


# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

*Unite the left!*

Inside this week 

**Crime:  
socialist  
answers**

pages 3 and 7

**Fighting Nazism:  
lessons from  
the '30s**

pages 10 and 11

**Going back to  
South Africa  
after 23 years**

centre pages



## TORY PANIC WON'T STOP CRIME

# JOBS

# NOT

# JAIL!



**“U**NDERSTAND less!” This week John Major proclaimed mindless brutality by the State as the Tories’ answer to the mindless brutality of crime. “Society needs to condemn a little more and understand a little less”.

As if the Tories ever understood anything at all about the rottenness of their capitalist system, the way it blights lives, warps spirits, promotes greed and aggression, and pushes alienated, resentful young people into crime.

John Major has cynically seized on the shock, distress, fear and bewilderment caused by the murder of Merseyside toddler James Bulger to relaunch the old, failed Tory policies.

Reintroduction of “approved schools”, borstals or something similar for young lawbreakers. Longer jail sentences for criminals. More people in jail.

For once the Tories, worried about their budget deficit, are not promising more police and more money for the police. Shamefully, Labour has taken up that cry!

The Tories’ new idea is “cash bonuses” for “successful” cops — cash encouragement for the widely-exposed police practice of forcing or faking false confessions, or adding extra crimes to the real confessions, in order to improve their miserable “clear-up” rate.

Since 1979 the Tories have steadily

increased police numbers and pay. They have given more and more powers to the police. They have cut defendants’ rights in court. They filled the jails fuller and fuller — until 1988, when the rise in prison riots induced them to slacken off. Britain’s jails are still fuller, in proportion to population, than any other west European country.

The results: more lives wrecked by the degradation of jail, more young people alienated and bullied by arrogant cops — and an unbroken rise in the figures for crime and for unsolved crime.

Deep-rooted in capitalist society are the reasons why so many young men and boys can use violence casually and recklessly, or callously disrupt the lives of those no less poor than themselves by theft. Partial measures will not heal the evil; only a new society can do that.

But decent jobs for the millions of unemployed would be a start — giving hope to the frustrated, and a chance to reknit themselves into society to the alienated.

Full employment would start to make society more civilised, and start to reverse the spiral in which the Tories “combat brutality” by adding more brutality, and “attack degradation” by introducing more degradation.

Labour should be campaigning for jobs for the jobless — through a reduced working week and a big expansion of public services — rather than echoing the Tories.

## LABOUR: Blame the Tories not working class youth!



Teach 'em cheap — or double fees

# Education under threat

By Elaine Jones  
(National Union of Students National Exec, personal capacity)

IT'S A strange world. Last week that vestige of feudalism, the House of Lords, condemned the rise in student poverty and Labour's talking head on Higher Education, Jeff Rooker, said that Labour is now willing to consider charging students tuition fees. He is merely echoing the Tories, who say they intend to go ahead and start doing it. And Oxford University discusses privatising itself.

In the Lords it was a loyal Tory, Baroness Park of Monmouth, who explained: "students can't manage their finances, as they have no resources to manage".

But for students, sympathy, even the sympathy of the Baroness, is useless. What is needed is action to force the

government to give back benefit rights to students and ensure we have a living grant. What is needed is a Labour commitment to such measures.

The government plan to make students pay tuition fees would burden some students with bills of £10,000 or more. The Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals is already considering charging tuition fees to bridge the financial gap caused by university expansion combined with government underfunding.

There are unlikely now to be the same back-bench Tory doubts as there were in 1984 when the government last seriously threatened to introduce student tuition fees, and a NUS campaign of mass action, against a background of the miners' strike, forced the government to climb down.

The Tories say they want a more educated workforce, but they are refusing to pay for it. They pressurise colleges to "pile 'em high and teach 'em cheap".

They cut costs by cutting student financial support, slashing

grants and stopping benefits.

The next logical step is to make students pay for their education.

Neville Johnson, an Oxford Professor and a Tory, has accused the government of "misconceived policies which treat universities like industrial production units", and threaten both "academic standards and intellectual achievement". Mr Johnson, of course, is not proposing a campaign to defend higher education. Oh no! He only wants to save a few elitist universities.

HE PROPOSES that the top 12 universities be made private, profit-oriented concerns, financed by doubling their student fees. He sees a parallel with public schools — always the fast track to Oxbridge anyway. It would mark the turning point in the restoration of profound and naked privilege in education.

It's the logical development of an increasing restoration of privilege in education which we've had during the '80s and '90s.

While state schools have faced cut after cut and increased overcrowding, the rich have had tax cuts to pay for educating their children at public schools.

Now, while standards are forced down in higher education so that it becomes cheaper and nastier, plans are being laid for a private university system to school the ruling class under the best possible conditions.

The National Union of Students is facing a mortal threat, but there could not be a better way to build support amongst students and in the labour movement than by launching a political war on the Tories, in defence of education. This is what makes Jeff Rooker's support for fees so disgraceful!

The Labour Party is not only

betraying students and letting the Tories off the hook — it is actively driving students away from the Party.

Student activists should not wait for the leaders of the NUS or the leaders of the Labour Party to act — we should begin to act ourselves and force them to act! When the leaders will not lead, then the rank and file must. It is one of the oldest truths of the labour movement.

We must build a campaign to defend education. The campaign should be built from below, linking students with all workers in education. We need a wave of opposition to "cash on delivery education" and a mass campaign to demand an adequate injection of funds into the whole education system.

If we begin to fight now, we can win!

**"Save our student unions" conference**

A conference to plan the student response to voluntary membership and to start the fightback!  
Wednesday 10 March 1993  
University of London Union (ULU)  
Malet Street (nr Euston Station)  
11.30 am — 5 pm  
Contact 061-275 2973 for more details.

## Double standards on Kurds

**This statement of the Kurdish National Parliament explains why Kurds have been on hunger strike in Brussels.**

THE KURDISH people are divided between the Turkish, Iraq and Iranian states. They have no state of their own. Everywhere they are repressed. They are forbidden to freely practice their language and culture. Their national democratic rights have been usurped. Now, in Turkey, they face a war of extermination. Throughout 1992 the Turkish state waged a dirty war to suppress the resistance of the Kurdish people, but despite using inhuman methods they were unable to crush the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom and democracy.

In 1992, the new Turkish government of Demirel and Inonu pursued a policy of all out state terror. The record of this one year long period of inhuman attacks is as follows: over 400 members of the Kurdish community, all civilians, were killed by the contra-guerrillas, Turkey's "Gladio". These people, from different walks of life, included 42 people active in politics and 13 journalists.

Turkey was declared by international press organisations to be the country where most journalists had been killed in the world and the state's policy of silencing the opposition press was the basis for these murders.

Progressive and democratic publications were also constantly confiscated, their distribution obstructed, these sellers murdered because of their objective approach to human rights and the Kurdish question.

Five towns, including Sirmak and Kulp, were left in ruins by shelling and aerial bombardment. The inhabitants were forced to abandon these ghost towns. Random arrests were made from amongst the Kurdish people, who have been categorised as an enemy by the Turkish authorities. 20,000 people were arrested in 1992. Turkey's assaults continued outside as well as within its frontiers, 16 cross border operations were carried out in 1992. Around 300 villages were forcibly evacuated and destroyed.

These attacks are intensifying daily. Turkey is paying absolutely no heed to international norms of war. It directs its attacks on the civilian population and aims to achieve its goal through these inhuman methods.

World public opinion must end its silence and change its attitude

so that it takes a stand on the Kurdish question. The denial of the identity of a people number more than 30 million is being imposed before the eyes of the world. The international powers, particularly Europe, have a double standard on the Kurdish question. They prefer not to see or hear human rights violations. Supplies of military hardware by European countries, first foremost France and Germany, have encouraged Turkey in its terror.

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To draw attention to these facts and make public opinion aware of what is happening in Kurdistan, the 15 MPs elected to the Kurdistan National Parliament from Europe made an appeal and since 24 January 1993 720 Kurdish people have been on indefinite hunger strike in Brussels. In fact thousands of people responded to the call but due to lack of space most of them were unable to participate

in the hunger strike.

We call on governments, human rights organisations, trade unions, political parties, the international media and public opinion:

\* To protest against the Turkish state's torture and slaughter of the people of Kurdistan and destruction of towns and villages.

\* To condemn the contra-guerrilla murders of patriots and democratic persons from all walks of life in Kurdistan.

\* To develop initiatives for a democratic solution to the Kurdish question, to put pressure on the Turkish state which refuses to consider a peaceful solution.

\* To represent to the governments concerned that they should stop military aid to Turkey.

\* To take concrete steps to force the Turkish state to adhere to the international rules of war in the war it is waging.

\* To call for delegations to be sent to Kurdistan by the European Parliament and national parliaments to investigate developments on the spot.

We, members of the Kurdish Parliament, call on all currents from Kurdistan who support the freedom and independence struggle, all anti-fascist forces in Turkey and all the peoples of the world to support our hunger strike which has been called to protest against the war launched by the Turkish state to annihilate our people.



Timex pickets lead the fightback

Over 300 workers — many of them women — are on strike against mass sackings at the Timex plant in Dundee, Scotland. Full story and interview page 15.

