

**Socialists and Europe**  
pages 3,10, 11, 12

**Building workers fightback**  
page 5

For socialist renewal!

For workers' liberty!

**Sell off means rip off**  
BT profits: page 3

**Saving the Earth?**  
After Rio: pages 8& 9

# SOCIALIST

**ORGANISER**

*Unite the left!*

# South Africa

# DE KLERK

# IS A



Over one million South African workers struck on Thursday 16 June to oppose F. W. De Klerk's racist regime. The African National Congress (ANC), with the South African Communist Party and the trade union federation COSATU, organised strikes, rallies and demonstrations to 'force the government to back down'. Nelson Mandela and the leaders of the anti-government mobilisations aim to force De Klerk to move faster towards majority rule. The ANC want an interim, coalition government with pro-reform establishment parties. The ANC say they want to produce a 'Leipzig effect', similar to the huge, snowballing demonstrations which brought down Stalinist power in East Germany in 1989. However, the ANC faces a much stronger, coherent and well-organised opposition.

Continuation and report from Cape Town on page 2

# TERRORIST

## The lie machine

Maybe Neil Goodwin, a pipe-fitter from Letchworth, is a thug who deliberately organised rioting by English football fans in Sweden. Maybe he is not. But shouldn't he be assumed "innocent until proven guilty"?

Hours after he had been arrested in Malmo, huge headlines in the tabloids were branding him a "yob", a "thug", and a "ringleader".

The tabloids had been given enough information to locate and interview Goodwin's brother, his mother, his father, and the mother of his baby son. The "Sun" had been supplied with a picture of Goodwin with friends in a pub, and the papers had details of his previous convictions.

The press also had figures for Goodwin's income: how and from whom did they get them, especially if Goodwin is (as the "Mirror" tells us) self-employed?

Who feeds all this information to the press? And why?



## Oil bosses use spies, says industrial tribunal

# A victory for every oilworker

By Gerry Bates

"A pure, unmitigated victory, with no strings attached", was how Ronnie McDonald of the offshore workers' union OILC described last week's decision by an industrial tribunal that a striking oilworker was unfairly dismissed after being betrayed by a company "undercover agent".

James Byrne was one of over 700 men sacked after

the OILC's August 1990 recognition strikes and rig occupations.

Since the 20 day sit-in on Brent Charlie, Mr Byrne has been blacklisted and on the dole.

His case focussed on the behaviour of one John Goddard. Goddard was a "strikers' representative" while secretly working as a spy for Ward Group Engineering.

The 11 page tribunal find-

ings state: "We had no hesitation in accepting that Mr Goddard not only participated in the [strike] action, but actively supported it."

"It was Mr Byrne's belief that from 3 August to 9 August, when he finally left the rig, Mr Goddard's position had been identical to his own. He had been the men's spokesman and had spoken up in support of the sit-in."

"He had not known that Mr Goddard was passing on

information to the company and had been appalled when he heard about it."

"The use by the company of Mr Goddard as what Mr Byrne's QC, Mr John Henty, variously described as an agent provocateur, an undercover agent or a double agent, was in itself sufficient to make the dismissal unfair."

"Whether authorised to do so or not, Mr Goddard had initiated, encouraged and promoted the strike and sit-

in and, after having done so, was rewarded by the retention of his job while the applicant was sacked".

The tribunal decision is a major victory for the OILC. As Ronnie McDonald puts it:

"This is just one of a series of test cases. We will be bringing many others against the other contractors who took the same course of action. The next one planned is against Kelvin Catering".

## Jimmy Airlie caught red-handed in spy case cover-up

Engineering Union (AEEU) official Jimmy Airlie, who has spent most of the last year denouncing the OILC as "pariahs and irrelevant", has been exposed trying to get victimised oil rig worker Jim Byrne to withdraw his action against the company that sacked him.

According to Jim, Airlie repeatedly tried to get him to halt the case that established that oil contractors Wood Group Engineering used an agent provocateur to spy on OILC activists.

"He passed messages on through three other union members earlier this year, promising to arrange for me to come off the blacklist and get back to work if I pulled out of the tribunal."

"But I knew of others who had agreed to do so but who had not been taken on. The AEU signed a 'hook-up' agreement with the operators and as part of the deal promised to get the strikers' jobs back. But that had not happened - and they were embarrassed that we are making waves by looking for justice through the tribunals."

Airlie was aware of the contents of the case at this time, according to Jim Byrne. This was confirmed by an AEEU spokesman on Tuesday 16 June, who said that "Of course Jimmy was aware of the contents of his case", and added: "Jimmy stood by what he said to Jim. If he'd dropped the case he would have got his job back. This is just a pyrrhic victory".

So, presumably, for the AEEU, a real victory is to shut up about management spies, to keep your head down, to forgo your legal rights, and to behave like an obedient slave. Readers can

judge for themselves on the AEEU's allegation that nothing the OILC says can be believed.

The Morning Star of 15 June, after reporting the OILC's accusations, printed the AEEU's defence: "At no time did we advise him to withdraw his case" and stating as proof that "a number of AEEU cases are going forward".

Strange indeed! The story in the Star contradicts what AEEU head office is saying.

What's more, in 1991, the AEEU (then AEU) drew up a list of fifty oilworkers who wanted their jobs back. The list was to be presented to the employers. The condition of getting on the list was to give up any industrial tribunal cases.

At the same time, the AEU, arm in arm with the employers, was denying that there had ever been a blacklist!



Jimmy Airlie

## Priest power in hospitals

By Mick Duncan

In March 1983 Sheila Hodges died in a Catholic hospital in Ireland after giving birth prematurely. The baby died immediately after birth.

Mrs Hodges died of cancer. It might have been curable; but the surgeons would not treat it for fear of damaging the foetus, which was highly unlikely to survive anyway.

As in many similar cases, the decision not to treat Sheila Hodges was taken by the hospital's Catholic "ethics committee".

The "Independent on Sunday" (14 June), highlighting the Hodges case, reported how many hospitals

in Ireland, funded by the state, are run by the Catholic Church.

Each person's contract of employment tells them they must abide by the ethics of the Catholic Church.

Even life-saving action, if it comes into conflict with the Catholic religion, must be cleared with the "ethics committee". The procedure may take weeks and cause considerable psychological and physical harm to the patient.

It is also in breach of the Irish Medical Council's rules which protect the confidentiality of the patient, doctor relationship and state that doctors should practice "without consideration of religion".



Anti-abortion campaigners in Ireland meet to plan their campaign for a "no" vote in the Maastricht referendum on Thursday 18th.

The relation between the Maastricht Treaty and Ireland's abortion ban is complicated. By creating a common European Union citizenship, the Maastricht Treaty would seem to establish Irish women's right to access to abortions, by travelling to other European countries where abortion is legal.

But the Irish government got a "protocol" which says that nothing in the treaty can override Ireland's constitutional ban on abortion. Then, four months ago, Ireland's Supreme Court decided that a 14 year old suicidal rape victim could, after all, legally have an abortion.

The Irish government says that Maastricht does not affect the abortion issue one way or another. Many anti-abortionists still call for a "no" vote since they fear that Maastricht and closer European integration will nonetheless undercut Ireland's abortion ban. They want a tighter constitutional ban on abortion, and are worried because the protocol gives protection only to Ireland's existing ban, not to any future reworded clause.

Some pro-choice campaigners, are voting "no" because, they say, the protocol will make Irish women's position worse, removing possibilities they might otherwise have to appeal to the European Court for the right to travel.

## South Africa The military could react very violently indeed

Neville Alexander reports from Cape Town

The basic situation is that the African National Congress (ANC) and the Communist Party (SACP) are trying to use the emotional significance of June 16th - the anniversary of the Soweto school students uprising - to whip up mass action.

They are using the actions simply to force the government back to the negotiating table. They seem to think they can simply switch mass action on and off in order to strengthen their hand.

However the general approach outside of the ANC/SACP alliance - and significantly this includes a large part of the main trade union federation COSATU - is that we should be for more action around specific social issues putting forward specific demands rather than just asking the government to resume talks.

We in WOSA - the Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action - believe that in addition we should be focussing on the demand for a Constituent Assembly - a genuinely representative constitution making body elected on the basis of one-person, one vote.

The situation today (June 16th) is unclear.

Some people in the ANC/SACP alliance are talking about escalating the action. But

I think this is not necessarily what it seems. The central leadership may want to use the threat of escalation to force De Klerk to concede.

This could be like a red rag to a bull. If they carry out their threats of moving the action to the white suburbs, inner cities or occupying government buildings then the state will surely react very violently indeed.

The general perspective that we have had in WOSA over the last period in regard to the state

looks likely to be confirmed. WOSA have talked about the danger of a military government of a special kind that would oversee the reform process at the same time as decapitating and repressing the mass movement.

\* Neville Alexander is a South African socialist and a former Robben Island prisoner. Associated with the Workers Organisation of Socialist Action, he is the author of a number of studies on socialism and nationalism including "One Azania, One Nation".

## De Klerk is a terrorist

From front page

President F. W. De Klerk has had a good press in the west as a reformer - South Africa's Gorbachev. But he leads a government responsible for terror, murder and cynical intrigue.

State organisations have looked to play off the ANC against the Zulu communal organisation, Inkatha. They have looked on as Inkatha has clashed with the ANC.

A shadowy "third force" has worked for De Klerk - adding to the death toll in the townships. Twelve people a day die in the violence. Twenty-five people died during Tuesday 16 June.

And all De Klerk's reforms have one simple aim - to make South Africa safe for

capitalism. The trade union explosion of the early 1980s forced the racists to reform apartheid - they have only done so to better exploit the working class.

De Klerk is no democrat. In fact, military rule is now a real possibility. Elements of a State of Emergency are being introduced right now. Detention without trial is now being used to round up activists.

British workers must stand up for our brothers and sisters in South Africa. We must say liberation now! We must demand one-person, one-vote to elect a genuinely democratic Constituent Assembly. Down with the racist terrorists!



1983: Telecom workers protest against the privatisation and a lock out by management. The Tories' policy was and remains a formula for rip off and Union busting

# Privatisation means rip-off

British Telecom (BT) made £3.07 billion profit last year. That's £97 every second.

To put it another way: every child, woman and man in the country paid an average of about £60 into BT profits last year. Or yet another: the profits amount to over £15,000 for each of BT's 200,000 workers.

BT was sold off by the Tory government in 1984. Knockdown share prices made the sell-off a vast windfall pay-out to the wealthy people (and some better off workers) who bought the shares. It was a grand exercise in wholesale political bribery.

The great bulk of the shares are now in the hands of big shareholders, who pocket the gains from the dividend payouts and the rising share prices.

The sell-off would mean more

efficiency and competition, less wasteful bureaucracy, said the Tories.

In fact BT is still a near-monopoly, with 93% of Telecom business - only now it is a private monopoly, run for private profit. Its top managers have paid themselves huge rises. BT boss Ian Vallance awarded himself £450,000 last year, with bonuses on top.

BT has cut jobs - from 252,000 in 1983 to 200,000 today, with another 40,000 to go in the next few years - and worsened conditions for its workers to the point where fully half of them have volunteered for the company's current redundancy scheme, at a

time when conditions for them getting other jobs could hardly be worse.

***"The whole Tory policy of privatisation, now being accelerated, is a formula for rip-offs and union-busting, nothing more"***

It is plainly out to break the Telecom unions. While BT says it has surplus staff, it is putting out

work to private contractors.

New technology should have made it possible for Telecom prices to be cut drastically. The effect of such competition as there has been in Telecom is that prices have been cut for the services most used by big business, such as long-distance phone calls, while prices for line rentals, local calls, and directory inquiries have gone up.

Mercury, BT's competitor, concentrates on the big-business services, and that is why BT has had to make price cuts there.

Complaints of bad service have soared since BT was sold off. They increased from 9000 in 1985 to 32,000 in 1989.

Now the official body set up to regulate Telecom, Oftel, has rapped BT on the knuckles and told it to cut prices more and trim its profits. Oftel's new requirements are reckoned to cost maybe £100 million or so of BT's £3 billion profits.

That's private enterprise. That's the profit system. That's the discipline of the market.

The whole Tory policy of privatisation, now being accelerated, is a formula for rip-offs and union-busting, nothing more.

The case for public ownership is stronger than ever. Renationalise - under democratic workers' control!

## For a referendum on Maastricht!

Britain should have a referendum on the Maastricht Treaty. The Treaty is the EC governments' blueprint for a more united Europe. Its guidelines affect every EC citizen.

