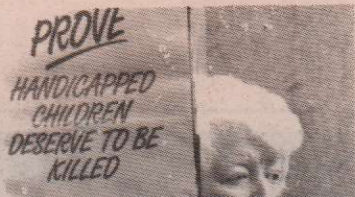




Born to pray and save?

Yeats on the Labour War: pages 10-11



Free speech for anti-abortionists? page 12



The new Mussolini

page 9

Black – and working class



Darcus Howe: centre pages

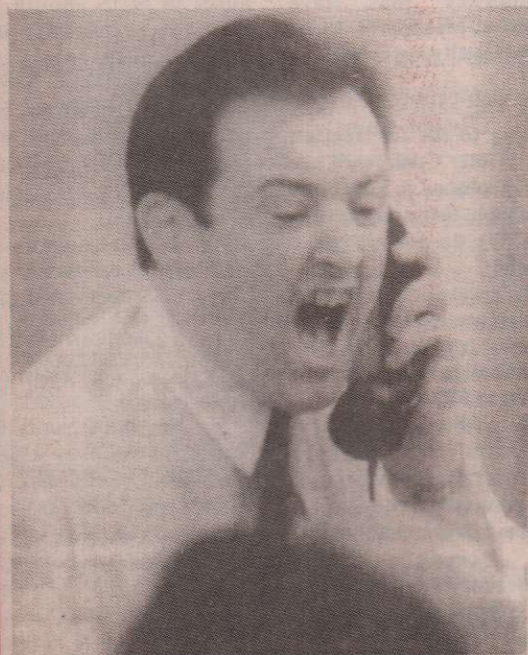
SOCIALIST

WHY

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

CAPITALISM IS CRAZY



- Why the pound crashed.
- What will happen now?
- How to tackle the

Tories.

- After France's "yes" vote: will Maastricht go ahead?
- See pages 3, 4, 5.

GET THE TORIES OUT!

The lie machine



The Thatcherites are on the rampage again! The Sun has come out for a referendum on Maastricht, and the Star chimed in with anti-German venom: "Major sides with the Krauts..." While backing the democratic call for a referendum, the left must also have its own, internationalist alternative, opposed equally to the Thatcherites and to the Euro-bosses.

Daily Mail £30,000

Mummy has been killed, Alex. She is never coming back!

HAPPINESS IS A FALLING POUND

The Sun 25p

The Sun Euro referendum NO YES

Diana has given up £72,000 Mercedes

MELLOR TO QUIT

Norman Lamont fouls up his own economic policy beyond belief, and wastes £10 billion in the process — and the Tory tabloids are full of praise for him! Instead they would rather use David Mellor as a lightning-rod for discontent with the Tories.

Scargill defies pit plans

"We will take any action necessary to defend our pits, jobs and communities" NUM President Arthur Scargill has said.

"Confidential documents in the possession of the NUM reveal that the Tory government

and British Coal are embarking on a savage pit closure programme involving up to 30 pits. The detailed list in possession of the NUM show that 3 collieries are to close in the North East, 11 in Yorkshire, 9 in Notts, 2 in Derbyshire, 2 in the Midlands, 2 in South Wales and one in

Lancashire.

Such butchery of the British Coal Mining industry would represent a catastrophe not only for Britain's miners and their communities but also for the British economy which is already on the verge of collapse. According to the Rothschild Report,

the cost of closing 30 pits would be £2.1 billion. Another £200 million would be spent each year if only half the miners from those pits remained on the dole. The document projects increases of up to 6.6 per cent in unemployment in some Travel to Work Areas such as Mansfield."



Scargill prepares to fight pit closures



Last Saturday's demonstration against David Irving. Organised by the Campaign Against Fascism in France the demonstration united most anti-fascist and left groups. Photo: Alex MacNaughton

Talks in Dublin

Northern Ireland Unionists have gone to Dublin for talks this week for the first time since Ireland was partitioned in 1920.

The Dublin government - a nationalist, Fianna Fail government - is hinting that it may call a referendum to delete Dublin's claim to rule over Northern Ireland from the Irish constitution, a constitution written by a Fianna Fail government in 1937.

Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party has boycotted the Dublin talks:

Paisley attacked the Official Unionists, declaring: "Some of the Unionist negotiators drink at the bar with these men [the Dublin minister]... My party is not in that business. The only time we address them is across the table when we are standing up for what Ulster stands for..."

But the DUP has not withdrawn, as it could have done, from the whole negotiating process between Northern Ireland, Southern Ireland, and British politicians.

Campaign launched for student democracy

The Campaign for Democracy in NUS has launched a Commission of Inquiry, made up of independent labour movement activists, into the undemocratic practices of the leadership of the National Union of Students. NUS has for a long time been a relatively open and democratic organisation. It has a membership of one and half million and is the only sizeable youth organisation in Britain.

One of the main issues to be investigated is the witch-hunt against Steve Mitchell and Mark Sandell.

At the NUS Spring Conference in April, Mark and Steve were given 90 seconds to refute vague allegations. The atmosphere was whipped up to an ugly pitch, and a motion of "no confidence" was carried.

On top of this foul witch hunt, the NUS leadership has bulldozed through a number of constitutional

"reforms" without getting the necessary number of votes at the relevant forums.

Lorna Fitzsimons, NUS President, was recently described by the Times as "a

"NUS President Lorna Fitzsimons told the Times she 'would rather be a venture capitalism with a jet set left style'."

woman of substance". Appropriate, if the substance involved is slime.

Though elected on a Labour slate, she has little in common with even the worst of the recent NUS Labour Presidents. A cynical careerist, who admits openly in the Times that "she would rather be a 'venture capitalist with a jet set lifestyle' than a hollow eyed Labour MP", she has managed to fix herself up with a clothes sponsorship deal with Next. Her crusade for the coming year seems to be to "change the stereotype of women students".

The Labour leadership of NUS have often ignored and sometimes blatantly refused to carry out democratically decided campaign mandates, but at least they held votes. Fitzsimons rarely bothers.

NUS must be defended. The Campaign for Democracy has produced a statement (see below) which is being circulated around the student movement. We want people to sign it, get it

passed at Student Union GMs, council and Exec meetings, and return it to Janine Booth, Secretary of the Campaign for Democracy in NUS, c/o 71a Graham Road, London E8.

Statement from the Campaign for Democracy in NUS

We believe that democracy is essential for our Union to be representative and participatory. We are alarmed at the abuses of democracy that have occurred recently in NUS. Specifically, we believe that:

(1) The series of events leading to the declaration that Winter Conference has been abolished is a farce of cheating, lies and corruption. We do not recognise as valid:

- the revote held at Winter Conference 1991;
- the calling of the Extraordinary Conference in March 1992;
- the adding in of (selected) "extra" votes to change the outcome of the vote at that conference;
- the refusal of the NEC to accept Spring Conference's vote to pass the Steering Committee Supplementary Report that Winter Conference would

be organised.

(2) The NEC should convene a Winter Conference in December 1992.

(3) The resolution of disputes in NUS should be subject to the principles of natural justice. The vote of 'no confidence' in Steve Mitchell and Mark Sandell at Spring Conference did not follow these principles, but constituted a witch hunt.

(4) NUS has a commitment to full autonomy for liberation campaigns, and the NEC has no right to attach political strings or to engage in bureaucratic interference.

(5) The NEC and the National President should respect and uphold the constitution of NUS, and not re-interpret it, ignore it or make it up at will.

(6) The NUS NEC should carry out the democratically agreed policy of National Conference.

Student left comes under attack

By Jeni Bailey

I can see only two reasons why the ruling clique on NUS's National Executive should not be called "Stalinists".

Firstly, they have not killed anyone yet. Secondly, at least most Stalinists are political.

The clique, centred round President Lorna Fitzsimons and National Secretary Ian Pigg, continued their drive against NUS democracy at the Executive meeting on 22 September.

Their main targets were National Executive members who are supporters of Left Unity.

National Executive member Elaine Jones had her campaign responsibility for "Human Rights"

removed. She had been doing the job for two months. It seems that her crime was to send out a questionnaire asking colleges what clubs and societies exist which take up human rights issues.

Left Unity's base in the working-class Further Education sector was attacked when the NEC voted to set up an investigation into the Left-Unity-led Tyne-Tees Area NUS. A right-wing student union sabbatical officer from the area claimed that the Area accounts had not been audited and that Area member colleges had not been informed of meetings. Both allegations are untrue. The idea is to introduce "regionalisation" in the North-East.

That means closing Tyne-Tees Area down. It is going to prove very difficult for the right wing.

Left Unity had some successes at the NEC. We prevented the right wing from pushing through all of their new "protocol". They were halted in their attempts to gag NEC members, introduce a highly undemocratic grievance procedure, and attack the autonomous liberation campaigns.

While the heat is turned up on the left, the new term is beginning in the Further Education sector. Despite, and in part because of, the attacks on us, the left looks set to recruit larger numbers of youth to socialist politics in the coming academic year.



The Tories won the election on false pretences

Labour and TUC should campaign for a general election!

Get the Tories out!

The Tories are frauds! Shysters! Swindlers! Their economic policy has collapsed, after the hopes and livelihoods of millions had been sacrificed to it.

The financial crisis will mean:

- Big price rises: as the pound slumps, the price of imports, which amount to a third of the British economy, will increase.

- Attempts to cut real wages: the Tories will try to get wage-workers to bear the whole cost of the price rises.

- High interest rates, as the Government tries to stop the pound slumping further. Mortgage rates will be high; more and more people will have their homes repossessed.

- Even worse cuts in public services - more hospitals, schools, and libraries closed.

To win the April election, the Tories promised that economic recovery was already underway, and that they would safeguard the National Health Service. They were lying! Their whole strategy of the last few years has collapsed. Labour and the TUC should campaign - with mass demonstrations, strikes, lobbies, and obstruction in Parliament - to force the Tories to resign.

Lots of people say Major and Lamont must go. But would it solve anything if we had Heseltine in place of Major? The whole Tory cabinet supported Major's and Lamont's economic "strategy". They should all go.

"To win the April election, the Tories promised that economic recovery was already underway, and that they would safeguard the National Health Service. They were lying!"

Yes, it is only five months since they won an election, and they have a big majority in Parliament. But they won the election on false pretences. Labour should not accept that the Tories have an unchallengeable right to rule for another four years, and to push through whatever new destructive economic strategy they devise - without any accountability, without the people having any say. Labour should start campaigning, not bleating and quibbling!

Fight back against Tory cuts!

This is not our crisis. It is the Tories' crisis - a crisis of their system and their policies.

They will try to make the working class pay for it: but we should resist.

For some years now, a mood of resignation has gripped the labour movement. The Tories seem evil - but in control, and unstoppable. The limited revival of strikes in 1988, and the fall of Thatcher and the poll tax in 1990, shifted the depression a bit, but not decisively. Now it is clear that the Tories are not in control. They do not know how to operate their own system. They can be beaten.

By contracting-out, privatisation, and cuts, the Tory Government is trying to reduce that core section of the working class who have stable jobs in boom or slump.

Decades of struggle by the labour movement forced the capitalist state to put health care, education, and other services on the basis of provision according to need, not according to what is profitable.

That not only guarantees health care and education for those who would otherwise be too poor to pay hospital or school bills; it makes jobs in the public services safer.

In the building industry, for example, stable jobs have disappeared with the axing of local authority Direct Labour Organisations and the virtual abolition of public-sector house-building.

But the public service trade unions have survived the 13 years of Tory rule so far better, on the whole, than those in manufacturing industry. The Tories are determined that they should not survive the next 13 years!

The labour movement should use the base and the strength that it has in the public services to resist contracting-out and privatisation.

The Tories can be and have been

pushed back by trade union action. Public service workers on the rail and Underground, in the civil service, and even in local authorities, have tremendous strategic power if only they take united action.

They can force the Tories to retain and even to expand public services.

Where private companies close factories - sometimes because of reduced Government orders, for example because of the cuts in military spending - the trade unions should demand that the company is nationalised, the plant converted and the workforce retrained for socially useful production and campaign to win public support

"Labour should not accept that the Tories have an unchallengeable right to rule for another four years, and to push through whatever new destructive economic strategy they devise"

for the proposal.

We should fight for the present miserable cheap-labour Government "training" schemes to be replaced by genuine training and retraining, at trade union rates of pay, with training courses leading to recognised qualifications.

Trade unions should demand wage increases (and increases in state benefits, too) to match the coming price rises. We should fight for a "sliding scale" such as the Italian government - in its attempt to do the same sort of thing as the Tories, making the workers pay for a financial crisis - has just abolished: wage agreements should

guarantee wage rises to match prices.

Both in the public and in the private sector, trade unions should also fight for a shorter working week.

This demand can be won. The engineering workers won a cut in their working week, even under the un-militant leadership of Bill Jordan. Where trade unions are weaker, in the US or Japan, work hours are longer; conversely, strong trade union action can cut hours.

Capitalism is crazy: it throws millions of people into enforced idleness, only to use the threat of the sack to force those who still have jobs to work harder, for longer hours. Instead, the work should be shared out equally among all those who want jobs.

Such a campaign could unite the employed and unemployed. To organise the unemployed and save them from despair must be the labour movement's top priority.

Continued on page 7

"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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A sect eating away at Labour's heart

There is a mystery about all the current agitation in certain quarters about how the block vote "damages the Labour Party".

The right wing are firmly in control. They are backed up by the block votes of all the main trade unions. There is no credible evidence that the union link damages the Party electorally.

So why all the fuss? Three arguments have been used to explain the conundrum.

The first goes something like this. The main union leaders feel deeply frustrated about their exclusion from the "corridors of power" by the Tories since 1979. Increasingly they look to Europe for ideas. The GMB has opened up a European office. Others will follow.

All this costs money, and with revenues declining as membership bleeds away, the Labour Party affiliation fees do not like a very good investment. Better loosen the links with Labour, and look for a more bi-partisan, business-unionist approach to politics, symbolised by inviting CBI boss Howard Davies to speak at the TUC.