## Clinton upsets Major

NEWS LEAKED out this weekend of a plan by the new Clinton administration to send Tom Foley, speaker of the House of Representatives, to Northern Ireland on a fact-finding mission. Although the publicity seems to have scuppered this plan it makes some things clear about the two governments.

Ever since Major gave all his support to losing candidate Bush, the "Special Relationship" has been under strain. Also, while

Major is happy to propose foreign mediation (and even military intervention sometimes) for other countries like Yugoslavia and Somalia, the same rules don't apply when another country proposes mediation in the Northern Ireland war.

As for Clinton, having dropped most of his campaign promises already, he may hope at least to retain popularity with the 43 million Irish Americans by making some fuss over Northern Ireland.

### The poisoned well



Such was the tone of the tabloid comments on "teenage crime" that Police Federation representatives could get their views published only in the Guardian, where they sounded like diehard liberals. "We don't believe in the birch, or any of that nonsense..." Kenneth Clark's scheme for new borstals "is not going to solve everything. [In the old borstals] there was sodomy at night and brutality during the day".

Today was the exception among the tabloids, documenting what the panic chase after "young villains" had meant for 12 year old Jonathan Green.





John Major despoils the lives of millions — then preaches morality.

**Labour should fight the big criminals — the Tories and bosses**

# Criminals big and small

**T**HE pronouncements of Labour's Shadow Home Secretary, Tony Blair, are a disgrace to the labour movement. He sounds like a traditional Tory with his vapid talk about raising the moral level to fight crime. He does this in conditions where it is obvious that the left is right against the Tories on the cause of crime — and many non-socialists know it.

Blair largely echoes the Tories. Yet practically all the general basic facts about crime continue to confirm its *social* causes; the areas affected, the background of convicted criminals, the rise in crime in the 1980s etc.

Crime has long been the pet issue of the Right. They say it shows that humans are naturally bad, that there is original sin, that some humans are just plain evil and, above all else, the need for a powerful state, firm punishment and a strict unquestionable moral code.

Many working class people know it is people like themselves who suffer most from crime. The rate of burglaries on the poorest housing estates is four times that in wealthy suburbs. The Tories — and their little Sir Echo Labour understudy Tony Blair — can appear to have immediate answers, whereas the left have only a long-term vision of a society where there would be less crime. Most people live day-to-day, and the immediate answer will be more appealing, especially at times of intense emotional anger and frustration.

But to attack the social roots of crime is not to make an "excuse"

or to evade the immediate problem. No explanation of collective behaviour in terms of social conditions can eradicate individual responsibility.

Individuals have responsibility for their actions. They can make decisions rise above their circumstances.

If this is not so, then socialism is simply not possible, for the social conditions that shape people today can only be changed by those same people. What is more, the majority of humans have a right to be protected from crime and to demand that governments — even bourgeois governments — do all they can to provide that protection.

**T**HE TORIES' plans for harsher policing, more people in jail, and new borstals should be denounced as lacking immediate answers, as well as evading the social issues.

*"Whatever is done with convicted criminals should try to rehabilitate them, to bring them back into society"*

Changes to crime-hit estates and other areas (demolition of walkways, provision of concierges, better lighting) would do much more to cut crime immediately.

So would reorganisation and democratic accountability of the police, forcing them to pay attention to crimes like racist attacks and burglaries in working class areas which they now neglect.

Jails of some sort are necessary for now; but to fill them with thousands of people who have committed only minor crimes is to breed more crime, not to limit it. Whatever is done with convicted criminals should try to rehabilitate them, to bring them back into society as decent citizens with decent jobs.

But here we come up against the social roots of crime. As things stand, to give young criminals decent training and decent jobs would be to favour them over other young people.

The tabloids reported that the two ten year olds charged with the murder of James Bulger would be held in "luxury" compared to what they had at home.

The socialist conclusion is that we need to change society so that no child lives in a home worse than a decent prison. The Tory conclusion is that prisons should be worse, more squalid, and more degrading than even the worst-off working class home.

Yet crime is an issue which goes far beyond economic judgments, for it is the ultimate indictment of liberal capitalist politics. The way in which capitalism uproots and exploits people economically and socially creates the raw material for criminal culture, but it is the combination of that with the liberal philosophy of 'abstract classless' individual freedom and self-reliance that makes crime an

inevitable and central feature of capitalist society.

*"Where in reality does a sense of right and wrong come from in our society?"*

It is much easier for some to reach a "moral", reasonable decision to live by a "civilised" moral code than it is for others. Indeed, for some people it is close to impossible. Crime — sometimes real crime, sometimes "crime" like theft by the hungry from big food shops, which socialists would not call crime at all — is a matter of survival in large parts of the world and is becoming so in parts of Britain.

**Y**ET MORALITY is about more than just crude economics. Where in reality does a sense of right and wrong come from in our society? And why does it appear to have been lost?

Historically, industrial capitalist societies have been able to rely on a number of powerful influences to impose a more or less orderly code of behaviour. State coercion was one of the most important — direct repression for crimes against the person and property.

This direct coercion has usually been reinforced by a moral authority which regulated every aspect of our personal lives and

expected unquestioning obedience.

This in turn was reinforced by religious codes which remained powerful until quite recently and were much more than "imposed" moral values. One of the strengths of religion has been that they encode practical common sense ethics — honesty, generosity towards others, non-violence — inside their framework of ritual, sexual taboos, and mystic beliefs, impelling many to accept the religion because they accept the ethics.

There was always much idealisation about traditional working class communities — they had terrible consequences in restricting and limiting people as well as collectivist influence. In any case there is no going back to such a community even if it were desirable.

**Continued on page 4**

*"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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# Sign here, or else

**T**HE LEYLAND DAF collapse has not been a very pretty affair. Workers with 30 to 40 years' service were booted out of Leyland plants in Birmingham, Lancashire and Glasgow with just the statutory minimum redundancy pay — less than half what they would have got under the company's redundancy scheme.

## INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

The Dutch and Belgian governments intervened to protect jobs, but President 'Hezza' of the British Board of Trade has steadfastly refused to be swayed from his determination that the "free market" must prevail, without government "interference".

In this situation, the choices facing the unions in the British plants were stark:

1. Accept the initial redundancies and hope that local management buyouts and/or the Dutch/Belgian government rescue package would keep the show on the road.
2. Call a Leyland-wide strike and hope it forces the British government to the negotiating table.
3. Occupy the plants and use that as a focus to build support to keep component supplies coming in and to consolidate public support.

Union officials from TGWU, AEEU, MSF and GMB met in Manchester immediately after the Leyland DAF bankruptcy was announced. The possibility of a co-ordinated plant occupation was discussed, but ruled out on legal grounds. Instead, the officials decided to go for the more "militant" option of strike action — an option that everyone knew was a non-starter.

As a result, ballots were held in all Leyland DAF plants without the support of the plant leaderships. Not surprisingly, the results of the ballots were against strike action (except in the small Glasgow Albion plant). The outcome was 1,635 workers going down the road, with just the legal minimum redundancy pay — disowned by their union "leaders".

At the Birmingham Washwood Heath plant, however, another factor had come into play: the development project between the Birmingham Leyland DAF plant and the French company Renault.

While Renault were prepared to guarantee payment of 210 out of 290 workers engaged on this project — up until September 1993 — they did not want to enter into any formal relationship with the Birmingham plant or its employees.

A condition of them signing the deal with the receivers was that at least 90% of the employees signed an agreement called a "deed" under which the workers waive their right to make any claim against the company and declared that in the event of any court (or tribunal) finding any such claim well-founded, they would not pursue the resulting financial remedy or award.

The purpose of this "deed" was plainly an attempt by Renault to circumvent the Transfer of Undertakings Regulations that presently exist in British law.

Employees were given *one hour* to decide whether or not to sign the "deed", or be sacked. Signing meant that the "Employee will agree that... he or she will not make a claim for any remedy in respect of any finding by a court in his or her favour against Renault. This includes: (1) unfair dismissal; (2) redundancy; (3) failure to consult with their union or in any other matter in which ACAS officers have power to conciliate.

"If he or she does not present a claim then he or she is not on any finding of liability of a tribunal to find against Renault".

The "deed" goes on to exempt Renault from all liability with regard to claims concerning pay in lieu of notice, wages, holiday pay, sick pay, pensions, claims under Equal Pay, Sex Discrimination, Race Relations and Wages Acts, and any legislation of the EC.

The TGWU and the GMB consulted their lawyers regarding all this. The advice was the same: the "deed" was illegal. Nevertheless, the TGWU recommended its members to sign, on the grounds that since the "deed" would not stand up in court, they might as well agree to it. And when people like us advocated an occupation, the T&G officials said we were "mad"!

Mark Serwotka for CPSA president!

# Unity in struggle is the way forward

Mark Serwotka is the only left-wing candidate in the election for President of the low-grade civil servants' union, CPSA.

Mark works as a receptionist in a DSS office in Rotherham. He is currently in his fifth year as a member of the DSS Section Executive Committee and is the Secretary of the DSS Rotherham Area Branch.

In his thirteen years as a CPSA member he has not only held many union posts, including that of chairperson of the DSS Wales and South West Region, but has also led many local strikes.

Mark is a member of the CPSA Broad Left, and this year is the Broad Left candidate for the post of Deputy Chairperson of the DSS Section as well as a Broad Left candidate for election to the National Executive Committee.