Yet it was cooked up behind closed doors by a handful of top politicians, without anyone outside their small circle having a chance to amend it.

Almost all the big political parties in the EC support the Treaty. It commands big majorities in all the parliaments. On this issue, West European parliamentary democracy is at its most unresponsive, bureaucratic and elitist, with almost no accountability to the electorate.

Referendums are a very poor form of democracy: the Government controls the wording and the timing of the question, and the implementation of the "yes" or "no" result. For that reason they have often been the favoured instruments of dictators.

But a referendum on Maastricht would open up a debate now tightly controlled in a very small circle. It would also disrupt, embarrass, and maybe even split

the Tory Party.

Thus far we agree with Tony Benn and other Labour MPs who are pressing for a referendum. But we also disagree.

If a referendum is called, we will probably abstain rather than vote no. And we do not believe that the campaign for a referendum, and then for a "no" vote in the referendum, is the great new political mobilisation to revive the left.

"No to Maastricht" by itself means very little. All sorts of people are against Maastricht. The biggest political forces opposing it - in Britain, the Thatcherites and that section of the Labour Left who used to campaign for "Britain Out" of the EC - are nationalist. They defend the old, outdated barriers between nations.

Left-wingers who campaign now with the slogan "No to Maastricht" telling themselves that this really means "Yes to a socialist united Europe!", fall in to wishful thinking. Their policy translates into: Yes to higher barriers between nations now! Yes to a socialist Europe some time in the far future!

Our slogan should be not just "No to

Maastricht!", but "No to Maastricht! No to the barriers between European nations! Yes to workers' unity! Yes to a fight for democracy within the EC, and a democratic united Europe!"

In Parliament, socialist MPs should vote against Maastricht, coupling their vote with proposals for democratic integration of Europe and for workers' unity.

In a referendum, no-one can add explanations or amendments to their ballot paper. On any likely posing of the referendum questions, a "no" vote would throw us behind the nationalists, and a "yes" vote behind the Euro-bosses.

However, to combat illusions that the disruption created by a referendum majority against Maastricht would necessarily, or even probably, lead to a better Europe, is different from wanting to protect the powers-that-be from that disruption! We want a united Europe; we take no responsibility for the EC governments' bureaucratic, stitched-up, botched way of moving towards a united Europe.

If their botch-up leads them into trouble - if their credibility and authority are damaged in a referendum - so much the better!

We should campaign for a referendum to disrupt the Tories' plans - and argue for clear internationalist politics, so as to maximise the possibility of real gains

*"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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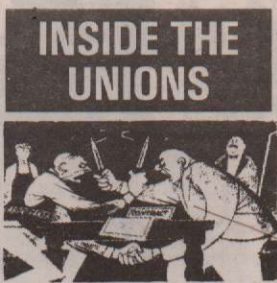
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# Born leader goes down the tube

Last November the London tube bosses announced "The Company Plan". It would be the most comprehensive attack on jobs, conditions and union organisation in the entire history of the tube: 5-10,000 job losses, workers forced to reapply for their own jobs, personal contracts, contracting out, performance pay.... etc etc.



By Jim Denham

Clearly, an attack like this is not best fought section by section - it requires a generalised fightback from the entire workforce. Disgracefully, the ASLEF and TSSA leaderships didn't even ballot their members for action against the plan. But the RMT did, and got a resounding 2-1 majority for action. What did the RMT leaders do next?

Why, they called off the strike, of course! The official reason for this climb-down was that management had agreed to "negotiations" on the Plan. A polite way of describing that explanation would be "balderdash" - a lot of tube workers used stronger language. In fact, all the bosses were offering was to "discuss implementation" of the Plan, which is not quite the same thing as "negotiations"...

Now, sometimes even revolutionaries in the unions are forced by considerations of the balance of forces to recommend deals that fall far short of anything that could be called a victory. But, having read our Farrell Dobbs, we know that in such circumstances we present the issues honestly and don't paint up and prettify a retreat by calling it something that it's not. So it was a trifle strange to find at least one "revolutionary" publication saying that "talks with employers become unavoidable" because the bosses had agreed to "negotiate" within the existing procedures and to honour existing agreements, including seniority. Like I said, "balderdash".

But perhaps the good folk who produce Socialist Outlook didn't know the true facts about the situation on the tube. Perhaps they'd been deceived by some left-talking RMT bureaucrat?

Well, yes and no. They should have known the facts because they do have at least one supporter on the tube. But perhaps they were misled by a fake-left bureaucrat: their supporter.

This is Mr Patrick Sikorski, full-time RMT District Council member and a very important, knowledgeable, and clever person. He'd argued a month earlier in favour of going back for "negotiations", and later justified it in terms of his "mature assessment of the balance of forces".

Unfortunately Mr Sikorski isn't quite so "mature" when invited to discuss his role in this shambles: his face turns purple, he quivers with righteous indignation and he does a passable impersonation of the Incredible Hulk about to ruin yet another shirt. He'll call anyone who questions his integrity, wisdom and judgment (even one who works on the Underground) a "sectarian" and an "outsider" who "knows nothing" about the tube, the RMT, trade unionism in general or what day of the week it is.

Mr Sikorski's extreme reaction (and I'm not exaggerating: it borders on apoplexy) is something I've noticed before in washed-up "revolutionaries" who end up in full-time union posts without any political base.

Unlike many straightforward reformist bureaucrats, they feel obliged to defend every sell-out in the most defensive and self-righteous manner: maybe it's got something to do with bad conscience and a lingering memory of old ideals and principles long since discarded for all practical purposes. In Mr Sikorski's case, this impression is reinforced by the stentorian, upper class tone in which he delivers his rant. We're just ignorant proles who don't understand the subtle ingenuity of a Great Thinker and Born Leader like Sikorski of the RMT.

Anyway, all is not lost: the Great Man may have advocated throwing away a legal 2-1 majority for a strike, but Outlook tells us that "when management come back demanding more changes only unofficial action that breaks the law will be effective". There you are! Us simple proles just don't understand, do we?

## INSIDE THE UNIONS

# Fight student poverty!

By Kevin Sexton, NUS NEC (personal capacity)

As the summer holidays approach, thousands upon thousands of students face another year without any social security benefits.

Higher Education students are the only people over 17 in Britain not entitled to any state benefits.

According to the Tories, students are meant to have budgeted on their measly grant, parental contributions, ad "top-up" loan, so that they have enough money to live on for the entire year.

For most students this is impossible. Students are even worse off than the unemployed if you measure by average weekly income.

Of course, students in Higher Education often come from middle class families which give them financial support, and they often have some access to credit. But the increasing number of students who don't have any parental support face the prospect of student union soup kitchens, begging, taking extremely badly-paid work, or worse.

Lorna Fitzsimmons, the NUS President elect, is a cross between Brenda Dean and Marie Antoinette - the glamorous briefcase carrier with a "let them eat cake" attitude towards the membership.

While Lorna is globe trotting round Europe over the coming period, Left Unity



Students need to organise against poverty and for their rights

will be organising a campaign to highlight student poverty and to demand our benefits and a fair grant.

*"Students are even worse off than the unemployed if you measure by average weekly income."*

Things to do between now and the end of July:

- If you haven't got one already, set up a "Students Against Debt" group. Get your union to fund it. Don't be put off if you're told it's too late for any budget applications. There's always a way

around this. Check out your union constitution.

- Get publicity out now. Advertise soup kitchens, food parcels, useful phone numbers (Citizens' Advice Bureau, Local Housing Office, Social Security, Salvation Army, local hostels) - and information about the legal position on begging, prostitution, busking, squatting etc.

- Circulate model letters to MPs demanding they take up the issue of student hardship.

- Collect signatures on a petition. Petitions in and of themselves change very little. However, they are a means of speaking to lots of people and building an on-going campaign against hardship.

- Organise a lobby of your college governors. Get them to condemn student hardship

and the government for imposing it.

- Organise local press stunts. Get as much media coverage as possible. Tory MPs claim that there are only very few genuine cases of hardship and that much of it is hype by the left!

- Organise a mass signing-session at your local DSS. Get together as many students as possible to go together to sign on for benefits. Get the press to turn up. Make sure you have press statements prepared, and people are prepared to be interviewed.

- Build the student demonstration in Manchester at the end of October "Against Student Debt and Cuts in Education".

# Yes, there is a political answer!

By Alice Sharp, NUS Women's Officer (personal capacity)

Many students are taking paid work during term time. Some are taking jobs that clash with tutorials and lectures. Inevitably their studies are suffering.

Professor Conrad Russell of Kings College claims "It is not only their own degrees these people are threatening. Since marking is a comparative exercise, many of us, usually quite unconsciously,

are lowering the standard of the degree to meet what people can reasonably be expected to do. Until the standard degree course is four years, jobs during term time threaten the British degree."

"There will be no political solution", says Russell. His "constructive alternative" is for students and parents to save up a "nest egg".

That is the advice he's given to his own son: defer your place in Higher Education, work for a couple of years until you have around £3,000 and then off you go.

## Occupation faces intimidation

Students at Oxford Polytechnic are facing threats of victimisation after being in occupation since 11 June. The occupation was called after a General Meeting drew up a list of demands to be met by the college management. These include an increase in computer facilities, lowering of catering prices and the appointment of a student debt counsellor. There have also been calls for the polytechnic to publish its

accounts to the student body, and that profit from library photocopiers etc. be transferred to maintaining the building and buying new books.

The occupation is ongoing until all threats of victimisation are dropped. The occupation also has the support of the college unions, NALGO and NATFHE.

Messages of support should be sent to Laura Bowen on (0865) 819167 or fax (0865) 819913.

If you cannot get a job, "wait until you're a mature student".

It seems that not only students' academic standards are being lowered, but also professors'!

We are living in one of the worst recessions this century. Paid work is not easy to find.

Defer a year or two and save up £3,000? The Tories attacks are coming so fast that the figure of £3,000 this year is likely to be increased by a third next year. Some form of tuition fees looks very possible.

Do you just keep working in the hope that eventually you will catch up with the Tories attacks, inflation etc?

But Russell says students should work with parents to make sure their "nest eggs" can be saved. He assumes that parents have enough to set aside a sizeable sum for their grown up children.

Most parents don't have such income and some who do would not cooperate.

If all else fails, says Russell, you should wait until you are a mature student. Why? Apart from the fact that education should be a right to take up whenever you want it, how would it help?

To qualify for a mature student's grant you have to have earned £12,000 over the previous three years.

If you've been looking after children or an elderly or infirm relative you don't benefit from the extra grant. And the amount extra, if you do qualify, is nothing to get excited about.

Mature students are experiencing hardship and debt too.

Professor Russell claims that student hardship "is not the result of the introduction of loans... but the loss of the right to social security benefits".

But you cannot divide the Tories' attacks into good and bad. The freezing of the grant after it had already been whittled down to a pittance; the abolition of supplementary grants; inflation; the recession; the introduction of loans; and the abolition of benefits, have all contributed to the misery experienced by many students.

Russell is wrong. There is a political solution! The Tories can be forced to back down! But only if students organise a fightback that involves mass action and work alongside trade unions in education.

This is the only solution.



Sacked steward Michael makes a defiant stand.

*An example to us all*

# JSC: Daring to fight

By Tom Rigby

**A**cross industry, we seem to be faced with the same picture. The official leaders of the trade unions have gone from retreat to rout. What opposition there is appears localised and limited. Few workers feel confident enough to fight back.

That's why the rank and file fight back on the London building sites is so important.

Over the last few months, activists from the unofficial Joint Sites Committee have been involved in a series of guerrilla battles with the employers.

By the middle of last month, the score was JSC - 8; bosses - 0.

A remarkable achievement when you consider that the industry is in the middle of one of its worst slumps for years, with many workers in fear of losing their jobs.

Now the JSC is involved in a vital battle at a West London site,

Vascrofts, Harrington Gardens. Four key shop stewards have been locked out and their unions, the TGWU and UCATT, de-recognised.

The EETPU has been brought in by management, a single union deal has been signed and an outside union convenor has been appointed to take the place of the democratically-elected stewards.

But still the JSC fights on. One of the stewards, Michael, has occupied the crane on the site. Another of the sacked stewards explained:

"The man has been up there for a week now. He's hitting the boss, we've completely stopped all deliveries because they can't use the crane, work inside has almost ground to a halt.

"It's blazing hot up there and management have been trying their best to starve him but he's determined to stick it out and win."