The trouble with this argument is that it is rather exaggerated. In a trade union official's framework, four and a half years is not that long to wait for a change of government. What's more, Euro-lobbying cannot look quite as profitable today as it may have done only a week ago, before "Black Wednesday".

Argument number two focusses on what could happen under a future Labour government.

Labour councils have been making some pretty spectacular attacks on their workforces and trade unions [see page 15]. Those battles could be nothing in comparison to what would happen if a Labour Government had to confront its own working-class base in conditions of major economic crisis.

In such circumstances, the party/union link could prove explosive. Remember how the trade union revolt in the "Winter of Discontent" in 1978-9 fed back into the Labour Party in 1979-81 to create the heyday of "Bennism".

This argument goes part of the way to explaining what is happening, but only part.

A lot of trade union officials want to keep the link with Labour, but in a much more bureaucratized form. That is the meaning of the slogan put out by Tom Sawyer of NUPE: "No say, no pay!" The trade unions want influence on Labour policy in return for their affiliation fees.

Stuart Weir, writing in the *New Statesman* points to a third explanation.

"During the election, the Conservatives tried to make Labour's links with the trade union into an electoral issue and failed. None of the polls picked up any sign of the trade unions damaging Labour's rosy image, and the first portmorts by specialist writers entirely disregarded them. But within a few weeks a highly influential group within the Labour Party had rewritten history. They firmly identified the trade unions as the root cause of the electorate's distrust of Labour - apparently as the first stage of a campaign to break the party/trade union connection".

A survey by MORI for the GMB established that only 4 per cent of non-Labour voters mentioned the trade union link as an obstacle to voting Labour. But the yuppy sect eating away at the heart of the Labour Party does not care. They have a theory - derived from *Marxism Today*.

They believed that all Labour had to do to get elected was to embrace the Tories' agenda, but appear more "modern" and "competent". When they were proved wrong, then like all sectarians and mystics they needed scapegoats. And so we get the crazed post-election campaign against the trade union link.

Who are these people? According to Weir, their base is in Walworth Road and the Labour Coordinating Committee.

"The first strike came the Monday after the election in BBC Radio 4's *Today*, a key agenda-setting influence on the rest of the media: the theme was divorce between party and trade unions.

"In mid-June, a coordinated attempt to flesh out the case against the trade unions was made in a set of reports and articles by favoured journalists and was clearly the result of detailed briefing by internal spin doctors. The case they presented was ostensibly based on 'polling evidence' prepared by the Shadow Communications Agency for Labour's National Executive..."

By determined "spin-doctoring", a small group of people have managed to put the very survival of a political labour movement in Britain at risk.

They can only do this on the back of the whole Kinnockite crusade against class politics. But the campaign to defend the link may be the starting point for the revival of that same class politics.

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

Capitalism

The pound and the lira have dropped out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism. The Spanish peseta has been devalued within the mechanism. Central banks have had to intervene frantically to stop other currencies being devalued. France has voted yes to the Maastricht Treaty, but only narrowly. Martin Thomas assesses the questions.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US?

Inflation: Suppose the pound goes down to 2.40 deutschmarks. The price of goods imported from Germany, or any other country whose money remains stable against the mark, will go up.

Before the pound slumped, 28 deutschmarks was the equivalent of about £10. If the pound goes down to 2.40 marks, then that 28-mark item will cost £11.70. Its price will go up 17 per cent.

Since imports are about one-third of the British economy, prices on average will increase about 6%. They are increasing at about 4% a year already. Add 6% to 4%, and that makes 10% inflation.

Cuts in real wages, and

more cuts in public services: the Tory Government will try to do what the Italian government is already doing. The Italian government has abolished the "sliding scale" which guaranteed Italian workers wage rises when prices rise, and it has gained emergency powers from Parliament to make economic policy by decree, starting off with a public-sector wage freeze and big cuts in pensions and health insurance.

SOME TORY RIGHT-WINGERS AND LABOUR LEFT-WINGERS ARGUE THAT THE POUND'S COLLAPSE IS GOOD NEWS, AND WILL OPEN THE WAY TO ECONOMIC RECOVERY.

The Tory right-wingers think that an Italian-type policy can be pushed through successfully. Anatole Kaletsky, in the *Times*, declares that "Happy days are here again". He predicts rapid growth resulting from cuts in interest rates in the following scenario:

"Never in the last 30 years has Britain faced less of a threat of inflation than it does today. Union militancy is non-existent and wage rises are at record lows..."

The collapse of ERM membership offers the government a once-in-a-lifetime

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE £7 BILLION THE GOVERNMENT BORROWED TO TRY TO KEEP UP THE POUND'S EXCHANGE RATE? AND TO THE £10 BILLION THE BANK OF ENGLAND SPENT IN THE LAST FEW HOURS BEFORE THE POUND LEFT THE EXCHANGE RATE MECHANISM?

The Bank of England spent £10 billion in deutschmarks, dollars, and so on, to buy pounds, and thus, it hoped, through force of supply-and-demand, to keep up the pound's value.

Now the Bank of England has £10 billion in pounds. It could change it back into deutschmarks or whatever, at a loss. If the pound goes down 10%, to about DM 2.50, then the Bank of England loses £1 billion on the whole business - £1 billion from the pockets of

the taxpayers into the pockets of the currency speculators. On top of that, the taxpayers have to pay about £700 million a year in interest on the £7 billion the Government offered. "That's capitalism", as Norman Lamont said!

But it's worse than that. In fact the Bank of England can't change that £10 billion back into marks now, because selling pounds on that scale would crash the exchange rate! In the long term, it can change the money back some time, but then in the long term it can just print more pound notes anyway.

A pound note is just an IOU from the Bank of England. The Bank of England does not become richer by holding more pounds, any more than you would become richer by sitting down with a stack of paper and a pen and writing millions of IOUs. It does become poorer by holding fewer marks, i.e. fewer IOUs from the Bundesbank.

Billions have been paid out to banks and speculators, and even more billions have been made unusable. Ten billion pounds would pay for 150,000 new council houses or 300 new hospitals!

MAP ET PRÉSIDENTIELLE AUX USA
la 2e édition de Los Angeles, le magazine phare de ce dimanche est offert gratuitement P.44

RENTRÉE SCOLAIRE
un million d'élèves ont rejoint le chemin de l'école, semaine de fêtes et parties sur le ponton de Long P.14

HAL LOGES
des gens de tous les âges de l'économie, le mouvement de la dévaluation a mal agité de nombreux salariés P.38

LITTÉRATURE
l'annonce de la dévaluation a suscité l'engouement autour de la lecture de l'ouvrage P.38

à nausée
l'annonce de la dévaluation a suscité l'engouement autour de la lecture de l'ouvrage P.38

ROUGE

NON!

Lutte Ouvrière
hebdomadaire - paraît le vendredi - N° 1.200 - 28 août 1992 - prix: 5 F

Référendum sur Maastricht

ni Oui avec Chirac

ni Non avec Le Pen

The French left were divided over Maastricht with *Rouge* arguing not very elegantly (and appearing very nationalistic) "Non" and *Lutte Ouvrière* taking an independent working class position.

chance. The nation's desire for low interest rates is now so intense that an extremely tough public spending round would readily be accepted as a *quid pro quo*.

Even such previously unthinkable ideas as freezing public sector wages and suspending the indexation of non-means-tested social security benefits and pensions would surely be acceptable in exchange for a cut of 3 or 4 per cent in interest rates".

There are several things wrong with this right-wing argument in its own terms. For a start, a cut in interest rates is not a magic recipe for growth. Look at the US now, with 3% interest rates! But anyway, Mr Kaletsky's "happy days" will certainly not be happy for the working class!

What the Labour leftists say is mindless blather. They have just seized on devaluation because it looks like a "popular", "winnable" cause against the Tory Government.

WHAT DETERMINES EXCHANGE RATES?

If capitalists are exporting from Germany to Britain - so their costs are in marks and their receipts are in pounds - or from Britain to Germany, so their costs are in pounds and their receipts in marks, they need some

way of changing their receipts into their home currency, and some agreed rate: so many marks to the pound.

A baseline for that rate is set by the ratio of the different money-units to an objective standard. If widgets are produced in both Germany and in Britain with the same technology, and cost £1 in Britain and DM 3 in Germany, then the rate should be £1 = DM 3.

"Today less than one-tenth of foreign-exchange dealing is directly connected with trade."

SO WHY DO EXCHANGE RATES VARY SO MUCH?

People change pounds and marks, and other currencies, not just for trade, but also for investment, and, increasingly, for speculation. Today less than one-tenth of foreign-exchange dealing is directly connected with trade.

Exchange rates vary a lot from the baseline, depending on interest rates and expectations. If you have \$1 million earning 3% interest, then you gain by converting it to DM 1.5 million earn-

isn't working



Major and Kohl – in the “good old days” of the ERM

ing 9% interest, even though that DM 1.5 million will not buy nearly as much as the \$1 million. If you have £1 million and you reckon that the pound's value will drop, then you gain by converting it to DM 2.8 million (and being able to change it back into £1.17 million or so after the pound has dropped), even if the interest rate on pounds is 15%.

WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF VARYING EXCHANGE RATES? AND WHY ARE GOVERNMENTS SO WORRIED ABOUT THEM?

According to free-market dogma, all the to-ing and fro-ing should produce a harmonious self-regulating system. In fact it tends to divide countries into a few with “strong” currencies and many with “weak” currencies.

The “weak” countries have chronic difficulty in exporting enough to match their imports. They suffer a “flight of capital” (rich people moving their wealth to “stronger” economies). They have big foreign debts; high inflation; currencies which keep on losing value relative to the “stronger” ones; inadequate investment; and low indus-

trial productivity.

There is a vicious circle - not unbreakable, and not without exceptions and counter-tendencies - in which all the elements of the “weak” economy reinforce each other.

The exports of the “strong” countries become more expensive in the “weak” currencies, but generally the “strong” country's productivity advantage is enough to overcome that problem. A country which tries to make its currency “strong” without having a “strong” productive base behind it will be in trouble - like Britain under the Tories!

WHAT MAKES INTEREST RATES GO UP AND DOWN? AND WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF HIGH OR LOW INTEREST RATES?

Interest is the slice that money-lending capitalists take out of the surplus value produced by workers. The size of the slice depends on the balance of forces between money-lending capitalists and industrial capitalists: it tends to be lower in booms and higher in slumps.

There are many complications. Just as interest rates affect exchange rates, so also exchange rates can

affect interest rates; and a government can manipulate interest rates by setting the rate which its central bank lends money to commercial banks.

High interest rates tend to depress industry by taking a big slice out of its profits. Low interest rates sometimes lead to inflation, by letting credit expand out of proportion to production.

WHY ARE THE TORIES PREPARED TO SACRIFICE SO MUCH FOR “ZERO INFLATION”?

Often, “the fight against inflation” is just code for “the fight against wage rises”. But there is more to it than that.

In the 1950s and 1960s inflation averaged a bit over 3%, and capitalism thrived on it.

“Such inflation means that workers are bound to be constantly pushing for wage rises.”

Such inflation means that workers are bound to be constantly pushing for wage rises. That was not a big problem in the booming 1950s and '60s, but it is now.

Worse, in the 1970s the bosses discovered that gentle inflation could rapidly spiral out of control in slumps. They resolved to try to suppress it.

WHY DOES THE CAPITALIST CLASS LET THE SPECULATORS GET AWAY WITH IT?

Because they are the speculators themselves! The young men and women seen on our TVs peering into computer screens deal

not in their own money but in that of big capitalist companies and banks. They, and their bosses, get a handsome commission on the deals, but the big winners are multinational companies, banks, pension funds, and so on.

Governments and central banks lose. Until the 1980s, they used to impose “exchange controls” to limit buying and selling of currencies. It would take a much worse crisis to make them reimpose those exchange controls, because lots of multinational companies and big businesses

WHY IS THERE AN ECONOMIC CRISIS?

Slumps are built into the capitalist system of production for private profit.

Every capitalist upswing, even the feeble one of the mid-1980s, “overshoots”. It leaves masses of poverty and even unemployment intact; but the building of new offices, factories, and production facilities overshoots the limited market. The capitalists compete wildly, in boom-time, to expand fastest and grab the biggest share of the expanding profits. The expansion is blind, unplanned, chaotic, and runs out of all proportion to whatever limited increase there is in wages and mass-market demand.

have a powerful interest in today's deregulated international finance markets.

IS THE BASIC PROBLEM THAT BRITAIN ENTERED THE EXCHANGE RATE MECHANISM AT TOO HIGH A LEVEL?

“Capitalism is in crisis world-wide – in Germany, Japan and the US as well as Britain.”

No. The pound has been slipping relative to the mark for many years (it was over 11 marks to the pound as recently as 1967). As long as it keeps slipping, any fixed rate would become “too high”. Now it looks as if any rate above DM 2.50 is “too high”; and if Britain had entered the ERM with the pound at DM 2.50, then the resulting inflation would have soon made DM 2.50 “too high”.

IS JOHN SMITH RIGHT TO SAY THAT THE BASIC PROBLEM IS MISMANAGEMENT OF THE “REAL ECONOMY”, I.E. INDUSTRY?

Yes. But the problem is not just the Tory being bad managers of British capitalism. Capitalism is in crisis world-wide – in Germany, Japan and the US as well as Britain. And, sadly, John Smith has no proposals to do anything more about capitalism than tinker with details.

Few capitalists are buying new machinery or buildings: with sales low, they make do with what they have, and maybe even try to sell off some of their assets. Thus the construction and machine-making industries are hit doubly hard.

All that means more people out of work, more ruined business-people, more pressure to keep wages down - which in turn means lower sales, and a worse slump.

The present downturn started early in Britain, when a big balance of payments deficit forced the Government to block the flow of credit. It started only late last year in Germany and Japan, and is likely to continue world-wide for a long time yet.