Mark is a supporter of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

As a member of the Socialist Caucus, Mark stands for a democratic, fighting union — run by the members, in the interests of the members. Mark's campaign will be fought on these issues:

### • Nationwide attacks need a nationwide response

Mark is the only candidate in the Presidential election who wants to see a co-ordinated campaign of nationwide strike action to scrap market testing and all other Government attacks on civil servants.

### • Market testing will mean the end of the Civil Service as we know it

90% of Civil Service jobs face market testing in the near future — 44,000 this year alone. No Department or Agency will be left untouched. There will be mass job losses. Pay and

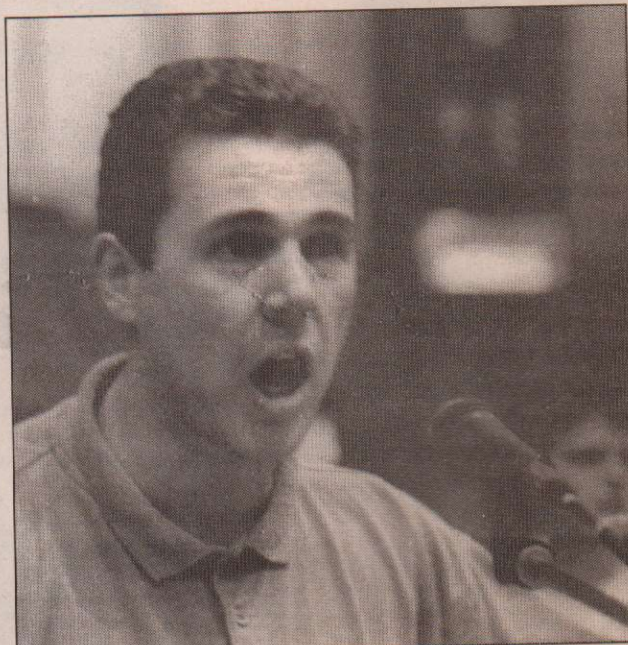
conditions will be slashed. Pension rights will be eroded. Jobs will be permanently insecure. Services will worsen.

*In short, tens of thousands of civil servants will be cast into poverty now and in old age.*

### • Market testing will particularly hit women

The vast majority of CPSA grades are women. Market testing will narrow women's employment opportunities. The small steps towards equality negotiated by the unions will be reversed. Agreements on part-time working, job sharing, creche and holiday play schemes will all be sacrificed on the altar of private profit.

If you are a part-time worker you will find your hours driven down below



Mark Serwotka

the legal minimum so allowing private profiteers to avoid the employment laws and their responsibilities regarding paid annual, sick and maternity leave.

### • In-house bids = "do-it-yourself" market testing

The whole point of market testing is to cut wages, conditions and jobs. That's why the Government are so keen on it. They want savings of 25% a year.

Putting in an in-house bid simply means cutting your own throat rather than someone else doing it.

The practice of submitting in-house bids did not save the 110,000 ancillary jobs lost in the NHS, or 114,000 lost in local councils due to contracting out. In-house bids have, however, con-

tributed to an overall cut of £125 million a year in the living standards of local government workers.

### • You can't rely on European law to stop market testing

We should use all means to hamper market testing. But it would be a big mistake to rely solely on European law to stop it.

Public Service Minister William Waldegrave isn't exactly quaking in his boots at the prospect of being done over by Brussels. Asked if European law will stop market testing, he replied "It will not..."

Hoping the Government will abide by this European law is like expecting all employers to abide by the Health and Safety laws!

# Criminals big and small

From page 3

THE CENTRAL fact is that we live in a time when major elements of the old bourgeois world, in the first place the traditional family, have declined into decay and disintegration without the workable alternative having yet emerged. Capitalism has generated this unfolding revolution.

In Britain since 1979 people have been taught by example that we live in a world where everyone must fend for themselves, the fittest will survive and the rest will go to the wall. Mrs Thatcher said: "There is no such thing as society, only individuals and their families" — and modern capitalism is increasingly like that, only even the families are disintegrating. Nothing encourages respect for others: others have no respect for you. Only cash counts.

When you feed people a diet of such crass individualism, in a conscious, deliberate attempt to destroy collectivist traditions, and then sponsor mass unemployment which

denies millions of people the means to pursue their individual development, you create an expanded criminal culture.

Capitalist culture is after all the culture of the criminals who have thrived and prospered so much that they have enshrined their monstrous seizure of the common means of life as private property in law.

The final factor in the increased criminality — and for the left this is central — is the defeat and retreat of the organised labour movement. There was an alternative "culture" and "code of behaviour" available to a very large section of workers until recently, and new young workers could expect to be initiated in it — the culture of workplace solidarity, collective struggle, trade union discipline. The story of what has happened to trade unionism is a long one and involved the effect of mass unemployment, the even sharper youth unemployment, the use of savage anti-union laws, the defeat of workers in some major struggles and the shame-

ful retreat of most trade union leaders in the face of a determined confident, ruthless enemy.

Trade unionism will revive. It has in many ways proved surprisingly resilient already. But its decline has temporarily removed a crucial alternative route to survival, self-improvement and resistance. It has removed an historic educator and trainer of angry working class youth. Its decline has left space for mannequins like Tony Blair and his vacuities. But that decline is, we repeat, temporary.

Rebuilding, reviving and reorganising working class solidarity now will be the fastest way to undermine and marginalise working class criminality. It will bring nearer the day when the working class will be able to destory the great carnivorous system of legal criminality — capitalism. Socialism does not echo the voice of the powerful, not even faintly. It is the voice of the unheard, the hope of the hopeless.





Labour's right wing wants to deprive five million trade unionists of their say in the Party. Photo: John Harris

## Labour Party discusses trade union link

# Will we let MPs steal union rights?

As we go to press on Wednesday 24 February, the Labour Party National Executive Committee is meeting to discuss the future of relations between the party and the trade unions.

Some people on the right wing of the movement including John Smith and Neil Kinnock want to see the end of any direct union input into the party.

Others, like the GMB leaders, are proposing an unworkable and highly bureaucratic "compromise" — a list of registered supporters.

A broad-based campaigning coalition, "Keep the Link", has been set up to resist these moves, and to advance the cause of collective trade union representation in the Labour Party.

This is what the campaign has to say about the proposals up for discussion this week.

**G**REAT secrecy has surrounded the work of the official review group into Labour Party and trade union links.

The Party Conference gave the group a clear

instruction to "strengthen the trade union link" but if the *Guardian* leaks are to be believed most of the options being considered by the review group do not strengthen the link at all but merely serve to weaken it.

Increasingly, many of the powers currently held by the Party's five million affiliated trade unionists would be transferred direct to the 300-odd Party members who are MPs or MEPs.

At annual conference, for example, it is proposed that the trades unions' 70% share of the vote should be reduced to 50%, so that parliamentarians could be given 20% of their own to provide the "stability" required by the Party establishment.

In leadership elections, one option proposed would reduce the trades unions' say from 40% to 33.3% while increasing MPs' say to 30-33%. Another option, in express defiance of conference's decision to maintain "participation of national trade unions in the election of the Party's leadership", would give the MPs 50%, and cut the trade unions altogether.

In the selection of parliamentary candidates, meanwhile, MPs would be given greater immunity from trade union influence than they already enjoy.

First, the 'trigger' ballots which they hope would, in 95% of cases, prevent a contest even occurring, exclude

trade union branches altogether.

Second, in the few contests that do occur, trade union branches would also be disenfranchised, replaced either by no trade union say at all or else by a complicated and half-baked list of individual "registered supporters".

*"The Party's trade union links are not a weakness but a strength."*

Even the supporters of this scheme admit that it could not be set up in time for the forthcoming round of selections and that the trades unions' role should therefore be completely abolished in favour of 'one member one vote'!

Both the 'trigger' and the 'registered supporters' scheme are in blatant breach of conference's decision to retain "representation of trade union branches at every stage in the selection of parliamentary candidates".

For more information about Keep the Link telephone Francis on 081-960 7460, or Tom on 071-708 0511; or write c/o 120 Northcote Road, London E17 7EB.

Should local government workers receive the equivalent of full take-home pay during disputes?

## Strikes mean sacrifices

### PLATFORM

By Dion D'Silva

**T**HE ISSUE of strike pay is a bit of a hot potato for NALGO activists at the moment, especially with the recent settlements of the Islington and Newham disputes.

At the recent NALGO local government conference, feelings ran high about the Newham strike. The national NALGO leadership was rightly condemned for not fully supporting the strike, despite last year's conference recognising it as a dispute of national significance. Yet the action was never spread outside Newham and at the end it was a minority of the branch who were out on full take-home pay.

It was a similar story in Islington — although in that case there was some success in taking up the issue in the local Labour Parties. But that was no thanks to NALGO.

To many on the left NALGO's refusal to spread the strikes on full take home pay was the sell-out. This misses the point and ignores the problems with full take-home pay, namely:

1. No matter how much is in the strike fund — and it is millions in NALGO — it does have a limit, and when it runs out it proves difficult to carry on the dispute.
2. This allows the union leadership to have a great level of control and influence on the running and future of the strike.
3. Union members expect full take-home pay if they are to come out in support.

