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YOUTH FIGHTBACK

Pull-out inside



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SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

Courts ban Newham strike

We fight for union rights!



Strikers from Burnsall's in Birmingham are touring London this week to seek support for their strike demanding union recognition. The need for a fight for union rights has been highlighted by a judge's outrageous decision to ban the Newham Council workers' strike because the union campaigned for a "yes" vote in the strike ballot (see page 11). But the TUC in Blackpool has ducked out from the fight (see page 5).

Chamorro scapegoats lesbians and gays

On 11 June 1992, Nicaragua's National Assembly passed Latin America's most repressive law against lesbians and gays. If implemented, it could imprison lesbians and gays for up to four years.

As it stands in Nicaragua, there is a law against eleven acts of sodomy which "outrage public morals" although, to our knowledge, this law hasn't been acted upon for some time.

Article 205 of the new penal code has two worrying references to "homosexual sexual acts practised in scandalous form" and to the inducing, promoting or propagandising of such acts. It also introduces a new concept of "unlawful seduction" which people in any position of authority could be charged with; examples of authority figures are being a teacher, boss or a guardian etc.

"Scandalous" could be open to wide interpretation and could lead to the criminalisation of private, consensual sex.

Lesbians and gays involved in political activity such as advocating lesbian and gay rights and freedom from discrimination could be prosecuted and imprisoned. Article 205 is a gross violation of lesbian and gay rights!

This legislation comes at a time when the conservative government led by Chamorro are pushing the line of "family values". The government have been unable to control the economy. There is widespread inflation, unemployment, poverty and unrest. Targeting the newly active lesbian and gay movement is a useful distraction from the economic pressure and deprivation that the majority of people are experiencing. Article 205 will feed the prejudices and homophobia in society, it legitimises discrimination and attempts to link lesbian and gay sexuality in the public mind with depravity and immorality.

This will result in the marginalisation of the growing lesbian and gay community, instilling fear and distrust in them and sending them underground.

Presente* and the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights are organising a petition and a picket of the Nicaraguan Embassy on Monday 21 September, 12-2.30 pm and 4.30-7pm. An International Day of Protest will be organised in October. Look for dates in the gay press.

Send letters of protest (English is fine) to Her Excellency, Violetta Barrios De Chamorro, Casa Presidencial, Managua, Nicaragua. Fax: 010 5052 627911.

*Presente is a group of lesbians and gays in Britain working in solidarity with lesbians and gays in Nicaragua. (C/o 82 Margaret Street, London W1N 8LN)

Socialist dayschools

30 people attended the Burton-upon-Trent socialist discussion school on Saturday 5 September. 12 copies of *Socialist*

Organiser and a number of pamphlets were sold from the bookstall. An AWL branch is being set up.

Nottingham AWL dayschool will be held at the ICC, Mansfield Road, 10.30 - 4.30, Saturday 10 October.

South African courts block huge strike

Lawrence Welch reports from South Africa

A massive strike of over 100,000 workers in more than 720 engineering companies has been called off by the NUMSA executive in the face of a court ruling that the well-prepared ballot for action was conducted improperly.

These events bring together the contradictions and uncertainty facing South African workers, many of which they face alongside workers of all other countries.

The strike was called around a series of demands including a 25% wage increase (later revised to 1% above current inflation of 15%), a moratorium on retrenchment, training, maternity and paternity leave.

Supported overwhelmingly by the workforce, including members of Inkatha, the trade union officials were thrown on the defensive by the employers' organisations, SEIFSA, taking the unions to court over the legality of the action.

It was called to start, strategically, on the first day of the August stayaway, causing some confusion amongst, for example, the Vaal workers who organised a week of action regardless of the NUMSA strike ballot.

Unlike British courts, the South African judge allowed the unions time to study the employers'



Security forces

claims without granting the employers an interdict to call off the strike. This 'go slow' by the courts was unusually echoed by the police who, though they continued to harass and beat up workers with their customary ferocity, now required employers to gain permission from the courts before doing so. This was, in part, a measure of the 'Peace Accord' and, in part, a measure of the ability of the union to organise effectively.

Two weeks later the court finally allowed itself to be convinced that, on a series of minor balloting technicalities, the strike was

'undemocratic', creating a dangerous precedent against unions.

The immense risk that workers face in fighting for living conditions of work, as well as the impossibility of not fighting, was brought home brutally by the papers the following day announcing '10,000 jobs to go after steel strike'. These figures were for September alone, with losses for the next year expected to exceed the previous year's figure of 35,000.

In these conditions, distinguishing between tactical retreat to soften the overpowering blows of the state and a weak, timid aban-

donment of the fighting strength of the workforce is a calculation easily settled by emotional sympathies but rather harder to work out in the nitty gritty of the struggle.

Massacre!

As we go to press news has come in that up to 30 ANC supporters have been shot dead by soldiers in the Ciskei "homeland", and as many as 200 have been wounded.

Neither Bundesbank nor siege economy, but European workers' unity!

By Colin Foster

Seven billion pounds would pay for 100,000 new council houses, 200 new hospitals, or employing half a million people for a year in public services.

Norman Lamont would rather borrow the money in a desperate attempt to keep up the pound's international value and stave off new interest-rate increases.

The Exchange Rate Mechanism means that Western Europe is attempting fixed (or, for now, semi-fixed) exchange rates between currencies, in a world where billions of dollars, marks, and pounds are traded by speculators every day, without

any of the government controls that existed before the 1980s.

This attempt is necessary if Western Europe is to become a single "home market", an economic unit of the size and scope necessary for modern technology. A European single market cannot afford different shifting currencies any more than a national market can.

But it demands that credit and government-budget policies be uniform across Western Europe. Every West European government and central bank has to move in tune with Germany's Bundesbank, or with the European Central Bank due to be created under the Maastricht Treaty. Britain cannot cut inter-

est rates below Germany's, because then financiers would sell their pounds for marks which would earn a better rate of interest, and the value of the pound would crash.

And the Bundesbank is keeping interest rates very high because credit has been expanding fast in Germany and, unless it is stopped (so the bankers say), ruinous inflation will follow.

Slump-hit Japan is launching a huge "Keynesian" programme of public works. The US can afford to let the value of the dollar slide a fair bit relative to the German mark, hoping that the advantages to American exporters (their products become cheaper in marks, or francs, or

pounds) will put a floor to the slide. But Western Europe is tied to deflation, austerity, and "sweating it out". Britain's jobless figure, already 3.8 million on the basis of calculation used in 1982, is bound to increase.

Neither free-market quackery, nor economic nationalism, is an answer to the Bundesbank! European economic integration is a fact from which we should look forwards, not backwards.

Our demand should be for Europe-wide democratic control of the institutions of finance and credit, and the orientation of finance and credit policy to full employment and good public services rather than to capitalist cost-cutting.

Students plan demonstration for 4 November

By Kev Sexton

Despite a big building programme of student accommodation by many of Britain's universities and colleges, the new term will again see students sleeping on camp beds in gyms or in caravans on campus, a familiar scene for the last three or four years.

All HE colleges are under pressure to increase their intake of students, and most simply cannot cope.

They have passed the Tories' education cuts on to students

through rent rises, increased library fines, and cuts in services to students.

Rents for college-provided accommodation have increased dramatically over the last few years; in some cases rents in Halls of Residence have risen above the average rent in the private sector. These big increases in college rents have had a knock-on effect, enabling private landlords to make big rent increases too.

Students at the University of Westminster (formerly the Poly of Central London) can expect

more than a 20% rise for new accommodation in Docklands (miles away from the college).

Student unions in London, Manchester, Teesside, Buckinghamshire and Cambridge all predict accommodation shortages at the start of term.

Last October, colleges all over Britain staged occupations or rent strikes against student poverty, rent rises and cuts. For the second summer running, students have been without any financial support — no social security benefits, few jobs and grants, and loans that barely cover the rent and travel to college.

Few students have money left to buy the books and study materials which they are now expected to buy for themselves.

Already, weeks before the start of term, Labour Club activists in some colleges are planning action. Unlike the leadership of the National Union of Students [NUS], students in the colleges still believe the best way to fight back is through direct action.

NUS has no real priority campaign this year. NUS leaders are running scared of the Tories on the question of "voluntary membership" (the Tories plan to impose crippling financial controls on student unions) and are ignoring the hardship experienced by most students.

For the last two or three years, the Labour leadership of NUS has told students "keep your heads down, don't make any fuss and wait for a Labour government".

Well, we didn't get a Labour government, and the Tories are going for students and education worse than ever! And what are the Labour leadership of NUS saying this year? "Keep your heads down, don't make any fuss, and hopefully the Tories won't attack us".

They seem to have convinced a layer of paid student union officers that this is the way to deal with the Tories. Last year, ordinary students left many of their local leaderships standing when they started a wave of

Sinn Fein leader says: don't coerce the Protestants

By John O'Mahony

Sinn Fein is the political wing of the Provisional IRA (PIRA). Mitchell McLaughlin is Chair of its "Northern Executive". Last week he told a private meeting of Sinn Fein activists in Belfast the basic truth about current Irish politics: the Northern Ireland Protestants cannot be forced into a united Ireland.

This, though McLaughlin did not say it plainly, means that most of what PIRA does is wrong and counterproductive. PIRA targets for many years have mainly been Northern Irish Protestants.

McLaughlin says what SO has got itself a bad name with the mindless "left" for saying.

If he means it, he must go on to say what it implies: that the IRA should stop all offensive military action immediately.

This is some of what he said, as it was "leaked" to the *Irish Times*:

"We must convince them of the rightness of our cause and of the benefits accruing from advocacy of our cause... Whilst we offer the hand of friendship to our Protestant neighbours, we cannot expect them to read our palms to discover our intentions. We, and they, must be ready to talk and apologise and unite, and the only way that can be achieved is through dialogue leading to understanding".

McLaughlin spoke of a "convergence of opinion" between the leader of the SDLP, John Hume, and Sinn Fein, endorsing Hume's opinion "that division cannot be healed by force".

"There are deep and genuine difficulties in ending a conflict whose roots in Ireland are to be found in a history of colonial conquest," McLaughlin said.

"Who, of all forces active in Ireland, in this, the last decade of the 20th century, has the most influence over the greatest number of people to effect the necessary political changes? Sinn Fein would put that onus upon the London and Dublin governments".

action that lasted most of the first term. Whether or not local and national student union leaders will support direct action taken by the rank and file this year remains to be seen.

Both Sussex Area NUS and Manchester Area NUS are organising demonstrations in the first term. These events will be the main focus for the best activists, organising action that involves thousands of students which can stop the Tories.

Rent strikes and occupations will help build up to the MANUS demo on 4 November. Following the demo we should build up the activity in the colleges and areas, putting pressure on the local and national leaders to support our action and demands or resign.

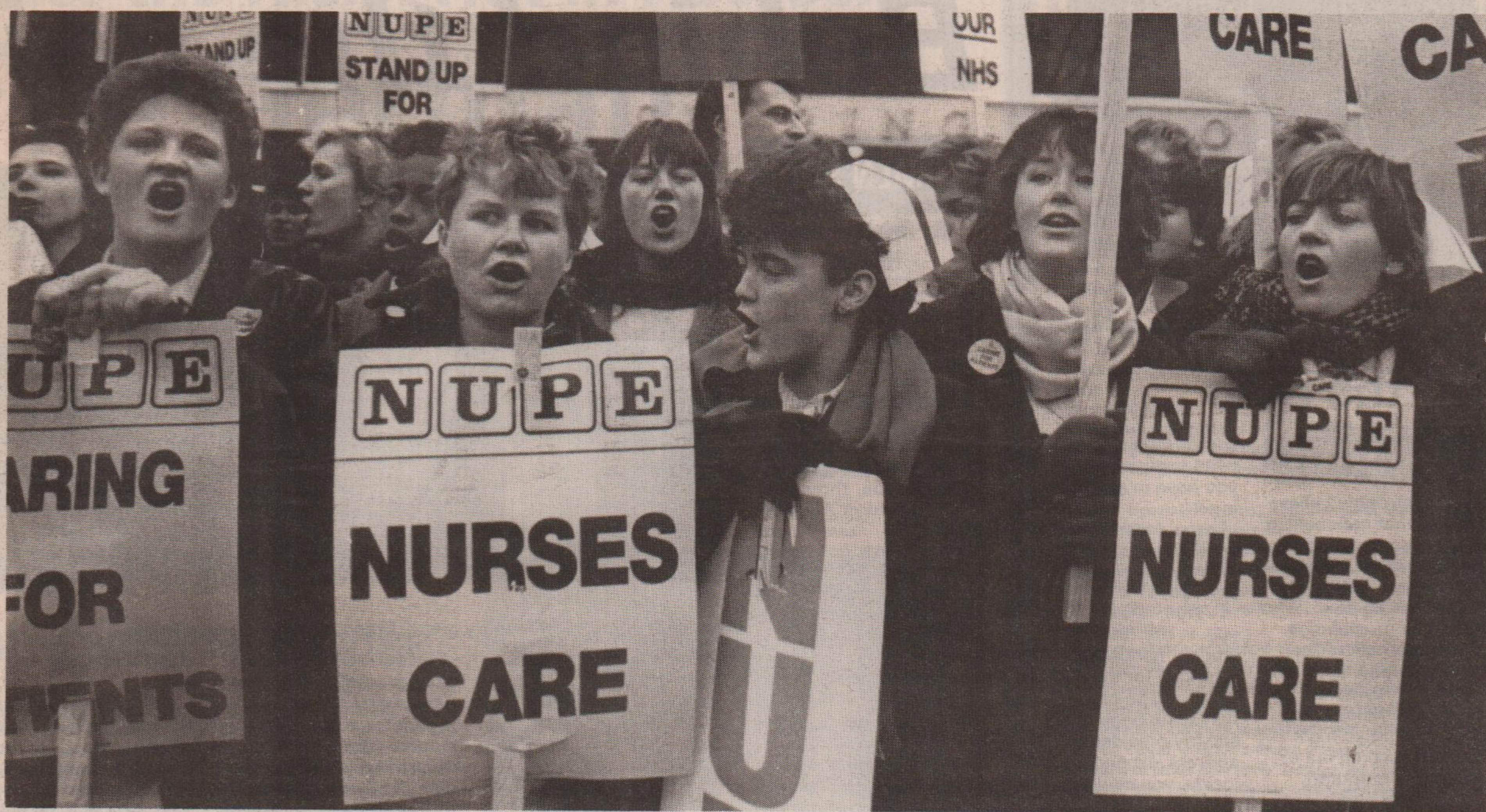
The Tories are confident because they won the election, but they've got big headaches in the economy and over Europe.

Even if they are in their fourth term, they're not invincible. The fightback has to start somewhere — why not from students?

Australian students' excellent example

Australian students are showing how it can be done. No keeping your head down and making no fuss there! A wave of action has included storming the Victorian Parliament. The Australian government is being forced to listen to the students, the students are gaining confidence, and their struggle is gaining strength against a new loans scheme.

Their government plans to end grants immediately, replacing them with interest-free loans.