The mid-'80s upturn was pushed along by mushrooming credit, especially international credit.

Vast speculative projects, like London's Docklands, and sleazy financial empires, like Ivan Boesky's, Michael Millken's, Robert Maxwell's, Alan Bond's, the BCCI, or the US Savings and Loans companies, were built on that credit.

The bubble was bound to burst. It was pricked by the US government's attempts to put right the imbalances created by the upturn - vast trade deficits and budget deficits.

Now, from Canary Wharf to Tokyo, the big capitalist cities are full of excess offices and half-idle factories.

GRAFFITI

People against the Protestants?

GRAFFITI

Recently we reported that a Derry Sinn Fein leader, Mitchell McLaughlin, had admitted that the Northern Ireland Protestants could never be coerced into a united Ireland. We advised him to draw the obvious conclusion: that the current activities of Sinn Fein's associate organisation, the Provisional IRA, are entirely counter-productive.

In fact, though, Sinn Fein — which some on the left in Britain believe is a socialist organisation — functions "on the ground" in Northern Ireland as a Catholic sectarian movement. A reader recently sent us copies of Sinn Fein general election advertisements, commenting:

"Despite all the protestations that they are a non-sectarian socialist party, the Sinn Fein general election campaign in Fermanagh-South Tyrone shows that they are basically a Catholic Nationalist Party.

"In a simple 'Keep the Protestant Out' drive, the chairman of the Gaelic Athletic Association offered to be a 'unity' candidate. When this failed, Sinn Fein placed two election adverts in the local Catholic paper, the Fermanagh Herald. 'Note the use of language. An appeal is made to the people of Fermanagh, pointing out that there are 31,400 Unionists out of 71,474 electors on the roll. Presumably the Protestants aren't people. And Sinn Fein calls on 'Republicans, Gaels, Nationalists of Fermanagh-S.Tyrone'."

Did you realise that there are 71,474 Electors on the Register 31,400 TOTAL Unionist electorate 40,074 Total Nationalist Electorate EVERY VOTE WILL COUNT — ONLY MOLLOY CAN WIN — VOTE —

People in glass houses can get away with throwing stones, or so the record of some of the people behind the witchhunt of people allegedly associated with Socialist Organiser

in Sheffield suggests. One of the main witch-hunters is Richard Baker, whose dislike of the left goes back to his days as a sabbatical officer in Sheffield University Student Union. Although Baker was a Labour Party member, he stood as an "independent", in a de facto alliance with the Liberals, and defeated the Labour candidate.

The Labour slate that he stood against included Ruth Cockcroft, one of those whom he is now trying to expel.

Now Baker is angling for a Regional Organiser's job in the Labour Party. Unfortunately his ward party has a lower opinion of his talents, and at their last AGM removed both him and his sidekick Andrew Nicholson from the GC.

Quick as a flash, plan B came out — they set up a fake Fabian Society and were delegated from that.

At the NCC hearings last week, a prize exhibit in Baker's evidence against one member was that he had been seen in the company of a known SO supporter — canvassing for Peter Kilfoyle in Walton. The NCC turned down the chance to make history by expelling someone for canvassing for an official Labour candidate...

The Freedom Association, as you might know, is a nasty right-wing outfit who are dedicated to helping smash up trade unions.

Now they have turned their attention to Virginia Bottomley, whom they accuse of the heinous crime of being "politically correct".

The organisation's founder, Gerald Hartup, has found some social work training guidelines. He says Bottomley, as Health Minister, is personally responsible for them.

The guidelines state that advertisements for social workers should explain that they "need to demonstrate a commitment to anti-oppressive practice" and concludes "racism is endemic in the values, attitudes and structures of British society".

Mr. Hartup obviously believes that this is denying freedom to social workers who would like to be oppressive at work. In the PC dictionary, Hartup is a "politically and intellectually challenged and differently parented person". Or, if you prefer ye olde English, "thick right-wing bastard".

Happiness is a falling pound

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

It's an old joke, and not exactly Politically Correct, but Thursday's Sun front page hit the spot: "Now we've all been screwed by the Cabinet". The rest of the Tory press was equally scathing, if somewhat less colourful. The Daily Mail led with "the Devalued Chancellor" and the Telegraph called for Lamont's resignation.

This was the moment of sweet revenge for that section of the Tory press (i.e. most of it) that has never quite forgiven Major, Lamont et al for their high treason of November 1991. Sadly, the anti-Lamont agitation proved to be no more than a Thatcherite spasm. By Friday most of the press had realised that:

- 1. It was John Major, not Lamont, who (in the words of the Telegraph) "persuaded Mrs. Thatcher to succumb to formal membership of the ERM".
2. Lamont's likely successor would be Kenneth Clarke — an even less popular figure on the Thatcherite right.
3. Ministers simply don't resign over anything these days.

And, anyway, maybe it had all turned out for the best after all — or, in the words of Friday's Mail front page, "Happiness is a falling pound".

Who was really to blame? Beneath Thursday's main headline "Pound is devalued" ran the follow-up, "Germans are accused of sabotaging sterling as Britain pulls out of ERM". The next day, the Express declared "War with Germany". The rest of the tabloids were, by now, lining up the Bundesbank's Helmut Schlesinger for the bad guy role.

The only surprise was that it took most of the tabloids a day or two to rumble the Hun's dastardly plot.

"This was the moment of sweet revenge for that section of the Tory press that has never quite forgiven Major and Lamont for their high treason of November 1991."

Having established Herr Schlesinger and the Teutonic hordes of the Bundesbank as the villains of the piece, the only question left for the tabloids was: who were the heroes? It would have been straining credulity to have attempted to rehabilitate Major and Lamont for such a role. They remained the



Thank God! The Mail has an excuse to laud the Tories

bungling incompetents who had just flushed £10 billion of our money down the toilet.

By Friday, the Mail and Express, at least, had found their heroes: the boys with the red braces and the dented Porsches. Of course! These lads aren't "speculators" or "spivs" (both terms that had been used on Thursday morning) but the heroes of Black Wednesday — the chaps who had saved the Government from itself, opening up the prospect of lower interest rates, economic recovery and dancing in the streets, while homeowners, the unemployed and small business people weep tears of joy and gratitude. Yes, Happiness is a Falling Pound.

The British Government is about to embark on a new economic policy which

promises to deliver far more than the one it has been forced to discard. Those who presided over it should be discarded too... If the Prime Minister cannot bring himself to sack his Chancellor and senior Treasury advisors... then they should do the decent thing and fall on their swords".

Strong words from the Sunday Times editorial this week. But, hang on a moment: wasn't it only last month that ST editor Andrew Neil had personally promised John Major a five month moratorium on criticism of the Government's economic policies? Mr. Neil missed his opportunity to prove himself a man of his word and say nothing about the economy, instead turning the ST over entirely to "lifestyle" features on restaurants, cars and foreign holidays. You just can't trust anyone these days, can you?

Getting a word in edgewise

WOMEN'S EYE

By Rebecca Van Homan

Public speaking is definitely male territory. Freudian readers could no doubt draw their own conclusions as to why men need to speak louder and longer than the previous speaker, and why this affects some men more than others.

In conversations, too, men dominate. In male-female conversations, men make 98% of the interruptions.

There is substantial evidence that this pattern starts from a very early. In year one in primary school (five to six year olds), boys made 88% of classroom

interruptions. By year five (nine to ten year olds), this had changed to boys making 100% of the interruptions!

In male-female conversations, it is women who do all the groundwork — nodding, saying "yes", "that's interesting", and so on — all the little signals necessary to keep the conversation going.

Women's lack of confidence is born of long years of practice and socialisation process that teach girls their place in life and what is expected behaviour.

However, this is an issue that men need to take more seriously. To give women confidence in the political arena they need to be given space to organise, and a chance for equal participa-



And they say women never shut up!

tion in public debate.

With the autumn flurry of political meetings coming up, male comrades should take these issues on board.

A rolled-up pair of socks down the front of your trousers may do more for women's emancipation than you think.



Despite the French "yes" vote and irrespective of the combined efforts of the French right alongside some left-wingers, Maastricht is now a dead letter.

Capitalism isn't working

"Maastricht is largely a dead letter"

IS EUROPEAN MONETARY UNION - I.E. A SINGLE CURRENCY FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY - IMPOSSIBLE NOW?

It is very difficult, and very unlikely for a long time yet. Despite the French yes vote, the Maastricht Treaty is largely a dead letter. It called for monetary union by 1999. That depended on the middle-rank and poorer countries of the EC getting their economies "strong" enough to stay linked to the mark. They won't.

However, the EC has suffered big setbacks before (its first deadline for monetary union was 1980!), and still carried on, slowly and falteringly, towards a single integrated West European capitalist economy.

The ERM will probably survive, but in the looser form, with fairly frequent changes of exchange rates, that it had between 1979 and 1987.

WILL THERE BE A "TWO-SPEED EUROPE"?

That would mean the "stronger" countries - probably Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg - going ahead quite rapidly with a single currency, but leaving Britain, Italy, Denmark, Spain, Portugal and Greece outside.

The capitalists of the "stronger" countries would get an integrated European economy, capable of providing a wide home base for European firms to compete with Americans and Japanese, more quickly. They would do it without having to pay out so much aid to

countries like Spain and Portugal, and without having to cajole and bludgeon Britain and Italy so much. But it would be a much smaller integrated European economy.

The "weaker" countries would probably become weaker still in competition with this Franco-German mini-united-Europe.

It would be worse for the working class than a wider united capitalist Europe, because it would create more divisions.

LESS THAN TWO YEARS AGO THE BRITISH CAPITALIST CLASS WAS ALL FOR THE EXCHANGE RATE MECHANISM. THE TORIES PUSHED THATCHER OUT PARTLY BECAUSE SHE WAS NOT "PRO-EUROPEAN" ENOUGH. NOW MOST BIG BUSINESS PEOPLE WANT TO STAY OUT OF THE ERM. WHY?

When Britain's bankers and bosses thought that European monetary union was going to happen in the next few years, they wanted to be inside it. Now they don't think it is going to happen, so see little point in being tied to the ERM.

The City of London's hopes of being the financial centre of a united European capitalism are probably dead. In fact, this crisis may well be the beginning of the end for London's role as the major world financial centre - the last economic remnant of the British Empire.

IS THE CRISIS THE FAULT OF THE BUNDESBANK?

No. The Bundesbank is just following the same monetarist-type policies in Germany as the Tories advocate for Britain.

The capitalist reconstruction of East Germany is a shambles: large amounts of state spending are being poured in, yet industrial output is still collapsing.

That combination of high public spending and stagnant output can cause inflation, and the Bundesbank has set interest rates high to stop inflation.

There is argument among Establishment economists about whether, and how much, the Bundesbank could cut those interest rates without prices rocketing. Whatever the rights and wrongs of that argument, the Bundesbank's problems are symptoms of the chaos of capitalism, not causes.

IF WE HAD A SINGLE EUROPEAN CURRENCY, WOULD THAT DO AWAY WITH CRISES LIKE LAST WEEK'S?

Yes: but we would have other problems! A single European currency could not be stable without some centralised European control over credit and financial policies. Socialist supporters of a united Europe would advocate democratic control, but under the Maastricht Treaty that centralised control would be by the unelected bosses of a European Central Bank constitutionally independent from any elected political authority.

The British government and the Italian government would probably be being told by the European Central Bank that they must cut spending drastically.

Get the Tories out!

From page 3

The employers and the Government will say that they can't "afford" jobs, training, and public services. We should reply: open the books! If individual businesses really are bankrupt, open the books of the big wealth-holders in the banks and the City institutions! They could "afford" to throw away billions of pounds in vain efforts to peg the exchange rate. Democratic debate, not a casino of competitive swindling, should decide where major credits and investments go.

"Only the expropriation of the private banks and the concentration of the entire credit system in the hands of the state", as Leon Trotsky wrote, "will provide the state with the necessary real material resources - and not merely paper and bureaucratic resources - for economic planning.

"However, the statisation of the banks will produce these favourable results only if the state power itself passes completely from the hands of the exploiters into the hands of the workers".

The Tories will try to find scapegoats and ways of deflecting the blame for the crisis. Don't be fooled!

Dissident right-wing Tories - and, foolishly, some Labour leftists too - blame the Exchange Rate Mechanism and the Maastricht Treaty for the crisis.

They've got their way now. The pound is devalued and out of the ERM. The Maastricht Treaty is dead. It cannot possibly be implemented now. And are things better? Are prospects brighter? No!

The Maastricht treaty and the ERM, were attempts to create a more integrated West European capitalist economy. They are in ruins because capitalism is in crisis world-wide. But higher economic barriers between countries in Europe, and attempts to return to "capitalism in one country", are not going to make things better.

The Tory Government is blaming Germany and the Bundesbank. But the Bundesbank is only following the same monetarist policy of choking off credit to control inflation that the Tories themselves advocate in Britain!

Foreign-exchange dealers have made millions in the last few days, at the expense of taxpayers. But they, too, have only been playing by the rules of the Tories' system. The basic reason why the pound has slumped, and why speculation against it was effective, is that what can be bought for pounds - the output of British industry - no longer counts for very much in world markets. The Tories

deliberately used the slump of the early '80s to make mass unemployment a bludgeon against the trade unions - at the cost of ruining manufacturing industry.

Key sectors of industry, once destroyed, cannot easily be rebuilt from scratch against harsh world competition. And those sectors have never revived. Since 1983 Britain, the one-time "workshop of the world", has imported more manufactured goods than it exports. Education, training, and basic services, like public transport, which underpin all economic activity, are wretched in Britain because of years of Tory privatisation, contracting-out, and cuts.

The root of the crisis is not the Exchange Rate Mechanism, or any such detail, but the capitalist system itself, and the way the Tories have operated it.

A Workers' Plan for Europe!