4. It may discourage people to get actively involved in picketing, meetings etc, when they can sit at home getting paid.

5. In effect, NALGO takes over the payment of workers from the employers.

Some of these problems were highlighted in a Lambeth payroll dispute — where the payroll section was pulled out on full take home pay. It proved hard to spread the action and many who wanted to strike expected full strike pay.

I also found that it caused some resentment. A NUPE shop steward told me he was a bit miffed that he wasn't getting his bonuses in his pay packets — but the strikers weren't losing a penny.

The counter-argument is that there would have been no action if it wasn't for full strike pay. So what should be our strategy?

I think we should argue against full take home pay. Taking strike action does involve making sacrifices. We should use local hardship funds, local levies etc where necessary. Another idea would be to top-up strike pay with payment for picket duty. These things would increase rank-and-file control and activity.

The basic strike pay in NALGO is £62.50 per week, which is not a lot to live on. However, it is much less in NUPE and CoHSE — and the miners would have been grateful to get anything like it when they stuck it out for a year. In UNISON we should argue for a decent level of strike pay throughout — but not full take-home pay.

What do other readers think?



Full pay for strikers is a recipe for small disputes which stagnate for months and then are shut down by the union leaders. Photo: Mark Salmon



# Education? You got it!

## GRAFFITI

**B**URGERS IN THE news part one. Now testing at seven and eleven allows schools to select an intake most likely to turn in a good performance for the league tables, the question is, where do the consumers with the least academic spending power go in the educational market?

To the rescue comes Burger King, offering £50,000 for a refurbished special educational unit in Tower Hamlets. Whether the school will be designed to look like one of the burger chain's restaurants is not known, nor is its name.

The project on which it is based is called the Burger King Academy in Pittsburgh. Good attendance and achievement at the academy is rewarded with vouchers for free food at Burger King. Where those who don't behave well end up has not been disclosed, but watch out for fingernails in your Whopper.

**B**URGERS IN THE news part two. No-one will be surprised to find McDonald's workers complaining of lower than average wages and poor working conditions. What is more unusual is that these McDonald's workers have gone on strike. And this is the world's biggest branch of McDonald's — in Beijing. To pay someone too little by Chinese standards is quite some achievement.

**Y**AEL DAYAN, Labour member of Israel's Knesset, is certainly not a chip off the old block. Her father was the late Moshe Dayan, the eye-patched warlord of Israel during the Six Day War of 1967.

Yael is the first Jewish Knesset member to meet with Yasser Arafat — she gave him a copy of her less than flattering biography of her father — but it is not this that has really raised the ire of Israel right-wing traditionalists.

In a Knesset committee investigating charges of anti-gay discrimination in the Israeli army, she suggested that the second king of Israel and occasional slingshot giant slayer David would himself be unlikely to make it into the US marines.

The evidence? In II Samuel 1:26 he wrote of his brother in law, "...Jonathan. Very pleasant hast thou been unto me. Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of a woman".

**T**HE BROAD Left in NALGO has put out an appeal for a new UNISON united broad left. The trouble is that

the NUPE Broad Left hasn't been approached. Could this have anything to do with the fact that the NALGO BL is controlled by the SWP, and the NUPE BL is run by Militant? Now, does the Bridlington Agreement apply to Broad Lefts...?

**T**HIS WEEK'S reactionary of the week is Labour MP Frank Field, sneaking in just ahead of fellow members of PLP Tony "Hang 'em and flog 'em" Blair and David "What they need is a good dose of National Service" Blunkett.

Field has a plan for the long term unemployed. If they can get a job paying the princely sum of £50 a week then they should receive their benefit on top of that for a year. The long term unemployed having been pushed into low wage jobs, what happens a year later when the benefit stops? Field is eloquently silent on this point. Could it be that they are stuck in low paid jobs?

**E**LSEWHERE this week Field has called on the Government to force pension funds to invest in British industry. Japanese pension funds invest in Japanese industry, he claims — ignoring the fact that this might well be a much more profitable investment. Does Field want to do for Britain what Robert Maxwell did for Mirror Group Newspapers?

**I**F YOU'RE IN South London and a bit peckish on 18 March, and Pizza Hut looks a little crowded — why not wander down to the Oval Cricket Ground to the *Tribune* fundraising dinner? You can dine on Terrine of Three Fish Marseillaise and Navarin of Lamb, and listen to a political lecture from Bill Morris on the limits of Clintonisation, with Clare Short and Michael Foot chipping in, all washed down with Plaimont Cotes de Gascogne 1991, or Coteaux du Salores 1990.

The cost of the meal? A snip at £40. The only catch is that you only get half a bottle of wine. It would certainly take a lot more than that to make the evening bearable.

**P**ERHAPS British bosses are still more progressive than the CBI...

One anonymous banker told the *Economist* last week: "Women are much better than men — less impulsive, more loyal. And pregnant women are brilliant. They work like slaves."

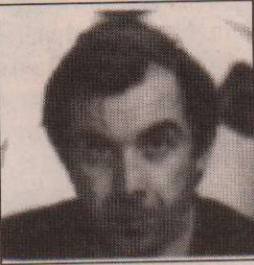
On the other hand, perhaps they aren't...



Champagne socialists

# Melodrama at the Mirror

## PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

**T**HE SITUATION at the Mirror Group is coming to resemble one of the less believable sub-plots of *Drop the Dead Donkey*. *Mirror* hacks, scarcely recovered from the traumatic events that followed Cap'n Bob's watery demise, now find themselves embroiled in yet another byzantine melodrama. And, once again, we are told, the very "soul" of the *Mirror* is at stake.

The new cast-list may be less colourful, lacking as it does an ogre of Maxwellian proportions. But the dour Ulsterman David Montgomery, the quietly menacing Lord Hollick, the tragi-comic David Banks and (most importantly) the faceless bankers who actually own the Mirror Group, all have considerable potential as characters in a soap-opera-cum-surrealist farce.

Hollick, a "socialist" peer and city whizz kid, set his sights on the Mirror Group in mid-1991 as rumours of Maxwell's insolvency began to

circulate. By the time the Captain went overboard, Hollick had teamed up with Montgomery, a journalist who'd started out on the *Mirror* twenty years previously, but had left bearing grudges. He'd gone on to become a leading Murdoch hatchet-man, editing the *News of the World* and *Today*. Naturally, he'd also played a prominent role in the union-busting exercise at Wapping.

Hollick was prevented by cross-ownership regulations from simply buying a majority stake in the Mirror Group. And, anyway, the administrators would not sell while the share price was bumping along at rock-bottom in Maxwell's wake. Instead, Hollick began assembling a consortium, fronted by Montgomery, to take over the Group. He also joined the Mirror board (at the request of the administrators) and ensured that Montgomery was made Chief Executive.

Meanwhile, the *Daily Mirror* and its associated titles were enjoying an idyllic interregnum, freed from the Maxwell tyranny and without any new owner to answer to. For nearly a year this agreeable state of affairs continued, while the then-editor of the *Mirror*, Richard Stott, laid plans for a management buyout. A whole new era of Robert Owen-type Socialism in One Newspaper beckoned.

It was not to be. The bankers who in reality controlled the Mirror Group made sure of that. On 23 October 1992, Montgomery strode into the *Mirror's* Holborn Circus HQ and declared the party well and

truly over. Paul Foot and a few others attempted some token resistance, but within 72 hours they were crushed.

The purge began immediately: Stott and the *People* editor Bill Hegarty were sacked; the *Mirror's* 100 or so "casuals" were dispensed with; *Mirror* "staffers" were told that their legendary "lunchtimes" and "expenses" were now things of the past.

*"The real threat to the 'soul' of the Mirror is the prospect of a general downgrading of any political coverage."*

Under the new regime, the *Mirror's* brief flowering of journalistic freedom perished like the fragile bloom it was. Circulation, which had been on the up-swing, declined and the prospect of overtaking the *Sun* once again receded. But the bankers were well pleased: the *Mirror* was under control and there was a realistic prospect of eventually recouping the losses they had been suckered into by Maxwell. All courtesy of the dynamic duo of Hollick and Montgomery.

Last week, the dynamic duo fell apart, and the *Mirror* was once more plunged into crisis. Montgomery signalled his determination to break the

*Mirror's* organic link with the Labour leadership, by bringing in former *Today* leader writer David Seymour as "associate editor (politics)"; this inevitably put the *Mirror's* political correspondent Alastair Campbell in an impossible position, and he duly resigned.

Campbell is a close friend of Neil Kinnock, and his presence as the *Mirror's* political correspondent was widely regarded as symbolic of the paper's continuing loyalty to the Labour Party.

Immediately after Campbell's departure, more than 150 Labour MPs signed a Commons motion of no confidence in David Montgomery.

Lord Hollick opposed the appointment of Seymour and has, by all accounts, now fallen out with Montgomery in a big way. Most significantly the bankers who still control the Mirror Group have told Montgomery that under no circumstances is the Labour link to be broken.

This last, initially surprising, reaction is the result of a simple calculation: the *Mirror's* only selling point is its pro-Labour stance. The banks want their pound of flesh and maintaining the *Mirror's* traditional political allegiance is their best means of getting it.

But the real threat to the "soul" of the *Mirror* is not a break with the Labour leadership: it's the prospect of a general downgrading of any political coverage. Montgomery, Hollick and the bankers all agree that soap operas and sensationalism offer the way forward.