Meanwhile the stewards have not

received much official support from their trade unions. George Brumwell, UCATT General Secretary, has said that "we have no knowledge of any rank and file activity, but UCATT is in dispute over the victimisation of stewards."

You can interpret that comment any way you like, but the most accurate is probably that of one of

the JSC stewards with 15 years of UCATT membership: "The unions? They're like toothless tigers."

The JSC needs the support of every rank and file trade unionist. They are an example to us all.

For more information on the JSC, contact 081-343 9172.

## Stop press...

**Occupation ends but battle on the sites continues. After occupying the crane for exactly one week Michael and the other steward who had joined him that evening decided to come down. They and the other workers remain sacked. Their unions, the TGWU and UCATT, are still**

**de-recognised. The dispute however continues. Despite his ordeal Michael was up and running, getting stuck into JSC business by Tuesday afternoon. They have been forced to retreat without any agreement but the battle to organise the sites continues.**

*3 strikes in 3 months...*

## A bitter fight for recognition

**I**t has been a hard fight to unionise Vascrofts Harrington Gardens site. One of the sacked stewards explained:

"Wages and health and safety on the site are a disgrace, so a couple of months ago we decided to get some activity going.

"We held a meeting and occupied the canteen for six hours until management agreed to union recognition.

"But within a couple of days the intimidation started. On Monday 27 April I was sacked, shortly after being seen giving out UCATT union forms.

"I suppose I was privileged. The last union activist they sacked only got a couple of minutes to get off site. I was given two hours."

The next day a flying picket shut down the job and another nearby Vascroft site.

About half the deliveries were stopped:

"It's the first time in twenty years in the building industry in London that I have seen a display of solidarity like that. It obviously got Vascrofts worried", remarked one of the strikers.

After a week, the strike was won.

All those strikers that had been sacked were re-instated; the union was recognised. Strikers received £55 pay for their week on the picket line and an hour was taken off the working day.

However, management had simply retreated in order to re-group.

Four times the management cancelled pre-arranged union recruitment meetings.

Finally, when one did go ahead on Thursday June 4th, management went mad. First, they tried unsuccessfully to cancel it; then they had UCATT official John Gould thrown off the site by police. In the process, he was manhandled and verbally

abused.

In protest, the lads at the union meeting walked out and mounted a picket. The next day management turned up with a fax announcing that they had just signed a single union deal with the AEEU 'Building Section'

## EETPU renegades help the bosses

[an outfit consisting of ex-UCATT renegades who jumped ship after ballot-rigging disclosures.]

The pickets outside were given 2 hours to go back. After discussion it was agreed to retreat but management wouldn't have the stewards

back. "I went up and clocked on well before the deadline, but I was just told 'You're not wanted'," explained one of the stewards.

It was then that they decided to fight fire with fire. Since Michael went up the crane, JSC members have been assaulted in local pubs and roughed up by the police.

But the AEEU has not established itself.

"Most lads don't know they're in it", explained one sacked steward, and added: "Quite a few of them think of themselves as UCATT or TGWU men".

Apparently, when the boss tried to get the brickies' foreman elected as convenor, nobody would vote for him so, instead, an outside "convenor" has been appointed.

"He's a dog", said the sacked steward. If the AEEU's behaviour is "modern" trade unionism, roll on death!

## A week on a crane

**3**.30am on Tuesday 9 June: Michael takes up position. Management and police refuse him the right to fresh supplies of food and drink. One of the other sacked stewards is physically stopped by the police from tying a parcel of sandwiches to a string. The copper says that the string cannot be used to get food up the crane as 'he has reason to believe it may have been stolen'.

Management and police maintain their hard line of 'no food, drinks or communication' until five minutes after one of the sacked stewards, Chris, is interviewed live on the London news radio station, LBC, on Thursday.

Suddenly, the police are all sweetness and light. They repeatedly tell JSC supporters that they will *not* force Michael down.

On Friday, the High Court issues an eviction order against Michael and a writ for £1,000 damages. However, management were not able to serve them on Michael as the pulley system got all tangled up.

Police and management attempt to prevent JSC members communicating with Michael by stopping them getting within shouting distance of the crane.

A building worker who lives in the adjacent block of flats decided to show his support by letting the JSC communicate with Michael out of his back window.

Monday 15th: day of the mass picket. Michael is in good spirits but, as negotiations drag on, the food and drink ban appears to have been re-imposed.

Monday night: another sacked steward joins Michael.

3:30am Monday 16th June: they both come down after exactly one week.

## Wanted: a rank and file movement

**'U**ltra-left posturing' is what we called it in last week's *Socialist Organiser* and we were right.

After banging the table, thumping the tub and doing whatever else General Secretaries do when they are performing at annual conference, George Brumwell of UCATT is backing a "slightly revised" pay deal with the bosses. That is just *nine days* after "grimly" threatening a "summer of discontent" on the building sites. What's this year's increase? 3%!

This shows the vital need to close the gap between the official UCATT "Broad Left", which meets in smoke-filled rooms and does the negotiating and the rank and file organisation on the sites.

"Broad Left" officials are obviously better than the likes of Williams, but really builders need an organisation that can control its leaders and make them put their necks on the line just like the rank and file have to.



"We had no idea we were privileged"

## An everyday story of lordly folk

### GRAFFITI

Anyone who thinks that the aristocracy are a bunch of out of touch privileged idiots will have to think again after the testimony of Princess Di's bother, Charles Spencer. "We had no idea that we were privileged....as children we accepted our circumstances as normal". Presumably when the butler and Nanny had finished work they went back to their own stately homes and servants.

The Home Office is putting out for tenders to transfer all of Britain's 3 million criminal records currently stored on microfilm onto computer. After a Manchester firm put in a bid offering 99.5% accuracy, an Australian group put in a tender £5 million lower, offering 99.8% accuracy. Their trick - around 200 badly paid workers in the Philippines will work in shifts around the clock and complete the task in a year. The question is how will get police records 99.8% accurate? They weren't that accurate in the first place.

Socialist Action's new journal "Socialist Action Review", which is exactly the same as their old journal "Socialist Action", contains some remarkable revelations about Socialist Organiser and the ANL in an article of self congratulation on their role in the Anti Racist Alliance. The article states "...part of the left, the SWP, supported by Socialist Organiser and Socialist Outlook, reacted to the Anti-Racist Alliance by trying to split the movement by relaunching the ANL".

It is of course true that the SWP took a decision to set up the ANL after ARA had been launched - although somehow they forgot to ring up SO and canvass our opinion first. And why did SO decide to split the movement? "The aim was....to create an organisation under the SWP's control from which it could recruit". Of course, as regular readers will know, Build the SWP is SO's most prominent slogan.

As it happens any charges of "splitting the movement" that could be directed at the SWP could just as easily be

directed at Socialist Action, who want to exclude various groups from ARA committees, just as they argued for excluding us from the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf. But what is the point of quibbling about mere details like democracy? Socialist Action continue "SO went out of their way to welcome and justify the relaunch of the ANL". And how? "SO published a special poster calling on people to build the ANL and ARA".

So there you have - SO attempted to wreck the Anti-Racist Alliance by convincing the SWP to split and then, and this is the cunning bit, built anti-racist struggles irrespective of the label they went under. Only Socialist Action's eternal vigilance in their role as the self appointed Special Patrol Group of the Left saved the day.

"Socialist Action Review" will continue its high quality journalism next year with a report of Princess Diana's secret life as go-go dancer - roll over Andrew Neil.

Roy Lynk, leader of the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers, is attempting to break into the capitalist class through his union buying a stake in the privatised British Coal. But money has not always been so easy to come by for Roy. Eric Hammond in his recently published autobiography wrote of a interesting menage a trois that Lynk became involved in. One Joe Godson, a possibly CIA sponsored American trade union fixer, suggested that Lynk approach Rupert Murdoch for £250,000 to "bolster" the union. Lynk and Murdoch duly lunched (in the middle of the Wapping dispute). Hammond believes that no money was paid.

People have been complaining for years that Nelson's column is a piece of patriarchy made solid, a huge phallic symbol thrown up by a male imperialist discourse .... (continued, see any back number of Marxism Today). Now Dudley Council has spent £300 on a new "Nelson's Column". This time it's Nelson Mandela. It avoids problems associated with the original by being only 2 inches tall and carved out of a cocktail stick.

# Legal controls on the way?

## PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

You didn't have to be a genius to predict that the Sunday Times' serialisation of Andrew Morton's "Diana" book would spark off an orgy of royal "revelations" in the rest of the press. And you didn't have to be a genius to predict that that would stir up the old privacy/press freedom argument and the prospect of statutory press controls.

Eighteen months ago, the Calcutt committee delivered its damning report on press standards in Britain, but concluded that an "overwhelming case for introducing a statutory test of infringement of privacy has not so far been made out... Our grounds for deciding against include arguments of principle,

practical concerns and the availability of other options for tackling the problems which we have identified." Instead, Calcutt proposed establishing a new mechanism for press self-regulation (the Press Complaints Commission) and three new criminal offences of journalistic trespass, which affect the acquisition of material, not its publication. Calcutt's decision against statutory controls was very much "on balance" and then-Home Secretary Douglas Hurd drove the message home by putting the press "on probation" for eighteen months.

Up until last week's Sunday Times-led outbreak of Di/Chas hysteria, the press appeared to have taken some heed of the warnings, and even the Sun and Star cleaned up their act somewhat. Now, with the eighteen month probation period about to expire, all hell has broken loose.

A group of front bench Labour MPs have drawn up a private member's bill to regulate "the freedom and responsibility of the press", which would pave the way for a statutory complaints body. Lord McGregor, the chair of the Press Complaints Commission, rushed out a statement condemning the

"prurient reporting" of sections of the press and accusing journalists of "dabbling their fingers in the stuff of other people's souls" (a quote from Virginia Woolf, so I'm told). No sooner did the statement appear, however, than two of the editors who sit alongside Lord McGregor on the PPC (Brian Hitchen of the Star and Patsy Chapman of the News of the World) let it

*"It is impossible to conceive of any form of statutory control that would not, in practice, inhibit genuine investigative journalism"*

be known that they dissented. The Express and the Sun attacked the statement in print. When David Mellor comes to review the state of the press and the role of the PPC next month, the pressure to introduce some form of statutory controls may well be almost irresistible.

But a few points need to be made at this stage - first and foremost that,

distasteful and hypocritical as much of the present royal reporting may be there is considerable evidence that the lovely Princess Di did co-operate with the Morton book and has not exactly discouraged a lot of the rest of the coverage.

Secondly, while all socialists will sympathise with the motive of those MPs who want to use the present furore to curb the Tory press (and perhaps punish it for its election coverage) it is impossible to conceive of any form of statutory control that would not, in practice, inhibit genuine investigative journalism and give protection to the rich and influential - the Parkinsons, Archers and Maxwells. The British press (and not just the tabloids) is a disgrace. But statutory controls brought in on the back of the present "Diana" row will only make matters worse.



# Backlash personified? Maybe not

## WOMEN'S EYE



By Belinda Weaver

Only determined listeners would have caught every one of Camille Paglia's words on the "Late Show" last week. This woman talks fast. She also enrages people; especially feminists and the so-called Politically Correct, who are the target of many of her attacks.

She's an American academic who's flavour of the month with the media because she argues that all the great achievements of civilisation were the work of men.

Is she the backlash personified?

Her ego is certainly big. "Who is the better role model for women," she asks, "Gloria Steinem or Kate Millet, with their self-esteem problems, or me? I have no self-esteem problems!"

She ignores the fact that women have self-esteem problems not because they want to, but because they're raised that way - in the family and in society at large. Women are belittled, ignored, ridiculed, beaten down.

Though Paglia trumpets male achievement in her book, "Sexual Personae", she claims women are better. They're less violent, for example, less one-track, more in tune with nature because of their reproductive systems. But she's not a biological determinist. Gender is not fate, she says. Women must strive to remove all social barriers to their advancement. (She doesn't say how.)

She claims that American feminism is stuck in an "adolescent whining mode", blaming men for everything. Strong women should have no fear of strong men, she says, and anyway men are

weak; women are the dominant sex.

Confused? I was.

I agree with her that a "victim culture" is bad. Some American feminists, with their almost exclusive focus on rape and pornography as the key elements of women's oppression, do foster the idea of women-as-victims. Feminism here has been infected with that virus (though not lethally). We should focus instead on work, pay, childcare, and reproductive rights, areas where women can organise and fight back.