Labour and TUC leaders have limited themselves to piffling criticism of details of Tory policy. A new approach is needed - and not only from the British labour movement. Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, French workers - and German workers, too - will face similar problems. This is a Europe-wide crisis, and despite their mutual recriminations the bosses and the capitalist governments across Europe will coordinate their drive to make the workers pay.

The labour movement should reply with a Workers' Plan for Europe! We want a European Central Bank, coordinating credit and investment - but it should be democratically controlled, and geared to a plan for improved public services, industrial reconstruction, comprehensive job training and retraining programmes, and full employment.

We need Europe-wide campaigns for a legal 35 hour week, and for levelling-up of workers' rights and conditions across Europe, so that every country is brought up to the best standard.

- Get the Tories out!
- Labour and TUC should campaign for a general election!
- Resist the cuts! Fight for a shorter working week and to defend and extend public services!
- Open the books of the bosses and the City!
- For democratic control of credit and investment, instead of the "casino economy"!
- For a Workers' Plan to rebuild industry and public services in Europe!
- For a Socialist United States of Europe!

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty adopted this manifesto on the crisis at its National Committee meeting last weekend.

Darcus Howe on race, class and social

"I do not want to hide anywhere"

Long time left wing activist Darcus Howe presents *Devil's Advocate*, Channel 4's important platform programme on which controversial public figures defend their views. He explained to Socialist Organiser what he is trying to achieve in *Devil's Advocate* and what his own political outlook is.

Inside the black and Asian communities and when they overlap with white communities in the inner cities, there are always heated debates going on.

In barber shops and pubs, working people are arguing. What *Devil's Advocate* is aiming to do is to bring these issues out, structure and clarify the arguments.

For instance, a recent programme discussed the issues raised by Leonard Jeffries, an academic and black leader who has been accused of anti-semitism.

There is, in my view, some tendency in the black community to characterise all Jews as people with lots of money. This comes about as black

people meet some Jewish people in the retail trades. So we confronted Jeffries on *Devil's Advocate*.

Perhaps, on other occasions, the issue will be cricket. Black people will heatedly debate with Pakistanis. As in all working class communities,

"I am in the tradition of the Paris Commune, of the profound changes in Russia in 1917, of the mass social movements for change in United States and of the struggle for freedom in Vietnam."

these disagreements will contain both a lot of prejudice and also a lot of advanced thought.

The point of being a *Devil's Advocate* is to tease and test positions. It's fortunate that Channel 4 have given me licence to present my own view at the end of the pro-

grammes. I can say what convinces me and what does not.

Of course, I've got my own agenda. But it would be difficult for me to describe myself as a socialist or Marxist. Both definitions have become so completely warped by what has happened in Eastern Europe, by Neil Kinnock - by a whole range of people calling themselves socialists and Marxists who have abandoned egalitarianism.

However, I am in the tradition of the Paris Commune, of the profound changes in Russia in 1917, of the mass social movements for change in United States and of the struggle for freedom in Vietnam. In brief I am a "Jamesian" in the tradition of CLR James, who looked at Russia and said, "that's not socialism, that's not a degenerated workers' state, that's state capitalism".

I think sometimes activists find it difficult, take time, to see major changes which are gradually taking place. The black community has changed enormously in the last five or ten years. Up until that point there was an "uncertainty of presence". Enoch Powell and Mrs Thatcher, all of them disrupted our presence here by continually making references to "sending you back".

After 1981, Mrs Thatcher's government, strangely enough, said to us: you put a Home Office form through the post box, you will get your nationality, through the letter box. The sacred cow, that is British nationality was being given to about one and a half million of us.

I think that was a major factor that, over a period of time, provided us with an "ease of presence".

If you were to go on a demonstration now and shout as we used to in the '70s,



Darcus Howe: socialist and black activist

"come what may, we're here to stay" people would ask: what are you talking about? That sort of unease has gone.

I have five children. Four, all over 21, are black by statement. The youngest is twelve and she is black at ease. There is not much concern there.

Here is a historical phenomenon: the black community has been transformed. Ethnicity and race, although we should be alert, have receded as issues.

I do not think the issue here is that new confidence has been created by the existence of a second generation. I am being more precise. I do not think this is a matter of time. I do not think this ease of presence is a matter of several generations. For instance, look at the length of time the Jews lived in Europe.

I do not like the word "integration". I like the sound of "ease of presence", and it is specific too. There is now a sense that we are part of what is here.

In this country the working class has a tradition of organi-

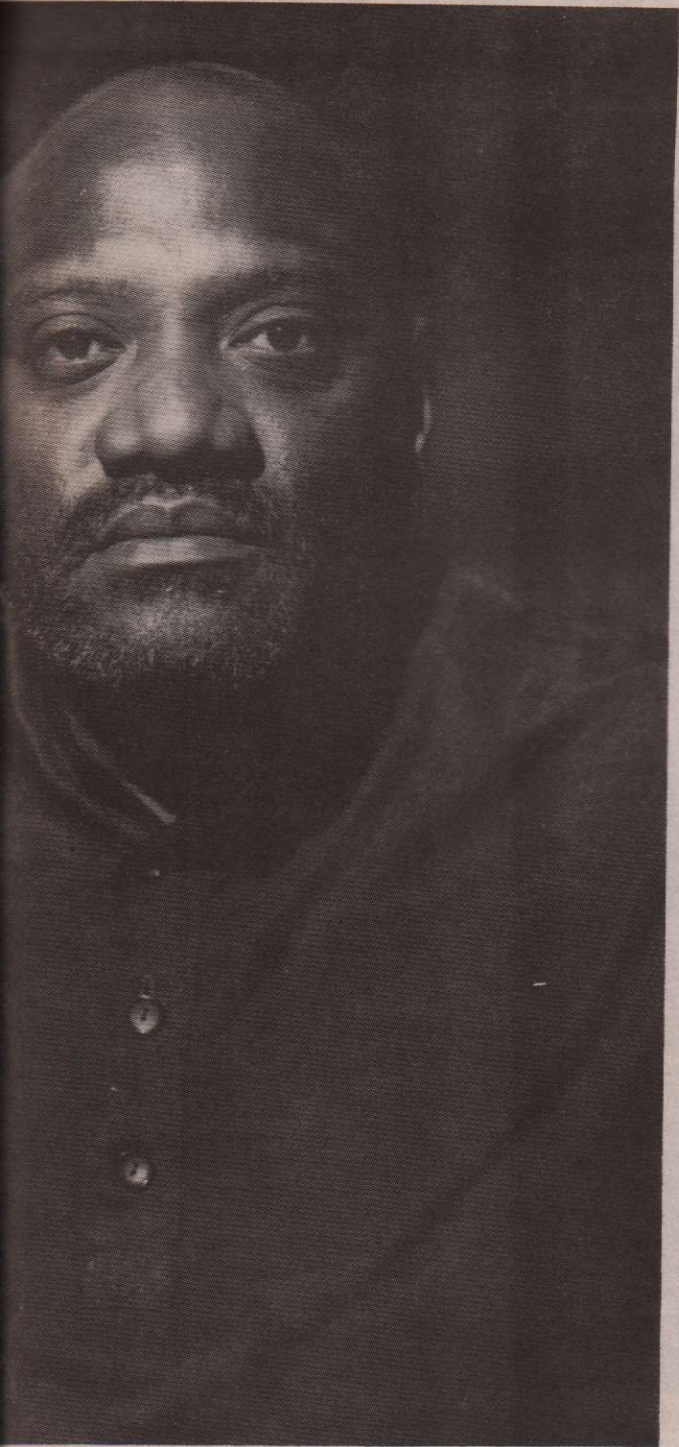
sation. There are the trade unions and the Labour Party, and the working class has some sense of itself as a class. However much you may question these institutions, they prevented the extreme violence which has accompanied race and ethnicity in the twentieth century. We could say: we are larger than black, we are also part of the working classes.

It is also so for the "bumpies" - the black, upwardly mobile - they want to be part of the English middle classes, the professional meritocracy. This is also, for them, larger than being black. A lot of these people would not live in Brixton if it was the last place on earth. They inculcate the Victorian snobbery of the middle classes.

When we were uncertain we opted for Martin Luther King. Malcolm X was difficult to embrace. We went for the option least hostile to the ruling classes. Now we are saying: I do not want to hide anywhere, I will like who I

CLR James Festival
Including: • Maya Angelou in performance. 25 October. Shaw Theatre, Euston Road, London. £8.50.
• The Future of the Caribbean. Speaker: Michael Manley. 28 October. Brixton Recreation Centre, London SW9. £3.00.
Details from Creation for Liberation, 165 Railton Road, London SE24.

ism



and I like Malcolm. y radicalism began with olcolm X. However, I do think this is the experience some Asian people who e written to Devils vocate saying: we must d carefully and not upset white people who might ow us out. I think this es from a section of Asian

**The US is a society
warped by race.
Everything a black
person sees is
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prism of race"**

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alcolm has returned to the
in a big way. It is more
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One factor in this process is the fact that there has never been any mass, active working class support for a black struggle. Until this happens there will always be a current of radical black nationalism.

And it is a fact, for instance, that last week 500 police officers sealed off this entire area to arrest seven alleged drug addicts. This is the reality for this community, we cannot ignore this, and it too is another part of the process.

One thing I make no truck with is that type of anti-racism which says: white people, get to the back of the demonstration. One of the most vulgar examples I have ever seen of this was after the arson attack and murders of youth in New Cross.

Some of the mothers were white. They were told to march at the back! That was degenerate.

There is no theoretical justification for this type of behaviour – from the 18th century to today. Even the first black uprising for freedom in Haiti, in its best moments embraced equality and fraternity and tried to make links with the French revolution, from which it took its starting point.

Looking forward, there are now some of us who are saying that race is no longer the social cancer, no longer something which dominates people's lives. We are free to inherit history and cultures from ancient Greek society to the experience of the Russian soviets of 1917 – the best which Western civilisation has to offer. We bring with us currents from our own civilisations, and this will be all part of the mix and metal of the twenty first century.



"I am in the tradition of CLR James, who looked at Russia and said, that is not socialism"

by race. Everything a black person sees is viewed through the prism of race.

Since the collapse of Jesse Jackson's presidential ambitions there is a deep vacuum in the politics of the US black community. People are turning to Malcolm X. His universal appeal comes from where he himself came from – the ranks of the unemployed which had emerged in the US after World War Two. This social group exists in every major city in the world.

A lot of the interest in Malcolm appears as fashion. People buy the t-shirts. This is only the expression of popular movement reclaiming Malcolm from the hostility of the ruling class.

There is always a dialectic between nation and class. Especially if you are a minority. Especially if sections of the working class have been hostile to you. Depending on particular circumstances, black people will say "I am black" or "I am working class" or both.

"Massacre is necessary"

Jim Fraser reports on the Italian fascists

The MSI is the largest fascist organisation in Italy, it was founded in Rome on 26 December 1949 by former leaders and officials of the "The Salo Republic". Salo was created in a small part of Italy by Mussolini with German military help in 1943 to fight a last ditch battle in defence of Italian fascism. This is considered the most vicious and brutal episode in Mussolini's more than twenty year reign of terror.

The majority of the MSI's founding members considered themselves heirs to the original "revolutionary fascism". Many were already involved in organised violence.

Giorgio Almirante who was the leader of the MSI from its inception until the early fifties, and who regained the leadership in 1969 which he held until his recent death, was head of the private office of the Minister of Propaganda in the Salo Republic.

When he brought a libel action against a Socialist Party official who described him as "A mass murderer and torturer of Italians", Almirante lost the action on the grounds that – "the allegations had been proven to be true."

In the late 1960s the MSI adopted the "strategy of tension", which combined terror attacks, especially bombings, to create an atmosphere of chaos and fear, with an electoral drive to present the MSI as the only party that could re-establish law and order by forming an authoritarian government.

The terrorist side of its work was carried out in the name of formally independent movements such as Ordine Nuovo (New Order), founded and led by MSI militant Pino Rauti.

The Ordine Nuovo and its successor organisation, the Armed Revolutionary Nuclei (NAR) implemented this strategy of tension with a murderous catalogue of bombings, assassination and terrorism, culminating in the bombing of Bologna railway station in which more than eighty people were murdered.

The NAR was formed in 1977 by a coming together of three fascist terrorist groups who already had a widely overlapping membership, the Ordine Nuovo, Ordine Nero (Black Order) and Avanguardia Nazionale, (National Vanguard).

The formation of the NAR was guided by Pino Rauti, who was eulogised in League Review, journal of the openly nazi League of St George in Britain.

Clemente Graziani, one of the originators of the strategy of tension – a founder of Ordine Nuovo and its political secretary – stated in his "Notebook of the New Order" that "the murder of the old, of women and of children, is absolutely necessary."

Graziani also stated that Ordine Nuovo was "under the protective banner of the MSI".

Sandro Saccucci, another founder member of Ordine Nuovo, was formerly an MSI member of Parliament. In 1976 he

committed a brutal murder and went on the run, fleeing to London where he was safehoused by right wingers and where he "communicated" with the League of St George.

The explosive used in the Bologna bomb outrage was delivered to the NAR cell that carried out the attack by Massimiliano Fachini, a leading figure of the MSI in Padua, where he was both MSI president and a local MSI councillor! Fachini was a close friend of Franco Freda who was convicted for the bombing of the Bank of Agriculture in Milan, in which sixteen people were killed.

Almirante himself was closely linked to Carlo Cicutini, who went on the run after police found evidence clearly linking him with the "Peteano outrage" in which three policemen were murdered by a carbomb. This bombing, carried out by Ordine Nuovo, was intended to be seen as the work of left wing groups, with the left being blamed for this triple murder.

Almirante was prosecuted for aiding Cicutini to escape justice: after the attack, he paid him £20,000 so he could travel abroad.

With the death of Almirante, Pino Rauti has taken over the leadership of the MSI and it has become even more violent, playing a key role in the wave of racist attacks which swept parts of Italy late last year. Several immigrant hostels were bombed.