# Far enough for some

## WOMEN'S EYE



By Jean Lane

**W**HEN anything — Fordism, Modernism, etc. — gets

described as 'post' I always get the feeling that the person doing the describing is looking for a way out. They are about to compromise and, in order to do so and keep their credibility intact, they are trying to say that the battle has been won. When *Marxism Today* used the phrase 'Post-Fordism', for instance, they meant that the class struggle was over, and we had to concentrate on equal rights and citizenship. I'm not sure your average Leyland DAF worker would agree. What they really mean is, "I'm middle class now,

I'm doing very nicely thank you, so I think we should stop all this whingeing about the need to change society. We should campaign to make it a bit nicer so I don't have to have a guilty conscience about the people who aren't getting quite as much as me".

So, when people (middle class women in particular) talk about 'post-feminism', I naturally start to feel suspicious about what's going to come next. The women's movement of the '60s and '70s was all very well for then. They've got equality now, perhaps?

But we haven't! Eighteen years 'post' Sex Discrimination Act [SDA] and 'post' Equal Pay Act, women still earn only 77% of men's wages — only 3% more than when the Acts were passed!

But, of course, we said at the time that changing the law isn't everything. We have to change attitudes as well. Just as the introduction of race discrimination laws, important as they are, would not legislate people's racism away, so the SDA would not stop men being sexist.

Along with words like 'post-feminism' we get others, like 'New Men', to assure us that these attitudes are indeed changing. But are they?

In a recent statistically representative survey of over 1,000 men aged between 20 and 50

carried out by Gallup, 39% thought that women's liberation has 'gone too far'. 19% thought it had 'irreparably damaged relations between the sexes'. Two-thirds of the men in the survey agreed with the statement: 'The trouble with women is that they want equality but only when it suits them'. And, although 42% agreed with the statement 'men just don't know what women want any more', half the men interviewed said they thought that 'most women want to be looked after by a man'.

**N**OT ALL THE statistics were as depressing as these, however. Half the men believed that women are capable of doing anything a man can do and that women get a raw deal in the workplace. Almost two-thirds didn't care whether their boss was a man or a woman. Only 4% said they would describe themselves as macho, whereas three-quarters saw themselves as caring, just over half as independent and sensitive, and a third as romantic.

Only 17% thought that not crying in public is a sign of manliness. 87% believed that both men and women should share the responsibility of bringing up the children, and 94% thought

they should take equal responsibility for contraception (it does make you wonder whether this survey was really representative or not, doesn't it?).

Does this make them New Men, I wonder? Not if New Men means being dead right-on about everything, it doesn't. More than half of the same sample of men thought that if a woman dresses 'provocatively' she shouldn't complain if she's chatted up, and 18% thought it excuses sexual harassment. Almost 40% thought that men are better drivers (fact: they aren't. They have lots more accidents). A third thought it natural to want their first-born to be a boy. And a third thought that men are the more logical sex.

Not so much 'new men' then as 'nearly new'. So those post-feminists who think we have arrived, and are anxious to get on in the world, can get out at the bargain basement. The rest of us will continue to fight for women's equality. And many of us, the revolutionary socialists, recognising that what sops to equality are given can also be taken away, will fight to change society completely.

The 'Posties' may think we are there already. But they haven't got a better society. They've got a better society for themselves. We want equality for all.



## Crime: as capitalist as credit-ratings

# The rich are the "dangerous class"

By Martin Thomas

**S**mall children start with no sense of respect for others and no idea that it is wrong to hit, scratch or take things from other people.

Adults encourage them to share toys, to be generous and gentle. Bit by bit, they learn to live as social beings.

Then those same adults grab at their own possessions with all the jealous energy inspired by capitalist competition and its motto "Greed is good". While they tell children to be gentle and considerate, they hit them and shout at them, wounding them with blows and words.

While the child is told to respect others, he or she lives in a miniature tyranny — a household where adults have total, arbitrary authority, tempered only by weariness or indifference, and the child has no recourse or chance of appeal to a broader society.

It is no wonder that many young people grow up bitter, cynical, hard-faced and reckless about their own futures.

Then, in their teens, at school, the majority have "Failure! Failure! Failure!" shouted at them, week after week. In times like today's, they can see no chance of a worthwhile job. Capitalism taunts them with success, wealth, luxury, power — and then kicks them down with a mocking laugh.

When family structures are strong, they can counteract the tendency of capitalism to reduce us to a crowd of lonely, isolated individuals, connected to each other only by hard cash. The bitter, frustrated young person at least knows that someone cares about him and watches what he does.

In Britain as in most modern capitalist societies, family structures are breaking down. For better or worse — and in many ways better, since there is probably more violence and abuse inside families, unrecorded in crime statistics, than there is in official crime — the stable man-woman-



The Tories are cynically using people's distress and bewilderment at James Bulger's murder to push plans which only mean more police abuses and more people degraded and brutalised in jail.

children unit is less common.

No amount of legislation or preaching by politicians will make families more rigid and stable again, even if that were desirable. Yet while the old order is rotting, no new order has been created. Meanwhile, millions of young people are thrown to the wolves — or left little choice but to become wolves themselves.

**P**ROBABLY THE best single measure to reduce crime would be to increase public provision of good nurseries. Reorganising schools to be less punitive and competitive, and providing decent jobs for all young people, would reduce crime further, as would any measure to make society more equal and less of a game of devil-take-the-hindmost.

Yet the Tories go in exactly the opposite direction — towards the ruthless, unrestrained capitalism of which America is an example.

America is the standing disproof

of all the Tories' dogmas about crime. The Tories base themselves on the ethics of capitalist free enterprise — the notion that the greatest good is to make money, limited only by what the law allows. Consequently they believe that people's desire to despoil others is a basic fact of nature, to be limited only by the force of the State and by whatever moral pressure the upper classes can impose.

The US has the most viciously punitive system of policing and law in the advanced capitalist world. It has three times as many people in jail, relative to population, as Britain, and five times as many as the Netherlands. It is the most religious of the advanced capitalist countries. African-Americans are perhaps the most religious people in the world, and among the most heavily jailed and subject to police violence and death penalties.

Yet the US's murder rate is over six times that of Britain — seven times that of the Netherlands.

The social conditions of ruthless capitalism are a hundred times more effective in generating crime than any amount of religious preaching or State repression can be in limiting it.

The Tories' attempt to seize on James Bulger's tragedy to create a moral panic — and Labour's feeble "us too" response — is not only a diversion from the real roots of crime, but positively dangerous.

They want to make us cluster round the State, huddled fearfully against an alien "dangerous class" of criminals.

But criminals aren't a special class of evil people. One man in three has a conviction — for something more than routine driving offences — by the time he's 31.

About half of all recorded crime in Britain is done by male teenagers. If we include unrecorded crime, almost all male teenagers are "criminals". The children of the well-off are likely to escape with indulgent words about "wild oats", "youthful high spirits" and "previous good character". Working class boys will end up in the Tories' new "approved schools" or borstals.

Repression is no answer. It is part of the problem of a brutal, unequal society.

**T**HE PRACTICAL effect is to license police brutality. Given that only one in 14 criminal offences, at most, is cleared up by the police, a "crack-down" becomes almost random repression of those unlucky enough to be caught. And those who are caught, especially when the cops are under pressure to "show results", are often not the people who did the crimes. Witness the Guildford Four, Birmingham Six, Tottenham Three and many other cases. The "drive against crime" becomes a police offensive against those who the cops think

are "criminal types" — young people, black people, militant trade unionists.

The James Bulger case itself has already produced an example.

Twelve year old Jonathan Green seemed a likely suspect to the police. His parents are jobless; two of his brothers are in council care; Jonathan himself is under a council care order; he has often gone truant from school. As his mother ruefully told *Today* newspaper, "We're the classic problem family".

The police now acknowledge, Jonathan was nowhere near the shopping centre where James Bulger disappeared. But they sent a fleet of cars, sirens blaring and lights flashing, to arrest Jonathan at his home. The police action brought out an angry crowd of over 200, which besieged Jonathan's house — with his father, 6 year old brother and three year old sister in it — for two hours. The family has fled their home.

That's life for what the police reckon to be the "dangerous class".

The wealthy and respectable are far more dangerous, as a class, than are the jobless and poor.

The lives of most of us are far more likely to be damaged by an employer's greed and ruthlessness — leading to industrial sickness, injuries or death, and all the ailments that come from poverty — than by a psychopath from the dark streets.

The answer is to work for a decent, equal society, a cooperative commonwealth.

As Bruno Bettelheim reported after studying communal child-rearing in Israeli kibbutzim: "Few turn delinquent in a society where... there are no differences in property and nothing to be stolen, and where hard physical labour is highly valued and offers acceptable discharge of some aggressiveness".

### The threats of death

694 people died through murder or manslaughter in England and Wales in 1991. Homicides accounted for about one death in a thousand.

Suicide claims six times as many lives — 3950 in 1990.

Road accidents claim even more — 5042 in 1991 — and work injuries claimed 475 in 1989-90.

### When crime soars

It is difficult to compare crime statistics from different periods or different countries, because definitions vary and many crimes are not officially recorded. Yet the official figures, such as they are, show a drop in crime by young people over recent years.

Crime rates in Britain were very high in the heyday of "Victorian values". In the 1860s you ran four times as great a risk of being murdered as in the 1980s.