Birmingham healthworkers demonstrate against hospital closures (5 September). A Workers' Charter of legal rights for trade unionists should secure the right to "solidarity" and "political" strike action on issues like the NHS cuts. Photo: Mark Salmon

Help us continue the battle — and win!

Fight for union rights!

For six years now, *Socialist Organiser* and the Alliance for Workers' Liberty have campaigned for a Workers' Charter.

We have campaigned for the labour movement to commit the next Labour Government to a programme of positive legal rights for trade unions and trade unionists.

The big white-collar workers' union NALGO has twice voted in conference to back the Workers' Charter, and this year the NALGO leaders were forced to put down the Workers' Charter as their resolution to the Trades Union Congress. The union leaders used "compositing" (the process by which the motions submitted are put together into a smaller number for concise debate)

to rip the guts out of the Charter (see report from Blackpool on page 5). But the issue will not go away!

The Workers' Charter demands:

- The right to belong to a trade union for all employees;
- The right to strike, to picket effectively, and to take industrial action in support of other groups of workers, without fear of losing your job or legal attacks on your union;
- Legally enforceable rights for unions to gain access to workplaces to organise, for workers to join unions, and for unions to gain recognition;
- The right for unions to determine their own constitutions and rule books in accordance with their own democratic procedures, free from any interference by the State;
- The right to stop work whenever health and safety are threatened;
- The right of workers and their unions to be fully consulted and informed by employers on all decisions relating to working conditions, job prospects, strategic investments, mergers and takeovers;
- The right to employment free from discrimination on grounds of gender, race, age, religion, sexual orientation or political persuasion;
- Full-time rights for part-time workers; rights for short-term contract workers and homeworkers;
- The right to trade unions to take political action and collect a political levy.

Trade unionists should defy the Tory laws wherever possible, and demand their repeal. But that is not enough. Many groups of workers, much of the time, are now not able to defy the law head-on. They have to evade the law, or defy it selectively: it is stupid to pretend otherwise.

The labour movement needs a con-

tinuous, ongoing, coherent campaign, not just spurts of defiance.

In a situation where capitalism was booming (more or less), and many employers could easily afford to give out continuing concessions to trade unions, the "pure trade unionist" line of "keeping the law out of industrial relations" made some sense.

"The Workers' Charter is a knife to cut through capitalist exploitation — but to cut straight, rather than scraping at the surface, the knife needs a strong, resolute, hand to hold it."

Even then, it left millions of workers in the lurch, in less-organised, less-advanced, less-profitable sectors. Today, as mass unemployment becomes a permanent feature of capitalism, the system lurches from recession to recession, and more and more capitalists become outright union-busters, the "pure trade unionist" approach is downright foolish.

The labour movement has to use the weight of its strongest sections to win rights and concessions for the whole working class, rather than leaving each section to fight on its own. It has to get its gains secured in law, rather than leaving them dependent on the ebbs and flows of workplace battle.

Legal rights for union organisers to gain access to workplaces, for example, for workers to join trade unions without being victimised, and for

workforces to gain union recognition, will be vital in the battle to unionise the new "greenfield sites".

Depressed, crisis-wracked capitalism generates more and more cowboy capitalists who coin quick profits by employing desperate workers for long hours at miserable pay and under wretched conditions. And, as Marx recognised, "capital never becomes reconciled" to being restricted to up-to-date employment, on up-to-date technology, in up-to-date conditions, "except under the pressure of a General Act of Parliament for the compulsory regulation of the hours of labour".

A bold statement of the legal rights which we demand, as positive rights, rather than in the backhand, oblique, legalistic form of "immunities" (as they were before 1979), will also help to rally working-class opinion to claim and enforce those rights.

The law is bourgeois law, capitalist law, the law of a capitalist state. But it is also the law of a capitalist state which has to reckon with a population which is mostly working-class, and a working class which is still, despite everything, substantially organised and active. It is not a fixed object. There is bourgeois law and bourgeois law!

To shy away from demanding laws, as some trade unionists do, is tantamount to saying that the ruling class should dictate just *how*, in what fashion, bourgeois law should shape the space it has to give to the working class, without the labour movement ever daring to intervene.

Today (though it was not always so) few working-class activists would fail to fight for laws guaranteeing public education, health services, social security, women's rights, and so on. The same should go for laws for trade union rights.

Despite the NALGO leaders' chicanery, the fight for the Workers' Charter will continue. It will be promoted and debated at the Labour Party conference next month, and throughout the labour movement.

The campaign shows how even small groups of socialists, like the AWL and the supporters of *Socialist Organiser*, can play a big role in the labour movement when we formulate precisely and clearly — with the aid of collective thought, study, and experience — what millions of activists are groping towards instinctively.

While we remain small, however, our ideas get taken over by more powerful forces, like the NALGO leaders, who gut and bowdlerise them.

The Workers' Charter is a knife to cut through capitalist exploitation — but to cut straight, rather than scraping at the surface, the knife needs a strong, resolute, hand to hold it.

To take the campaign forward to victory, we need your help! Support *Socialist Organiser*! Join the AWL!

"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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Reactionary of the week

Wiping nationalists off the map

GRAFFITI

I strongly believe that nationalism has no place at the end of the twentieth century". Which peace-loving soul could be proclaiming such internationalist words? None less than Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. But what could have caused such an out of character outburst?

Is it a late attempt to grab the Nobel Peace Prize from under the expectant gaze of Lord Owen? And why not, Henry Kissinger won it while the dust was still settling from the several million tons of high explosive he arranged to have dropped on Cambodia? Surely not.

Perhaps he has engaged the Yugoslavian Prime Minister and world-renowned statesman Milan Panic as a script writer? No-one could be that stupid.

No. Surely Slobodan was about to add "...and that's why I intend to wipe any traces of Bosnia and Croatia from the map".

Reactionary of the week is ex-World Chess champion Bobby Fischer, and not only for staging his comeback on an island in Serbia's ally Montenegro (the second part is to be staged in the Serbian capital Belgrade).

No, Fisher has been putting the fact that he was "robbed" of his title (the world chess authority would only accede to 177 of his 178 conditions for the defence), down to a conspiracy of "Russians and Jews".

"I'm not sure what anti-semitism is" complains Fischer, "Arabs are Semites and I'm definitely not anti-Arab". That would go down well at an SWP branch meeting, but is considered rather naff in international chess circles.

I imagine the scene — it's five years from now and the ex-President of the National Union of Students, Lorna Fitzsimmons, is going for a job in an advertising agency.

Interviewer: Well tell

us, Ms Fitzsimmons, what experience do you have in advertising?

Lorna: I was president of NUS.

I: Yes, but what did you sell?

L: Well, myself, actually. In the 1992 student handbook I arranged for the first picture to be of me — full facing page opposite my presidential address, second page inside, you couldn't miss it. I also had the NUS material printed in pink and orange to coordinate with the 1992 Next collection. You remember Next?

I: Yes, a pricey clothes shop. One of the first victims of the 1993 recession. The kind of place students couldn't afford to shop.

L: Yes, well I was the most important woman in Britain under thirty; I could hardly be seen to be linked with Oxfam, could I?

I: Wasn't it Next who bought their 1991 lingerie designs from Newcastle Poly before it changed its name to Northumbria University and shut after a hostile asset-stripping take over bid from the LSE? Didn't the student who did the designs only get 50 quid?

L: Oh, don't tell me more student hard luck stories. Anyway, I haven't told you the best bit. I then got to model some of the Next fashions in the *Daily Mail*. Right at the beginning of term. What a coup!

I: The *Daily Mail* wasn't exactly a progressive paper — it did quite a lot to down-play student debt, even before Martin Jacques became editor.

L: Well it was a bit of a coup.

I: You were elected on a Labour ticket weren't you?

L: Yes...

I: All this doesn't square very well with your, as we say in the advertising industry, product image you know, Labour, socialism, collective action. Anyway, send in the next candidate. Oh, and don't ring us...

Behind the veil

WOMEN'S EYE

By Rebecca Van Homan

The position of women in society is often a good economic and political indicator — nowhere more so than in Iran.

Since the revolution in 1979, Iran's treatment of women has become a measure of its political climate.

The election, three years ago, of President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani saw some improvements in women's lives (along with an improvement in the economy). Things look set to deteriorate once again.

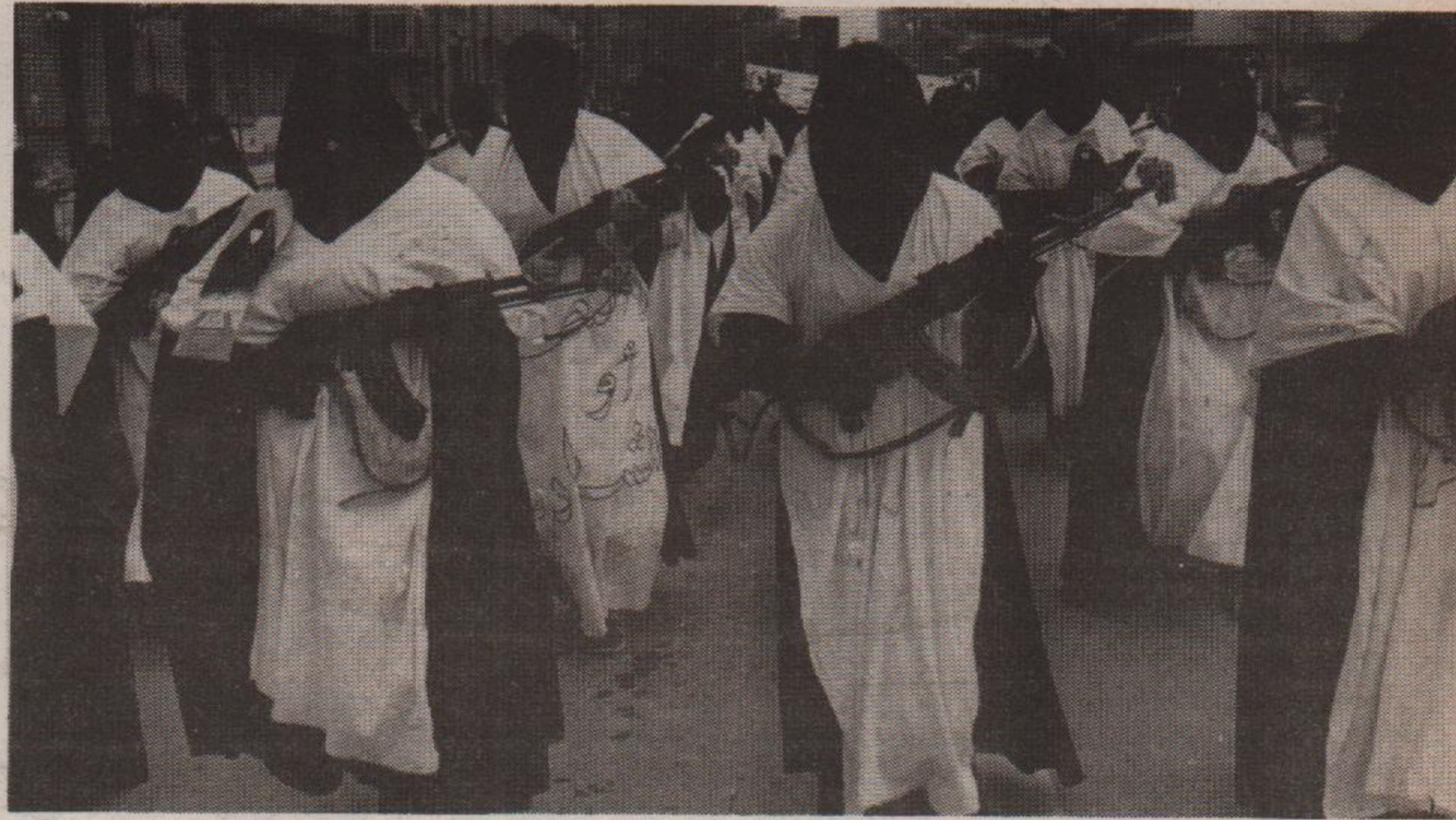
Last month, an edict revived the 'sacred duty' of all Muslims to challenge 'wrongdoers' and to combat evil wherever they see it.

After a year's virtual absence, the dress patrols run by the Revolutionary Guards are on the streets again.

Leaflets for the guidance of Iranian women dictate that they should show no more than their hands and faces; that if they bleach their facial hair, they should show only their eyes. They may wear only rose-water perfume and no nail-varnish.

Busloads of women from Tehran are arrested every day. Since the chador is not obligatory (though a large headscarf and long baggy coat are) these women had grown used to the relative freedoms of showing a bit of hair and wearing make-up.

But the control of women's



Women of the revolutionary guard. Photo: Kaveh Golestan, Reflex

appearance is only an outward display of the whole position of women in Iran.

Women are considered, from birth to death, to be the property of men.

"The control of women's appearance is an outward display of their position: from birth to death, the property of men."

The legal Islamic minimum age for girls to marry is nine years. All that is needed is the consent of her father or, in his absence, a male guardian. Selection of spouses for women is purely the decision of fathers or male guardians.

Divorce laws are weighted against women. The marriage contract used in Iran lays down sixteen circumstances under which a woman can get a divorce: a man can get one without reason.

There was some talk of a new marriage contract allowing women a no-fault divorce and the right to half her husband's wealth. This has been delayed in parliament for more than a year.

A woman's share in parental inheritance is half that of the man's, and her share from her husband's inheritance is only one-eighth.

Women 'convicted' of adultery are stoned to death. Abortion has been declared not only illegal but, indeed, 'sacrilege' under any circumstances and, therefore, punishable by death, both for the woman and for

the doctor who carries it out.

The economic dependence of women is clear — wages of women are on average one-third of men's. The first executive decision by the new 'Minister for Islamic Guidance and Culture', Ali Larijani, was to ban all female secretaries in his ministry.

Paid maternity leave is now reduced to 70 days, at the end of which there is no guaranteed return to employment. Most nurseries have been closed down by the state.

For women accused of not obeying these 'Islamic values' the penalty can be sentence to 'rehabilitation camps' to be re-educated in the *Koran*.

It's easy to forget how far we've come sometimes but, on reflection, it's how far we've got to go that matters.

Free speech for anti-fascists!

THE POLITICAL FRONT

By Mark Osborn

Leaflanders from the Campaign Against Fascism in Europe (CAFE) were physically prevented from distributing their leaflets at an anti-fascist carnival in Hackney, East London, last Sunday (6th). One of the CAFE people, a pregnant woman, was jostled and pushed around.

The attackers were not fascist interlopers, but anti-fascists, mainly, we understand, from a group called Red Action.

At the carnival, organised by Anti-Fascist Action, *Socialist Organiser* sellers were also prevented from selling our paper because we had not paid for a stall. In other words, the only public place in Britain where we could not sell our paper on Sunday was Hackney Downs! Those groups who did have stalls were penned into a small 'left' area.

At our Workers' Liberty events, for a small amount, we let other organisations have a stall. We let campaigns who have little money have free space. We let everyone — whether they have paid for a stall or not — wander around selling their papers and magazines.

We are in favour of liberty and free speech!

One of the organisations responsible for preventing our

members selling *Socialist Organiser* was *Workers' Power*. They "disagreed with the decision" but, with characteristic spinelessness, helped to implement it. For the sake of the "United Front". It seems that they cannot tell the difference between a united front and a democratic centralist organisation.