Paglia is against the nonsensical Politically Correct (PC) movement which wants to banish all Dead White European Males (DWEMs) from school curricula and replace them with a ragbag of examples from a range of cultures. It's not the widening of references that's bad about PC, but the refusal by its adherents to acknowledge that one thing could be better than another; it equates the Sistine Chapel with a homemade quilt.

In contrast, Paglia says study everything, from Judeo-Christianity, Graeco-

Roman paganism, to Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and so on. But it must be the best from each tradition, she says. She has an idea of "greatness", an idea lost, she claims, in egalitarian anti-hierarchical feminism.

She has a point. Many of the PC proponents want to banish thinkers like Freud or Marx from the curriculum. Paglia rightly says people need to study the whole sweep of history, not just the narrow confines of their own ethnic group.

She also loathes the influence of the French structuralists and post structuralists. I'm with her on that one!

Much of what Paglia says is sensible, while the "outrageous" stuff has probably been pumped up by the media and the right wing to hammer the feminists. In her desire to be famous and celebrated, Paglia has allowed the media to use her, and in using her, to distort and hype up her ideas to sell papers.

She may not be the backlash, but she's riding its wave.



German steel workers from IG Metall during their strike in 1978. These workers have agreed to stand by their Brazilian comrades in their wage battle in July

# Brazilian trade unionists call for shared struggle

**Brazil, site for the Earth Summit, is also the home of a fresh and militant labour movement. In this interview, translated from the German socialist fortnightly *Sozialistische Zeitung*, two officials of the Brazilian CUT union federation, Otomar Lucio Barbosa Silva and Diarlhes Pider Benjamim, describe their union's activity. They were visiting steelworker trade unionists in Germany.**

*How does the CUT assess the economic policy of the Collor government?*

**Barbosa Silva:** The neo-liberal economic policy under the current Collor government has, as we predicted, failed pitifully. Brazil is now going through the worst time in its history.

Never before has there been such a mass of need and poverty, in the cities and in the countryside. Because of the severe recession, more and more tens of thousands of workers are losing their jobs in the industrial zones. Monthly inflation is in double digits.

The government's policy of privatisation has only made things worse. They are dumping the state holding companies in petrochemicals, steel, and so on, into the hands of private capitalist groups, and opening the internal market ever wider for multinationals.

The government has also got a new credit from the IMF, of \$2.1 billion, and has accepted very harsh conditions for it.

It wants to reduce inflation from

around 26% monthly to 2% monthly by December 1992. The public debt is to be reduced from its current 36% to 18% of Gross Domestic Product. This means: further cuts in public transport, in health and education, further increased unemployment, tax increases, and industrial decline.

*What does the CUT propose to overcome the crisis?*

**Barbosa Silva:** The position of the CUT is, as previously, for: 1. a radical land reform, to revive the internal market, increase production of foodstuffs, and stop the flight from the land to the cities; 2. non-payment of the foreign debt, because in truth it has long since been paid back, and it chains the country to the rich countries; 3. an increase in the purchasing power of the great majority of the population.

*Should international firms be boycotted?*

**Benjamim:** The CUT does not call for foreign companies to leave the country. We demand that the profits be siphoned off and reinvested. We demand an end to the dumping prices which the Brazilian state allows to the multinationals.

Under today's conditions, no independent development is possible. But foreign firms must respect the democratic demands and social needs of the workers.

We demand dialogue about development, and introduction of new technologies. The Brazilian people should be able to buy what it produces. Most of the goods produced in Brazil today we can obtain either not at all or in insufficient quantity.

*What is the position of the CUT today? Is it the only trade union organisation in Brazil?*

**Benjamim:** The CUT represents

about 17 million workers. It organises much fewer, but it is the biggest union federation.

The difference between "representing" and "organising" is to do with the old system of state trade unions in Brazil [under the military regime], which is not yet completely disposed of. Under that system, the trade unions have to organise geographically. The CUT thus has the majority in many areas, and leads the local federations; but by no means all the workers of the local federations are members of the CUT.

Besides the CUT there are two other trade union organisations, the CGT which is internationally aligned with the official US trade union federation, and Forca Sindical. The latter is oriented to the Brazilian government,

**"We demand no help in the form of the workers in Germany reducing their living standards so as to raise ours... The workers in Germany, Brazil and elsewhere must share the struggle, otherwise they will perhaps share the poverty with us. Together we must force the capitalists to reduce their profits."**

Since its origin almost ten years ago, the CUT has been closely linked with the Workers' Party (PT), but it does not see itself as a party trade union.

Besides the PT there are other party-politically oriented currents in the CUT, such as the PDT, PSDB, PCdoB and PCB [The PDT is a nationalist/populist party; the

PSDB is the Brazilian Social Democratic Party, a right-wing party; the PCdoB and the PCB are "Communist" parties, splinters of the old Moscow-line Party].

Trade union work has, of course, become very difficult because of the severe economic crisis, the mass sackings and massive wage cuts. CUT activists are often the first to go when jobs are cut.

At the union's fourth congress, last September, there was a hard discussion on the course of the CUT.

*Do the difficult conditions also reflect themselves financially and organisationally?*

**Barbosa Silva:** The financial position of the CUT corresponds to the financial position of the workers in Brazil. It survives with the monthly solidarity of the workers. Lack of democracy in workplaces and society, bad working conditions, and the general low level of organisation, of about 25%, form the background.

In the Mannesman works at Bel-Horizonte, for example, where I worked as a foundryman, the organised trade unionists are discriminated against. They are called upon to leave the trade union. The Mannesman firm maintains its own informer service, directed at the activities of the CUT.

The election of a workers' council is prevented and so are information meetings at the factory gates. The management have just sacked five elected trade union representatives.

In principle things are no different in the local subsidiaries of Thyssen [another big German firm].

*Can trade unionists in Germany help?*

**Barbosa Silva:** We demand no help in the form of the workers in Germany reducing their living

standards so as to raise ours. We have heard that there is now a lot of talk in Germany about sharing sacrifices.

The workers in Germany, Brazil and elsewhere must share the struggle, otherwise they will perhaps share the poverty with us. Together we must force the capitalists to reduce their profits. Our German colleagues should get themselves better informed about the bad conduct of their managements abroad, and put pressure on them.

Quite correctly, we have got an agreement during our visit that IG Metall activists will stand by us in our wage battle in July with Ferteco Mineracao (a Brazilian iron-mine, from which Thyssen and Hoesch take a lot of iron ore).

*What does the CUT say about protecting the environment?*

**Benjamim:** The CUT does not close its eyes to the ecological catastrophe in Brazil and world wide. For that reason CUT will get actively involved in the Earth Summit in Rio.

In our region the biggest German steel companies are extracting iron ore. But if anything is done to protect the environment, it is only to permit further exploitation.

There are no concrete plans for recultivation and reforestation. Rivers have been poisoned and become ecologically dead through the iron ore workings. The protection of the environment is ignored or used as an alibi. The same goes for labour protection and health precautions.

70% of all iron ore extracted in Brazil goes to Germany. If this ore is important for the German workers too, then we call on them to consider together with us, how we can improve conditions.

*No answers on global warming, forest*

# Greed for profit leads Rio treaties toothless

**Les Hearn  
looks at the  
Earth Summit**

If the attendance of 117 presidents and prime ministers were an indication of the importance of the Earth Summit, then we should be able to feel fairly optimistic about the world's future. However, the attendance probably says more about the importance of looking like you're doing something!

The suspicion is confirmed when we see what has actually come out of the biggest gathering of the world's leaders ever.

Let us remind ourselves of the issues that needed to be addressed.

There was the question of deforestation. Many of the developed countries have lost a large proportion of their original forests. Britain now has perhaps 5% of its forest cover left, a substantial proportion lost this century.

Even the little that is left is not safe — just recently the Government decided to force through the destruction of the ancient Oxleas Wood in south London.

The US and Canada are busy logging their Pacific Coast forests. Better-known is the destruction of tropical forests in Third World countries, proceeding in some cases at a rate of up to 5% a year! Sometimes the forests are being replaced by plantations of just one type of tree, for production of pulp etc.

In all cases, there is a serious loss of plant and animal species



George "Read My Lips: 'the Planet Can go to Hell'" Bush



Aid commitments made 30 years ago are still not being met

as the forests are destroyed. There is also an increase in the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere as the carbon locked up in the forests is released during burning or rotting.

Agreement on ways of preventing, limiting, or repairing the damage is vital, but none was forthcoming from the summit. India and Malaysia led Third World opposition to what was seen as interference in their exploitation of their resources. There was no Forest Convention, but instead a set of non-binding Forest Principles was agreed.

Then there was the question of biodiversity, the range of different forms of life.

This has been seriously damaged through the activities of humans, most notably in the last 30 years or so. Factory ships have overfished the seas; forests have been replaced by cattle pasture; animals have become rarer as their habitats are destroyed or split up.

At the same time, fortunes are being made from products deriving from plants and animals found in Third World countries. Anti-cancer drugs from the rosy periwinkle of Madagascar are the

basis of a \$160 million industry. Genetic stocks of those food crops which originate in the Third World (virtually all of them!) are patented by agricultural giants, so that poorer countries have to pay to use what were originally their own resources.

**"The most important medium term problem is that of climate change due to the release of carbon dioxide and other 'greenhouse' gases. Rio saw the signing of a treaty to combat the release of carbon dioxide, but one with absolutely no teeth at all."**

The Treaty on Biodiversity aims to preserve wild areas with exceptionally high levels of diversity but also to encourage the "sustainable development of biological resources". Such a strategy has been adopted

by drug company Merck and Costa Rica. Merck will prospect for plants with useful pharmaceutical properties while funding conservation and a national biological research centre.

But that is just one agreement. The treaty contains nothing to force countries to protect their own diversity of life, though it provides for the developed countries to help the less developed. That will cost money — and there is little promise of that in any statement by the richer countries.

The US refused to sign the Treaty on Biodiversity, and in theory could be refused access to the resources of signatory countries. Compliant governments and dubious commercial practices should help them get round that.

Probably the most important medium to long term problem is that of climate change due to the release of carbon dioxide and other 'greenhouse' gases. Rio saw the signing of a treaty to combat the release of carbon dioxide, but one with absolutely no teeth at all.

Climate scientists are almost unanimous in predicting some global warming, together with negative consequences, such as

the raising of sea levels as ice caps melt or disruption of patterns of rainfall.

**"The key to all the agreements is cash. It was estimated that an extra \$40 billion per year — three or four Canary Wharves — in aid from the developed countries were required. Pledges of new money amounting to less than \$1 billion, or a small fraction of one Canary Wharf, were made!"**

The former could lead to the loss of low-lying coastal land, often the most populous, and even the forced abandonment of some islands, as the prime minister of Tuvalu told the summit. The latter could lead to agricultural disasters much worse than



# sts and saving species

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cover recycling, disposal of hazardous waste, the role of trade unions and women in environment and development, strategies for limiting population growth, policies on forests, oceans, deserts, the atmosphere, and biotechnology. It is not legally binding and will cost lots to implement.

Previously negotiated and agreed at the summit was the Rio Declaration, 27 principles on protecting the environment. Principle 3 covers the concept of "sustainable development", meeting today's needs without squandering resources so that future generations are harmed. Principle 2 accepts a right to exploit one's own resources without harming the environment of others.

It is also accepted that the developed countries are responsible for the bulk of pollution to date, and have a greater responsibility in its reduction.

The Rio Declaration had all teeth removed before the summit.

The key to all the above agreements is cash. It was estimated by the Earth Summit secretariat that an extra \$40 billion per year — three or four Canary Wharves — in aid from the developed countries were required. Pledges of new money amount to less than \$1 billion, or a small fraction of one Canary Wharf, were made!

The United Nations target of aid at a level of 0.7% of GDP, set some 30 years ago and never met, was restated at the summit, to be met "as soon as possible". Don't hold your breath!

As the increasingly desperate competitive race for profits continues, in a capitalist world, the chances of serious planned provision for the long term become worse and worse. The capitalist approach of grabbing what you can, when you can, is destroying the world for future generations. Only socialism can save the Earth!

be too late, if the "positive feedback" models are correct.

Developed countries have now agreed to stabilise carbon dioxide emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2000 and to submit reports on their levels of emission. But there is no legal force to make them meet this target.

**"The capitalist approach of grabbing what you can, when you can, is destroying the world for future generations. Only socialism can save the Earth!"**

Less developed countries are to be assisted to curb their carbon dioxide emissions by funds from the World Bank's \$800 million Global Environmental Facility, a rather modest sum in the circumstances.