Crime rates dropped at the end of the 19th century and up to the 1940s or '50s as the growth of the labour movement

and the social reforms made under its pressure enabled working class people to live with more dignity and hope.

Since World War 2 rates have risen again.

### Schools for crime

From the old "approved schools", two out of every three inmates committed a criminal offence for which they were found guilty within two years of leaving the institution. Plainly those "schools" drove kids into crime rather than pulling them out.

Prisons are mostly full of people who have been there before. Of 16,000 men going into prison in 1990 for whom information was recorded only 2,664 had not been in before.

Most people in prison are there for minor crimes or crimes against property.

Of 45,000 people in jail in England and Wales in 1990, only 14,000 were there for serious crimes (sentences over 4 years).

Of the 2500 or so sentenced in 1989 to

more than 5 years jail, only 600 were sentenced for "violence against the person", and another 600 for various "sexual offences" (some, but by no means all, assault and rape). 600 were sentenced for robbery and 700 on drugs offences.

### Arguing about the 1930s

The Tories try to draw evidence for crime not being caused by poverty and unemployment from the 1930s. Poverty and joblessness were high then but crime did not increase.

But in the 1930s youth unemployment was lower than adult unemployment. For 15 years now — and into the foreseeable future — large numbers of teenagers have seen no prospect of a decent job. The 1930s despite everything were not as bleak in that respect.

Also in the 1930s there was more collective organisation of the unemployed, more effort by the labour movement to offer radical answers and less of a taunting, uncontrolled growth of inequality.



# An exile returns to South Africa after 23 years

## Apartheid fades, the

Lawrence Welch left South Africa in August 1969 at the age of 16 in the knowledge that he would not be able to endure — politically, morally or psychologically — conscription into the South African army.

He had little idea that it would take him 23 years to visit the country again. The following is his brief account of some of his impressions in returning to South Africa and (next week) of a trip to Zimbabwe.

THE PLANE TOUCHED down on a Johannesburg morning to freezing temperatures, an icy contrast to the hazy humid heatwave I left 11 hours previously in Heathrow. Signs in Afrikaans and English claimed that the dilapidated state of the airport was due to a refurbishment programme, but the work had so far left the rickety luggage trolleys untouched.

Despite attempts to brush up on my scraped-through "O-Level" Afrikaans, my eyes impatiently sought out the English version of the directions. A cleaner laughingly accosted me just before I walked into the Dames/Ladies. Knowledge of the unbanning of the ANC almost removed my unease as I went through Immigration.

A huge crowd awaiting the Wallabies greeted me as I came out of Customs, dwarfing my 86 year old surrogate aunt and her son who inevitably embarrassed me with his memory of holding me in his arms as an 11 month old baby when they first met my family arriving from England.

We drove into Johannesburg in the bright dazzling sun, along the broad new motorway, cluttered on either side with unfamiliar industrial estates, past the brown kopje I knew as Gilloolies farm, by a small Army encampment, past my old house and school. I had a powerful sense that this was home, a cloying yet elusive memory resurfacing in an excitement mixed with anxiety that I froze when I left 23 years ago.

The names of the city street resonated with

memories. Eloff Street, Rissik Street, Bree Street. But while the buildings were fainter memories, the people were transformed: black faces everywhere, orderly, non-unionised street hawkers crowding the pavements, wrapped in blankets to ward off the harsh, cold wind, some eking out a living with a motley display of 8 or 9 different articles.

Africa had finally found its way into Jo'burg, and the colour of my skin now marked me out as the one who was different. At first a fossilised attitude fostered by childhood training returned as I instinctively looked for a white queue at the post office, but the privilege accorded to me then was no match for the experience of sharing the impatience of waiting with everyone else.

On the buses, black and white alike gave up seats for each other. A small white schoolgirl shared a joke with her black friend at the same time as I saw on the street a haughty looking, white 6 year old followed by a black woman bearing her tiny satchel.

In the cosmopolitan streets of Jo'burg, at least, I did not witness that burning white rage at someone with a different pigmentation getting on the bus first. I guess that those afflicted with this malaise would shop in the exclusive shopping malls sprouting up in the suburbs — a report in the *Star* gave vent to the angry feelings of the worthy, white residents of Kempton Park, objecting to a poorer class being allowed into their area.

Outside the Civic Centre, I examined more closely the statue of three miners the burghers of the Golden City erected as testimony to their gratitude to the fruits of the labours of those whose toil they otherwise rewarded rather less magnanimously: two black miners drilled while a white held a lamp for them.

At my old school, with amazement I saw a few black faces, equal in the right to wear the tightly buttoned up uniform which, 23 years later, I still felt a strong sense of relief to have escaped from. Just down the road, lest I be deceived by these impressions into thinking

that everything had changed, a gang of black labourers sweated with pickaxes in a long slit in the road, observed by a burly, red-necked, white foreman sporting a classic, bulbous nose.

My visit to my old house gave vivid reinforcement to my mounting awareness of the seething tension and fear which had crept out of the black townships deep into white areas. In 1969, the windows of my house were protected with a flimsy, wire burglar-proofing; my parents secured the side alley to the back garden with a large iron gate chiefly to restrict the police's scope for harassing our domestic worker. In 1992 the apricot tree from which my sister and I could lob fruit at passing cars had given way to an 8 foot brick wall with spikes at the top. A sign outside warned the hungry of an Armed Response to intruders, a drawing of a pair of revolvers underlying the message to any doubters.

*"Africa had finally found its way into Jo'burg, and the colour of my skin now marked me out as the one who was different."*

SECURITY firms are big business. In the hallway of the apartment block where a friend lived stood a rather diminutive security guard offering protection to the inhabitants whose security intercom system had broken down with the aid of a single-barrelled, pump-action shot gun.

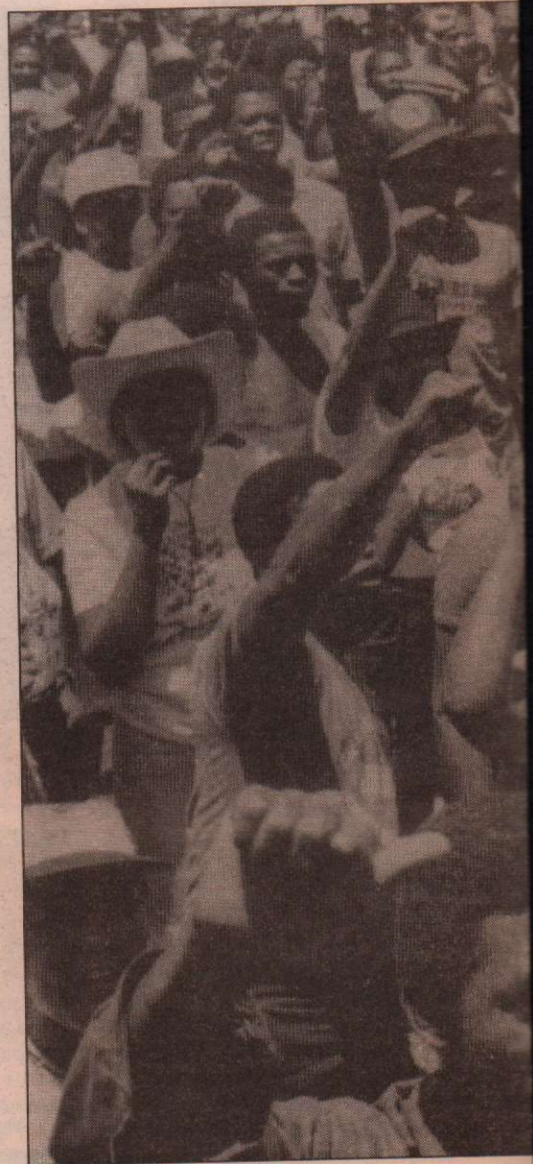
Even quite small shops try to prevent theft by employing

security guards. In Hillbrow, with a vast concentration of flats, a policeman give chase with his rifle. I wondered what happened to the person whose blood had somehow poured down the wall of a block of flats. Knowledge that the red of the more violent graffiti was only paint was little comfort when the content expresses so vividly the desire to see blood spattered on walls: "one bomb, many kaffirs", "one settler, one bullet".

Much of the violence, of course, does not come even with this superficial veneer of political logic, but is the result of the harsh dynamic of survival amongst a population struggling with 40% unemployment.

An area of especial conflict is the war over taxi routes: gleaming, white minibuses offer an efficient, cheap (a flat rate of Rand 1.0 [30p]), frequent form of transport to a largely black clientele. The driver hurtles along the road, beeping his horn at any pedestrian, swerving in suddenly when someone responds by raising a forefinger. The fare makes its way forward over the passengers' shoulders, and somehow the change arrives back. Conflict over the much prized routes flares up into open warfare in the terminuses where tens of minibuses swarm. A free market regulated by bullets establishes which taxi firm controls the most lucrative routes in regular gun battles.

Transport and communication are clearly growing industries in a city whose golden reputation continues to serve as a powerful pole of attraction for those for whom the three year old drought makes the starvation conditions of the squatter camps taking root in Soweto preferable to the unrelenting thirst of the Northern Transvaal. Long rows of public telephones encased in orange shells



Black working class rage is erupting in strikes,

compete with shops enticing customers in with offers of seats by each of the several booths.