Those who stopped the CAFE leafleters were mainly, it appears, from Red Action, a

group which split from the SWP in the late 1970s when the SWP reined in its anti-fascist street-fighting, and which makes macho fascist-bashing the centre of its politics.

Sunday's incident marks a point at which a one-sided tough-guy approach spills over into downright destructiveness.

It's time to call a halt! Free speech for anti-fascists!

The lie machine

The *Daily Star* seized on John Major's unease over the French referendum to wave the Thatcherite Union Jack. Socialists should reject the *Star's* nationalism — and its reflection within the Left — but also support the democratic call for a referendum. Our support for a united Europe does not mean that we are obliged to give a clear ride to the bosses' Maastricht formulas (Euro-monetarism and a European Central Bank independent of any elected control).

Meanwhile, the *Sun* and the *Mirror* were back on their binge of prurient peeping-tom "exposures" of David Mellor. There are a hundred good reasons why Mellor should not hold public office, but if he is hounded out and replaced by another Tory for this reason — his affair with Antonia de Sancha — the cause of civil liberties and a tolerant society can only suffer.

After the racist riot in Rostock

The German left fights back

Since the attack by a racist mob on a hostel in Rostock, north-east Germany, housing immigrants from Eastern Europe, a wave of racist and fascist violence has swept Germany, East and West. These articles, translated and abridged from *Sozialistische Zeitung*, newspaper of the German socialist group VSP, outline the social roots of the racist upsurge, the criminal policies of Germany's established politicians, and what the German left is doing to fight back.

Police obstruct anti-racist response

Between 15,000 and 20,000 people demonstrated in Rostock on 29 August against xenophobia and racism. In contrast to Hoyerswerda [site of a previous racist atrocity], this time the answer of the left came broader and more promptly. Many foreign citizens participated prominently — they feel extremely threatened and their residence in Germany is no longer certain. The situation was more depressing than the previous year.

While in Hoyerswerda consternation was to be seen in the local population about the people of violence, and the demonstration immediately gained the participation of the residents themselves, the larger demonstration in Lichtenhagen could not achieve this effect. The initiative for the demonstration was taken by a Rostock citizens alliance (the PDS, Young Socialists, anti-fascists) and was planned collaboratively. Behind the support gained in the area, on many faces one could read only reserve and defiance. People want to have the violence of the preceding

days condemned from their racist standpoint. "The gypsies must go", they insisted. The demonstrations have changed nothing in this respect.

Politicians responsible for Rostock and country-wide have picked up on this. Days before the demonstration it was defamed as preparation for "a rampage" in the same sense as the violent fascists. People were warned that it would be a "riot" to frighten them into not participating.

The police indicated clearly that they had prepared themselves, which they had obviously not managed so well in their clash with the rightist stormtroops. Wide-ranging controls were placed around Rostock, and several buses from Hamburg and Berlin were subjected to hours-long delays. The beginning of the demonstration was thus delayed by three hours. In Rostock even the S-Bahn, the most important transport link to the main station, was deployed as a weapon: suddenly it stopped running. It was an effective demonstration-hindering strategy.



Skinheads push a Romanian immigrant down stairs

Government policies paved the way

On the night of 29-30 August, as demonstrators went home wearily from the big demonstration against racist violence in Rostock, asylum seekers in about two dozen East and West German cities were being hunted down, with fire-bombings and throwing of stones and Molotov cocktails.

On 1 September "unknown persons" blew up a monument in Berlin to the memory of the deportation of Jewish people to the concentration camps. Racist acts of violence have continued in an unbroken stream ever since.

In Rostock, in the week after the pogrom, a widely distributed fliersheet made unveiled threats of death to asylum seekers, "in order to force the politicians to act at

last". The popular rage seems however to have come very conveniently for those politicians.

The regional government established its central reception point for asylum-seekers in Rostock at the end of 1990. Initially 20 a month arrived, then the figure rose sharply. In June 1992 alone it was 1300. The hostel has only about 320 places!

Many asylum-seekers were not even assigned a bed any longer, and had to camp out in the open. No-one could be surprised at the consequences: dirt and noise.

The problems were the immediate result of the prevailing policy of concentrating and shunting off foreigners instead of integrating them.

Left must answer the social issues

Angela Klein discusses the social causes behind the racist upsurge

Social causes — that does not only mean that rents are rising to Western levels, but rather than people suddenly find that their right to their home, which is so self-evident that it seems to them like a property right, is put into question. They are dispossessed a hundred thousand times, while troops of robber-knights from the West grab land, houses and dwellings.

Social causes — that means that people no longer have hope for a future, because their economic and industrial foundation for existence has been destroyed.

Social causes — that means that all the many social institutions, neighbourhood help, youth clubs, house committees, holiday homes, sports clubs, have, from one day to the next, fallen victim.

Such social institutions made life livable in the concrete deserts because they offered possibilities of active participation in the community. With them gone, half the GDR turns into a no-hope ghetto.

These are the developments which explain why Rostock-Lichtenhagen, with its 17% unemployment, has become the parade ground of pogroms, and not cities in the Ruhr district [in western Germany] in which the unemployment figure is often no lower.

"East Germany has become a society in which people are excluded, superfluous, forced to the margin, isolated, alienated from society and each other."

Right-wing extremism at least promises ersatz solutions: the opportunity to feel strong again in the exercise of violence against people who are still weaker, and for once to arouse public attention. It also promises to halt the arrival of further competitors for social assistance, or sometimes for jobs: employers are taking on workers from Eastern Europe at starvation wages.

If socialist forces are to match up to these dimensions of the

problem, they must, over and above the necessary immediate struggle against racist violence, put a general social alternative into discussion.

The executive of the CDU [Helmut Kohl's governing party], at a private conference in early September, decided on a "line of march for talks on a solidarity pact" which included the following main elements:

- Strict economies in federal and regional governments, above all in the Western regions (i.e. clear reductions of expenditure for social welfare, culture, health, youth, etc.)
- A slower equalisation of the wage levels in East Germany to the Western standard (and therefore evasion of the wage agreements from 1990);
- Smaller wage increases in West Germany;
- More flexible working hours (reopening clauses in wage agreements, options for the reintroduction of the 40 hour week in branches of industry or in single workplaces);

DGB [trade union] leader Meyer and business chief Murmann are exploring, together with the parties, the terrain for big sacrifices by the West German workers. The wheel is being turned backwards in

regard to real wages and shortening of the working week, all the achievements for which the West German trade union movement has fought.

It is possible for them to be put into question across the board today, because in the East mass unemployment and depression threaten to break through all trade union barriers.

The SPD aims for a Grand Coalition [with the CDU].

Reconstruction aid for the East today must mean, from the point of view of the wage-workers of the West:

- Determined resistance to all those concepts which serve only increased profits and not investment to create jobs and livelihoods;
- Compulsory state measures for the modernisation of the factories in the East and the building of new factories and social institutions;
- Conversion of long-standing dwelling rights into property rights; transfer of land to the communes, and transfer to communal councils of decisions about possible returns of property to previous owners.
- Immediate introduction of the 35 hour week in the whole of Germany.

Union leaders gut Workers' Charter

The debate on the anti-union laws at this year's TUC could have been both serious and fruitful. The original agenda included a clear call from the NUM for the repeal of all the Tory laws and a comprehensive motion from NALGO

INSIDE THE UNIONS

By Sleeper

calling on the General Council to campaign for a Workers' Charter of positive legal rights.

But, when members of the NALGO delegation arrived in Blackpool, they found that their original motion had been totally gutted in the process of being 'composed' with another from the TGWU.

NALGO General Secretary, Alan Jinkinson, had been very 'flexible' with his own union policy.

In the original NALGO motion, there was a clear and unambiguous commitment to the right to strike. This was replaced with 'the right to strike supported by a ballot'. So workers could still, presumably, be sacked for 'unconstitutional' or 'unofficial' action.

The original also contained an unambiguous clause on solidarity action: 'the right to strike for all trade unionists in including secondary or solidarity action, without fear of dismissal, fines or sequestration...'. This was replaced by the bizarre formula 'The right to legal solidarity action'. The right to do what's legal — that's a daring demand!

'The right to picket effectively' became 'the right to picket peacefully', which is not quite the same thing! And 'the right to stop work wherever health and safety are threatened' was transformed into 'effective legislation to safeguard employees' health and safety'.

Jinkinson was able to get away with this because of the support he got from the NALGO delegation, many of whom were not too keen on being instructed by their own conference to move NALGO policy on the anti-union laws at the TUC.

A member of the NALGO delegation told *Socialist Organiser*:

'In the delegation meeting, Jinkinson announced that the composite with the T&G contained the same approach as the original, but that's a load of rubbish. The only similarity was a call for legal rights, the substance of the rights was very different.

'Really, our delegation should have voted against Jinkinson's composite, but it never got to the vote. Most of the executive weren't bothered about sticking up for NALGO's policy because they don't agree with it anyway! Others were far too soft on Jinkinson. They didn't want

NALGO to look 'silly' by voting against NALGO's composite!

Having done his wrecking job, Jinkinson then presented 'Composite 2' to the annual congress. Most speakers in support then counterposed the NALGO/T&G composite to the NUM's call for total repeal and defiance of the law.

The debate then started to take on a rather surreal quality as speaker after speaker in support of the composite devoted most of their time to impassioned speeches about the iniquity of the Tory laws — laws that the composite they supported would keep on the statute books. Bill Morris of the TGWU was the worst.

In the end, NALGO and the TGWU won overwhelmingly, while the NUM got just about 25% on a show of hands.

The other big debate at this year's TUC is likely to be over the EETPU and its reaffiliation to the TUC. According to a rank and file member of the GPMU print union delegation, their leadership are coming under intense pressure from the General Council to accept a 'compromise'.

'Dubbins has spent all the TUC so far in meetings. He's being squeezed to back down, but I can't see how he can come away from Congress with nothing'.

Left discusses unity

'Time after time, the left wins the argument on the floor of congress, we convince a clear majority of lay delegates, we win the most applause and then the General Secretaries make sure the right wins the vote'.

That's how Ian Cuthbert, chair of the NCU Broad Left, summed up the mood of this year's TUC.

Dave Ayre, a member of the UCATT delegation, agreed with that assessment: 'Scargill got the loudest cheers by far for his speech on the anti-union laws. He won the argument but lost the vote'.

Probably a quarter, at least, of the delegates in Blackpool oppose the direction the TUC is taking, but there is no unified left force at the Congress that can draw together that opposition.

The NCU Broad Left held a fringe meeting at this year's Congress to raise the question of uniting the left across the unions.

The meeting attracted around 50 delegates and visitors.

Audrey Wise, President of USDAW, spoke for many when she said: 'We've got to find ways of working together, of discussing a way forward and developing a strategy'.

The Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee is planning a one-day conference early next year to help unite the trade union left. Contact SMTUC, c/o 53 Geere Road, London E15.

"Freedom, justice and equality — for all people"

Why Malcolm X is still

Dion D'Silva, in the first part of a two-part article, explains the legacy of Malcolm X

In some schools in the southern part of the US, schoolchildren are forbidden from wearing Malcolm X hats, tee-shirts or symbols. Malcolm X was murdered in New York in 1965, yet he is so popular and considered "dangerous" even now. Why?

He was born Malcolm Little in 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska. The family then moved to Lansing in Michigan. Even in this rather unremarkable town in the heart of the States, racism was rife. In 1929 the family house was burnt down by the KKK. When Malcolm was 6, his father was murdered. This drove his mother to insanity, and Malcolm was put into an institution in Michigan.

After dropping out at 15, Malcolm moved in with his sister in Boston, on the East coast. Malcolm got "black" jobs such as shoeshine boy and hotel bus boy. He became a waiter in Harlem and drifted into the world of robbery, drugs and prostitution. Before he was 21 he was sentenced to 10 years in jail for burglary — he was expecting a maximum of two.

Malcolm later explained his

popularity with young black people because he spoke the language of the "ghetto". The experience of the young Malcolm, drifting from poorly paid jobs into the relative rewards of a life of crime and finally jail, is sadly mirrored by hundreds of thousands of black youth in the cities of the States today. Indeed it is more likely for a black young male to be in an institution than at high school.

Jail changed Malcolm's life. He developed a thirst for knowledge — he read anything he could get his hands on, starting with the dictionary. Some 40 years on, many people are picking up his autobiography with that same thirst — there have been 14 reprints and over 100,000 sold in the UK alone.

In jail Malcolm came across the Nation of Islam, commonly known as the Black Muslims. They preached self-reliance and a distrust of all the white institutions. Malcolm became a follower. Later on he was recognised as one of the sharpest debaters — a skill he said he refined discussing ideas while in prison.

Malcolm had a natural talent for public speaking and organising. After leaving jail he built mosques throughout the East coast. Elijah Muhammad was the leader of the Nation of Islam but Malcolm was the



The aftermath of the LA riots. Black people in America still face the appalling economic and social conditions Malcolm X tried to fight

public spokesman of the organisation. He was now known as Malcolm X, a recognition of the hidden history of slavery.

"The experience of the young Malcolm, drifting from poorly paid jobs into the relative rewards of a life of crime and finally jail is sadly mirrored by hundreds of thousands of black youth in the cities of the States today."

The Nation's main support was in the North. Malcolm was a radical and provocative speaker. The white man was the "devil" and a degenerate offspring. Integration could not work, what was needed was separation as whites and blacks would never live together. However, Malcolm became disillusioned with the Nation's lack of involvement in politics and in particular the civil rights movement. He started a newspaper for the organisation. The Nation is now under the leadership of right-winger Louis Farrakhan, with a paper named *The Final Call*.

In 1963, Malcolm's remark on the Kennedy assassination caused a split with Elijah Muhammed. Malcolm had stated the "chickens have come home to roost", meaning that America was a violent society stoked up by racism and oppression, with violent and brutal leaders. The split was a very traumatic experience for Malcolm. He stayed a Muslim

until the day he died but he also knew how the Nation of Islam treated dissidents. Many believe that they assassinated Malcolm.

Malcolm's ideas developed and changed. He set up the Organisation of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). He was keen to set up a black political organisation that stood independently from the racist Democratic and Republican parties. He also talked about building alliances with white people.

Nevertheless, in 1964 Malcolm put it this way. "Whites can help us but they can't join us. There can be no black-white unity until there is some black unity. There can be no workers' solidarity until there is first some racial solidarity. We can't think of uniting with others until we have first united ourselves".

The ideas of black pride had great support among young black activists such as Stokely Carmichael of the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee. This feeling of pride and dignity cannot be underestimated for a people who were battered and humiliated and treated as second class citizens.

Malcolm made a pilgrimage to Mecca and also visited African countries freeing themselves from colonial repression. The visits had a marked effect. He now said that "American whites can be cured of... rampant racism. I am not a racist and do not subscribe to any of the tenets of racism... I wish nothing but freedom, justice and equality! Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness — for all people". So much for being a "black racist" as some of the

media, including the American Communist Party, called him.