When Alessandra Mussolini addresses a meeting of Western Goals at the Tory party conference next month this is the organisation she will be representing.

**Demonstrate
against Mussolini
Outside Tory
Party Conference
in Brighton
4pm Tuesday 6
October**

**More details from
071 277 0817**



Giorgio Almirante – mass murderer

The Irish labour war:

1913: 400 Dublin employers have taken the Dublin labour movement by the throat in an attempt to break the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, "Larkin's union". Using the sympathetic strike ruthlessly, Larkin had helped the 'unskilled' workers of Dublin become a great power for their own good. Now the bosses have hit back, locking out all ITGWU members and all workers who refuse to pledge that they will never help the ITGWU. The British state controlling Ireland has thrown its weight behind the Irish capitalists. Workers have been beaten to death by the police. It is now a war of attrition. The

It is not necessary, I presume, to remind our readers of the beginnings of the Dublin struggle. Let us, just for convenience sake, take up the fight at the moment it became a subject of national action on the part of the British Labour movement.

A public meeting had been proclaimed [ie banned] in Dublin in a brazen illegal manner. For declaring that this proclamation was illegal, and advising their leaders to disregard it and stand to their rights, a number of leaders of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union had been arrested and imprisoned. A wholesale batoning of the people had followed, and Dublin was the scene of the most unparalleled police brutality.

An appeal was made to the British Trades Union Congress, then happily sitting, and that body in the name of the British working class nobly rose to the occasion, and pledged the credit of the whole British labour movement to see their Dublin comrades through the fight. As a result, the right of free speech was re-asserted in Dublin, a supply of food was arranged for through the despatch of specially chartered steamers, and a huge amount of money was raised to enable the men and women of Dublin to keep the fight going. Never was seen such enthusiasm in a labour fight. Trade unionists, socialists of all kinds, anarchists, industrialists, syndicalists, all the varying and hitherto discordant elements of the labour movement found a common platform, were joined together in pursuit of a com-

bosses' weapon is starvation, the unions dogged solidarity and resistance. All over Britain collections are taken for Dublin. The Cooperative Wholesale Society sends shiploads of food. Larkin and Connolly speak at meetings all over Britain. They ask for more than financial aid: they want the British trade unions to take solidarity action, blacking all goods from Dublin. A special TUC Conference on 9 December 1913 considers a militant motion in favour of solidarity action with Dublin. The union leaders opposed it and won. Dublin was isolated, James Connolly commented bitterly.

mon object. Now, permit me to underscore that point, and emphasise its great importance. For long years we have been preaching to the labour movement the necessity of concerted industrial action, telling it that the time was rotten ripe for industrial unity, and declaring that as the interests of each were the concern of all, our organisations should be rearranged with a view to the conserving of their common interests.

We found that to a large extent these ideas were taking root in the minds of the work-

ers, but that to a still larger extent the tacit acceptance of our ideas failed to evoke concerted action built upon these lines. The forces of our enemies were united and wielded with all the precision and relentlessness with which the general staff of an army would wield the battalions and brigades which formed the component parts of that army, but the battalions and brigades of the army of labour when engaged in battle had no efficient general staff to guide and direct the whole army to the salvation of its individual units; and, worse still, had none of that esprit de corps which on the military battle-field would make the desertion of any section to its fate an unthinkable course to the officers of the divisions not engaged. We had seen at London, at Leith and elsewhere that whereas the whole force of the Shipping Federation has been actively engaged in fighting the dockers of these ports, the dockers and seamen of the other ports had maintained the peace, and left their Leith or London brothers to bear alone the full force of the Federation attack, instead of meeting that attack by a movement against the flanks and rear of the Federation in these other ports. We know that although much of this blundering was due to the sectional jealousy of various union leaders, much was also due to the fact that the conception of common action on a national scale by the whole working class had not yet entered the minds of the rank and file as a whole. Something

Bosses' leader - William Murphy

William Martin Murphy was one of the leading capitalists in Ireland - owner and builder of tramways, newspapers, and railways.

Very largely a self-made man, Murphy was 70 years old in 1913 when he banded 400 petty employers together in Dublin to crush the new labour movement.

A Home Rule Dublin parliament within months was then thought a certainty, and all sides prepared for the new situation: the labour movement, by deciding in 1912 to found a broad trade-union-based Labour Party, the employers by trying to settle accounts with upstart Irish labour and its "foreign" "socialistic" ideas. They would be masters in the new Ireland.

In fact Murphy was an "advanced" and sincere bourgeois nationalist. He had been a Parnellite MP (1885-92), and was in 1913 a supporter of the smaller, more liberal, less suffocatingly Catholic, and more nakedly bourgeois of the two Home Rule groups in the British Parliament - the All for Ireland League, found-

ed by William O'Brien in 1910.

They tried to heal the split in the Irish bourgeoisie between Unionists and Nationalists, advocating conciliation and compromise and progress towards Home Rule only by agreement with the Unionists. In line with this internal Irish orientation they sought agreement with British Tories as well as Liberals, and criticised the main Home Rule Party for having become a helpless appendage of the British Liberals - which indeed it was, even to the extent of signing its own political death warrant by agreeing to Partition in 1914.

Opposing partition, O'Brien's grouping threw in its lot with the enemies of the old Home Rule Party, the grouping set up in 1917 under the catch-all name "Sinn Fein".

All this did not stop Murphy's paper, the "Independent", from urging the British authorities in May 1916 to shoot the badly wounded James Connolly. Murphy died in 1919. His newspapers still thrive.

had been wanting—something that would make the minds of the workers more responsive, more ready to accept the broader idea, and act upon its

acceptance. That something Dublin supplied.

Continued next week

"September 1913", by WB Yeats

If the bourgeoisie, the Home Rule politicians, the priests, and such Sinn Fein politicians as Arthur Griffith, all lined up against the workers, on the side of the workers there formed up a splendid coalition of the intelligentsia and such revolutionary nationalists as Patrick Pearse. In a more limited way, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union acted as the magnet which Solidarnosc was in Poland after 1980. Around this core, other social forces clustered.

Yeats, the greatest English language poet of the 20th century and in general politics a romantic authoritarian - in part what Karl Marx called a "reactionary socialist" - who wanted a return to the ordered political and social hierarchies he believed to have existed in the Middle Ages, wrote in the *Irish Worker* in protest against the priest-led groups which prevented starving children going to food and shelter in England.

His famous poem *September 1913*, in which he indicts the Irish bourgeoisie, is frequently explained as expressing only his protest against the philistine hostility of the Murphys to such projects as the Municipal Art Gallery in Dublin; but plainly it is an indictment of what Murphy and his gang were doing to the workers of Dublin.

It is a bitter mockery of what the Murphys, with their "greasy tills", are bringing Ireland to, after the long battle for survival and independence.

"O'Leary" was an old "literary" Fenian of no political consequence, an early friend and mentor of Yeats. The "wild geese" were the Irish Catholic soldiers who fled to the continent to join the French and other armies during the

persecutions of the 18th century. Edward Fitzgerald, Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone were Irish Jacobin revolutionaries of the end of the 18th century, all of whom lost their lives in the struggle.

What need you, being come to sense,
But fumble in a greasy till
And add the halfpence to the pence
And prayer to shivering prayer, until
You have dried the marrow from the bone?
For men were born to pray and save;
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Yet they were of a different kind,
The names that stilled your childish play,
They have gone about the world like wind,
But little time had they to pray
For whom the hangman's rope was spun,
And what, God help us, could they save?
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Was it for this the wild geese spread
The grey wing upon every tide;
For this that all that blood was shed,
For this Edward Fitzgerald died,
And Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone,
All that delirium of the brave?
Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave.

Yet could we turn the years again,
And call those exiles as they were
In all their loneliness and pain,

You'd cry, "Some woman's yellow hair
Has maddened every mother's son":
They weighed so lightly what they gave.
But let them be, they're dead and gone,
They're with O'Leary in the grave.



WB Yeats

the isolation of Dublin



A broad alliance backed the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union: Constance Markiewicz, despite being born into the Anglo-Irish upper class and becoming a Countess by marriage, organised a soup kitchen for the strikers and became a lifelong socialist.

The Dublin lock-out and its sequel

Do you wish proof of the value of organisation to the workers, or proof of how impossible it is to destroy organisation if its members are loyal! I can give you that proof from the records of our own union.

Let me give you a little bit of history – history of very recent date. You remember the great lock-out in Dublin in 1913-14; you remember how the Dublin employers smarting under the defeats inflicted upon their individual efforts to keep their workers in slavery, at last resolved to combine in one gigantic effort to restore the irresponsible reign of the slave drivers such as existed in Dublin before the advent of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. You will remember how four hundred employers banded themselves together to destroy us, and pledged their sacred word of honour that they would wipe that union off the map; that when the fight was over no man or woman affiliated to us, or friendly to us, would ever be employed in Dublin. You also remember how they did more than pledge their honour – the honour of some of them would not fetch much as a pledge – but they also deposited each a sum of money in proportion to the number of employees each normally employed, and that money deposited in the Bank in the name of their association was to be forfeited, if the depositor came to terms with the union before his fellows.

Thus strung together in bonds of gold and self-interest, you might think they were well equipped for beating a lot of poor workmen and women with no weapons but their hands, and no resources but their willingness to suffer for the right. But they were taking no chances. They laid their plans with

the wisdom of the serpent, and the unscrupulousness of the father of all evil.

Before the lock-out was declared they went to the British Government in Ireland, to its heads in Dublin Castle, and they said to that Government, "now, look here, we are going to make war upon the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, but we believe that we cannot succeed as we should wish, while peaceful picketing is allowed. We know it is allowed in England, in Scotland, and in Wales, but we don't want it allowed in Ireland." And the Government said: "all right, gentlemen, the law allowing peaceful

"Our right of public meeting was ruthlessly suppressed in the streets of our city, the whole press of the country was shamelessly engaged in poisoning the minds of the people against us..."

picketing is only a scrap of paper; we will tear it up while the fight is on." The employers said again: "good, but these Labour men and women will hold together while they are able to hold public meetings, and hear their speakers encouraging them." Could His Majesty's Government not manage to suppress public meetings, whilst the fight is on?" And the Government answered: "Suppress public meetings? Why, of course: the law which permits public meetings in Ireland is just another scrap of paper, and has been torn up many a time, and oft; we will tear it up again, so as to help you in the good work of crushing the Labour

movement."

And you know, the British Government kept its promise to the employers. All through that long and bitter struggle, the elementary rights won by trade unionists by a century of sacrifices were denied to us in Dublin, although freely exercised at the same time in England.

The locked-out worker who attempted to speak to a scab in order to persuade him or her not to betray the class they belonged to, was mercilessly set upon by uniformed bullies, and hauled off to prison, until the prison was full to overflowing with helpless members of our class. Women and young girls by the score; good, virtuous, beautiful Irish girls and women were clubbed and insulted, and thrown into prison by policemen and magistrates, not one of whom were fit to clean the shoes of the least of these, our sisters.

Our right of public meeting was ruthlessly suppressed in the streets of our city, the whole press of the country was shamelessly engaged in poisoning the minds of the people against us, every scoundrel who chose was armed to shoot and murder the workers who stood by their Union.

Two men, James Nolan and John Byrne, were clubbed to death in the street; one, Byrne of Kingstown, suffered unnameable torture in the police cell, and died immediately upon release, one young girl, Alice Brady, while walking quietly homewards with her strike allowance of food, was shot by a scab with a revolver placed in his hands by an employer, and within twenty-four hours after the murder, that scab was walking the streets of Dublin a free man. Our murdered sister lies cold to-day in her grave in Glasnevin – as true a martyr for freedom as

any who ever died in Ireland. But she did not die in vain, and none who die for freedom ever die in vain.

Well, did the unholy conspiracy against Labour achieve its object? Was the union crushed? Did our flag come down?

Let me tell you our position today, and tell it by an illustration.

We recently put in a demand for an increase of wages in Dublin, for all classes of labour in our union.

Bosses' leader – Joseph Devlin

"**W**ee" Joseph Devlin controlled the "machine" of the main Home Rule Party, whose half-nominal leader was John Redmond.

In the course of the strike, Devlin organised a scab union and a strike-breaking pseudo-workers' paper which published *Sun* or *Sport*-level libels on Jim Larkin. Attacks by his thugs wrecked the offices of Larkin's paper, the *Irish Worker*.

Devlin was the head of the Catholic equivalent of the Orange Order, the Ancient Order of Hibernians (Board of Erin). This was a Catholics-only semi-secret society, of the corrupt freemason jobs-for-the-boys type, which spread throughout Ireland in the years before World War 1, and won control of the Home Rule Party machine, thus identifying Home Rule with narrow and intolerant Catholicism.

When an attempt was made to send some hundreds of starving Dublin children to live with sympathisers until the Labour War was over, Devlin, together with certain priests, whipped up a tremendous religious outcry against this "plot" to infect Catholic children with English

That demand was eventually met by the employers, and at a Conference between the representatives of the Union and the Employers were prepared to settle matters through the Union, and that whatever terms were then agreed upon would determine the rates for the quays and elsewhere, wherever our men were employed. Here are a few of the advances thus agreed upon, as well as the advances arranged with other firms not represented at the Conference, but dealing directly with the Union Officials.

Stevadores Association: one penny per ton increase on all tonnage rules.

Deep Sea Boats: one shilling per day on all day wage men.

Casual Cross Channel Boats: one shilling per day.

Constant Cross Channel Boats: eightpence per day.

Dublin and General Company's employees: four shillings.

Dublin dockyard labourers: three shillings per week.

Ross and Walpole: two shillings per week.

General carriers' men. Two shillings per week granted direct to men after receipt of letter from the Union.

These comprise the larger firms, many smaller firms also made advances as a result of action of the Union, and in every case the advance made was in proportion to the manner in which the men had stuck to their Union.

The firms whose employees had fallen away gave poor increases or none at all; the firms whose members had remained loyal to the Union, paid greater increases, and so the men reaped the fruits of their loyalty, whilst those who were faint of heart were punished by the employers for lack of faith in their Union and their class. So it shall ever be.