In addition to the treaties, Agenda 21 was also agreed at Rio. This is a 800-page set of proposals and guidelines. Its 40 chapters

## Origins of the modern monarchy:

# A show to beat the socialists

By Mick Duncan

The monarch is constantly in the press, but not normally in the way it is at the moment.

The press usually tells us that the monarchy is a fine old British tradition, stretching back over a thousand years.

This notion is a fabrication. It is a myth to help prop up the class which rules our monarchist, capitalist society.

Before the late 19th century the crown had far more everyday political power than now, and it was a much more everyday institution. There was much less pomp and display. The crown was not as public as it is now, and did not have the public support either.

National identity figured less large and, anyway, the 18th century monarchs were not English but German. Some spoke little or no English. They were certainly not symbols of British national identity.

When national pride was evoked it was to celebrate a military hero such as Wellington.

The modern monarchy was developed from the late 1870s. Public ritual became more splendid. Old rituals were updated and new ones were created, starting in 1877 when Victoria was made Empress of India.

The increase in pomp and ceremony was used to make the monarch more popular.

When George VI died in 1952, the Times declared: "There was never an individual less regretted by his fellow creatures than this deceased king".

By the end of Victoria's reign, the press referred to Queen Victoria not as "Mrs Brown" any more but as "the most excellent of sovereigns."

A most unpopular queen had become popular. She had surrendered power and had received a new popularity.

This trend continued with George V, George VI and Edward VII. New traditions and ceremonies were invented all along the way.

The grand ceremonies for royal weddings, for example, are very new. Many of the traditions associated with these ceremonies date back less than a hundred years.

The church too upgraded its ritual. Bishops started to wear purple cassocks, cathedrals filled with incense and candles, and choirs were given matching cassocks.

The monarch became a mass-media symbol of the British Empire. The political purpose was quite conscious. The Archbishop of Canterbury commented after Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebration in 1887, "Everyone feels that the socialist movement has had a check".

Between 1887 and the First World War, ceremony was piled on ceremony. "Land of Hope and Glory" was composed as part of the Coronation Ode in 1902. Coronation and Jubilee mugs, medals, and stamps were produced.

As the Russian, German, Austrian, Italian and other monarchies were swept away, by the time of Elizabeth's Coronation in 1953, the British monarchy had become the most lavish and expensive in the world.

Certain traditions, such as living off the backs of the poor, do go back for many centuries but much of the ritual and ceremony of the monarchy is of recent invention.

This modern monarchy of very little everyday power, but wide popularity and fantastic wealth and splendour, used as a national icon, is only about 100 years old.

The Queen's personal income, private and public, comes to £18 million a year. If Americans on vacation really want to look at the Royals, can't we put them in a zoo?



Keeping down the workers

# Their Europe

**Martin Thomas looks at the background to the row over Maastricht.**

**I**n place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations". Capitalism was binding the world together into a closely-linked international economic system, wrote Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1847.

The EC is fundamentally a reflection of this drive by capitalism to knit together the world into larger economic units. But why did it come into existence only 110 years after 1847?

Capitalism first created the big nation-states in Western Europe. The next stage was not harmonisation between those states, but sharpening competition between them for economic territory and colonies on the other continents and in Eastern Europe.

Towards the end of the 19th century tariff walls were built higher and higher. The process culminated in the First World War.

After that war, and especially after the Great Crash of 1929, the rivalry between the big capitalist states only became sharper. Tariff walls rose yet higher. After a new World War, it was not until 1950 that intra-European trade (trade between one European country and another) recovered to its level of 1913.

Forward-looking capitalist thinkers had been proposing a United States of Europe since early in the century. The harsh competi-

tive conflicts between national capitalist classes made this impossible. After 1950 two factors made a half-way house towards it possible.

Those were the unprecedented capitalist boom of the 1950s and '60s, which lubricated the frictions of integration, and the unparalleled dominance of the US in the capitalist world.

The US provided the umbrella under which Western Europe was semi-integrated. The starting points were the Marshall Plan of US aid — in connection with which the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation was set up in 1948 — and the post-war US/UK/French control over West Germany.

***"We need the economic and social reconstruction of Europe in the interests of the working class — by way of building on the post war integration of the West European economy, seizing control of it rather than seeking to unscramble it."***

The Allies had to allow West German capitalism to grow and flourish to provide a bulwark against USSR-occupied Eastern Europe. But they wanted to avoid a competition for supremacy in Western Europe between West Germany, French and the UK.



We need an economic and social reconstruction of Europe in the interests of the working class...

The solution was a partial integration of the West European economy under US hegemony.

As the US/UK/French control over West German coal and steel

was ended, the European Coal and Steel Commission was proposed and eventually set up in April 1951. It was a 'common market' in coal and steel, with the same six

members — West Germany, French, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg — as eventually formed the full Common Market in 1957.

Britain refused to join — mainly because its trade was still heavily directed towards the Empire, or ex-Empire. (In 1957 only 15% of the UK's trade was with the EC).

The aim of the EC was to create a unified home market for West European capitalists, with free movement of goods, labour and capital, with common EC policies for economic infrastructure — transport, basic industry, energy, agriculture — and with harmonised economic laws and regulations. It would be a home market on the scale demanded by the huge productive power of modern technology.

In that aim the EC has been half-successful. A customs union was established in 1968. Trade within the EC grew tremendously.

In 1953 it was only 5% of world trade. "The European Economic Area" to be formed in 1993 from the EC plus Scandinavia, Iceland, Austria and Switzerland will account for at least 40% of all world trade.

In 1957, the bigger EC countries had 20-odd per cent of their trade with other EC countries. Now it is about 60%.

US multinationals benefited

## WHAT MAASTRICHT MEANS

The Maastricht treaty, agreed by the 12 EC governments in December 1991 and due to be ratified this year, is intended to map out the next stage of European integration after the Single European Market of 1992/3.

● It commits the EC to developing a single Euro-currency and a European Central Bank at latest by 1999. The European Central Bank is to be independent from all political control — that is, independent from democratic accountability! — and the treaty commits EC states to make their own central banks independent.

Britain has a special clause allowing it to opt out of the single currency. This clause probably means little. Britain has agreed that the other 11 states should go ahead to a single currency, and if they achieve that, the City will certainly insist that Britain must

join in.

It is quite possible, however, that economic difficulties and wrangles within the EC will wreck the agreement and make moves to a single currency much slower.

● Maastricht redefines the EC as a "European Union". Citizens of EC states will become "Union" citizens, with the right to move freely within the "Union".

Some people see this redefinition as a move towards a federal United States of Europe. It may be that or it may be just words, depending on the detailed battles and crises in the coming years.

The Maastricht treaty gives the elected European parliament slightly greater powers to veto EC policy, but still leaves it very feeble.

● Maastricht commits the EC to developing "a common foreign and security policy". It leaves open what this will

mean: maybe not much, since neutral Switzerland, Austria and Sweden are applying to join the EC.

● There was to have been a new "Social Charter" written into the Maastricht treaty, committing the EC countries to common standards for workers' rights and conditions.

Britain blocked this, and the other 11 countries signed a separate treaty on this question.

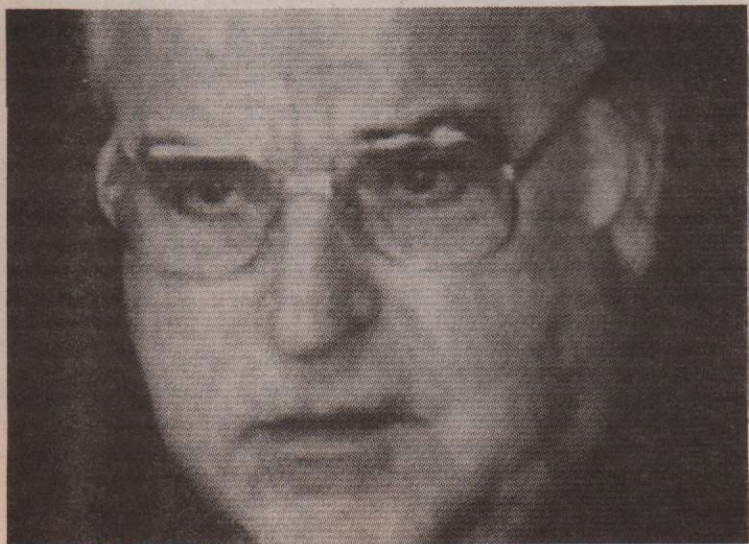
This "victory" for John Major, like his "victory" on the opt-out clause for a single currency, was largely a gesture to placate the Thatcherites. Britain could have signed the "social chapter" without changing anything of substance, and not signing it does not help Britain stand out against EC social policy based on the existing (1957) "social chapter".

All the bad consequences of the Maastricht treaty — transfer of economic power to unaccountable central banks, "tight money" policies, harsher immigration controls round the EC — depend on action by the EC member states to carry them through. (Some of them are not even explicit in the treaty). There is no central EC state machine of any substance to push them through. The main enemy for the working class is still "at home — our "own" bosses and our "own" state.

To counterpose the nation-states to Maastricht, or a less-integrated EC, is no way of fighting the racist, pro-cuts policies of these states.

Just to say "No to Maastricht! Yes to a socialist Europe!" is to omit the equally necessary slogan: "No to a nationalist Europe of competing nation-states!"

# and ours



...not the bosses

tremendously from the EC, pouring in investment for this wider market. The paradoxical result has been to make the EC today a challenger to the US's supremacy in the capitalist world.

Britain's trade with the EEC grew, to 31% of its total by 1972, and the UK, Denmark and Southern Ireland joined the EEC in 1972-3. Greece joined in 1981 and Spain and Portugal in 1986.

**"Just to say 'No to Maastricht! Yes to a socialist Europe!' is to omit the equally necessary slogan: 'No to a nationalist Europe of competing nation-states!'."**

Even from a capitalist point of view, however, the EC is a very limited form of international integration. Many barriers to trade within it still exist. All frontier controls on people and goods are due to come down, "from Limerick to Lesbos", by 1 January 1993, but Britain, for example, has said it will continue border checks on people.

A common monetary system is a long way off. Movement of capital is not fully free. "Cross frontier"

mergers of companies have flopped; so have joint ventures like Airbus.

At each economic or political jolt, the EC is thrown into crisis and only long, wearisome negotiations between the different states can patch together a compromise to keep going.

From a socialist point of view, a lot worse can be said about the EC. It has all the vices of capitalism writ large. It faces the Third World as an imperialist consortium. The Common Agricultural Policy means not only high food prices in the EC for the sake of fat profits for big capitalist farmers, but also massive surpluses while millions starve and high tariff walls round the EC for agricultural producers in the Third World wishing to export to it.

The EC, however, is not a particular "bad policy" of capitalism which can be amputated from the system to provide better conditions for the working class to fight in. It is a reflection of the most fundamental economic trends of capitalism.

The economic integration of Western Europe began before the EC; the EC is only a set of arrangements to accommodate and accelerate it

No amount of calls for "Britain out" will turn the economic clock

## WHO IS AGAINST MAASTRICHT AND WHY

Some Danes fear that their country's relatively high social and environmental standards would be harmed by pressure to get common standards across the EC.

Others fear that closer European integration would mean more immigrants coming into Denmark, and more Danish money going in EC aid to poorer EC countries like Greece, Spain and Portugal.

Many are simply hostile to the EC as a bureaucratic set-up which they blame, to one extent or another, for the unemployment, cuts, and economic crises which have developed since 1972/3, when Denmark joined the EC.

In Germany, right wingers fear that a Euro-currency, influenced by comparatively poor and shaky EC economies, would be less stable than their cherished Deutschmark.

Left-wingers object that the treaty does not go far enough in European integration, because it leaves the European Parliament still feeble, with all key decisions still to be taken by haggling between the 12 governments.

In Ireland, the strongest opposition is from Catholic anti-abortionists, who fear that Maastricht's call for citizens to be able to move freely within Europe could mean that Irish women could

freely go abroad for abortions.

There is also nationalist opposition, in the name of Irish independence.

The same nationalist theme is strong in France, where both the fascist National Front and the Communist Party play on the threat to "French sovereignty" represented by closer European integration.

In Italy and the other smaller or poorer EC countries there is less hostility to the EC, which has visibly helped them economically.

In Britain, the big majority of the ruling class is keen to get Britain on the "inside track" in the EC. It was for that reason, as much as for the poll tax fiasco, that they forced out Margaret Thatcher.