One of the most striking images is the poster of Malcolm X with rifle raised looking out of a window with the words "By any means necessary". Yet he never advocated violence — he was concerned with self-defence. No doubt Malcolm provocatively counterposed this to the "turn the other cheek" approach of Martin Luther King. In fact the picture of Malcolm looking out of the window was a demonstration of his nervousness at being followed and hounded by the secret services.

Malcolm made the link between capitalism and racism. Speaking on a socialist platform, asked about the system he wanted he replied, "I don't know. But I'm flexible... all of the countries that are emerging today from under the shackles of colonialism are turning towards socialism. I don't think it's an accident... It's impossible for a white person to believe in capitalism and not believe in racism."

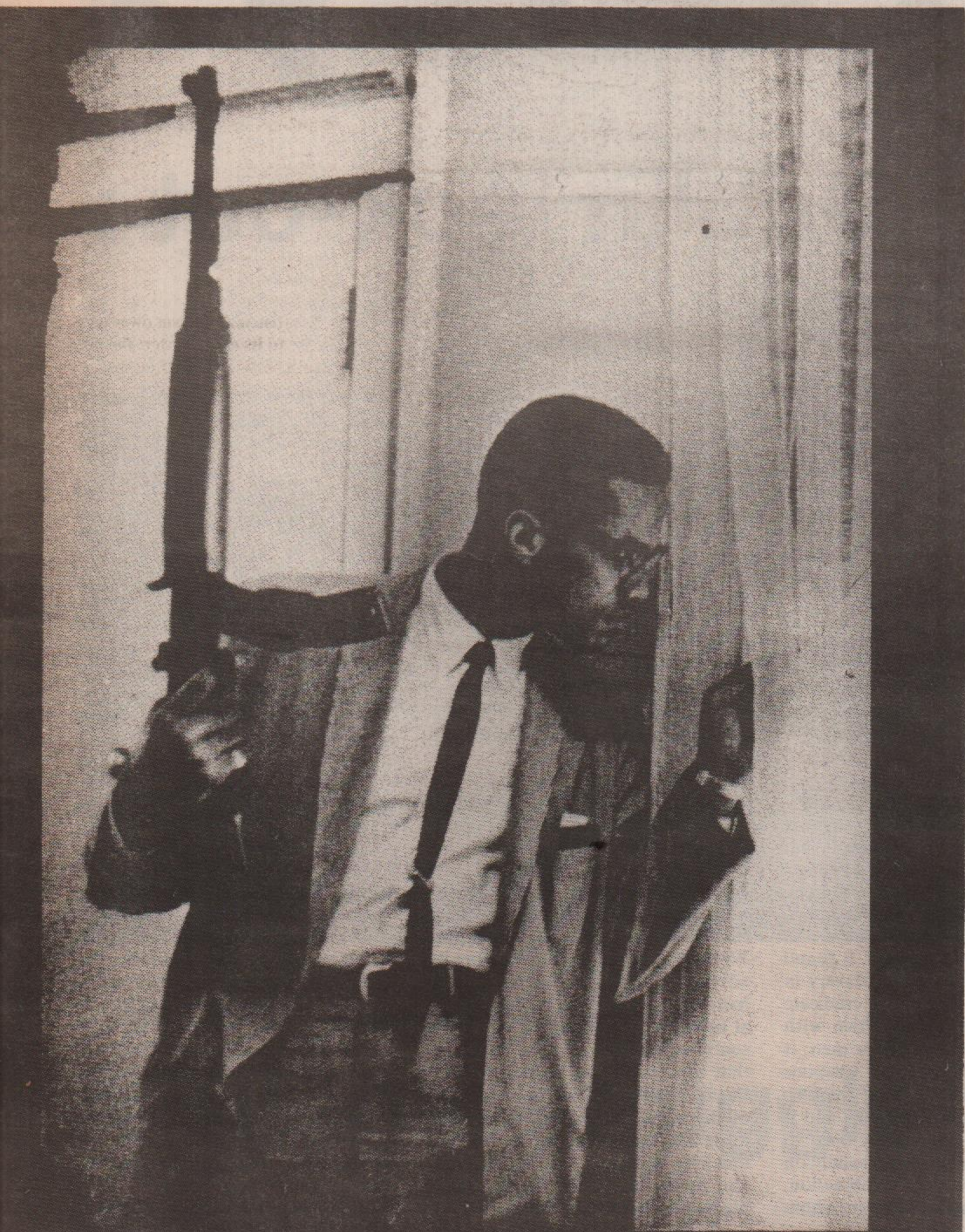
"Malcolm was open to new ideas. Unfortunately he was gunned down in Harlem in early 1965 in the prime of his life. We can't say how he would have changed and developed."

Malcolm was open to new ideas. Unfortunately he was gunned down in Harlem in



Until the movement for black liberation of the 1960s black people in America lived in fear of lynch mobs and, in some areas, under near-apartheid

ill our hero



BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

Malcolm X never advocated violence, but self-defence

ly 1965 in the prime of his life. We can't say how he would have changed and developed. It is fashionable for political groups to claim the legacy of Malcolm X, from socialists, communists, black nationalists and even the Nation of Islam. Soon after his death the American Socialist Workers' Party (no relation to the British SWP) claimed that Malcolm had become a revolutionary anti-capitalist with the break with the Nation of Islam. Not only this, he was pro-socialist. George Breitman explains: "I don't say he was a Marxist — wasn't — and we can only guess if in his future evolution he would have become one, as

Castro did in his later development". I think this gives more away about how the SWP saw Cuba as a model of socialism than about Malcolm X. Similarly, others explain Malcolm's life as being consistent with black nationalist ideas throughout and say that his break with the Nation of Islam was not especially significant. I have heard it said that his talk of alliances with white people was a ruse. I think both approaches are flawed, yet both contain an element of truth. Malcolm was a Muslim and a black nationalist of sorts until the day he was gunned down. His starting point was to organise black

people to fight oppression. Even so, his realisation that in order to fight racism, the economic system must be fought as well was a changing point. Nevertheless, Malcolm's ideas of black community control and, for that matter, his conception of socialism were rather vague. There was no mention of the role of the white working class. Admittedly the labour movement in the US had a long and vicious history of racism. I am not another to claim his legacy, but he was and, strangely, still is our hero. He wanted to create a world that was free from all oppressions. To do this he risked his own freedom and, ultimately, his own life.



Women's control over their bodies is a modern phenomenon

No, there was no sex strike!

Liz Millward takes issue with Chris Knight's theories about how humankind developed from apes (SO 531)

Chris Knight has let himself be carried away by his discovery that the menstrual cycles of women who live together slowly come to coincide. This discovery has led him to all sorts of fantastical conclusions. Unfortunately for Chris, he has not yet discovered enough about female physiology!

Chris must have noticed that breast-feeding women do not menstruate. Add a nine months' pregnancy to a year's breast-feeding, and you have a woman who does not menstruate for the best part of two years.

Our earliest ancestors knew nothing about today's sophisticated methods of birth control; therefore it is likely that the onset of menstruation signalled a woman regaining fertility, rather than the reverse, as Chris would have it.

If I understand it, Chris's thesis is that the women of a primitive community simultaneously menstruated in order to send the men out hunting together, by removing the temptation to stay at home and canoodle. Chris extrapolates from this and reads backwards to find a form of primitive physical solidarity in "the first class struggle".

Think about it from what we know today. Assume three women live in one flat. Over time — a period of perhaps six months or more — their menstrual cycles will tend to converge. But the synchronisation will be disrupted.

Assume that one gets pregnant and gives birth. She stops bleeding for nine months, and then for another year afterwards, as she lactates. She then starts to bleed, no longer menstrually synchronised with the others.

The others continue together. But then one of them gets pregnant... You see it is a *tendency* to synchronise, sometimes realised, but regularly disrupted. This could not be the basis for concerted and frequent sex strikes by women. Take a woman in the first period of pregnancy when she is not bleeding and continues — until taboos intervene at a later stage — to be sexually available to the husband: how would she exert pressure? The same goes for a lactating woman — and primitive peoples continue breastfeeding for a very long time.

In our time, old wives' wisdom had it that you could not get pregnant if you were breastfeeding — though in fact you can — and until recently, at least, birth control

handbooks warned of this popular fallacy. We can observe that when certain mammals come "into season", it is signalled by slight bleeding. So, I contend, the most likely significance of menstruation was to give a clear and unmistakable signal that fertility had returned.

How does Chris Knight imagine that the *tendency* to synchronise menstrual cycles led *in fact* to a real and continual synchronisation of all the women in a community? The sex strike thesis must have it that somehow it did do that.

Even supposing that all the children of each generation of the community really were born in perfectly synchronised groups (which is an inescapable corollary of the thesis of menstruation in union), and all their mothers breastfed for an identical length of time, then the hunting parties would only go out once every two years. The women would have grown very hungry!

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* that the class struggle ends either in the victory of the representatives of a higher order, or in the mutual ruin of the contending classes. Mutual ruin here, I think, and quickly!

"A tendency to synchronise menstrual cycles, regularly disrupted, could not be the basis for concerted and frequent sex strikes by women."

Chris has only been able to make his discovery having met a group of women older than puberty who are neither pregnant, nor breastfeeding, nor post-menopausal. This has only been possible since the advent of widely available methods of birth control. Previous generations of women, including the primitive societies Chris is talking about, did practise birth control, but only in a haphazard fashion. The majority of women were slaves to fertility and produced children until they died at an early age. The chances of Chris's thesis of synchronised menstruation holding good for an entire community would be extremely remote.

To repeat: I think it far more likely that after a long break during pregnancy and breastfeeding, the return of bleeding indicated fertility, and that far from going hunting the men would most likely have been hanging around outside the caves and huts like bees round a honeypot.

The Dublin Labour War and the sympathetic strike by James Connolly

Solidarity!

When the Tories outlawed "secondary", or sympathetic strikes they knew what they were doing.

The solidarity strike had defeated them again and again throughout the '60s and '70s.

When they come out in sympathetic strike, workers act on behalf of interests not directly or narrowly their own. This is class action far more advanced than mere sectional trade union action. Implicitly, and sometimes openly, it challenges capitalist rule in society.

That is why the Tories, the Labour leaders and most trade union officials hate the idea of the sympathetic strike. They would like to banish both the idea and the memory of the sympathetic strike to a museum of ancient Labour history.

Socialists and militant trade unionists must, on the contrary, fight to keep the idea of solidarity strikes alive. Knowledge of working class history is one means of doing this.

The articles by James Connolly in this and next week's *SO* serve a double purpose for us here. Connolly was one of the best ever propagandists for the sympathetic strike, bringing to that work experience of labour struggles in Britain, the USA and Ireland. More than that, these articles were written as part of one of the greatest working class struggles in Western Europe this century, the Dublin Labour War of 1913-14, in which Connolly was a central leader.

Connolly's brilliant articles were weapons in that struggle, explaining, rousing and heartening the workers and putting things in the perspective of a historic class struggle for them.

James Connolly was the chief lieutenant of Jim Larkin, the founder of the modern Irish labour movement and General Secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and leader of the workers during the 1913 battle.

Jim Larkin set up the Irish

Transport and General Workers Union in 1908 after the leaders of a British-based union (GMB today) for which he was an organiser sold out a strike he was leading in Belfast. In the next few years he organised the "unskilled" workers — the coal heavers, dockers, carters, drivers — of Dublin, thereby creating a new Irish labour movement based on "general", "unskilled" workers. Until then unions in Ireland had mainly been small, old-fashioned, skilled craft societies. Larkin was doing in Ireland what had been done in Britain at the time of the "matchgirls" strike and the great London Dock Strike of 1889, out of which had come Britain's great general trade unions.

Using the sympathetic strike ruthlessly, Larkin got the bosses on the run and created a new spirit of self-respect and self-reliance in the Dublin working class. No trade, no group of workers was left to fight alone. The weight of the whole union was brought into play on their behalf where necessary. Labour in Dublin was no longer a driven rabble but a movement conscious of itself as a class.

The bosses fought back. They organised a Federation pledged to "destroy Larkin", put money into a common war chest which an individual employer would forfeit if he made peace, and then they gave the workers an ultimatum: leave "Larkin's union"; have nothing to do with the ITGWU; pledge yourself never to join it.

But the workers had felt their strength: everywhere they chose to be locked out, facing starvation rather than surrender.

It was open war. In the course of the Labour War, three workers were beaten to death by the police and one, a young woman, Alice Brady, was shot dead in the streets by an imported scab.

In these two articles James Connolly explains why the bosses of Dublin declared war on the workers of Dublin.

The Dublin lock-out : on the eve

Perhaps before this issue of *The Irish Worker* is in the hands of its readers the issues now at stake in Dublin will be brought to a final determination. All the capitalist newspapers of Friday last join in urging, or giving favourable publicity to the views of others urging the employers of Dublin to join in a general lock-out of the members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. It is as well. Possibly some such act is necessary in order to make that portion of the working class which still halts undecided to understand clearly what it is that lies behind the tyrannical and brow-beating attitude of the proprietors of the Dublin tramway system.

The fault of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union! What is it? Let us tell it in plain language. Its fault is this, that it found the labourers of Ireland on their knees, and has striven to raise them to the erect position of manhood; it found them with all the vices of slavery in their souls, and it strove to eradicate these vices and replace them with some of the virtues of free men; it found them with no other weapons of defence than the arts of the liar, the lickspittle, and the toady, and it combined them and taught them to abhor those arts and rely proudly on the defensive power of combination; it, in short, found a class in whom

seven centuries of social outlawry had added fresh degradations upon the burden it bore as the members of a nation suffering from the cumulative effects of seven centuries of national bondage, and out of this class, the degraded slaves of slaves more degraded still — for what degradation is more abysmal than that of those who prostitute their manhood on the altar of profit-mongering? — out of this class of slaves the labourers of Dublin, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union has created an army of intelligent self-reliant men, abhorring the old arts of the toady, the lickspittle, and the crawler and trusting alone to the disciplined use of their power to labour or to withdraw their labour to assert and maintain their right as men.

To put it in other words, but words as pregnant with truth and meaning: the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union found that before its advent the working class of Dublin had been taught by all the educational agencies of the country, by all the social influences of their masters, that this world was created for the special benefit of the various sections of the master class, that kings and lords and capitalists were of value; that even flunkeys, toadies, lickspittle and poodle dogs had an honoured place in the scheme of the universe,

but that there was neither honour, credit, nor consideration to the man or woman who toils to maintain them all.

Against all this the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union has taught that they who toil are the only ones that do matter, that all others are but beggars upon the bounty of those who work with hand or brain, and that this superiority of social value can at any time be realised, be translated into actual fact, by the combination of the labouring class. Preaching, organising, and fighting upon this basis, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union has done what?