Tourist attractions held little appeal for me as I rather feverishly announced my presence in several union offices and was surprised at how easily my description of myself as a trade unionist and socialist from Britain proved to be a passport to generally warm welcomes and immediate meetings with officials willing to discuss, more or less openly, the difficulties facing the union movement in South Africa.

One announced that his name, Jabu, meant happiness, but readily admitted that this did not reflect how he felt about the situation in South Africa. Perhaps more surprising for one still smarting from the icy attacks of the Anti Apartheid exiles in the early '80s against attempts to open up links with the union movement, was the openness and the uncertainty expressed. People knew what they wanted. How to get it in the nitty gritty of politics where De Klerk was playing a very canny game was far less clear. Words like interim government or constituent assembly could have very shifting meanings depending on who used them and what content they filled them with. At the same time, the rage of the black working class readily erupted in strikes, protests, demonstrations, giving urgency and driving force to the necessity to find concrete concepts able to focus and realise this energy. I did not envy the officials' delicate task of negotiating settlements providing sufficient gains for striking work-



Violence is widespread: some would-be political, much not. Photo: Paul Weinberg



# e struggle sharpens



Protests and demonstrations. Photo: IDAF

ers, while ensuring that there were jobs to go back to. Only detailed knowledge of local conditions can allow us to judge where compromises were shaped by careerist perspectives, and where their caution was genuinely motivated.

**O**NE WEEK into the holiday, I found myself on a 15 hour coach journey to an old friend in Paarl, the heart of the wine growing region of the Cape. I sat next to an Indian seamstress returning from taking a fitting for a wedding dress in Jo'burg who complained bitterly about how the recession was affecting her £800 a dress business.

The video entertainment gave an account for the would-be tourist of the wonders of the 11 year old homeland of the Ciskei (soon to be renowned for the brutal Bisho massacre), extolling the virtues of its modern hospital and health visitors, and ending with the wish that these hard won gains won't be lost. James Bond was a rather poor second best to the scenery in the morning as the semidesert of the Karoo gave way to the mountains of the Drakenstein. An 11 minute journey through a tunnel in one of these

mountains brought the coach to the edge of the huge valley leading to Paarl.

My friend immediately started educating me into the different pace of life: where I itched to pull off when the traffic lights turned to green, he would leisurely finish a

sentence before ambling away. Abe greeted me with news of a meeting in Cape Town where Mandela was speaking at 5pm that afternoon. The time approached for the meeting as we made our way round Paarl, stopping every 5 minutes to meet people whom Abe would introduce as being in the struggle or taking a break from it, until, at 5 o'clock when I was convinced that the

desire to go to the meeting had taken on the status of a nice though not to be realised wish, we pulled into Abe's home.

He took on an air of urgency and said we needed to go out quickly to get to the meeting, so we sat down and had a cup of tea. Of course my anxieties about time were misplaced as the meeting in fact was due to start at 6pm, and Mandela started speaking at 7.30. The occasion felt particularly significant to me as it was the commemoration of Ruth First's assassination, whose memorial

service I attended 10 years ago in Camden Town Hall in London. The book by her daughter, Gillian Slovo, *Ties of Blood* had given me the final spur to making this journey back.

The hall of the University of the Western Cape was divided in two by large, folding doors when we arrived, and the largely black audience soon got agitated, shouting, clapping, jumping on the desks as time went by and the wall separating us from the main event remained unmoved.

A large, but rather timorous, white man came through several times to apologise and to assure us that something was being done. When the doors were finally pushed to one side, a massive audience appeared in front of us, singing, swaying, shouting, clapping, stamping.

Finally the guests of honour streamed into the podium in the middle — the crowd was rapturous over the calm, dignified, towering, patriarchal figure of Mandela. The national anthem "Nkosi Sikeleli Africa" was sung, and the great, heaving, shouting, vibrant crowd settled into expectant silence as speaker after speaker after speaker got up and orated.

The first spent 20 minutes saying what an honour it was he had been asked to introduce the speakers!

The Rector of the University spoke, followed by an Englishman whose name I didn't catch, for the sound was very poor. Protests came from the back, including Abe who yelled "we can't hear!" and muttered angrily

to me that we were missing an important occasion. The English speaker, when audible, turned out to be giving a very human and witty account of Ruth First. He pointed out how she had been critical of the Soviet Union at a time when it wasn't fashionable amongst the Stalinist left, and finished with a powerful plea for the freedom of the press in a new democracy, quoting Rosa Luxemburg's comment in 1918, when the press in Russia was muzzled, that a free press wasn't simply a moral nicety, but a vital part of human development.

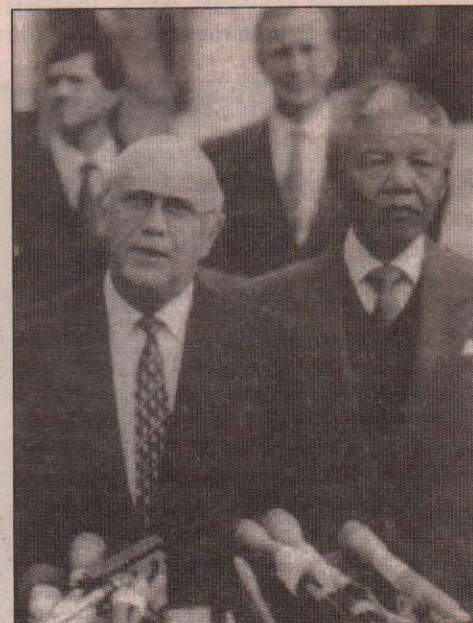
After a minute's silence for Ruth First and the dead in struggle, a woman told us what an honour it was to introduce Nelson, but that he needed no introduction. Everyone got up on the tables in the lecture theatre, stamping and shouting as the man made his way to the podium but again rapidly settled into silence as he lifted his hands for quiet. He (jokingly?) reprimanded the woman for not introducing him and said he was a member of a Soweto branch of the ANC.

After movingly describing how he first heard of Ruth First's death while in prison, he went onto the meat of his speech, though the two parts were intimately connected, for murder, like Ruth First's murder 10 years ago, has been a regular feature of covert state policy over the last few years.

Mandela welcomed the idea of a general amnesty, but said it could only take place under an interim government, and that those who perpetrated crimes must be revealed. He welcomed an investigation into all armed forces, including Umkhonto we Sizwe, and demanded that the armed forces should come under the control of a multi-party commission. For reasons I didn't understand, the crowd seemed strangely unresponsive during a speech outlining what was, then, new policy, and appeared almost subdued at the end. I would like to think that this was because of dismay about the lack of mention of the constituent assembly, or the absence of an appraisal of the South African armed forces, or the yawning gap in thinking about how to effectively mobilise the working class.

It was with great regret that I left Paarl after three days to visit a friend in Zimbabwe.

Continued next week



Mandela's perspective for moving forward slowly, hand in hand with De Klerk, wins little enthusiasm



# How the German working class was defeated by The destruction of

As German capitalism lurched into chaos after 1930, with five million jobless, the Nazis won the support of desperate middle-class people and unemployed workers by seeming to offer radical answers. The workers' movement — the trade unions, the Social-Democratic Party and the Communist Party — still had enough strength to beat the Nazis; but, as Bruce Robinson explains in this article, the third of a series, they failed to use it.

The political and economic crisis in Germany continued through 1932. Bourgeois rule became less and less stable and based on an ever smaller fragment of society without even the fig-leaf of Parliamentary support. These Bonapartist regimes could in the end only resolve the crisis by calling Hitler to power. The working class organisations remained paralysed in the face of these events.

In May 1932, Hindenburg, the President, dismissed the cabinet of Brüning. Brüning, who had ruled by decree with the passive support of the Social Democrats (SPD), had banned the fascist militias, the SA and SS, and proposed some measures which offended agrarian interests. Hindenburg, who had just been re-elected with the support of the SPD and other Republican parties, now felt himself free of the need to appease them. The Weimar constitution allowed the President to appoint the Chancellor, as long as the Chancellor could survive a vote in the Reichstag (Parliament).

Hindenburg appointed Von Papen, an aristocratic conservative, whom the French ambassador described as "taken seriously by neither his friends nor his enemies". In the background, General von Schleicher, with close links to both the army

and conservative parties, became Minister of Defence and manoeuvred.

Trotsky commented: "The present rulers stand 'above parties'. No wonder; they represent a dwindling minority... In rising above parties and parliament, the government has shrunk to a bureaucratic apparatus. The most effective part of the apparatus is undoubtedly the Reichswehr (army). It is not surprising then that Schleicher appeared

*"The KPD spread the illusion that Hitler's victory was temporary and would prepare the KPD's own triumph."*

behind Hindenburg and Papen".

The ban on the SA was lifted, the Reichstag dissolved, and new elections were called for 30 July. The SA unleashed a reign of terror against the left. On 17 July the Nazis marched through Altona, a working class suburb of Hamburg and waged a battle with the Communists (KPD) that left 19 dead. Von Papen used this as a pretext for the

long-awaited coup against the Prussian state government, the bastion of Social Democracy. (Germany was, then as now, a federation; Prussia was the biggest state in the federation, and included the capital, Berlin). The SPD had promised that the Republic would be defended if necessary by means of a general strike, such as had defeated a right wing coup in 1920. Their militia, the Iron Front, prepared for armed resistance. Plans were laid to blow up bridges and railway lines.