(From a speech in Cork delivered by Connolly as Acting General Secretary of the ITGWU, *Workers' Republic* May 1915).

Protestantism: groups of thugs led by priests stopped children boarding boats.

Connolly frequently, and before 1913, expressed his vehement hatred for the AOH and everything it stood for. *The Irish Worker* said of the AOH: "Were it not for the existence of the Board of Erin, the Orange Society would have long since ceased to exist. To Brother Devlin and not to Brother Carson is mainly due the progress of the covenant movement in Ulster" [i.e. of organised resistance to Home Rule].

The paper of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (Patrick Pearse and others) defined the collapse of Irish nationalism into AOH sectarianism as one of the great tragedies of Irish history. "This narrowing down of nationalism to the members of one creed is the most fatal thing that has taken place in Irish politics..." It described the AOH as a "job-getting and job-cornering organisation", and as "a silent, practical riveting of sectarianism on the nation". (*Irish Freedom*, March 1914).

Both Home Rule factions in 1913 saw labour as the main enemy, and formed a tacit block to smash Larkin.

Anti-abortionists are not fascists!

PLATFORM

By Mary Cooper

This year, NALGO's Annual Conference agreed, by a substantial majority, to re-affiliate to the National Abortion Campaign. The annual attempts to disaffiliate from NAC and the continued campaign to deny women the right to choose were again clearly rejected by Conference.

Unfortunate, and not quite so welcome, was the successful attempt by women from the National Women's Committee and various left groups including the SWP and Socialist Outlook to "No Platform" the anti-abortionists.

A few, it has to be said, rather feeble and hopeless looking old men were giving out leaflets one morning as Conference began. These advertised a lunchtime meeting, ostensibly on a drug used in the Third World, in reality an anti-abortion meeting. The National Women's

Committee, quite rightly I would say, produced a leaflet asking people to come to a protest picket of the meeting.

From here, things quickly went downhill. The women didn't only distribute their own leaflet calling for the picket. They launched a concerted attempt to prevent the anti-abortionists from distributing their leaflets, initially simply by asking people not to take them, then by obstructing them. I was a bit unsure about this, but worse was to come.

The lunchtime meeting took place, or rather didn't, in a local hotel. The supporters of a woman's right to choose, who were in a majority of about 100 to 15, took over the meeting. The platform were initially denied the right to speak.

After a suggestion from a woman who was pro-choice but believed that anti-abortionists should not be denied the right to speak, a vote was taken. This vote was overwhelmingly in favour of denying the platform speaking rights.

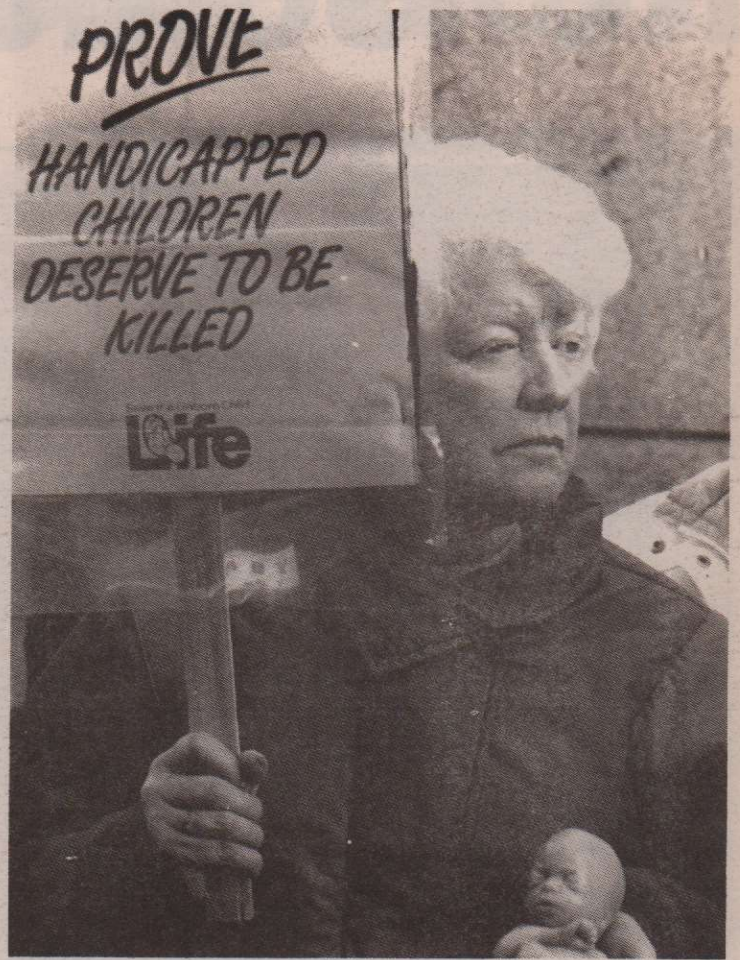
The anti-abortionists, one a Tory member of NALGO's NEC, were booed, jostled and

obstructed until they gave in and the meeting broke up.

I think both these activities, denying them the right to speak and breaking up their meeting, were wrong. Of course, we should show the anti-abortionist bigots that women at Conference welcome neither their presence or their views. But the right to speak should not be denied them. Anti-abortionists are not fascists.

Socialists should not use the tactic of "no-platform" against people who have different, even though pretty vile, political views. Apart from anything else, we could find it used against ourselves. Indeed this happened at Conference. After the morning's squabbles and the attempts at obstruction the anti-abortionist, everyone distributing leaflets or selling papers was immediately thrown out of the Conference Centre.

As the Socialist Organiser Conference bulletin pointed out, if we are to extend "no platform" to the anti-abortionists, we might well have to consider extending it further to a large section of the population of the Irish Republic!



To "no-platform" anti-abortionists is dangerous and wrong. Logically, it could be applied to a huge part of the Irish Republic.

Workers' Charter: the missing demand

LETTERS

Whilst fully supporting your "Workers Charter" (SO 533) and accepting that the labour movement should be demanding a legal "right to organise", I believe that its demands are incomplete in failing to raise the issue of workplace meetings in working time.

Many, if not the majority of, rank and file trade unionists, have other commitments which make it difficult to attend trade union meetings outside working hours. Many may be able to make arrangements (eg for child care) which would allow them to attend, but the majority are unable or disinclined to do so, or (unfortunately perhaps) might prefer to use their "babysitter" for a night out in the pub.

Trade union meetings tend to be attended by a relatively small minority of members, including the politically committed, and are therefore (despite the best efforts of activists to take account of the views of their non-attending colleagues) inevitably unrepresentative to a greater or lesser extent.

The Tory offensive against trade unions rested in part upon a popular perception that trade unions were undemocratic. Tebbit and Co based their appeal not just on an attack on the "union barons" wielding their block votes at Labour Party Conference but also on the reality of most trade unionists' experience - of decisions being taken on their behalf by a

minority of activists at meetings which they do not go to or (often) can not attend.

I believe that any charter for trade union rights should include the right for trade unionists to attend workplace meetings in works time, without loss of pay (the interminable number of "management" meetings held without loss of pay would doubtless be cited in our propaganda).

Such a demand would completely undercut any spurious attempts by our opponents to label us "elitist" or "undemo-

cratic". What we would then be campaigning for, loudly and clearly, would be the right of trade unionists to be actively involved in decisions about their pay and conditions and, crucially, to quote your existing charter, to play an active part in the process whereby their unions would "determine their own conditions and rule books in accordance with their own democratic procedures, free from any interference by the state".

Peter Allen
Glossop

Yes, free speech for anti-fascists

Your last paper refers to a series of incidents at the Anti Fascist Action Carnival at Hackney Downs. Indeed, a decision was taken by the organisers to restrict literature sales to the political area and to those who had paid for stalls. Workers' Power delegates to the organising meetings consistently opposed these bans. We were the only organisation to vote against them.

As a result Workers Power decided that we would refuse to participate in the stewarding of this ban. We supplied twenty stewards to help protect the Carnival from fascist attack and to carry out certain technical functions.

Any comrades of ours who "helped implement" the ban were

absolutely wrong. This was the case with the comrade of ours who informed a seller of *Socialist Organiser* that they should not sell papers unless they had a stall. Clearly we take responsibility for this mistake as an organisation.

We absolutely condemn the intimidation and physical harassment of comrades in the Campaign Against Fascism in Europe (CAFE) for trying to give out leaflets. It appears that those involved included stewards from Red Action. We are demanding that London AFA condemns this behaviour and the perpetrators of it.

Violence and intimidation has no place within the labour movement, least of all between anti-fascists.

Workers Power
BCM 7750, London WC1N 3XX

The ILP was anti-Stalinist

Graffiti's allegation that the ILP was a semi-Stalinist sect is totally unfair.

There was certainly, during the Stalinist Third Period, in the early and mid '30s, a Stalinist faction within the London federation of the ILP. On almost all issues the party leadership sided with Trotskyists against it.

The Stalinist faction left the ILP to join the CP. They did this as the Stalinist line changed to the Popular Front, a policy very different from those they had been backing, and so some members left the CP immediately. A few drifted back to the ILP, but as many joined the Denzil Harber group of Trotskyists.

It is true, certainly, that in the post-war years the ILP shrank: can you name a single leftist group (with the possible exception of the SPGB) that didn't? The whole of the Left went through a period of decline from 1948 to 1958, just as it did during the '80s.

It is true that a faction (notably FR Ridley) of the ILP, and specifically of the Trotskyist members of the ILP, accommodated to Stalinism at the depth of the Cold War, in the '50s, arguing

that in the conditions of the time there was no room for an independent class position. But their accommodation was certainly no worse than that of Healy or Pablo.

Until such time as your faction has repudiated that part of the past of orthodox (as well as revisionist) Trotskyism, it would ill become you to cast stones. Moreover, unlike the Fourth International, the ILP in the mid-'50s was led by people who insisted on proclaiming the aims of world revolution, and arguing that socialists must oppose both camps in the Cold War.

The accusation "semi-Stalinist", for a group which showed a clearer appreciation of the evils of Stalinism than you did yourselves (and which maintained close links with those you would consider ultra-left: Mme Trotsky, Damen, Bordiga, Pannekoek, CLR James, and Raya Dunayevskaya) is absurd and unjustified.

Laurens Otter
Wellington, Salop.

Editor's note: Yes, the charge is absurd. I apologise to readers for letting it slip through.



Breaking the cycle

Cinema

Belinda Weaver reviews
Straight out of Brooklyn

A few years ago, there was a short film called "The death of the rat". In it, a man beats his wife because his boss at work had given him a hard time. The wife, unable to strike back, beats their child, who in turn hits out at their dog. The dog chases a cat, and so the rat, the last in a long line of abuse, comes to a sticky end.

"Straight out of Brooklyn", a story of a black family living a poor and deprived life on one of the dismal housing projects in Brooklyn, has some of the same-

hopelessness. Ray, the beaten-down, alcoholic father, takes out his frustrations and hurt on his wife in nightly scenes of violence. Denis, their teenage son, wishes he had the courage to stop his father abusing his mother.

But all Denis has is dreams, dreams and schemes that have nothing to do with reality.

Denis and his friends, Kevin and Larry, have nothing to hope for; there's nothing for them, and thousands like them, but dead-end jobs or crime. Of the two, crime has the bigger appeal - the rewards are instant; there's no waiting.

They see drug-dealers on the streets, awash with money, driving fancy cars, wielding power by guns and terror. It's a dangerous life, probably short-lived, but

compared to pumping gas for life, it seems like an elevator ride to the top.

"Straight out of Brooklyn' succeeds brilliantly in showing a society where the women hold families together, where girls become adults too soon, and where boys never grow up."

"Straight out of Brooklyn" is the first film of 19 year old Matty Rich, and it feels real. Rich, who grew up in the Brooklyn projects, acre upon acre of soulless tower blocks where the streets aren't safe, and the sound of gunfire is heard at night, has no answers for what he shows, but he knows how to show the problems.

Ray is a fearful figure, full of power and menace. When he's inside the small, seedy apartment, he's like a powder keg. Everyone tiptoes around him, hoping, praying for peace. Frankie, his battered wife, is defeated but watchful, always trying to head off trouble. You see her trying constantly to squeeze herself into a smaller space.

Anyone who has ever lived with a domestic tyrant will identify

with the tension of the family's life, the knotted stomachs at mealtime, the constant fear of explosion.

It's like the world outside, where hope is not an option. Only dreams, fantasies keep you going.

Denis had planned to get out, to go to college, to break the cycle of despair. But four, five years seems too long to him; he wants instant riches, instant relief, and makes a disastrous choice.

There are a few awkward moments in the movie, scenes that feel preachy or contrived, but for the most part "Straight out of Brooklyn" succeeds brilliantly in showing a society where the women hold families together, where girls become adults too soon, and where boys never grow up, never have to take responsibility. For many of the older men like Ray, drink is the only escape from a world that trashes them.

It shows how much rage there is in people who have been kept down, and who've watched their children's dreams go down the drain. That rage, if properly channelled, could change the world.

But too often, it turns inward, into beatings and abuse, into drinking and self-hatred.

At the end, Matty Rich shows he knows how cycles of despair continue. "We need to change," he says. He's right. "Straight out of Brooklyn" shows how urgent that need is.

A moral by the tale

Cinema

Neil Cobbett reviews
Unforgiven

Unforgiven is a fine film continuing a tradition among western film-makers of challenging and debunking the traditional myths and values of the west and westerns.

Eastwood also takes a swipe at the images of violent gunmen and revenge themes with which he has become so closely associated. As usual with Eastwood's westerns there is a moral to the tale. It is a parable and allegory about what happens when civilised ethical values give way to entrenched self-interest and moral dogmatism; where acquisitiveness, avarice, malice and lust for power and revenge dominate, the inevitable consequence is a spiral of violence and authoritarianism.