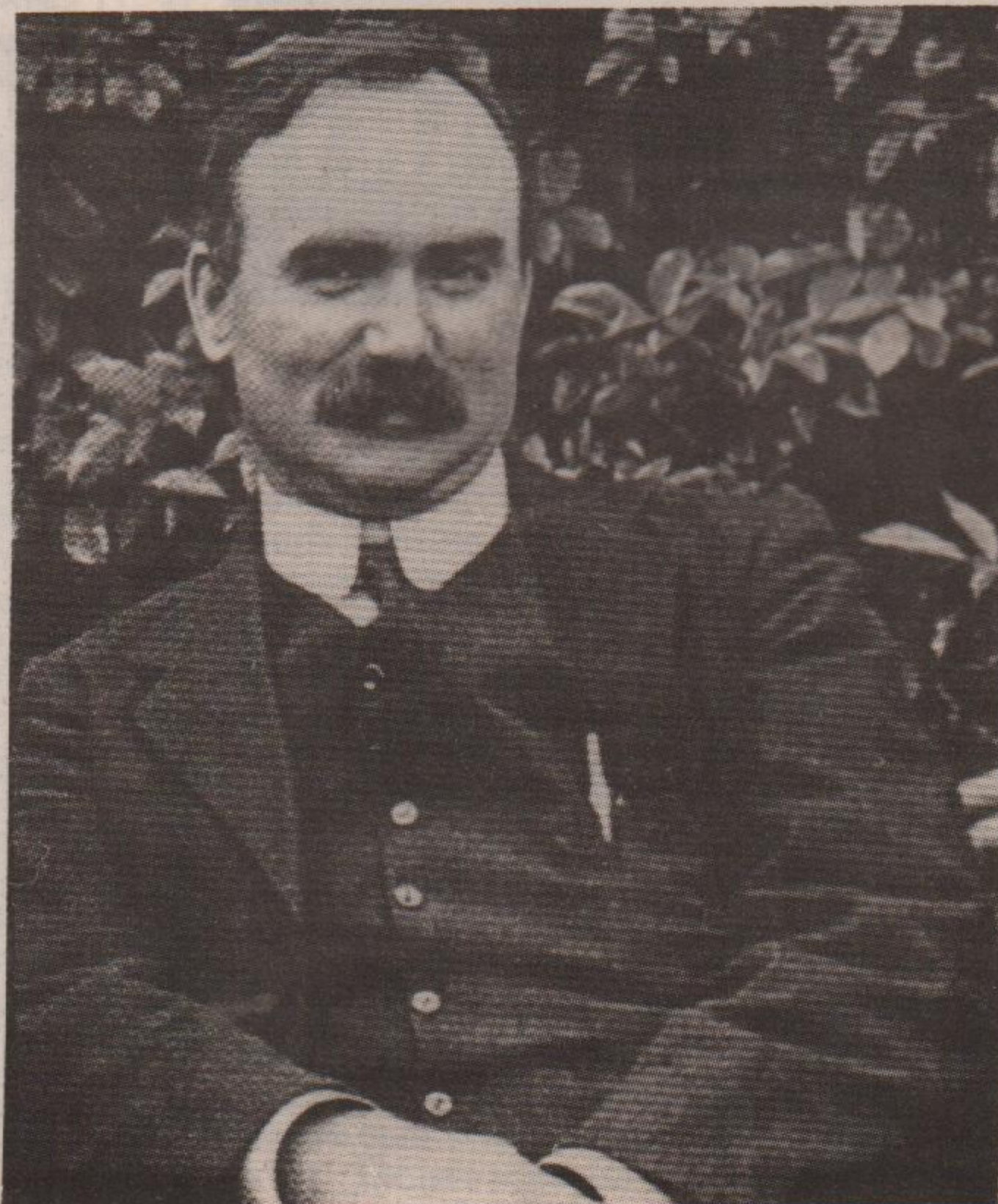
If the value of a city is to be found in the development of self-respect and high conception of social responsibilities among a people, then the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union found Dublin the poorest city in these countries by reason of its lack of these qualities. And by imbuing the workers with them, it has made Dublin the richest city in Europe to-day, rich by all that counts for greatness in the history of nations. It is then upon this working class so enslaved, this working class so led and so enriched with moral purposes and high aims that the employers propose to make general war.

Shall we shrink from it; cower before their onset? A thousand times no! Shall we crawl back into our slums, abase our hearts, bow our knees, and crawl once more to lick the hand that would smite us? Shall we, who have been carving out for our children a brighter future, a cleaner city, a freer life, consent to betray them instead into the grasp of the blood-suckers from whom we have dreamt of escaping? No, no, and yet again no!

Let them declare their lock-out; it will only hasten the day when the working class will lock-out the capitalist class for good and all. If for taking the side of the Tram men we are threatened with suffering, why we have suffered before. But let them understand well that once they start that ball rolling no capitalist power on earth can prevent it continuing to roll, that every day will add to the impetus it will give to the working class purpose, to the thousands it will bring to the working class ranks and every added suffering inflicted upon the workers will be a fresh obstacle in the way of moderation when the day of final settlement arrives.

Yes, indeed, if it is going to be a wedding, let it be a wedding; and if it is going to be a wake, let it be a wake: we are ready for either.

Irish Worker, August 30, 1913



James Connolly: his writings were weapons in the class struggle



Jim Larkin, leader of the unskilled workers, fighter for his class

A Titanic struggle

What is the truth about the Dublin dispute? What was the origin of the Dublin dispute? These are at present the most discussed questions in the labour world of these islands, and I have been invited by the editor of the *Daily Herald* to try and shed a little light upon them for the benefit of its readers. I will try and be brief and to the point, whilst striving to be also clear.

In the year 1911 the National Seamen's and Firemen's Union, as a last desperate expedient to avoid extinction, resolved upon calling a general strike in all the home ports. At that time the said Union, as the lawyers would say, was, more or less, of an ishmael among trade unions. It was not registered, in most places it was not even affiliated to the local Trades Union Councils, and its national officials had always been hostile to the advanced labour movement. They believed, seemingly, in playing a lone hand. Perhaps the general discredit into which it had been brought by the curiously inconsistent action of its leaders in closely identifying themselves with one of the orthodox political parties, and at the same time calling for the aid in industrial conflicts of the labour men whom they fought and slan-

dered in political labour contests, had something to do with the general weakness and impending bankruptcy of the National Seamen's and Firemen's Union, at the time it issued its call in 1911.

"The doctrine of the sympathetic strike brought the union into a long and bitter struggle along the quays."

At all events the call was in danger of falling upon vain ears, and was, in fact, but little heeded until the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union began to take a hand in the game. As ships came into the Port of Dublin, after the issue of the call, each ship was held up by the dockers under the orders of James Larkin until its crew joined the union, and signed on under union conditions and rates of pay. Naturally, this did not please the shipowners and merchants of Dublin. But the delegates of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union up and down the

docks preached most energetically the doctrine of the sympathetic strike, and the doctrine was readily assimilated by the dockers and carters. It brought the union into a long and bitter struggle along the quays, a struggle which cost it thousands of pounds, imperilled its very existence, and earned for it the bitterest hatred of every employer and sweater in the city, every one of whom swore they would wait their chance to "get even with Larkin and his crew."

The sympathetic strike having worked so well the seamen and firemen, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union began to apply it ruthlessly in every labour dispute. A record of the victories it has won for other trade unions would surprise a good many of its critics. A few cases will indicate what, in the hands of Larkin and the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, it has won for some of the skilled trades.

When the coachmakers went on strike the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union took over all the labourers, paid them strike pay, and kept them out until the coachmakers won. The latter body are now repaying us by doing scab work while we are out.

The mill-sawyers existed for

twenty years in Dublin without recognition. The sympathetic strike by our union won them recognition and an increase of pay.

The stationary engine drivers, the cabinetmakers, the sheet metal workers, the carpenters, and, following them all the building trades got an increase through our control of the carting industry. As did also the girls and men employed in Jacob's biscuit factory. In addition to this work for others we won for our own members the following increases within the last two years: cross channel dockers got, since the strike in the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company, an increase of wages of 3s. per week. In the case of the British and Irish Company the increase, levelling it up with the other firms, meant a rise of 6s. per week. For men working for the Merchants' Warehousing Company 3s. per week, general carriers 2s. to 3s., coal fillers halfpenny per ton, grain bushellers 1d. per ton, men and boys in the bottle-blowing works from 2s. to 10s. per week of an increase, mineral water operatives 4s. to 6s. per week, and a long list of warehouses in which girls were exploited were compelled to give some slight modification of the inhuman conditions under which their employees were labouring.

"I have always told our friends in Great Britain that our fight in Ireland was neither inspired nor swayed by theories nor theorists. It grew and was hammered out of the hard necessities of our situation."

As Mr. Havelock Wilson, General Secretary, National Seamen's and Firemen's Union, has mentioned the strike on the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company as an instance of our erratic methods, it may be worth while to note that as a result of that strike some of his sailors got an increase of 5s. 6d. per week.

In addition to the cases enumerated I might also mention that the labourers on the Dublin and South-Eastern Railway got increases of 6s. per week, and those in the Kingstown Gas Works got increases varying from 3s. to 10s. per week per man.

All of these increases were the result of the sympathetic strike policy, first popularised by its success in winning the battle for the Seamen and Firemen — who are now asked to repudiate it.

These things well understood explain the next act in the unfolding of the drama. Desiring to make secure what had been gained, Mr. Larkin formulated a scheme for a Conciliation Board. This was adopted by the Trades Council, at least in essence, and eventually came before the Employers' Executive, or whatever the governing committee of that body is named. After a hot discussion it was put to the vote. Eighteen employers voted to accept a Conciliation Board, three voted against. Of that three, William Martin Murphy was one. On finding himself in the minority he rose and vowed that in spite of them he would "smash the Conciliation Board." Within three days he kept his word by discharging two hundred of his tramway traffic employees for being members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, and thus forced on the strike of the tramway men. Immediately he appealed to all the Dublin employers who had been forced into a semblance of decency by Larkin and his colleagues, called to their memory the increases of wages they were compelled to pay, and lured them on to a desperate effort to combine and destroy the one labour force they feared.

The employers, mad with hatred of the power that had wrested from them the improved conditions, a few of which I have named, rallied round Murphy, and from being one in a minority of three he became the leader and organising spirit of a band of four hundred.

I have always told our friends in Great Britain that our fight in Ireland was neither inspired nor swayed by theories nor theorists. It grew and was hammered out of the hard necessities of our situation. Here, in this brief synopsis, you can trace its growth for yourselves. First a fierce desire to save our brothers of the sea, a desire leading to us risking our own existence in their cause. Developing from that an extension of the principle of sympathetic action until we took the fierce beast of capital by the throat all over Dublin, and loosened its hold on the vitals of thousands of our class. Then a rally of the forces of capital to recover their hold, and eventually a titanic struggle, in which the forces of labour in Britain openly, and the forces of capital secretly, became participants.

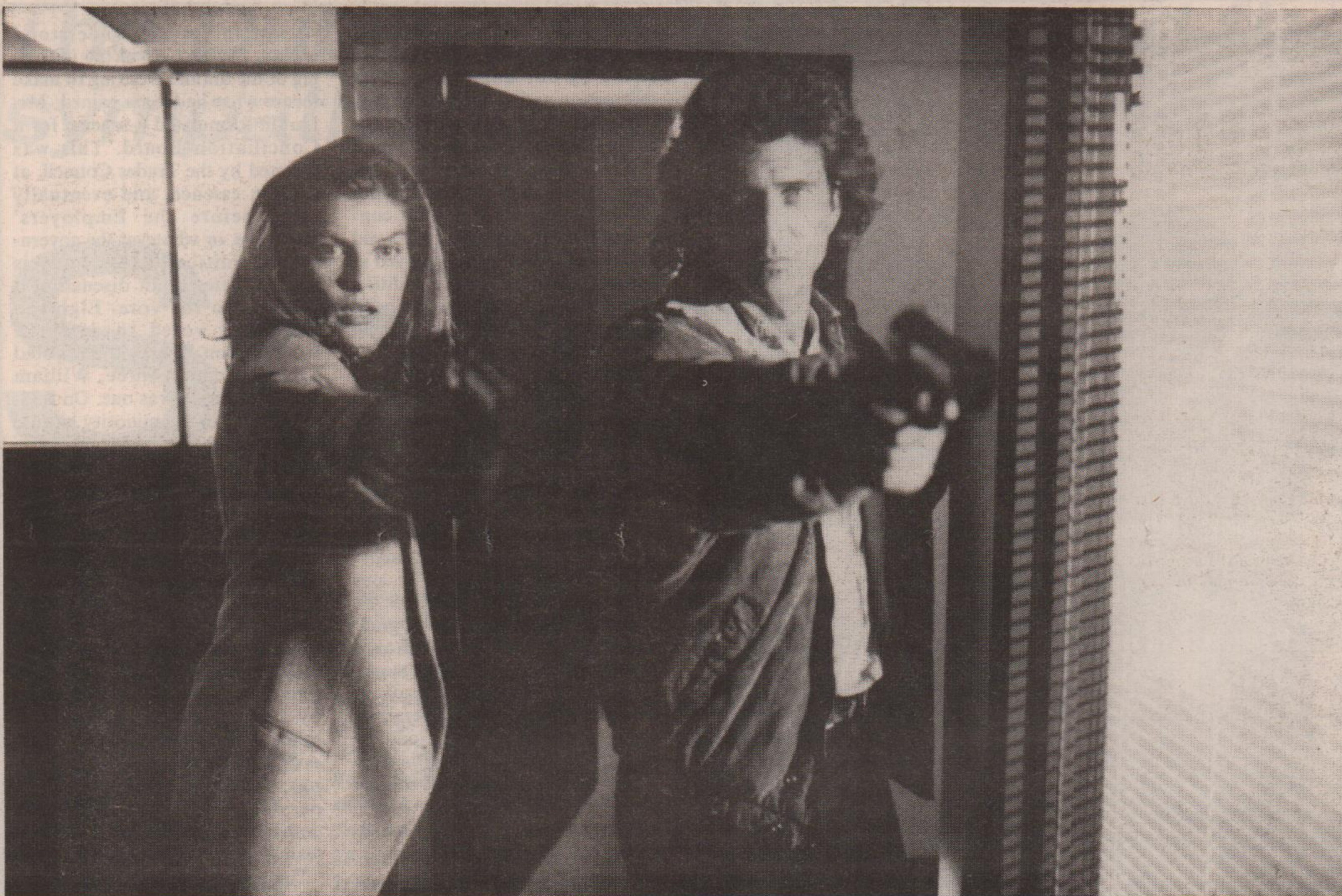
That is where we stand to-day. The struggle forming our theories and shaping the policy, not only for us, but for our class. To those who criticise us we can only reply: we fight as conditions dictate; we meet new conditions with new policies. Those who choose may keep old policies to meet new conditions. We cannot and will not try.

Daily Herald, December 6, 1913

Socialists and Ireland

£1 plus 34p postage from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA





Real, big, strong man Martin Rigg (Mel Gibson) and Lorna "Soft Underneath It All" Cole (Rene Rosso)

Lethargic weapon

Cinema

Matt Cooper reviews *Lethal Weapon 3*

Lethal Weapon 3 starts in Hollywood's spectacular style — Sgt. Riggs (Riggs to you, Mel Gibson), attempts to defuse a bomb. His partner, Sgt. Martnaugh (Rodge to you, Danny Glover) isn't so keen on the idea. He has seven days to retirement. Riggs blows up the bomb. Cut to unnecessarily dazzling shot of building collapsing. None of this has any relevance to the plot, but then most of the film has no relevance to the plot, which makes its first appearance in the film after a full 25 minutes. But this isn't a film about a story, this is a film about characters. They might be brutal

thuggish Los Angeles Police Department thugs but, hell, they're your friends, they have a laugh, they're on your side against the anarchy lurking just below the surface of society.

