May 5), they weren't told in advance the full details of the pay deal. That was because the General Secretary thought them confidential! The NEC was expected to troop in, get the details and vote there and then whether to recommend them. The majority of the NEC are members of the right-wing "Moderate" group. So it seems that the right-wing leadership won't even tell their own comrades what is going on. They are simply expected to see how their leaders vote and follow suit.

It also looks like the maliciously misnamed "Moderates" are hell-bent on preventing conference discussing the pay offer. The question is, if they are so sure of their position, what do they have to fear? Perhaps delegates will want to know what "negotiating skills" Ellis used to screw that massive 0.15% more out of the Treasury than NUCPS managed. Could it be that he's recommending acceptance where NUCPS aren't?

**CPSA/NUCPS conferences: see page 15.**

**Socialist Organiser will not be published for the bank holiday weekend of 23-25 May. No. 524 will be dated 28 May.**

Apologies for two blunders in *Socialist Organiser* no. 522 (last week): Bob Clay is no longer an MP; and the continuation of the front-page article, billed for page 2 went missing.