There are no good guys (not even any particularly sympathetic characters). There is no confrontation between good and evil. There is certainly no forgiving, only a menacing and relentless movement towards the film's bloody ending. There is no cliched ending with the hero whisking his girl onto his big charger and riding off into the sunset. The final victor (certainly not a good guy) rides out of town in the pouring rain barking death-threats and curses at everyone.

I think that the man's trying to say that a bit of human consideration for and compromise with one's fellows might be in order. Trite as it sounds, in his own way, he's right.

As an allegory for, or analysis of the society Eastwood sees around him - divided into frustrated, embittered, mutually hostile and destructive camps, apparently without any common ground or ability to see each others' points of view let alone bend or compromise Unforgiven certainly has its weaknesses. As a parable or warning about what happens when any ethical or civilised considerations give way to pure entrenched self-interest or revanchist attitudes it functions, I think, literally or not, as a warning against the dangers of authoritarianism and fascism.

In his own way I think that Eastwood is trying to say that in a world of absolutes, a world where people cannot, or refuse to bend or compromise or to accept that they have any common values or interests, the danger remains that the only way of reconciling the irreconcilable is by means of authoritarianism, force and violence. Lurking behind the plot of Unforgiven is as fine a portrayal of the components of the fascist mentality as you are likely to get, with sketches of the cult of violence, the revenge motive and revenge or malevolence masquerading as law and order or justice traced out, at least in a commercial film. Although, to be fair, despite its surprise box office success, this is really a film of a remarkably uncommercial nature, despite great performances from Gene Hackman and Richard Harris in a curious cameo.

This is a complex film, one that for once certainly can't be adequately dealt with in a short review, but I must say: it's really worth watching.



Clint E: a moral to his tales

Those who fight for labour by Siegfried Sassoon

Now when the shouting and strife are ended
And each man's voice upon the darkness dies,
Remember you have toiled for something splendid
And keep the vision stainless in your eyes:
Be faithful to yourselves and those you fought for -
Great hearts and generous hopes and patient hands:
Swear that you'll never lose the ends you've sought for
Till Brotherhood unites the martyred lamb.
Now when Reaction's bloodstained flags deride you
And the old ignorant gods for an hour prevail,
All that is noble and strong is ranked beside you
And you are crowned with victory though you fail.

"Proletarian" versus "bourgeois" science

When Stalin knew best

SCIENCE COLUMN

By Les Hearn

A scientist condemned for holding conventional scientific views and who died in prison as a result? When and where did this happen? The Middle Ages, in some country ruled by the Inquisition? No! It happened in the "socialist paradise" that was Stalin's Soviet Union.

In 1930, Professor Nikolai Vavilov, the Soviet Union's foremost geneticist, became known to Western scientists when he presented a paper to the Second International Congress on the History of Science and Technology in London. This paper concerned the origins of world agriculture and, in particular, the discoveries of researchers from his institute, the Institute of Plant Industry in Leningrad.

Since the Soviet Union was a largely agricultural country and was recovering from civil war and trying to modernise, it was important to obtain new genetic stock to improve the yield of the crops being grown. This would also help with industrialisation, since a larger population of city dwellers would need feeding.

Researchers from IPI approached the problem systematically. They found the places, many of them remote and mountainous, where the world's major food plants had developed. Not only were the ancestral plants often still there, but often there were other potentially useful plants.

Thus, in Peru, where the potato had originated, they found a dozen new species of potato. Many of these have been "rediscovered" recently and have been found to have such useful properties as high protein content, hardiness and so on.

Often, they also found enormous numbers of varieties of particular food plants. In Ethiopia, where only half a million hectares were planted with wheat, they found more varieties than in the rest of the world put together. There were many strains of maize in Mexico, its ancestral home, while in the Transcaucasus, home to many of the world's fruits, many varieties of wild fruit trees were found.

Hundreds of thousands of specimens of food plants were collected by the IPI's researchers, to be examined for useful qualities. Such collections are nowadays seen as even more vital when environmental degradation and unsound

agricultural practices result in the dying out of many of these varieties in their native habitats.

In 1930, Vavilov was the most important scientist in the Soviet Union, disposing of a colossal research budget. By the mid-1930s, the IPI had one of the richest seed banks in the world. All this was put in jeopardy by the triumph of a theory of genetics that owed more to the pre-Darwinian ideas of Lamarck.

Lamarck thought that the characteristics acquired by an organism during its life could be passed on to its offspring. This is like believing that if you developed huge muscles through weightlifting, your offspring would have huge muscles. Perhaps unfortunately, there is no way this can happen.

In the frenzied atmosphere of the Five Year Plans, it was easy for someone who promised big jumps in crop yields to come to the fore. Trofim Lysenko, an agronomist, argued that the painstaking work of the conventional geneticists, breeding fruitflies and doing statistical studies and selecting useful varieties from their seed collection was, at best, a waste of time.

He claimed that his method of "vernalisation" (chilling and soaking the seeds of winter wheat and planting in the spring) and similar environmental treatments could boost crop yields quickly, any improvement in current yields being passed on in Lamarckian fashion to future generations.

Lysenko's field trials were limited but their distorted results were seized on by bureaucrats desperate for success. Eventually, Stalin gave his imprimatur to this superstitious nonsense.

The result was to hold back Soviet agriculture at least until the time of Krushchev. It remained backward even after that while the capitalist countries, adhering to "bourgeois" genetics, made great strides.

In 1930s Russia, pressure increased on supporters of conventional genetics, who, in the paranoid atmosphere of the Stalinist show trials, were seen as saboteurs. Vavilov's fate was to be sent to a labour camp where, about 50 years ago, he died of cold and starvation.

At the same time, his co-workers in Leningrad were dying of starvation during the siege by the German army. In devotion to their scientific duty but in a gesture unappreciated by Lysenko's supporter, Stalin, they refused to eat the precious grain in their seed collection.

Living nightmare

IDIOD WATCH

By Mark Osborn

I was accosted by a young woman on Charing Cross Road. Lots of eye contact. "Excuse me sir". Sir? Me? Surely some error?

I looked over my shoulder, fully expecting to have made a mistake. The woman from the market research company must be after some debonair chap, walking just behind me. But there's no one there...

No! She's talking to me! Lots more eye contact. God, she's so sincere!

"Sir, have you seen this magazine?" Must be some motoring mag.

Aggh! No! It's *Living Marxism!* "Sir"? Out now! Believe me it's imbecilic! Yes, it's so off the wall, you need this magazine!

From the people who backed the scab Notts miners during the Great Miners' Strike of 1984-5... from the people who told you the labour movement is dead (despite the fact, that you know there are eight million trade unionists)... from the people who said Labourism is dead (despite the fact that you know Labour has 270 MPs)... from the people who laugh at bucket collections for strikers (despite the fact that you know a normal socialist wants strikers to win)... the RCP brings you... their Balkan line! If you thought "Sink the

Falklands Fleet" was calculated to wind up workers rather than stop the war... if you thought campaigning to smash up the National Union of Students was something best left to the Tories... you will not be surprised at the RCP's ideas on the Balkans war — the main issue is western imperialism. Don't worry about "ethnic cleansing": it's a Croatian invention.

Serbian imperialism? It does not exist! Well, look, if the mining of Nicaraguan ports and aid to the Contras is US imperialism, why is Belgrade's military and political aid to the Bosnian Serbs and the occupation of Kosovo not Serbian imperialism?

"Kosovo? Uh? Vojvodina? Where?" The *Living Marxism* seller did not know where they were, and did not care much either. Instead, the subject is changed: do I really believe what I read in the press?

It was like listening to an old Stalinist — "Hungary '56? They were all fascists. You don't believe what you read in the press, do you comrade?"

Well, yes, as a matter of fact I do believe the press, sometimes. I do believe:

- a. Kosovo exists;
- b. it is largely Albanian.

Quaintly, I also believe in the bourgeois democratic right of self-determination for such a people. Do the RCP believe that Kosovo has the right not to be trodden on by a chauvinist pig like Milosevic?

"Comrade, this is not the issue!" Yes, I know John Major is a war criminal — but why is



Serbian soldier surveys burning Bosnian village

Slobodan Milosevic not one too? Turning to the magazine. The war, it seems, really started because Germany recognised Croatia. The idea that this was the main factor in starting the war is bizarre. It takes responsibility away from the Serbian leadership for their nationalist drive from 1987-8.

Then follows a foul article covering for the Serbian nationalists. Apparently the term "ethnic cleansing" was invented by the Croatian government. Does "ethnic cleansing" not accurately describe what is happening now? Does it not describe what the Serb chauvinists are doing?

No, says the article — these are just population movements caused by war. Well, indeed! Without meaning to, the point is conceded — because "ethnic

cleansing" is a major aim of the war. The war was initiated by a Serbian government fighting for a Greater Serbia. That is, to clear the non-Serbs off conquered territory.

And what about Vojvodina in the north, away from Bosnia? There the "ethnic cleansing" goes on in a one-sided cold war of threats and intimidation against ethnic Hungarians.

Yes, the Croats have a terrible government, their own camps and their own policy of grabbing a chunk of Bosnia. But the context of the Croats' nationalist government is the drive from Belgrade.

To muddy the waters, to fail to pinpoint responsibility, to cover for Milosevic, is to be truly idiotic. To do all this with Vatican City style pomp and pretentiousness — that is to be truly RCP.

Events AWL public forums

Fighting racism

Saturday 14 November
Anti-Racist Alliance conference against racist attacks. 9.15-6, Greenwich Borough Hall, London SE18.

Saturday 28 November
Anti-Asylum Bill demonstration, London.

Inside the unions

Saturday 10 October
Trade Union News conference. 11.00-5.00. Mechanics Institute in Manchester.

Conference of the left

Saturday 17 October
Winding Wheel, Chesterfield. Organised by Chesterfield Labour Party and the Socialist Movement.

Lesbian and gay

Saturday 31 October
The Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition is demonstrating for equality. Assemble 12.00, Hyde Park, London.

Chinese solidarity

The Workers' Autonomous Federation of China is planning a consultative meeting to discuss the difficulties facing the Chinese working class. Details from: WAFc, c/o 47-49 Charing Cross Road, London WC2.

The Chinese Solidarity Campaign will hold its AGM in London on Saturday 3 October. Details from CSC, 68 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1 (071-836 8291).

Thursday 24 September

"The politics of *Socialist Organiser*". Sheffield AWL meeting. 7.30, SCCAU, West Street. Speaker: Ruth Cockcroft.

"How to stop homelessness". Leeds AWL meeting. 7.30, Adelphi Hotel.

Thursday 1 October

"The legacy of Malcolm X". Middlesbrough AWL meeting. 7.30, St Mary's Centre.

Wednesday 7 October

"The legacy of Malcolm X". Merseyside AWL meeting 7.45. Wallasey Unemployed Centre.

Marxist schools

Saturday 24 October
Nottingham AWL dayschool. 10.30 ICC, Mansfield Road.

Saturday 7-Sunday 8 November
"Socialism or barbarism" AWL student school. Manchester Town Hall.

Red weekend

The London committee of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty has called a "Red Weekend" for **Saturday 26-Sunday 27 September**.

AWL members will be selling *Socialist Organiser* on the streets on Saturday, and round estates on the Sunday. We will be visiting sympathisers as part of our drive for subscriptions to the paper and donations for our fund drive.

There will be a fund-raising social on the evening of Saturday 26 September.

Alliance for Workers' Liberty conference

Sat 28-Sun 29 November
Conference details from: The National Secretary, Alliance for Workers' Liberty, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Student demonstrations

• **Demonstrate against student debt outside Tory Party conference!**
Brighton, Wed 7 October. Organised by Sussex Area NUS. Details from Garry Meyer: 0273-671057.

• **Fight student debt!**
March in Manchester on Wed 4 November. Details from Manchester Area NUS: 061-275 2973.

Labour Party Conference diary

The "Keep the Link" campaign, organised to defend Labour's links with the trade unions has produced a petition for union and Labour Party branches.

A campaign planning meeting has been called for **Sunday 27 September**, 2pm at the Helmsshore Hotel, 24 Charnley Road.

Contact: 120 Northcote Road, London E17 7EB or 'phone Bob on 081-520 5386 or Tom on 071-277 7217.

Fringe meetings

Saturday 26 September
Campaign Against the witch hunt. 7pm, Central Library.

Sunday 27 September

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. 10am, Winter Gardens.

Anti-Maastricht meeting. 8pm, Imperial Hotel.

Tuesday 29 September
Black Sections. 7pm, Ruskin Hotel.

Campaign Group. 7.30, St Paul's Church Hall.

Wednesday 30 September
Keep the Link - Liaison Committee in Defence of the Trade Unions. 1pm, Clifton Hotel.

Labour Party Socialists. 7pm, Ruskin Hotel.

Thursday 1 October
Socialist Organiser/AWL. The Case for a Workers' Charter. 7.30, Ruskin Hotel.

Manchester railworkers told "you can't protest against sack"

Walk-out makes strike ballot illegal, says judge

NALGO calls London day of action

On Monday 14 September NALGO's Metropolitan District Local Government Committee voted for a London-wide day of action against cuts in services and jobs.

The provisional date set is Wednesday 4 November. The Met District is planning to hold a demonstration as the centrepiece of the day of action.

Activists must use this call to organise one-day strikes, tying in local issues with the attacks occurring right across London. This must be the beginning of a long-term, coordinated, public sector campaign.

Other public service unions, including in the Civil Service and the National Health Service, should back the day of action.

Tube coordinators meet

With the Tube bosses determined to implement the Company Plan, the main good news on the London Underground is that the train-crew coordinators who ran the unofficial strikes in 1989 are meeting again. They have agreed to push for a ballot in both ASLEF and the RMT against the Plan, and to circulate a leaflet for that purpose.

By a railworker

The courts stepped in to prevent the strike in solidarity with four sacked rail guards at Manchester Piccadilly from taking place last Friday, 18 September.