Running from the building before the bomb goes off, Riggs and Rodge save a cat. Riggs likes animals: later in the film he befriends a Rottweiler. This is strange because he certainly doesn't like people. He dispenses violence throughout the film, for any occasion. He beats up an unconscious suspect, a film director (who has committed no crime except looking a bit like Steven Spielberg), scares the wits out of a jay-walker by pretending to be about to shoot him for his misdemeanour and, finally, dispatches the bad guy, shot and dying, into a flaming building, presumably to be burnt alive. In one sequence in the film, the characters joke about what a great cop someone once was:

he "could beat a confession out of anybody".

All harmless fun, fantasy? Well there must have been a few sweaty palms amongst the film backers when the real LAPD were exposed as lawless thugs in the Rodney King beating and triggered the LA riots. They shouldn't have worried. I suspect the TV pictures beamed into every American home of the revolting urban underbelly of the US made the American public all the more willing to accept the Riggs character — a good honest fun-loving thug who has to break the law to enforce the law, one of "ours". Rules for the police just get in the way. Bleeding heart liberals have no place in the "fight against crime."

The message is underscored by the character of Rodge, very much the Jeff to Rigg's Mutt, the "friendly cop" who works off the "thug cop's" brutality. Rodge is black, his son hangs round with bad company. Then Rodge shoots one of his son's friends who is touting an Uzi during a drug deal. Rodge has a crisis — it could have been his son. Then there is a reconciliation — Rodge's son backs his father all the way. Message: he has taken a moral choice not to be bad — don't worry too much about the kids who are shot, they are made of weaker moral fibre.

The necessity of violence is underscored by the film's female lead — Sgt. Lorna Cole (no nick name, but then she is a girl). She's from Internal Affairs. She polices the police. She shifts from being a crude caricature of a career woman/ice maiden to being "one of the boys". She knows the score. She enters without a warrant, she beats confessions out of people, she beats up groups of blokes just for fun (although they are "criminals"). Of course, Riggs is attracted to her. But, hard and assertive as she is, she is emotionally insecure. And, guess what, it takes a real man — Riggs — to break through that and, yes, know that she means yes even when she has said no very firmly indeed. And, of course, this being

Hollywood she did mean yes even though she didn't even know it herself.

So there you have it: "well-intentioned" violence from beginning to the grand finale — where the good guys (and girl) conquer vastly superior forces just by seemingly being bullet-proof (although Lorna Coles is injured and has to be saved by Riggs, but she is after all a girl).

"The cops, even when they step over the mark, step over the right mark to protect us all."

The cops, even when they step over the mark, step over the right mark to protect us all — our way of life, our children and, most of all, our pets.

This is, of course, more than a fantasy: it is sugar-coated reality. It is trying to allay our doubts about policing, the racism and its random brutality. It is interesting to compare this film with another recent American release, *Juice*.

Not yet released in this country, *Juice* has created a furore for its supposed portrayal of black violence. The poster has a young black guy pointing a gun out of the poster; in the US it has stirred up a hornets' nest of racist fears. But there is only one killing in the film and, by all reports, it deals with black American urban existence seriously... even if it is as bad as most American critics make out, it will be leagues ahead of this junk which glorifies police brutality and attempts to justify it.

We can exclusively reveal the story for *Lethal Weapon 4*. Rodge has finally retired and is living in a rest home called "Hollywood Heights". Suffering badly from senile dementia, he goes in search of the plot and kills a large number of undesirable pensioners in the home... like most sequels it says nothing that hasn't been said in the previous films.

Black socialist blasts anti-semitic

Mark Osborn reviews "Devil's Advocate", Channel 4 TV, Mon 7 Sep

Like Darcus Howe and his Devil's Advocate programme. A couple of weeks ago he gave a roasting to a Tory councillor from Brent — an African woman who had been making anti-Asian statements.

Last Monday it was the turn of the black American academic, Leonard Jeffries.

Darcus Howe, who is a black socialist, was clear and sharp against Jeffries' anti-semitism. Jeffries peddles the septic lie that there is a Jewish conspiracy responsible for the black "holocaust".

For much of the left, this should be an eye-opener:

black people can be racist too! In fact, only a left which patronises black people would be incapable of seeing this.

The black nationalist Leonard Jeffries is also guilty of patronising black people. Darcus Howe took up Jeffries' view of history which divides the world's population into "sun people" (good, collectivist and black) and "ice people" (bad, colonialist, destructive and white).

Howe pointed out that there had been many African dictators. Jeffries' "theory" actually takes the main responsibility for the actions of, for instance, Idi Amin, away from the man and his regime and places it with white, colonialist "ice people", as if black people are not capable of responsibility for their own actions.

The Addams family of marriage

Television

Belinda Weaver watched "Diana: end of a fairy-tale?", ITV, Sunday, 9.25pm

This programme offered nothing new. It was simply an excuse to re-use lots of footage of Di, and for royal "experts" like Penny Junor to get their faces on TV.

If programmes like this exist, they should at least be compulsively watchable; this was a dog, a mere rehash of old news, updated to deal with the fuss over Andrew Morton's book, "Diana: her true story".

It had Andrew Neil looking sober and serious and Lord St John of Fawsley, chief brown-nose to the Royals, telling us it was a mistake to "let daylight in on magic". The Royals had tried to be modern and up-to-date — just like us, in fact — and it had backfired. Now everyone wanted the Queen to pay tax, and the tabloid press were out for blood. Royalty wasn't safe any more.

It was full of pity for Charles and Di: Charles without a proper job, etc, etc. What no-one mentions is that when (if?) he becomes King, he *still* won't have a proper job. Opening fêtes, getting handed bunches of flowers on walkabouts and shaking hands *isn't* a job, exactly. What the Queen does *isn't* that different from what he does now.

And it's sinister that his mother has to kick off before he can get his "job"; she must feel nervous every time she turns her back.

Not that I pity her. Everyone pointed out that the Royal family is the Addams family of marriage. Everyone who's got in wants out, from Lord Snowdon to Fergie. A joyless lot, for all the big bucks they have.

What's Di's beef? Charles is a bore and a philistine, probably, but she's well-off. In those circles, marriage is rarely "lurve everlasting"; it's a property relation. Apparently she wanted out, but wanted her title, her perks, her kids and a palace of her own. They said no, stick it out as is, or you're out on your ear. They probably can't see why she won't play by the rules of her class — marriage as a tidy shop-window, with adultery in the backroom.

Maybe that's why the Royals want to keep her; they don't have much else to offer the paying public.

Newham strike ruling sets dangerous precedent

"This decision means that any union would be prevented from campaigning for action before a ballot of members".

That is how Alan Jinkinson, NALGO General Secretary, summed up the significance of last week's High Court decision to grant an injunction halting the Newham Council workers' strike.

The injunction was given by the judge on the basis that it was 'arguable' that a letter from the branch chair prior to the all-out ballot constituted "interference" and was therefore contrary to the 1990 Employment Act.

Jinkinson is right.

Jinkinson is probably *wrong*, however, to believe that the judge's interpretation of the Tory anti-union laws "cannot possibly be what Parliament intended in drafting Section 7 (3) A of the 1990 Employment Act".

According to John Kelly of LSE, author of *Trade Unions and socialist politics*:

"The 1990 Act follows the logic of the 1984 Act [which first introduced secret ballots]. The aim is to atomise the workforce and further reduce the scope of collective decision-making and organisation.

"At present, 90% of strike ballots are successful. The '84 Act has not had the devastating effect that the Tories intended, people pick their issue and prepare well".

Kelly's assessment was shared by John McIlroy, author of *The permanent revolution? — the Tories and employment law*:

"The real danger here is that the courts are outlawing serious preparation and campaigning by the unions amongst the workforce. It's a decision against working class self-activity. It's as simple as that.

"There are no laws stopping the employers interfering in the

ballots by whatever means they choose — from personal letters to direct intimidation and sacking threats — no, the only people who can't interfere in the trade union ballot are the trade union!"

The Newham strikers should not have backed down.

They had a clear ballot majority for action. The judge has ruled that they were involved in a 'legitimate trade dispute'.

All that had happened is that the Labour Council had succeeded in gaining an 'interlocutory injunction' instructing the union to call off the action pending their appeal.

The tabloids regularly disobey such injunctions and, at the very least, wait for proceedings to be brought against them for contempt of court.

The unions should be capable of at least that amount of defiance.

Instead, the NALGO branch leadership backed down immediately, sending all the wrong signals to both the Council and to their own members.

At the mass meeting when the court case blew up, they even went so far as refusing to tell the 500 workers present anything about the issue because it was all "sub judice".

Council Round-up

Islington workers spread the action

Islington Council's Neighbourhood Office workers are on all-out indefinite strike, after a 70% yes vote in a ballot where 90% of the workers voted.

The Neighbourhood Office workers join 200 poll tax and housing workers on strike against the council's attack on jobs, conditions and services.

The Labour Council have employed temporary workers to help keep the poll tax office working. Scabs are also working overtime.

All the strikers are on full pay from NALGO strike funds. Support and details from 071 477 4481.

Greenwich expects a "yes" vote for strike action

Greenwich NALGO have balloted 230 housing and benefit workers for indefinite strike action. The ballot result will be announced on Wednesday 9 September and union activists expect a "yes" vote which will enable the workers to strike from Thursday 10.

The strike action is to support nine workers who have been on strike for nine months after being made compulsorily redundant.

The NALGO branch is demanding reinstatement and a workable redeployment agreement from the council.

Contact Greenwich NALGO: 081 854 8888 x5226

Sheffield plans job cuts

By a Sheffield Council worker

Sheffield Council plan to make between 70 and 291 manual and craft, and between 70 and 291 APT&C employees, mainly in the recreation and direct works departments, redundant on 22 September, issuing notices and paying staff off on that day.

In addition, this year, management intend to make 139 APT&C employees redundant across three other departments. These figures are based on the assumption that the unions would accept reduced car mileage rates

outside the national agreements and an eight-day move in the pay day, and that payment by cheques is stopped.

There is also a proposed semi-retirement scheme whereby employees over 50 leave and are re-employed on a shorter working week and the pension virtually makes up the drop in pay. The legality of this scheme is currently under investigation but, even if it goes ahead, it will not prevent redundancies.

Three other options have been tabled by management: a one hour a week cut in pay, a one per cent cut in pay or a one day a year cut in pay — they want the union to choose the option that

saves enough money to prevent redundancies.

These proposed cuts are in addition to the £4.1 million of cuts already made in the works department, which were agreed on the basis that they would "save jobs".

Two Sheffield teachers were the first employees to be made compulsorily redundant by the Council at the start of the new school term — a ballot for industrial action for reinstatement is being considered by the NUT.

All these cuts should be totally rejected by all the Council unions, which need urgently to prepare for industrial action in defence of jobs and conditions.

Company Plan gets worse and worse

This Monday (7th September) saw management and Tube unions start negotiations on the issues of "principle" involved in the Company Plan.

What are management's proposals? On job licensing - all tubeworkers will have to gain a licence proving we're competent to perform the jobs we're already doing. You'll have to pass an assessment when the system is introduced and then requalify every 3 years. If you fail the assessment you could be demoted or transferred. On probation when recruited or promoted you have to serve a probationary period. You can be sacked if you fail your probation.

On transfers - you can be turned down because your request exceeds the frequency for your grade or if you have a current disciplinary penalty (which are handed out like confetti). In any case seniority will not come into it.

On redeployment - you may be offered temporary work in another grade with protection of earnings for a limited period

only. If you refuse an offer of alternative employment you can be sacked.

Management's proposals are a sacker's charter. The whole procedure is littered with pitfalls which could lead to the sack.

As long as the unions agree to everything and those tubeworkers that are "lucky" take whatever job is offered management will "aim to avoid" compulsory redundancies - how's that for a cast iron guarantee!

Perhaps the most important issue is that these new principles of employment would mean the end of seniority and the promotion transfer and redundancy agreements (PT&R).

Management's aim is to give complete control of hire and fire to local managers and to try to create a climate of fear with workers continually being threatened with losing their jobs - the dismantling the PT&R and seniority is central to this.

However the Plan can be beaten if the unions unite in a joint campaign for strike action against the Plan.

RMT sells out Manchester guards

"The lads must be absolutely gutted. We had a massive majority for strike action, and now the Executive have wasted it".

That's how one Manchester railworker described the situation at Piccadilly station, where guards were set to strike this week in support of four union activists sacked when they stopped work in protest at a trainee driver being instructed to do guards' duties. A local agreement says that bosses can do this only if no guards are available.

RMT leaders had forced the guards to go back to work pending a ballot; but when the ballot showed a clear majority for action, instead of pursuing the mandate, the RMT union executive put the issue of the sacked guards to an appeal on Monday 14th.

Manchester railworkers fear that the executive are preparing for a climbdown - in a situation summed up by a local RMT

activist in these terms: "British Rail seem to be out to break the union".

Unless all four guards are immediately reinstated, the strike mandate should be activated on Monday.

Library workers look set to strike

Workers at the British Library are balloting for a one-day strike against the market testing of library jobs on Friday 18 September.

The only result declared so far is from IPMS, with 60% voting in favour in a high turnout. CPSA and NUCPS look set to follow suit.

The action will involve the London British Library offices and the sister library in Boston Spa, Yorkshire.

Time to unite the left

By Jim Silversmith and Tina Twelves (CPSA)

One of the most vital tasks for activists and members in the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) is to overthrow the right wing, misnamed "moderate", leadership of the union.

The fact that the "Moderates" won the NEC is partly explained by the fact that the two biggest groupings on the Left, Broad Left and BL84, who stood separate candidates in the national elections, have both failed to mobilise the mass of members against the Tory attacks. The majority of CPSA members do not support the "Moderates", but the Left has failed to provide a fighting alternative.

The Left must reach the 50% plus of CPSA members who did not vote in the national election - and we will do it by showing we are prepared to leading a fight against contracting-out now.

The Left is split into three groupings. The largest is the Broad Left, organisationally dominated by *Militant* with independents, SWP members and supporters of *Socialist Organiser*.

BL84 is a rotten bloc of the Labour Party soft left/right and ex-*Morning Star*/Communist Party supporters. The cement holding together this group (which split from the Broad Left in 1984) is, for some, mistrust and dislike of the undemocratic and sectarian antics of *Militant*, and, for others, personal ambi-

tion.

Over the years, as the contradictions have worked themselves out, BL84 has developed fairly distinct "right" and "left" wings. Some form of unity slate could be constructed with the "Left 84".

Socialist Caucus, the third group, is made up of independent left activists and *SO* supporters. Caucus split from the Broad Left last year, against the advice of *SO* supporters, who also remain Broad Left members.

In order to draw in as many members as possible, the left groups must organise a conference, open to all, to discuss left unity and to elect a joint slate against the right for 1993. Such a slate, in order to be representative and democratically decided, should be elected by some form of proportional representation.