Thatcherite hostility to the EC - apparently based on trying to make Britain a cheap-labour, free market offshore economy, free of the social welfare and workers' rights which encumber continental capitalism, and attractive to US and Japanese capital - does, however, command a significant minority of the ruling class, and a large section of the small-business class and of the Tory party.

The bulk of the Labour left has always been anti-EC on a nationalist basis, though its voice has become less certain as its alternatives have faded. In the early 1960s

there was much talk of the Commonwealth - i.e. the ex-Empire - as a more progressive alternative to the EC. In the 1970s, a siege economy, surrounded by heavy import controls, was the "mainstream left" alternative to the EC.

The Marxist left in Britain initially - when British entry was first mooted, in the early 1960s - said that workers should favour neither EC, nor Commonwealth, nor an isolated capitalist Britain, but respond to the bosses' Euro-integration with international workers' unity.

In the 1970s, when nationalist agitation against the EC reached a high point, almost all the Marxist groups scrapped their principles, went with the prevailing "left" wind, and shouted for "Britain Out!" *Workers' Fight*, a forerunner of *Socialist Organiser*, was the only left paper to stick to its principles.

For some years now the anti-European far left has fallen into an embarrassed silence, but the Danish referendum vote has spurred some of them to jump onto the nationalist bandwagon again.

*Socialist Worker* has returned to its line of before 1971, without any explanation of why it argued differently for 20 years, from 1971 onwards!

back and abolish the huge scale of modern capitalist industry and its interconnections. If capitalism did not have the EC, then it would inevitably have another arrangement differing only in details - or the only alternative is that it would have a murderous battle between the big capitalist states of Western Europe over which of them would

integrate the region in the form of making the other states its vassals.

To call for countries to withdraw from the EC is as foolish and reactionary as calling for the great capitalist multinational corporations to be broken up into smaller units.

We need an international work-

ing class fight against international capitalism.

We need the economic and social reconstruction of Europe in the interests of the working class - by way of building on the post war integration of the West European economy, seizing control of it rather than seeking to unscramble it.



The Europe of the future? The growth of the far right and racist abuse

## Their Europe and ours:

# For a United States of Europe!



Anti-Maastricht protest: the left should not give any ground to nationalist resentment

### Leon Trotsky argued for a United States of Europe in "The Peace Programme" of 1915. Excerpts:

The economic unification of Europe, which offers colossal advantages to producer and consumer alike, in general to the whole cultural development, becomes the revolutionary task of the European proletariat in its struggle against imperialist protectionism and its instrument militarism.

The United States of Europe — without monarchies, standing armies and secret diplomacy — is therefore the most important integral part of the proletarian peace programme.

*"If the capitalist states of Europe succeeded in merging into an imperialist trust... the proletariat would in this case have to fight not for the return to 'autonomous' national states, but for the conversion of the imperialist state trust into a European Republican Federation."*

The ideologists and politicians of German imperialism frequently came forward, especially at the beginning of the war, with their programme of a European or at least a Central European "United States".

Certain opponents of the programme of the United States of Europe have used precisely this perspective as an argument that this idea can, under certain conditions, acquire a "reactionary" monarchist-imperialist content.

Yet it is precisely this perspective that provides the most graphic testimony in favour of the revolutionary viability of the slogan of the United States of Europe. Let us for a moment grant that German militarism succeeds in actually carrying out the compulsory half-union of Europe, just as Prussian militarism once achieved the half-union of Germany, what then would be the central slogan of the European proletariat?

Would it be the dissolution of the forced European coalition and the return of all people under the roof of isolated national states? Or the restoration of "autonomous" tariffs, "national" currencies, "national" social legislation and so forth? Certainly not. The programme of the European revolutionary movement would then be: the destruction of the compulsory, anti-democratic form of the coalition with the preservation and furtherance of its foundations, in the form of complete annihilation of tariff barriers, the unification of legislation, above all of labour laws, etc. In other words, the slogan of the United States of Europe — without monarchies and standing armies — would under the indicated circumstances become the unifying and guiding slogan of the European revolution.

Let us assume the second possibility, namely, an 'undecided' issue of the war. At the very beginning of the war the well-known professor Liszt, an advocate of "United Europe", argued that should the Germans fail to conquer their opponents, the European unification would nevertheless be accomplished.

Even a partial overcoming of the obstacles would mean the establishment of an imperialist trust of

European States, a predatory share-holding association.

And this perspective is on occasion adduced unjustifiably as proof of the "danger" of the slogan of the United States of Europe, whereas in reality this is the most graphic proof of its realistic and revolutionary significance. If the capitalist states of Europe succeeded in merging into an imperialist trust, this would be a step forward as compared with the existing situations, or it would first of all create a unified, all-European material base for the working class movement. The proletariat would in this case have to fight not for the return to "autonomous" national states, but for the conversion of the imperialist state trust into a European Republican Federation.

## WHAT WE THINK

- Against the Maastricht blueprint for a capitalist, racist and imperialist Western Europe.
- We are *equally* against the nationalist alternatives, which argue for keeping frontiers more policed and with higher barriers.
- For a Republican United States of Europe! For an immediate fight for democracy in the EC — full control by the elected EC parliament over all EC affairs.
- For workers' unity across the EC and across Europe! For common campaigns for a legal 35 hour week, and for levelling-up of workers' rights and conditions across Europe so that every country is brought up to the best standard! For Europe-wide shop stewards' committees in all the big multinationals, and all major industries!
- For a Europe-wide programme of public works, and public ownership with workers' control of the big multinationals, to steer production towards need and to guarantee every worker the right to a decent job.
- For Europe-wide public ownership of all the big banks, and democratic control of credit and monetary policy.
- For a European Women's Charter, based on levelling-up women's rights and conditions across Europe.
- For the replacement of the Common Agricultural Policy with a plan worked out by workers' and small farmers' organisations, based on public ownership of land, conversion of big farms into public enterprises, aid for small farmers to develop cooperatives and food production geared to the needs of the world's hungry people.
- For the abolition of VAT and the financing of all EC budgets by progressive direct taxation.
- For a Europe open to the world! Free movement of people into the EC; free access for Third World exports to EC markets; a big EC aid programme, without strings, to Third World countries.
- For the right to vote of all residents of EC countries. (In some EC countries, even long-settled immigrant workers have no right to vote).
- Against the development of any "EC army", and for the replacement of all the EC states' existing military hierarchies by people's militias. For a Europe free of nuclear weapons!
- For a Workers' United States of Europe!



East German workers protest against growing unemployment. We need a Europe-wide programme of public works

## NO SOCIALIST CUCKOOS FROM THIS NATIONALIST NEST!

In the early 1930s, the German Stalinists tried to ride the bandwagon of nationalist resentment against the Versailles Treaty imposed at the end of World War 1. Trotsky's comments then apply also to the attempts of some left-wingers today to swim with the nationalist tide against at Maastricht — and with double force, too, since the Versailles Treaty really was anti-German, while it cannot be said that the Maastricht treaty is anti-Danish or anti-British.

"At the most important place in his conclusion, Thaelmann [the Stalinist leader] put the idea that 'Germany is today a ball in the hands of the Entente' [the victors of World War 1]. It is in consequence primarily a matter of national liberation.

"But... the slogan of the Soviet United States of Europe, and not the single bare slogan 'Down with Versailles Peace', is the proletarian answer to the convulsions of the European continent...

"Our policy is determined not by the fact that Germany is a 'ball' in the hands of the Entente, but primarily by the fact that the German proletariat, which is split up, powerless, and oppressed, is a ball in the hands of the German bourgeoisie.

"The main enemy is at home! Karl Liebknecht [a revolutionary leader of the opposition to World War 1] taught at one time. Or perhaps you have forgotten this, friends?"



Greta Scacchi plays Judith Wilkes, a campaigning journalist

# A tragedy, not a tearjerker

## Film

Belinda Weaver reviews *"Turtle Beach"*

**"T**urtle Beach" is a Malaysian beach where Vietnamese refugees, the "boat people", are trying to land after days at sea. It is the late 1970s. Instead of finding sympathy and help, the refugees struggle through the sea to be met by Malaysian villagers, armed with knives and machetes, ready to hack, drown or bludgeon them, rather than let them come ashore. The massacres are repeated time and time again. The police arrive, but always just a little too late to prevent the villagers exacting their revenge on the weak and

helpless refugees, many of whom are children. "Turtle Beach" is rather clumsily done, and it doesn't always transcend cliched ideas about character and plot, but it's more worthwhile than most other films in town, both because of its subject and because of the feeling behind it came through, despite everything. It's a sad movie, seen through the eyes of Judith Wilkes, a rather driven Australian journalist who wants to expose the horrors the boat people are going through. If Judith were a man, she'd be cliché - the reporter who neglects everything, including family, in the quest for the big story - but because she's a woman, we can see that she's torn between her two sons, and wanting something for herself - a career she believes in. She's committed. Though she

wants to tell the story (and make her name), she also wants to help, even if it means risking her life. She's aided in her investigations by Minou, an ex-Saigon bar girl now married to the Australian Commissioner for Refugees. Like

***"The film showed the horror... the wrecked lives, the broken families, the emotional cost"***

Judith, Minou is separated from the children, who are still in Vietnam. She's desperate to get

them out, paying thousands to black marketeers and spivs for information and assistance. Joan Chen as Minou carries the story. She's believable and pitiable. When you see her clinging to her hopes about her children, her determination to salvage their lives out of the chaos and wreck of post-war Vietnam, you see the fragility and desperation too. Like many refugees, Minou can live in the past, with their memories, or in the future, with her hopes; but she can't live for now, the present is a waiting room, a limbo, an indeterminate sentence.

The best and saddest scenes in the film are set in the refugee camps, where everyone, even the children, tries to catch the eye of people who can help them. As Judith walks through, appalled by the stink and the crowding the forlorn optimist, you see her crumple, and you know how she feels.

For Minou, it's even harder. Every face might be the face of one of her children. She can never relax.

What happens to Minou and her children makes Judith realise how fragile families can be, and how near she has come to losing her own children. When she rushes home, she isn't capitulating or conforming; she's simply become more human. She wants to find a way to work at what she cares about without shortchanging her kids.

There wasn't a dry eye in the audience by the end, but it wasn't a tearjerker. It was a tragedy.

There are 16 million refugees in the world today, many living in even worse conditions than the boat people in Malaysia. The film showed the horror of that, the wrecked lives, the broken families, the emotional cost of punishing helpless, terrified people, of forcing people to live on top of each other in filthy camps.

A film that tries to make us care about that is worth a hundred Batmans and Lethal Weapons.

# McCartney at 50

## Music

Paul McGarry reviews the South Bank Show tribute to the Beatles' Sergeant Pepper

**T**he South Bank Show's tribute to the Beatles' 'Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' album (ITV Sunday) marked the 25th anniversary of its release and Paul McCartney's 50th birthday.

The album, released in 1967, ushered in a new era of popular music. Hippie youth culture and new political movements were stirring. 'Sergeant Pepper', with songs such as 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds' and 'A Day in the Life', reflected this cultural and political ferment.

On its release the "New York Times Review of Books" announced that the album

heralded, "a new and golden Renaissance of Song". Newsweek compared the lyrics to T.S. Eliot. More interesting (and amusing) was Ringo Starr's remark that all he learnt from his five months in the studio was to "play chess". (If only Phil Collins had been similarly treated!) The coincidence of anniversary and birthday celebration is a cruel one for Paul McCartney. All of his post-Beatles work pales into insignificance with almost anything he wrote as member of the fab four. As George Martin, the record's producer, played back the original master tapes and tapped out the melodies on a keyboard, a mental comparison to "Mull of Kintyre" or "Pipes of Peace" became quite depressing.

McCartney himself provided part of the answer to this in one of the interviews on Sunday's show. He describes

the competition between him and John Lennon. Lennon writes 'Strawberry Fields Forever' and McCartney replies with 'Penny Lane'.

During a particularly heated exchange, just as the Beatles were splitting up, Lennon poured scorn on McCartney's "granny" music. Set free from Lennon's criticism, McCartney has spent twenty years producing, by and large, "granny" music.

That, combined with his overbearing self importance and craving for status has made McCartney a ritual hate figure for decently minded people. And probably rightly so - which is a shame, really, because as the Beatles Lennon and McCartney produced a series of records that have still not been equalled.

What's more, my mother's teenage infatuation with him has left me with a most unfortunate Christian name.

# Sleep walking towards barbarism

## Television

By Alan Gilbert

**T**here must be a lot of people in America wanting to be reassured that everything is like, OK. *Beverly Hills 90210* tells them that.