The news was faxed up to the Manchester BRSA Club at 11pm, only one hour before the strike was about to start.

The judge had declared that the guards' original spontaneous refusal to work on 20 August was illegal. The ballot would be in pursuance of that illegal action, and so was itself illegal. Since he held the four sacked union reps responsible for the illegal action on 20 August, British

Rail bosses were justified in sacking them.

The judge was not interested in the fact that the guards only wanted to keep the bosses to an agreement they had made with the union.

Outrage and anger was the railworkers' reaction to the union's decision to call off the action. Some wept. But they felt they had to comply.

The LDC (the union reps) spent Wednesday at RMT union HQ trying to get the Train Crew Grades Conference Executive to call a special train crews conference to campaign for a national ballot over the abrogation of the agreed disciplinary machinery. BR

openly admit to have torn it up in Manchester.

Whether or not the conference is called, Manchester RMT plan a rally to build support themselves.

The national union leadership will be expected to explain themselves at this meeting - not just over their handling of the Manchester guards' dispute, and their acceptance of the anti-union laws, but also over how they gave the green signal to BR by signing the new so-called Bargaining Machinery. That act of timidity has emboldened BR management.

Both initiatives deserve the full support of rail union activists.

CPSA: Reamsbottom tampers with ballot papers

By a CPSA DHSS Section member

The right wing leadership of the CPSA are doing everything in their power to ensure that their cronies in the "Charter" group win the upcoming re-run of the DHSS Section Executive elections.

Ballot papers have been tampered with by CPSA General Secretary Barry Reamsbottom in a bid to stop the left winning by the landslide they achieved last time.

Reamsbottom - who was elected by a tiny fraction of the membership, and is thus one of the least representative trade union leaders in Britain - has ruled that the ballot papers may not contain any details of the sex or the branch of the candi-

dates.

Instead he has put "Broad Left/Militant" or "Charter" next to candidates' names, in a bid to frighten the middle ground of the union. No details of candidates' record or position in the union are allowed.

The ban on printing the sex of candidates is a way of hiding the strong male bias of the right-wing slate in a union consisting mainly of women.

Branch officials would be well advised not to dispatch ballot papers after the vote before counting them. That should help to avoid the situation we saw last year, where hundreds of votes went missing between the first and second counts.

It is vital that the Broad Left defeats the right wing, not just by a majority but overwhelmingly and decisively.

NALGO higher education strike

Administrative and clerical workers in higher education are set to strike next Monday and Tuesday, 28-29 September.

The strikers are pressing for a wage increase well over the 4.3% they have been offered by management. They also want a cut in hours.

Student activists will be supporting the NALGO members on the picket lines.

Labour councils against the workers

Up and down the country, Labour-led councils have unleashed vicious attacks against their "own" workers. They would rather break the trade unions than fight the Tories. Below we print reports from around the country.

Sheffield council: Union officials prepare sell-out

Officials of Sheffield NALGO have floated the idea to the other council unions that if they can all persuade their members to take five days' unpaid leave, it will solve the council's budget crisis this year, and postpone 1,000 to 2,000 threatened redundancies.

This is tantamount to implementing the Tory cuts for them! At the TUC, CBI boss Howard Davies said that the public sector pay bill should be frozen "either by cutting jobs or by actually reducing present levels of pay", and Paul Hudson - Sheffield NALGO's Executive Officer, a NALGO NEC member, and an ex-CPGB full-timer

— has chosen the second option.

It is no answer at all. Next year the Council wants to cut around £40 million. That corresponds to 77 days' unpaid leave!

The whole strategy is based on the false assumption that effective strike action is not possible, and that the government cannot be forced to cough up more money.

The worn-out bureaucrats are using the threat of strike action — to make the Council agree to the pay cut! And should the council say no, who is going to strike for a pay cut?

The whole "strategy" amounts to the unions actively assisting the Tories in running down public services and breaking the back of public sector trade unionism. The whole shoddy deal should be totally rejected by the workforce of Sheffield Council, and a fight should be started to defend jobs, conditions, and services.

• NALGO members in the Land and Planning departments walked out for one and a half day's unofficial strike on Tuesday 22 September. They are protesting at 81 redundancies out of a workforce of 260.

Islington strikers are solid

700 Islington council workers remain on all-out indefinite strike against compulsory redundancies.

Housing and poll tax workers have been joined by Neighbourhood Office staff.

The Labour council is using scabs to continue to collect poll tax money and weaken the strike. Some Neighbourhood Offices have also been kept open by scab labour, and are collecting rents.

Bury council victimises union branch secretary

By Tony Dale

Bury NALGO branch secretary Rob McLoughlin was sacked on 11 September in an anti-union victimisation by the borough's Labour Council.

Rob was suspended on 13 May after he refused to comply with an instruction from the Chief Executive to withdraw branch publicity promoting anti-cuts rallies and giving information on a dispute over the Council shifting the pay date.

NALGO is giving Rob full backing. NALGO Regional Officer Brian Devine states:

"The Council action is nothing short of a disgrace.

"The decision to sack Mr McLoughlin is a clear act of victimisation against our Branch Secretary and NALGO. It can be no coincidence that these attacks have occurred at a time when the union has been fighting to protect our members' conditions."

The background to the victimisation is Bury's financial crisis. The council lost £6.5 million through the BCCI crash, and is trying to make the workforce pay for it.

NALGO successfully campaigned against compulsory redundancies. Then the council hit on a new way of saving money — push the pay date back from the middle to the end of the month, so that the workforce would give the council an interest-free loan of two weeks' wages.

Bury NALGO produced a series of satirical posters describing the dispute in the form of a fairy-tale. Madge the Witch and her son Majea the Magician taxed the people. The local giants were terrified of the witch and her son, and also very stupid; they were ripped off by the wizard Abcii. The giants tried to cut the wages of

Library workers strike against "contracting out"

By a British Library worker

Friday 18 September saw the first strike by London-based Civil Service workers against market testing and contracting-out of jobs.

Members of three unions, CPSA, NUCPS and IPMS, struck at the British Library, following a survey by consultants Ernst and Young which identified 60% of all library posts as probable candidates for contracting-out.

Ernst & Young were sent in over the heads of British Library managers by David Mellor's Department of National Heritage. It appears that the Library has been chosen as the prime target in the Department's drive towards cutting jobs and hiving off work to the private sector.

It may well be, however, that they have picked the wrong target. Workers will not sit docilely awaiting the "bullet". The one-day strike on Friday is only the first demonstration of our determination to defend our jobs.

Market-testing is beginning to affect various sections and departments of the Civil Service. If uncontested, it will destroy tens of thousands of jobs. The time is to fight it is now, before severe damage has been done.

But so far the response of Civil Service union leaders has been remarkable only for its complacency and lack of imagination.

Speaking at a rally organised by British Library strikers last Friday, full-time officials of the three unions involved were fulsome in condemning contracting out.

Doug Murdoch of the CPSA identified it, correctly, as "The biggest test that we're ever going to face".

The officials were less clear about what to do about it. Getting a parliamentary debate was a popular suggestion, and so was the production of a "very well-researched document" for branches.

A question from the floor of the rally about whether the unions would give financial support for more strike action was left carefully unanswered.

The way forward must be:

- To build links with service users. Although in the Library our "users" are only a small, mainly academic, section of the population, our contact with readers' groups has provided valuable moral support and access to extra channels for getting our views across.

- To build links with other branches. The British Library CPSA branch took the initiative in calling an open meeting prior to the strike, inviting other London-based branches to attend. From this meeting, we hope that a support/campaign group will be set up.

- Call on national union executives to launch an awareness campaign on contracting-out, which should explain the need for unity across the Civil Service and for industrial action in the face of this attack.

In September 1991, the Treasury issued a note entitled "Selling Government Services into Wider Markets", which stated plainly that: "The Government's policy is to restrict the size of the public sector, and in general the presumption is that services should wherever possible be provided by the private sector rather than the public sector".

The re-elected Tory government is pressing ahead with this presumption. Our response must be equally clear and determined.

the servants; the cook organised a meeting of the servants; and then the giants plotted against the cook.

For those posters, Rob McLoughlin has now been sacked.

One of the branch officers said: "Rob's defence is simple. He did not write or produce the anti-cuts material complained of. He was not at the meeting which decided to produce it. His name does not appear on it. And, most importantly, he does not accept that the Chief Executive has any right to instruct him, either as a council worker or as Branch Secretary, to withdraw legitimate branch publicity".

NALGO took a test case to the High Court over the shifting of the pay date, and the court ruled that the council had acted unlawfully; but they are still paying wages at the end of the month. NALGO has writs for another 127 cases about to be heard in court.

Since Rob was suspended in May, the council has effectively de-recognised the union. They have refused to have any dealings with Rob in his position as Branch Secretary.

Bury District Labour Party has voted to condemn the coun-

cil's poor record in industrial relations, and called for Rob's reinstatement.

Bury NALGO members are holding a special general meeting on Wednesday 23 September, and they need a programme of industrial action. NALGO nationally will underwrite any selective action financially. A rolling programme of one-day strikes and all-out strikes by selected key groups is the best way forward.

As a branch officer says, "Throughout this appalling saga, certain local Labour councillors have been indicating that NALGO doesn't give a **** about what happens to Rob McLoughlin, even to the extent of claiming that they had the nod from NALGO to get rid of him. We don't believe this rubbish".

Newham strikers still out

1700 Newham council workers are still solid on all-out indefinite strike.

The workers are demanding the reinstatement of sacked poll-tax workers. They also want a working redeployment agreement, and a council pledge that there will be no compulsory redundancies.



It is vital to keep open Labour's links to trade union struggle. Above: strike at Manchester Airport, 1988. Photo: Paul Hermann/Profile

Labour Party and trade unions

Keep the Link!

Martin Thomas previews Labour Party conference, which starts in Blackpool on 28 September

Defence of the Labour Party's links with the trade unions is the biggest issue for rank-and-file resolutions at this year's Labour Party conference.

The leadership have shied away from a fight by removing their proposals from the agenda this year and sending them to a "working

party", but a meeting on 27 September will launch an organised "Keep the Link!" campaign of Labour Party activists and trade unionists.

This year as in 1990 and 1991, *Socialist Organiser* supporters will be helping on a *Labour Party Socialists* daily conference bulletin, uniting different strands of the left to campaign for the trade union link and other causes.

Press rumour says that John Smith will come out for a British referendum on the Maastricht Treaty. The left must push for a

full emergency debate at the conference on Europe and the economy, so that Labour can develop a *working-class alternative for Europe*, rather than flopping along in the trail of the Euro-bosses or (as, sadly, with much of the Labour left) the flag-waving Thatcherites and the *Sun*.

As it stands, the agenda is weak on both the economy and Europe. The fuss and froth of the nationalist "No to Maastricht!" campaign being led by an unholy alliance of Ken Livingstone and Peter Shore seems to have little impact on the

rank and file.

The "Europe" section of the agenda is dominated by right-wing and middle-of-the-road CLPs and trade unions, but some of their proposals are not at all bad: control by democratically elected European parliaments over the European Commission; the European Central Bank to be committed to industrial regeneration; European social legislation.

The main "left" intervention is, sadly, an amendment from Bolsover CLP which wants to delete a call for "an ever closer union of European peoples", counterposing a rhetorical invocation of "an ever closer union of the European working class".

Labour Party democracy will be a big issue in Blackpool, with the left fighting to keep the right to make MPs face regular selection contests and the right for CLPs and trade unions to get motions to Labour Party conference without prior "sifting".

There are a lot of motions calling for cuts in military spending and scrapping of Trident, and there should be a strong composite calling for a Workers' Charter of trade union rights.

"Keep the Link!" organising meeting: Sunday 27 September, 2pm, Helmshore Hotel, Blackpool. For other Conference fringe meetings, see page 14.

Labour purge in Coventry

127 people have been suspended from the four Coventry Constituency Labour Parties for allegedly supporting Dave Nellist or John Hughes in the last General Election.

Ex-MPs Nellist and Hughes stood against official Labour candidates.

Bizarrely, some of the 127 are not even Labour Party members. Their inclusion on the list of those suspended effectively creates a proscribed list of people not able to join the Party. There

is already a case elsewhere of a longstanding Labour Party member who left briefly to join the Green Party and is now being denied readmission.

There are also many among the 127 who supported neither Hughes nor Nellist, but who are apparently being purged as "awkward" and "undesirable".

The witch-hunt has left the local Labour Parties demoralised and gutted.

The Campaign Against the Witch-hunt is organising in

the Labour Party to defend those expelled or facing expulsion in Brighton, Sheffield, Lambeth and Coventry.

In Sheffield, Wendy Robson and Chris Croome have been expelled for association with *Socialist Organiser*, and five other Labour Party members face NCC hearings on the same charge.

Contact: Campaign Against the Witch-hunt, c/o 56 Ashby House, London SW9 7SL.

Perhaps you are reading this paper at Labour Party conference, or perhaps you are watching John Smith, Gordon Brown and the rest of them on television.

Compare the clarity and strength of our socialism with the hollow pomposity of the leaders of our labour movement!

The Labour Party and the trade unions need a clear, sharp voice for socialism. It is the only way forward. Socialist politics are needed to turn the labour movement towards a serious defence of working-class interests.

You can help.

- Take out a subscription to our paper (see box below).
- Make a donation to help our work.

Socialist Organiser is organising a fund drive for £5,000 to expand our work.

Last week, Wendy Robson and Chris Croome were expelled from the Labour Party for selling and writing for *Socialist Organiser*. They were the first Labour Party members to be expelled under the ban imposed on our paper in 1990.

Despite the bureaucratic moves against us, we are continuing to fight Labour's right wing.

It all costs money! Send cheques or postal orders to *Socialist Organiser*, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Last week we received £276, bringing our total so far to £704. Thanks to AWL branches in Manchester, South-East London, East London and North London.

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 from: 200 Club, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA, or from your *Socialist Organiser* seller.

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