Unity last time

At CPSA conference 1991, Socialist Organiser supporters were the impetus behind a meeting calling for 'left unity' against the 'moderates'. The meeting, which held a lively, political debate on how to unite the left, was attended by over 300 people.

Militant supporters refused to back the initiative and took a sectarian approach, arguing 'only the Broad Left can defeat the right' and that

Such a conference also needs to decide and vote on a minimum programme around which to fight the election, including support for all members in struggle and total opposition to witch-hunts in the union. How a united left NEC would approach the central issue facing CPSA members, the need for national action to defeat contracting out, remains to be seen.

A electoral alliance on the left as the result of a democratic conference combined with campaigning amongst the membership to fight the Tories will beat the "moderates". Electoral "stitch-ups" without a conference between the Broad Left and Broad Left '84, behind the backs of the members, may lead to electoral victory but not to lasting unity on the NEC or in the union.

'left unity' was an alternative to the Broad Left.

Eighteen months on, rumours abound that *Militant* are in favour of an electoral pact with Broad Left '84 - the very people they denounced a year-and-a-half ago!

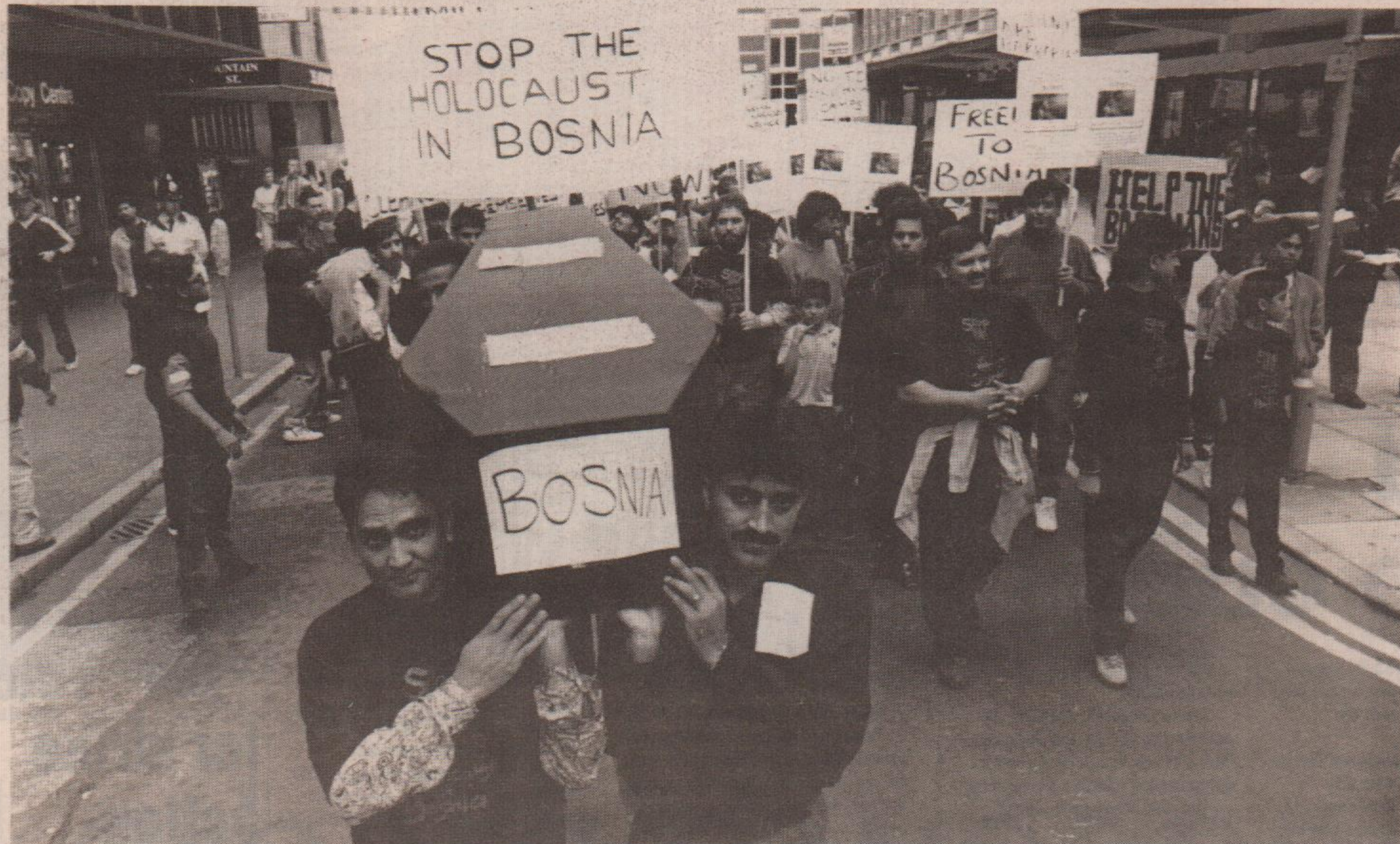
However, it also seems that *Militant* favour a stitched-up deal without consultation, discussion or democracy.

SOCIALIST

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Send us a donation

Help us fight the witch-hunt!



Demonstrators protest last weekend against atrocities in Bosnia. Western military intervention will not bring peace: instead, the UN and EC are cynically overseeing a carve up. Photo Paul Herrmann

During the week beginning Monday 14 September, ten Labour Party members will come before Labour's National Constitutional Committee, charged with association with Socialist Organiser. The ten socialists are all currently or recently active in Sheffield Central Labour Party.

This is the first attempt to expel people for association with Socialist Organiser since our paper was banned in 1990. There is a broad anti-witchhunt campaign active in Sheffield to defend all those accused.

Much of the prosecuting evidence is very thin - tittle tattle coming from sour, old student hacks. A number of those summoned before the NCC have had no connection with Socialist Organiser beyond attending the odd Socialist Organiser public meeting.



Ruth Cockroft, Sheffield Area AWL organiser - up for expulsion from the Labour Party

Ruth Cockroft has made an appeal for help against the witch-hunt. 'The Alliance for Workers' Liberty has organised a fund drive to pay for our expansion plans. We want to extend the influence of Socialist Organiser inside the Labour Party despite the right-wing drive to purge us. I might be expelled from the Labour Party, but our fight for socialism will continue.'

'The witch-hunt against us has further stretched our resources. I would ask all readers to help our fund drive.'

Last week, we received £401.00 towards our fund. Thanks to the following AWL branches: Manchester £211.00, Newcastle £68.00, South East London £14.50, Liverpool £100.00. Thanks too, to a reader in Derby for £7.50.

To send a donation: make cheques/POs out to Workers' Liberty and send to Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

200 Club

Our 200 Club is a monthly draw for £100. Entries are made by paying £1, £2, £5 or £10 into the 200 Club. For each extra £1, you stand an extra chance of winning the £100 prize.

Entry forms are available from Socialist Organiser sellers or from: 200 Club, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

General strike in Ukraine

Nikolai Preobrazhensky reports from Petersburg

The Ukraine was paralysed by a two-day general strike, led by new, independent trade unions, on 2-3 September.

Aviation and rail workers struck alongside miners in a movement demanding higher wages and the resignation of the government. Reports suggest there are 200 separate wage disputes. The Petersburg papers are saying that relatively few

pits were shut down, and that the main strength of the strikes was in the railways and airports.

The government used the military in Kiev and Odessa to keep some air traffic moving. For the first time the government went to court to use the law against the strikers. It is illegal for Ukrainian rail and aviation workers to strike.

In both Russia and Ukraine, it has also been illegal for miners to strike, for the last three years. No Ukrainian or Russian government has dared take the

miners to court - they know all about the potential power of the miners.

On the second day of the general strike, the Ukrainian president, Leonid Kravchuk, approached the central strike committee and promised to begin negotiations and not to use repression against the unions or their leaders, on condition that the strikers were ended. The strikes came to an end on the second evening, and the government dropped its court proceedings.

Now we have a stand-off, with

no side yet winning or being defeated.

There are big conflicts in the Ukraine between the various nationalist opposition parties. Both Rukh and the more radical Ukrainian Republican Party would like to have led the strikes. But they did not. They are blaming Moscow, or even Kravchuk, for the strikes.

The workers involved - miners and rail workers - are not the same groups who have moved in Poland. With the decline of manufacturing industry, the transport sector is now key.

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YOUTH FIGHTBACK

The paper for well red youth!

In Issue One:

Malcolm X and socialism

The 'Youth Training' rip-off

Do animals have rights?

Scottish youth fight back

Riots – the way forward?

Hang the bigot!

By Tunde, Brixton

The recent Madness concert at Finsbury Park in London which I and a friend attended exposed Morrissey's dangerous flirtation with nationalism.

Although Madness have repeatedly condemned racism, they sadly still seem to attract Nazi and racist boneheads to most of their events. The last concert was no exception.

Groups such as the National Front and the British Movement were trying frantically to whip up racial hatred by flyposting the surrounds of the Park and were openly selling their papers to passers-by. Inside the Park, a small but noticeable contingent waved the British flag and sieg-heiled to performers on stage.

Then came Morrissey. He danced before a backdrop of a couple of suedeheads, a gang notorious for their sexist, racist and homophobic ideology during the 'seventies.

The most frightening aspect of the performance was the national flag draped around Morrissey's shoulders and the fascists in the crowds cheering and sieg-heiling. And, although Morrissey left the stage half-way through his act due to the generally unappreciative reception of the crowd, the political significance of Morrissey's flirtation with nationalism had become more apparent.

In his heyday, Morrissey

Turn to back page

PICKET THE BIGOT

Join our picket of Parlophone to hand in petitions about Morrissey.

2pm, Monday 14
September

20 Manchester
Square, London WC2



For three weeks racist riots have raged across Germany. In Rostock, in eastern Germany, fascist thugs firebombed a hostel full of asylum-seekers.

In London, at the beginning of August, Ruhullah Aramesh was beaten to death by a gang of white youths in a racist attack.

The Tories are preparing to introduce the Asylum Bill in a bid to scapegoat 'Asylum Seekers' – black people – blaming them for unemployment and the economic crisis.

Across Europe the monster of racism is rising. White youth, facing unemployment, poverty and homelessness, victims of the recession, can be attracted to the stupid quick-fix of blaming foreigners, black people and Jews for the slump. We say that the crisis is caused by capitalism.

Black and white youth can unite. They face the same harassment and the misery of a collapsing system.

Only a battle by working class youth and the labour movement can win jobs and housing and solve the problems we face.

We are a group of black and white socialists who are fighting the racists. From Rostock to London, socialists are helping to defend black and immigrant communities. Youth Fightback and the AWL want to focus the anger of young people against the Tories and their rotten system.

Youth Fightback will fight for a labour movement that takes on the Tories and draws black and white youth into the battle for socialism.

Meetings:

Canterbury Young Socialists

PUBLIC MEETING

Can we stop the Nazis?

Thu 17 Sep, 6pm

Sydney Cooper Centre, Canterbury
High Street

Luton North Young Socialists

PUBLIC MEETING

The legacy of Malcolm X

Tue 15 Sep, 7.30

Youth House, Luton

FIGHTING RACISM

YOUTH POVERTY SP

The way
I see it

Profits from
misery

By Peter, Lancaster

Every day millions of animals are tortured and killed by humans. From rabbits being blinded to test the latest hairspray or lipstick, to foxes being gassed and having their fur coats ripped from their backs so the rich can parade their wealth, to dogs and mice being force-fed drugs to try out a new headache tablet, the catalogue of cruelty is enormous.

But why do we treat animals so badly? People aren't cruel to animals just for the pure hell of it (except maybe blood-sports enthusiasts). No, animal suffering through vivisection, factory farming and fur production is not the result of a few uncaring individuals but of the capitalist system's unceasing drive for huge profits at the expense of everything else. To compete and survive businesses need to constantly create new things for us to spend our money on. Hence the 'new, improved' washing powder or the toothpaste 'now with added calcium' etc etc. With all these 'new' products come a whole new set of animal experiments. There are already enough washing powders, toothpastes and headache tablets, we don't need any more. But Big Business cons us all into constantly buying new things that we don't really need. No-one needs to wear a fur coat. No-one needs to eat Chicken McNuggets.

"No-one needs to eat Chicken McNuggets."

Under socialism, society will be based on providing everybody with what they really need, not on creating demand for pointless things just to make profits. So, if we want to bring about animal liberation we will first have to bring about socialism.



Help!

'Basically I'm

Youth Fightback spoke to Diane, a YT worker at Stafford General Infirmary.

Diane is not unique: she's one of hundreds of thousands of people on slave labour Youth Training.

The Tories set up YTS and then YT to cut the unemployment figures and to provide cheap labour. Barring people under 18 from any benefits was the next step. It saved them money and removed everyone under 18 from the unemployment figures.

Now, in the depths of recession, the compulsory YT schemes are in short supply and tens of thousands live in total poverty.

A fightback is needed that unionises trainees and draws in unemployed youth.

I am a training care assistant. I wipe patients' bums, help them to the toilet, get them dressed and bath them, make tea. I'm just basically a skivvy.

I get paid £29.50 a week. I work for 35 hours but they can make me work up to 40 for no extra money. When I am 17 it will go up to £35 a week.

There's a lot of us working at the hospital on YT — if they had to employ nurses or just paid care assistants it would cost them lots more. We're just cheap labour; everyone looks down on us; we are treated like gofers — go for this and go for that. It's crap.