It tells not only tired and worried older people, but also, and especially, teenagers whom you would hope to be less addicted to reassuring syrup. Up to 69% of all teenage girls in the US watch it.

The show (ITV, Saturdays at 5.15) is built around a group of students at Beverly Hills High School. They live in big houses, they drive their own expensive cars to school, they wear fashionable clothes, the sun always shines, and they all have clear, healthy - and white - skin.

"The show is an ad for consumerism and status", as American critic James Wolcott puts it. Producer Barney Diller adds: "This is about family values".

But this is not the 1950s (and if it were, the producers would probably be less frantically emphatic about the comfort and luxury of the students' families). This is the 1990s, and so the show has to deal with AIDS, drugs, racism, and so on.

Jamie Kellner, boss of the TV company that produces the show, puts it like this: "Without them [the issues], it would be a very unimportant show".

On the evidence of the one episode I have seen, *Beverly Hills 90210* deals with such issues by trying to neutralise them and absorb them.

The episode was about racism and the uncontrolled violence of the private security forces which now have 75,000 employees in Los Angeles County. Even those issues provided only enough disturbance to keep a plot going for the 55 minutes of the show.

By the end, everybody is happy, and the syrup is running smoothly again. The Walsh family (who form the centre of the show) cancel their subscription to the private security firm. They all become the best of friends with the wealthy, urbane black family who have moved in to their street. The black family's

***"The show is an ad for consumerism and status"***

daughter has a working-class boyfriend back in the black ghetto, but he turns out to be "the one his mother never had to worry about", and she is reunited with him.

All is for the best in the best of all possible suburbs, and if we cannot quite forget there is a nastier world just a few miles away in South Central Los Angeles, at least we can put it to the back of our minds.

The show helped me understand how bourgeois America can carry on sleepwalking towards barbarism.

Help us spread socialist ideas!

# An appeal from the editor

As regular readers will know, "Socialist Organiser" and the Alliance for Workers' Liberty are appealing to supporters and readers for extra funds.

We aim to raise £8,000 before the beginning of July. The extra money will

be in part used to expand the circulation and influence of socialist ideas in the labour movement. We believe this is our central role - to help the left regroup and redefine itself around coherent, democratic, internationalist revolutionary socialism.

The left needs "Socialist Organiser".

If you feel our paper is a useful contribution to the fight for socialism, why not make a donation?

We have received £179.26 so far this week, including £55.85 from supporters in Sheffield and £70.00 from

readers in Southwark. Thanks to them.

You can send cheques/postal orders payable to "Workers' Liberty" to PO Box 823, London SE15 4 A.

For socialism, John O'Mahony

## Alliance for Workers' Liberty public forums

- Thursday 18 June: "Yugoslavia in turmoil". Glasgow AWL meeting. 7.30 Patrick Burgh Hall.
- Tuesday 23 June:

"How do we save the world?" Northampton AWL debate the Green Party. 7.45 Royal Mail Club.

● Tuesday 23 June

"The case for Socialist Feminism". Lancaster AWL

meeting. 8.00 Priory Hotel.

● Wednesday 24 June: "Labour and the leadership" Manchester AWL meeting. 8.00 Manchester Town Hall

● Thursday 25 June: "The tabloids and royalty"

Brighton AWL meeting. 7.30 Unemployed Centre.

● Monday 29 June: "The politics of Malcolm X" Canterbury AWL meeting. 7.30 Sydney Cooper Centre, High Street.

● Wednesday 1 July: "Aboriginal Rights" SW London AWL meeting. 7.30 Lambeth Town Hall. Speaker: Vassili Manikakis.

## Labour Party

- Campaign Group of Labour MPs Conference: Saturday 20 June, Union Hall, Leeds University; 11-5.30.
- Meeting to discuss the leadership contest: Tuesday 23 June, 7.30pm Lambeth Town Hall, London SW2.
- Tribune/LCC conference: 26-27 June, Central Hall, Westminster.
- Luton Keep the Link

Meeting: Tuesday 30 June, 7.30 Socialist Club, Union Street. Speakers include Jeremy Corbyn.

## The unions

- Socialist Movement Trade Union Conference: 18-19 July, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London.
- AWL Civil Service fraction: 19-20 September, International Community Centre, Nottingham.

## Economics

The Conference of Socialist Economists meets at the Poly of Central London from 10-12 July. Details from CSE, 25 Horsell Road, London N5.

## Fighting racism

A demonstration is planned to oppose the racist Asylum Bill: Saturday 31 October, London. Phone RAHCAR 071-251 5675 for more details.

## Workers' Liberty

### Book Service

The Bookclub is offering the second of Isaac Deutscher's three part biography of Leon Trotsky, "The Prophet Unarmed", for £4.50 (post free). It's a great read! Send cheques to "Workers' Liberty", PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

# IDEAS FOR FREEDOM

## AGENDA

### Friday 3 July

Starting 3.15: • Did Lenin lead to Stalin? Robert Service debates Tom Rigby • Three part series — lessons from the rise of fascism in the 1930s — John O'Mahony • Four part series introducing Marxist economics — Martin Thomas 5.45 - 6.45: • Backlash against feminism? Jill Mountford • Fighting British racism — a discussion with Marc Wadsworth and Dion D'Silva 7.00 - 8.00: • Ireland — what solution? Tony



Dale • What will socialism be like? Belinda Weaver

### Saturday 4 July

10.30-12.30: • After the election, the prospects for socialism — John O'Mahony 1.30-2.45: • Where now for Labour? Bernie Grant • Slavery and anti-racism — Robin Blackburn • Does God exist? Martin Thomas Starting 1.30: • Should Scotland be independent? Katrina Faccenda debates Stewart Hosie from the Scottish National Party. 3.00 - 4.15: • What solution in the Middle East? • The roots of anti-semitism — Nick Brereton • Is this the end of history? Jim Denham • The Tories, sex and the family — Martin Durham 5.00 - 6.15: • Can Le Pen take power? Gail Cameron • Was Keynes right? Peter Kenway •

Their morals and ours — Pat Murphy •

Should we save the Morning Star? Al Richardson

Starting 5.00: • What is the nature of Stalinism? Debate with Martin Thomas, Tom Rigby and Hillel Ticktin

6.30 - 7.30: • The legacy of Malcolm X — Sab Sanghera • Fighting contracting out — Trudy Saunders • Where do ideas come from? Ruth Cockcroft • Ennis, an Irish town — John O'Mahony

### Sunday 5 July

Starting 10.00: • The history of the International socialists — John O'Mahony 10.00 - 11.45: • South Africa in crisis — Tom Rigby • The Communist Manifesto — John Moloney • Hollywood's view of history — Dan Judelson 12.00 - 1.00: • Essex

man — Chris Hickey • Is politically correct, correct? Martin Thomas • The State and Revolution — Caroline Henry

1.45 - 2.45: • Cuba: socialism on one island? Cathy Nugent • A defence of dialectics — Jon Pike • Lessons of October — Mary Cooper • Queer politics — Janine Booth Starting 1.45: Forum on Zionism —

Speakers include John O'Mahony 3.00 - 4.00: • How do we deal with union bureaucrats? Jim Denham • A history of AIDS — Kev Sexton • Stalinism and Bolshevism — Jim Kearns

## Additional Sessions:

- the left and Europe
- US capitalism

See back page for details of the school.

# LETTERS: Honest, but Catholic

While I hope that no one would disagree with Paddy Dollard (SO 525) in holding that Noel Browne was that very rare thing — an honest politician — I am afraid Noel deceived himself and your comrade in saying that his Health Scheme was based on that of the British Labour Government and that his views were then Bevanite.

In 1951 Noel founded a Party called the Progressive Democrats. The Secretary was David Thornley, who was a contemporary of mine in college.

I asked about policy. Noel said it hadn't yet been decided. I asked: (a) whether it was socialist? and (b) if not, whether socialists were allowed to join. Though I had been in the RCP, subscribed to Freedom, Socialist Leader, Socialist Outlook, etc., I was not then a member of any group, but called myself a Bevanite.

He replied (a) no, it was not and (b) well, perhaps a Gaitskellite socialist might be permitted.

I was involved sufficiently closely to see how Browne later developed into a socialist; but he had not so done when I left Dublin in 1956.

When I say that Browne did not then think of himself as a socialist, I should add that even David Thornley only regarded himself as a Progressive Conservative though by the

time I left college he did define this as being "something like Socialist Review".

Browne and his associates in 1951 were insistent that their Bill was unlike Bevan's. It was modelled on the social teaching of Pope Leo. They had consulted the Vatican, which had approved the Bill, and, indeed, the Vatican had instructed Archbishop McQuaid to withdraw his opposition.

McQuaid got round this by starting the rumour that "pressure had been brought to bear on the bishops", (with the obvious implication that it was pressure from outside the church).

It was on this basis that, a little while later, Browne wound his group up and went into Fianna Fail, which then pushed through a worded version of the Health Bill. Even when Fianna Fail failed to renominate him at the subsequent election, he was in favour of accepting it.

David nominated him without his consent, and campaigned for him sufficiently vigorously to get him elected. That was how his party was recreated, but it too was non-socialist, although it permitted socialist membership. The socialist members formed the 1913 Club as the socialist wing of the Browne party, but were later forced to leave.

Laurens Otter Salop

# Don't back Prescott!

The only reason that SO 526 gives for supporting John Prescott for Labour's deputy leader is: "...a win for Prescott will undeniably boost the defenders of the trade union link".

And yet Prescott did not vote against Kinnock's move at the last Labour EC to scrap the trade unions' say in selecting Labour parliamentary candidates.

Prescott has ranted about Labour being too busy appealing to the press and not building up its membership, but he went along all the way with the witch hunt and was in charge of the "mass membership drive".

Prescott is a two-faced opportunist with a long record of mouthing off and doing nothing when it mattered: ask the P&O seafarers in Dover!

Undoubtedly, the trade union lefts have adopted Prescott, but that is not

necessarily because of his stand on he block vote. The Region 6 T&GWU left were backing him from the start as the "left" candidate with a real chance of winning.

There is nothing new about this sort of fascination with backing the slightly more left candidate and focussing on elections as the way to change things.

Keeping the link is vital and we need the biggest campaign possible to do that. The problem with backing Prescott, however critically, on the issue of the TU link, is that we put him at the head of this campaign.

Is this not rather like those who voted for Kinnock to keep the party unilateralist? Prescott is very likely to back cutting the union link if he wins and is securely in the deputy leadership.

Sally Marks South London

**INDUSTRIAL**

# NALGO votes for fight on pay and contracting out

By Tony Dale, Manchester NALGO, and Dion D'Silva, Wandsworth NALGO

The NALGO conference has voted for pay battles in local government, Universities and Polytechnics, and the gas industry.

The 3.8% pay offer to council workers was rejected as derisory. Conference reiterated its support for the flat-rate claim of £1000, and called for a ballot on a rolling programme of 8-day strikes over six weeks if the offer is not substantially improved. This rolling programme would be combined with all-out action by selected groups of workers.

The Polytechnics and Universities group meeting rejected their 4.3% offer. A ballot on a rolling programme of one, two, and three day strikes will be held. The strikes are planned to start on 3 July.

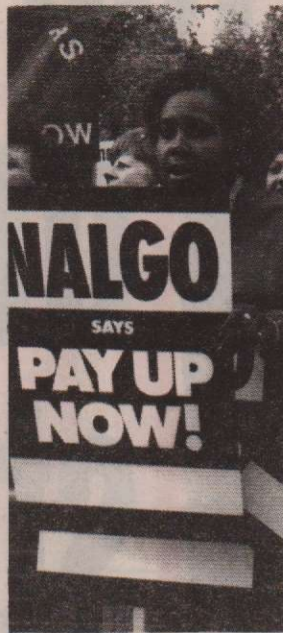
After the Tories' General Election victory, the employers have toughened their stance on pay. To win decent pay deals, public sector workers must organise for industrial action.

The debate on Tory plans to extend Compulsory Competitive Tendering and privatisation saw the biggest victory for the left against the National Executive.

Against the Executive's wishes, the Conference voted to hold a special conference "to discuss tendering and develop a strategy to fight it which will include industrial action". Also against the Executive's recommendation, Conference voted for a "series of national and regional events" in the campaign against Compulsory Competitive Tendering.

The National Local Government Committee wanted vague paper opposition to CCT. Conference voted instead for an active campaign against the privatisation threat.