Conditions are terrible — we've got no cover if a patient hits us or if

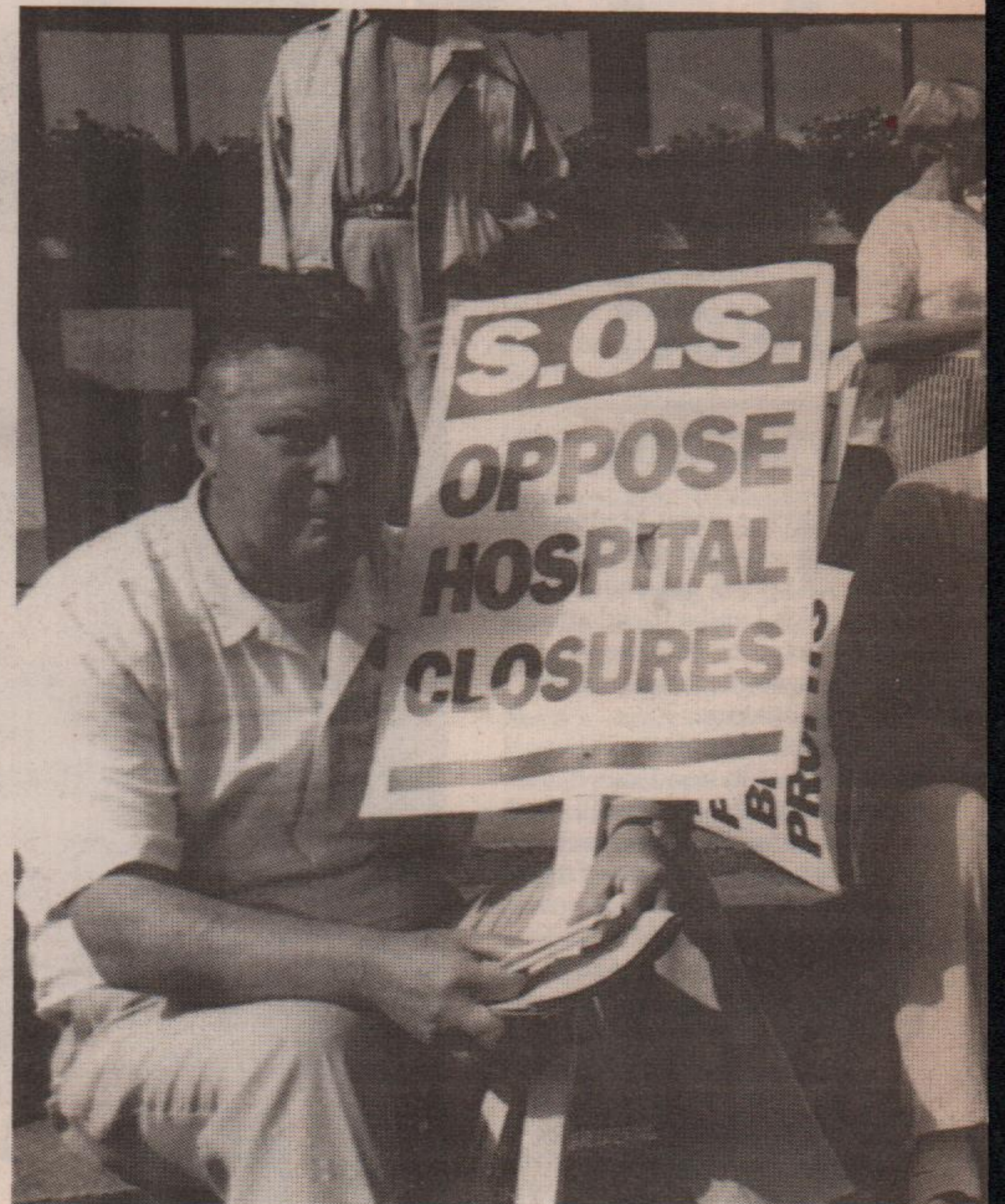
we hurt our back. That's not right. We get £29.50 as it is and we've got no cover.

At the end of the two years on YT you can wear a white uniform, but you don't get any really useful qualification. They call it youth training but it's not really training at all. YT was set up for cheap labour, but I don't have any choice — if you're not on YT you don't get any money. You can't get dole till you're 18. If I finished at the hospital now I would get £15 a week bridging allowance for eight weeks and then nothing. If I don't get a job, it's tough-luck. I don't get any money till I am 18. There are hardly any jobs going in Stafford. There was an article in the local paper saying that careers officers were telling people next year to stop in school because there are not even going to be YT places. They can't find everybody places this year: some of my friends can't find a place.

My hospital is going to become a Trust. When it is a Trust it'll make working conditions for nurses worse so it will obviously make ours worse, and we're getting less money than them as well. It's going to be a bigger rush with more patients in and out. They don't understand it's us that keeps the NHS going. The Tories want to get rid of the NHS, the trusts are making it private. All they'll be interested in is money; they won't want to fork out all this money for NHS patients.

I've contacted a YT manager about a union; there's not a lot of places in Stafford where YT people can get into a union. She told me I would have to pay full subs. I can't afford that. I am taking it further and contacting the union direct: if they find out I am really pushing for a union I get sacked, but there's no way I'm just going to put up with the way they treat us.

I think people on YT should organise. I mean, if YT and ET people went on strike the bosses would



The Tories' plans for privatisation of the NHS will mean worse conditions for young workers

be right in it wouldn't they? If we stood up and said we not doing it, they would have to do something to improve our conditions and get us some more money. I think the unions should come to us; they should organise a meeting for everyone when they start a job and get them to join. Then we could do something about the way the bosses treat us.

90p an hour!

By Maria, Hyde

Greater Manchester Low Pay Unit released a survey on Monday 7 September. They said young people were forced to accept terribly-paid jobs due to YT waiting lists and withdrawal of benefit rights.

In 1986, the Tories withdrew young workers from the protection of minimum wage laws. The report found teenagers working for 90p an hour.

One 16-year old in Stockport worked a 50-hour week in a supermarket for £1.40 an hour. The 'adult' legal minimum is £3.08.

Students fight back!

By Russell, Monkswearmouth FE

Students are worse off than they have been for decades. Higher Education student grants have been cut by over one quarter since the Tories came to power.

Since last year, they have been barred from Housing Benefit and Income Support.

But an HE student is still better off than a full-time student in Further Education. We have no right to a grant and the few local council grants have been cut altogether. That's why I am going on, and helping to build the MANUS demo in November.

Some luck!

By Steve, Manchester

“£32 a week, I learn nothing — and they say I am one of the lucky ones”.

That's how one trainee at a large Manchester factory explained his opinion of Youth Training to me recently. He went on to explain that some of the friends he went to school with had left this summer and had been unable to find even a YT place.

For those young people there was nothing: no entitlement to dole or income support, no jobs and no money to enter education, not even a place on a slave labour YT scheme.

It is estimated that there were over 60,000 such young people last year

— we can't be quite sure as they don't appear on any statistics and some live off their parents.

The unlucky ones are forced onto the streets. For these young people society offers nothing.

But are those “lucky” enough to be forced onto a YT scheme really better off? Sure, you get thirty quid a week but, for many young people, this goes straight to their parents for food and lodging. And to get this miserly thirty quid, Youth Trainees spend all week on a scheme which often offers little training or else training which will be useless when it comes to looking for a job.

Often they have to work in dangerous conditions and are treated like

second-rate humans by the bosses.

Basically, YT is crap. Young people deserve better. We should have the right to decent training of our choice on a proper wage. We should be entitled to a grant so that we can continue in education after we're 16.

Young people need to get organised. If you're poor, skint or angry, join a trade union and raise the issues of youth poverty with other workers. Get involved in campaigns to make society better in your area. Raise the issues that concern you with your mates. Write to Youth Fightback — we can let you know what's going on in your area. Sell Youth Fightback.

SPECIAL REPORT

a skivvy'



Youth Fightback – the paper for well red youth

"Youth Fightback has been launched by AWL youth because youth need a socialist paper. If you want to get involved, write to us, or send us articles and sell the paper".

- Tunde Brixton
- Julie Hackney
- Jeni East London
- Brian Easterhouse, Glasgow
- Peter Lancaster
- Maria Hyde
- Steve Manchester
- Russell Tyneside
- Elaine National Union of Students National Executive

Youth Fightback
PO Box 823
London
SE15 4NA
071-639 7965

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

**FIGHT STUDENT DEBT!
SAVE STUDENT UNIONS!**

Weds 4 November

12.45. All Saints Park, Oxford Road,
Manchester

MANUS demo hotline 061-275 2973

"BEAT THE BLUES"

DEMO AT TORY PARTY CONFERENCE

Weds 7 Oct

1pm. The Level, Brighton

Homes for the Homeless – Jobs for the Unemployed

For details contact Sussex Area NUS on 0273 671057

who we are

We're sick of poverty, of unemployment, of police harassment. We're sick of pointless jobs and YT cheap labour schemes. The Tories have used unemployment to drive down our wages. They've cut or abolished benefits and grants. Yet most young people see politics as irrelevant.

The reason for this indifference is the failure of the leadership of the labour movement. The trade union leaders have cowered at the Tories' attacks and failed to organise workers in new industries or the unemployed. The Labour leadership has given in and trailed along behind the Tories. Instead of fighting the Tories, Kinnock attacked the left and broke up the Labour Party Young Socialists.

Young people do kick back, the anger does explode in riots. But riots achieve nothing and can not change the basic problems we face. The only force that can rid society of poverty, alienation, unemployment and cut away the roots of racism and sexism is the labour movement.

The place for a youth fightback is in and through the labour movement. We will fight the right wing leadership of Labour and of the unions. If they bar us from official structures we will build our own.

We can take on the Tories, drawing the anger of young people into class politics. We can show young people they can change the world and that we can fight back.

Malcolm X & socialism

By Tunde, Brixton

Malcolm X taught black pride and self-reliance to American black people facing tremendous racist hostility.

Malcolm X said: not one inch to the racists! Fight racism by any means necessary!

Malcolm X was born in racist America in 1925. His father paid the price for fighting back against the racists — he was murdered by the Ku Klux Klan. Malcolm himself died from an assassin's bullet in 1965.



Malcolm X: not one inch to the racists!

Fighting back

Black youth are showing a renewed interest in Malcolm X. We wear the t-shirts as a sign of our increasing confidence and as a symbol that we are not prepared to stand for racism.

But we also need to learn about what Malcolm X said. We need to decide for ourselves what we can take from Malcolm to use in Britain today.

I say that black youth should say yes to Malcolm's spirit of defiance against the racist police, harassment and discrimination.

But black youth need more. Malcolm's ideas were evolving, but he was murdered before he embraced socialism. **And black youth do need socialism!**

We need a socialist government because, in the end, the only way to stop police violence, to get work and a place to live is to get a government which will help our fight.

Black youth get a worse deal than white youth. But white youth also get trouble from the police, are unemployed and have nowhere to live. This is the basis for a common struggle.

White and black youth — unite to fight against racism and for socialism! Join us!

REVOLUTION OR RIOT?

Nationalism no answer!

By Brian, Easterhouse, Glasgow



Los Angeles: riots won't beat the powerful modern state

By Jeni, East London

Since the '60s, young people have identified themselves into groups mainly around music, clothes, cult movies and certain ways of life. For instance, rockers could be identified by their drainpipe trousers, loud jackets, suede shoes and quiff hairstyle.

As well as groups of youth whose form of rebellion was music and dress, there have been political youth movements like CND and the Labour Party Young Socialists.

These movements drew in youth

questioning the system. Young people were angry and wanted to do something to change the way that they were treated.

The political leadership of the LPYS sold out the youth; not only was political education sparse, but Marxism was grossly caricatured.

As part of an attack on the left, the Labour leadership closed down the YS in the late '80s. The leadership of the LPYS allowed this to happen without putting up a real fight, leaving the youth disorientated with no labour-based organisation.

Young people have been given a raw deal by the Government. You can't claim state benefits until you are eighteen. YT schemes are low-paid slave labour — and there aren't enough of them for everyone!

With unemployment growing and community and youth organisations closing, there is nowhere to go but the streets.

The police treat youths as trouble-makers and potential criminals, forever harassing them and taking them down the station on trumped-up charges.

People get angry and fight back the only way they know how — rioting.

This form of fighting back doesn't really solve the problem.

The problem is capitalism and the way it exploits people throughout society. Riots can't replace that system and won't beat the powerful modern state.

Socialists have to turn the anger into action and distance themselves from the opportunists on the left, like the SWP, who think that the Los Angeles riots were as good as a massive and successful strike in Germany this summer.

We must denounce organisations like *Class War* who tried to spark a riot by having their rally on the Pembury estate. All this would do is split the community rather than strengthen it.

Rioting does not solve anything whatsoever. We have to give better answers to young people, bringing them into the Labour Party to win a government and rights like affordable housing, jobs on decent wages and an end to police harassment.

Socialists must side with the youth against the police and bring the anger and the hatred they feel against the state and the Tories into working class organisations.

Hang the bigot!

From front page

could boast — via the Smiths — of thousands of followers around the world, ranging from innocent and confused teenagers attracted to his rebellious and troubled image, to philosophical "trendy lefties" enticed by the meaningful lyrics that went to create some of the Smiths' most popular songs such as "Girlfriend in a Coma" and "Panic".

Seen as the crusader of trendy and saleable causes such as animal rights and nuclear disarmament, Morrissey could do no wrong in the eyes of the music establishment and, throughout the 'eighties, gained massive popularity. Now people are beginning to doubt the validity of Morrissey's so-called "conscientious left" image and question Morrissey's views on racism.

His ambiguous lyrics in the songs

"National Front Disco" and "Bengali in Platforms" have raised concern in the music press. He has said such things as black and white people will never really learn to get on with each other, and that he doesn't much like Pakistanis. He soft-peddles ideas which would be unacceptable from a fascist band like Skrewdriver — from Morrissey, who is such a right-on guy, they must be OK really — and that is why he is becoming dangerous.

Magazines such as *New Musical Express* and *Q* have been investigating the claim that Morrissey is a racist. But fans of Morrissey repeatedly claim that he is just trying to be controversial and is publicity-seeking by writing and performing such songs. Me: I think he is a bigot.

If you hate the Tories and support...

- replacing 'Youth Training' with real training on union rates of pay
- benefits for everyone from age 16 and a minimum grant of £70 per week
- affordable housing for all
- scrapping all nuclear weapons
- fighting racism, sexism and homophobia by any means necessary
- black, women's, lesbian and gay organisations that want to fight back
- campaigning in and through the Labour Party for a fightback against the Tories

... sell Youth Fightback

Address: Youth Fightback, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.
Phone: 071-639 7967

The General Election result was a setback for working class youth across the UK. The situation in Scotland, though, has presented distinctive political questions in the aftermath of Labour's defeat. The Labour Party did not campaign on the real issues affecting the working class and, in particular, failed to fight for the needs of Scottish youth: a decent education, living grants and full employment.

The overall effect has been the rise of Scottish nationalism and an increase in the popularity of the Scottish National Party. Yet what does this mean for young people in Scotland? How do the young people of Scotland win their demands?

Scottish nationalism owes its popularity to its easy answer: the people of Scotland should break away from England and all Scotland's problems will disappear. No more unemployment, decent housing and a good standard of living. But this solution does not understand Scotland's real problems.

The working class of Scotland suffers in a similar way to workers in England and Wales. Problems of unemployment and welfare cuts come from capitalism, not English nationalism. Until we have a system of production based on need and not profit, then poverty and inequality will continue, whichever country you live in. Fighting poverty and deprivation requires international solidarity and working class unity. Scottish separation is a diversion.

One political consequence of the General Election is the rise in nationalism. *Scotland United* has been formed and has taken advantage of the Tory victory by harnessing the resentment to form a group of widely different views whose only aim is to have a referendum in Scotland to start the process of separation. The lack of clear politics has meant a degeneration into a messy nationalist campaign with no relevance to the people of Scotland.

The rise in popularity of groups like *Scotland United* and the SNP has also been due to the poor state of the Labour Party in Scotland. The Labour Party has been more intent on expelling the left wing and "modernising" the party than campaigning on the doorstep on issues affecting Scottish workers.

In Motherwell, thousands of jobs will be lost due to the closure of Ravenscraig steelworks but the Labour Party has done little to support the workers' fight to save their jobs and community. If the Labour Party had taken on issues like Ravenscraig and challenged the Tories effectively on their appalling record on the economy, the poll tax and the Gulf War, we would have a Labour government.

The way forward for young people in Scotland is not to rush down the blind alley of independence. We need a society that takes young people's issues seriously, provides us with jobs and a decent education system. We will only achieve this by joining the fight for international socialism.

In part this involves changing the Labour Party. We should set up Labour Party Young Socialists groups and Labour Clubs in our colleges. The left must get organised to take on the false arguments of Scottish nationalism. We must put our socialist alternative on the agenda. Only by doing this can we begin the fight for a society free from inequality, deprivation and poverty.