Another important decision was to give full backing to Bury NALGO branch secretary Rob



McLoughlin. He has been suspended and is being disciplined by Bury Council for running an anti-cuts campaign.

On Tuesday 16 June, the conference voted for motion 45, the "unshackle the unions" statement, and also upheld NALGO's opposition to the anti-union laws by passing motion 44, to campaign against the laws and to prioritise the issue for the TUC.

Conference also passed an amendment initiated by *Socialist Organiser* supporters calling on the union to campaign for a Workers' Charter of positive trade union rights.

As we go to press, Conference is due to discuss the proposed merger with NUPE and COHSE on Wednesday 17th. The historical proposal for a one and a half million strong new public sector union should get wide support.

However, many branches remain genuinely concerned about the lack of clear, unambiguous statements on the rights of members and branches. The *Morning Star*, through the Districts, is putting pressure on the Conference not to pass any amendments at all; on the other hand, many anti-mergerites are using the issue of local collection of subs to try to scupper the merger.

Hopefully Conference will give a big yes vote to merger while putting on pressure for the maximum democratic guarantees.

## ASLEF Conference

# Fullick gives bosses all they wanted

By a West of Scotland ASLEF member

The conference of the rail union ASLEF, from 9 to 15 June, was eventful but disappointing.



Fullick

Fundamental attacks on the Machinery of Negotiation in both British Rail and the London Underground, as well as the London Underground's Company Plan and the Tories' planned privatisation of British Rail, made the conference a decisively important one.

Management are currently ignoring BR's 1956 Machinery of Negotiation, and wish to do away with many local representatives. In every depot with less than 100 members, for example, local reps would be cut from four to two.

The next level, the Sectional Council, would be abolished, leaving only the National Council and what remained of the local reps. The National Council's privileges would remain intact, but their clout would be seriously diminished as they would be invited only to "consult" with management at Profit Centre level on decisions that have already been taken.

A motion from Inverness called for a ballot of members in BR and rejection of the Executive report in the event of the Executive not obtaining a Machinery of Negotiation with management comparable to that of 1956. An Executive amendment called for "improvement, clarification, interpretation" on the Machinery, but no ballot and no action.

On the first vote neither the amendment nor the motion had a majority. An adjournment followed. The Executive did their deals, and on a recount got the motion defeated.

Then proposals for a ballot over the Company Plan were defeated without a fight, because their wording did not specify that only London Underground members were to be balloted. The mood of the

conference was for a fight over the Company Plan, but the Executive promised only to "consult with the membership".

A Polmadie motion calling on the Executive to use "every means at its disposal" to oppose privatisation was passed, but it did not tie the Executive to a ballot for industrial action. Activists must now fight for that interpretation.

One important victory was won against the Executive, allowing branch motions to cover more than one principle if they are related. Many motions — usually ones the Executive did not like — had been ruled out for covering more than one principle.

An unanimous vote saw ASLEF resolve to bring a private prosecution of the British Rail Board over the Newton rail disaster, in the event of the Health and Safety Executive failing to do so. The prosecution would seek criminal convictions of those responsible for the commissioning of the single lead junction at Newton.

The policing role of ASLEF leaders over their members is becoming more and more obvious to activists on the ground. The bosses must be delighted with the performance of union leader Derek Fullick.

All those disgusted with these sell-outs should build on the cooperation that took place at this conference to make sure that they are not repeated.

## NUCPS ballot

By a NUCPS member

Members of the civil service union

NUCPS have voted 23,000 to 14,350 — on a 40% turnout — against the three day strike recommended by the National Executive.

The union has rightly stated that it will still seek an improvement in the 4.1% offer, and will tell the Treasury that they reject the linkage between the pay offer and the proposed long-term pay arrangements. Nevertheless, the Treasury are likely to see the ballot result as a green light to impose the pay deal.

The ballot result was clearly influenced by the decision of the National Executive of the biggest civil service union, CPSA, to ride roughshod over its own conference and recommend the Treasury's offer with a lying propaganda campaign. The idea of being the only civil service union on national strike did not appeal to some members.

But the NUCPS National Executive must take primary responsibility for the years of recommending terrible pay deals and the months of keeping details of the latest Treasury offering secret instead of campaigning among the membership.

# Canary Wharf: no way!

By NUCPS and CPSA DoE group officers

Another large meeting of London Environment and Transport civil servants took place at Central hall last Friday. The attendance was further proof of the anger at the Tories cynical attempt to shove us to Canary Wharf and so bail out their big business friends. But the attendance was down on the first meeting and the temper was less obvious. If the anger is not to be dissipated then the unions must now give it a focus.

The mass meetings are vital — land must continue but people do not just want to listen to speeches condemning the government — they want a strategy

for stopping the move to Docklands. This Tuesday's "breakfast in Docklands" — members travelling to work via Docklands and reporting the additional hassle and journey time to the unions — has caught members imagination and shows their eagerness to be involved in campaigning activity. But members also know it will not defeat the Tories.

The decision of the NUCPS Group Executive Committee to ballot for a one day strike and selective action is therefore absolutely right. The CPSA and IPMS, and even the FDU must throw themselves behind the decision and build for the maximum unity across the different grades. Activists

must start putting the case across for substantial action, identifying prime areas for selective strikes.

The unions must link industrial action aimed at the disruption of the departments' work with a political campaign nailing Howard's lie that a Docklands move represents "value for money".

## Stop Press

One thousand turned up to the "Docklands Breakfast" organised by the joint civil service unions. The aim of the exercise was to give Civil Servants from throughout the South East a taste of the horrors of travelling to Docklands. The turn-out gives a massive boost to the campaign.

## Ambulance pay offer

# Ballot, ballot, and ballot again?

By Dale Street

Ambulance staff voted unanimously last month to reject management's pay offer of 4.75%. Now they are to be balloted again — on the same pay offer!

Management refused point blank to increase the original offer when they met union representatives last week. Their basic argument was that everyone else in the NHS, apart from nurses, had settled for 4.75%, so why should ambulance staff be any different?

Confronted with management's hardline stance, and backed up by the overwhelming rejection of the pay offer in last month's ballot, the union side should have gone straight for a ballot on industrial action. Instead, the four unions involved (NUPE, COHSE,

TGWU and GMB) are organising another ballot on the original offer.

Their argument is that when members voted to reject the offer last month — despite the unions' recommendation to accept it — what they were 'really' doing was mandating their representatives to try to get a better pay offer through negotiations with management.

Now that such negotiations have proved fruitless, the members are generously being given another chance to vote on the same pay offer.

Material being sent out by the unions with the ballot papers will 'explain' that no further progress can be made through negotiations, and that a rejection of the offer this time round will lead to another ballot, on industrial action.

But if the union leaders were serious about organising industrial action to win a better pay offer, they would not be

holding a second ballot on an unchanged pay offer.

Moreover, whereas the first ballot often took the form of open votes at union branch meetings, the repeat ballot is, according to official instructions, to be conducted on the basis of secret voting.

The union leaders obviously hope that the more passive sections of the membership will out-vote the more informed and active sections, especially in the light of the slanted information which accompany the ballot papers.

This underlines the need for union branches which opposed the offer in the original ballot to produce their own material, arguing the case for another 'no' vote and to build on the links established between different branches in the 1989 pay dispute.

The union leaders need to be told in unmistakable terms that 'no' means 'no' and not 'en-core'.

## Alcan Birmingham Strike against "all-time" working

The entire workforce at the Alcan factory in Kitts Green, Birmingham, are out on strike after a 93% vote in favour of action.

After a series of attacks that started about a year ago, rank and file members had had enough, and demanded a ballot for action.

In October last year, the bosses tore up the existing contracts and would only re-employ workers who signed up to new terms and conditions. Those included the right of the company to arbitrarily change shift patterns, almost without notice, and to impose compulsory overtime. They introduced "all time

working", which meant that the workers were always on call.

The company binned all agreements, and refused to recognise the unions except in disciplinary procedures.

After continual attacks, all the senior stewards at the factory took voluntary redundancy.

The unions managed to negotiate a reasonably acceptable deal earlier this year, only for management to refuse to sign it. That was the final straw that triggered the strike.

The action involves the TGWU, AEU and MSF. Messages of support and donations to: Alcan Strike Fund, c/o Dave Osborne, TGWU, 211 Broad Street, Birmingham B5.

## The Industrial Front

Thousands of school dinner staff are to lose their jobs in the South East. The company they work for has not had its contract renewed. Such job cuts are what we must expect across the board as contracting-out of services spreads.

The MSF union has called on Tory minister Michael Heseltine to launch an immediate inquiry

into the future of British Aerospace after the company announced that another 720 jobs are to go as part of its plans to cut 10,000 over two years. Nearly 3000 jobs have gone already this year.

The bosses' federation, the CBI, reports that service sector pay deals are down to an average of only 4.4% in the first half of this year, the lowest figure since 1983.

The EIS, Scotland's largest teaching union, is to ballot members in Strathclyde over a 5.5% pay offer.

"I'd rather close down than have a union", says Midlands boss

Workers are on strike at a Midlands electroplating company, Burnstall Ltd of Smethwick, demanding better safety standards.

The GMB has conducted a survey which shows that many of the workers "suffer from tightness in the chest, breathing difficulties, headaches, tiredness, and burns".

The strikers are also demanding equal pay for women workers, who at present earn £20 to £30 less than the poorly-paid male workers, and union recognition.

Last year the directors gave themselves a 46% rise. The workers got an average increase of 1%.

On Tuesday 16th, the *Independent* reported the managing director, Terry O'Neill, as saying that, "We would rather close down the company than give the union recognition. If the workers don't like our conditions, they can get another job".

**NUS: Don't sit back, organise!**

# Tories plan to break up student unions



*Workers' Liberty '92*

## Fighting for freedom

**I**deas for Freedom is the title of Workers' Liberty '92, the annual summer event organised by the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. "Ideas for Freedom" will run from Friday 3 to Sunday 5 July at Caxton

House, North London. Our main aim is to initiate discussions which help to rearm the socialist movement politically. "Ideas for Freedom" hopes to provide a forum for activists from the trade unions, Labour Party, and student move-

ment to discuss the issues which directly affect them.

For more details, phone Mark on 071 639 7967 or send a stamped addressed envelope to Workers' Liberty '92 AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

### Tickets for Ideas for freedom

*Tickets are cheaper before the event. (See box for details).*

Name(s) .....  
Address .....

Enclosed £ .....

Return to: *Ideas for Freedom, Alliance for Workers' Liberty, PO Box 823, London, SE15 4NA*

Cheques/POs to "Workers' Liberty".

### Facilities

There will be a professionally staffed creche at Workers' Liberty '92. Accommodation can be provided.

There may be transport from your area (phone 071-639 7967 for details).

Food, drink and entertainment are available.

### Tickets

Before the end of June tickets are cheaper. For the 3 days, £7 (unwaged)/£11 (students and low-waged)/£16 (waged). Subtract £1 (unwaged) or £2 (others) from these ticket prices for Saturday-Sunday only tickets.

### Agenda

Turn to page 14 for fuller details of the event. Phone Mark on 071-639 7967.

**By Jeni Bailey**  
(NUS National Executive)

**T**he National Union of Students (NUS) is under attack. Egged on by the Tory tabloids, education ministers look set to take action to break up the one and a half million strong union.

They want to break the system whereby students are automatically members of their college student unions and then - if the union votes to affiliate to NUS, as most do - of NUS.

The Tories' exact plans are unclear. A short debate in Parliament has given few clues. NUS bigwigs suggest that Education Minister John Patten is just hyping up an attack on NUS as a sop to right-wing anti-Maastricht backbenchers.

But there is no room for complacency. NUS should act quickly to head off this latest attack on union rights. The NUS National Executive must meet immediately and draw up a strategy based on mobilising students.

The best way to fight back is a defence of NUS linked to a militant campaign against student poverty. Students are more likely to defend NUS if it campaigns for their interests.

A repeat of the routine tac-

tics over recent years of the Labour right-wingers who control NUS spells disaster. There should be a summer campaign, involving a national rally, using NUS training events to organise new union officers, and leafletting rock festivals, and it should lead into an autumn of direct action, occupations, and a national demonstration.

As far as we know, the Tories have yet to finalise the method they will use to dismantle NUS. One possible way is to split local student unions into separate service and political sectors, with students "opting in" to the political sectors and to NUS. Another way is stop local student unions affiliating to NUS, but that is fraught with legal difficulties.

Either way, NUS will only survive intact if it breaks from a ten year routine of stabbing its own membership in the back.

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