The time had now come. Workers throughout Germany awaited the call for a general strike. But no call to resist was made by the SPD leadership, who, after a few meaningless protests, abandoned their positions without a fight. (This included control of the large and not totally unsympathetic police force). The KPD did call for a general strike, but the KPD and the Nazis had collaborated to try to bring down the same Prussian government. The working class was demoralised and the government encouraged to make new attacks.

Ten days later the elections took place. The Nazis doubled their 1930 vote. The KPD won  $3\frac{1}{4}$  million votes, largely from the SPD. Their leaders saw this as far more significant than the huge Nazi gains. The total vote for the workers' parties remained constant and about equal to that of the Nazis, with around 35% each.

Von Papen began negotiations with Hitler and, believing the Nazis to have reached their peak, made an offer of a few minor posts, which Hitler rejected. The SA's violence reached a new peak and both sides continued to try to wear the other down.

When the new Reichstag met in September, it passed a vote of no



Trotsky proposed a policy to beat fascism; but the Trotskyists lacked numbers

confidence in Von Papen's government by 512 votes to 42. Von Papen had already prepared a decree dissolving Parliament and calling new elections. Other decrees repealed wage legislation and attack social policy.

Two days later, Trotsky published his pamphlet *The Only Road*. He emphasised the weakness of the Bonapartist government and its relationship to the Nazis: "Through the Papen government, the barons, the magnates of capital and the bankers have made an attempt to safeguard their interests by means of the police and regular army. The idea of giving up all power to Hitler, who supports himself upon the greedy and unbridled bands of the petit bourgeoisie, is a far from pleasant one to them. They do not doubt that in the long run Hitler will be a submissive instrument of their domination. Yet this is bound up with convulsions, with the risk of a long and weary civil war."

"Through the mechanism of the Iron Front, Social Democracy paralyses the proletariat. By the policy of brainless ultimatism the Stalinist bureaucracy blocks the revolutionary way out for the workers... The paralysed strength of the proletariat has assumed the deceptive form of

the 'strength' of the Bonapartist clique. Therein lies the political formula of the present day".

The pamphlet was mainly concerned to spell out a policy for the workers' movement which would enable the defeat of fascism, and allow its revolutionary wing, the KPD, to win the leadership of the movement. The policy of the united front was again emphasised and linked to three tracks: preparation for a general strike, which Trotsky saw as leading to the creation of soviets; joint struggle against the Bonapartist regime; and the fight for socialism. Trotsky reiterated time and again that the policy of the KPD remained the crucial element in deciding the outcome. He also raised the prospect in the case of defeat of the Communist International having shown itself bankrupt and of the need therefore to build a new International.

The 6 November elections showed that the Nazi momentum had begun to falter. They lost 2 million votes, putting them again behind the combined votes of the SPD and KPD. This led to the widespread feeling, echoed not least in the complacent sectarianism of the KPD, that Hitler was a spent



Communist Party agitation: against the SPD and the (American) Young Plan, rather than against the Nazis



the Nazis

# German labour



Hitler at a Nazi rally after he announced the anti-Jewish "Nuremberg decrees" in 1935

force. It was true that Nazi morale was low, but the political crisis remained unresolved and the workers' movement took no new initiative.

Disputes amongst the ruling clique emerged, which resulted in Schleicher, the 'social general' and real holder of power, replacing Von Papen on 2 December. His plans were to try to put together a new type of coalition in support of an authoritarian regime. It would range from the 'moderate' Nazis under Gregor Strasser through to elements of the trade union leadership and possibly the SPD and be based on support from the army. Otto Braun of the SPD did have limited contact with Schleicher, and, together with some trade union leaders, saw him as the last possible defence against the Nazis.

This conception quickly fell apart, leaving Schleicher with no

political support. In early January Von Papen began negotiations with Hitler, who, while he still insisted on becoming Chancellor, agreed to a coalition with the nationalist DNVP. On 23 January 1933, Schleicher fell and Von Papen now had to convince President Hindenburg that Hitler would be under control. The Nazis settled for two places in the Cabinet and for Goering being made Prussian Minister of the Interior, with control of the police force. Von Papen boasted that Hitler was "no danger at all. We've hired him for our act". A coalition cabinet was put together and on 30 January Hitler became Chancellor.

How did the labour movement react? The SPD and unions stuck to their legalism and still refused to take action. The unions' address to their members on 30 January read: "To repulse effec-

tively attacks on the constitution and the people's rights, calmness and prudence are the first requirement. Don't let yourself be led into premature and therefore damaging individual battles." The SPD similarly called, though with slightly more radical sounding words, for restraint: "The hour demands the unity of the entire working people against their united opponents... So support the Iron Front. Only its slogans should be followed! Cold-bloodedness,

*"In May 1933 the trade union offices were occupied and their organisation smashed."*

decisiveness, discipline, unity and once again unity are the commands of the hour."

The constitutionalism of the social democratic organisations was to lead them to make ever more pathetic complaints about the Nazi attacks while not mobilising their supporters for a real fight on the grounds that this would threaten the existence of their organisations and elections were pending. The unions began to talk in more nationalist tones and make concessions to Nazi ideology in the hope of some kind of accommodation with the new regime. The low point here was when the unions

called on their members to take part in May Day marches which were called and dominated by the Nazi factory organisation.

The following day their offices were occupied and their organisation smashed. By the summer the SPD had also been totally smashed.

The KPD itself did make a call for a general strike and united front with the SPD on 30 January but its earlier sectarian policy gave the call little resonance. It still continued with its policy of describing the social democracy as the "main enemy", even spreading the illusion that Hitler's victory would be temporary and prepare the road for the KPD's triumph — "After Hitler, our turn next". According to the KPD, fascism already existed in Germany and its members were therefore unlikely to view Hitler's rise to power with the necessary seriousness. Even in May 1933, as the SPD was being destroyed, the KPD wrote: "The brutal suppression of the social democratic organisations and their press changes nothing in the fact that just as before they are the main support for the dictatorship of capital." The failure of this policy to raise serious opposition in the ranks after it had been proven false led Trotsky to conclude that the KPD and later the Communist International were dead for revolutionary purposes.

Hitler took seriously his own repeated statements that he would only take power constitutionally in order to overthrow the Weimar constitution. He was

able to use the same power of rule by decree as his predecessors. The SA began a reign of terror against all opponents and from the end of February was merged into the police force, which was then given new powers. The Reichstag fire on 27 February — blamed on the KPD — became the pretext for expanding the repression and destroying the KPD, by arresting its leadership, closing its press and offices. Up to 4,000 were arrested. Emergency powers suspended formal civil rights and imprisonment without trial made legal.

In this atmosphere the elections called for 6 March were bound to result in a Nazi victory. They were still short of an absolute majority. The Nazis got 43.9%, with the KPD and SPD together still managing to get nearly 30%. However Hitler was able to dominate the Reichstag by having removed most of the KPD deputies and intimidating the SPD. At the one Reichstag session held, Hitler won an Enabling Act by 441 votes to 94, with the support of the other right wing parties. This gave him personal power so that he could eventually dispense with the coalition and set up the Nazi dictatorship. The ruling class was largely to bury its doubts and become a prop of a regime which supported its interests.

The German labour movement, the strongest in Europe, had been destroyed totally. Throughout this period Trotsky and his supporters in Germany had proposed a policy which would have mobilised the labour movement against fascism and created the possibility of revolution. To become a material force, however, ideas need to have the active support of millions. In Germany the tragedy was that the millions supported the workers' leaderships, which both let Hitler come to power without a real battle.

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## The Nazis' road to triumph

1918

Germany defeated in World War I. Old regime, headed by Emperor, collapses. Liberal "Weimar Republic" set up.

1918-23

Successive waves of workers' revolution defeated and suppressed.

1930

Economic crisis leads to collapse of parliamentary government. A series of emergency regimes follows. Nazis win 18% of the vote.

1932

Unemployment rises to 5 million. July: Social Democrat regional government in Prussia deposed; Nazis become biggest single party in German parliament.

January 1933

President von Hindenburg calls Hitler to power.



# The laws of capitalism

IN LAST WEEK'S 'Elements of Marxism' we printed an excerpt from Lenin explaining Marx's basic concepts of value and surplus value.

This week's article takes the analysis one step further. Lenin shows how the basic purpose of production under capitalism — the relentless drive towards the self-expansion of capital — creates not just capitalist development but the potential for a higher social order.

Capitalism revolutionises the productivity of human labour, creates a more and more socialised and co-operative labour process, centralises the means of production and links every corner of the globe in a world market.

This lays the material foundation for working class rule and the transition to an economy consciously planned by the freely associated producers.

To avoid misunderstanding, it is important to grasp that the laws of development that Marx and Lenin talk of are not mechanical laws relating discrete and separate cause and effect in the way that a cue hitting a billiard ball "causes" the ball to move.

"The special laws which regulate the origin, existence, development and death of a given social organism, and its replacement by another higher one" (*Capital* Vol I, preface to 2nd edition) are laws of dialectical development through contradiction. Marx looks at society as an evolving whole in which different parts interact and change. It is a unity in which conflicting opposites exist, but cannot co-exist indefinitely without undermining the stability of the whole.

Marx simply could not have believed some of the things he is accused of believing by his bourgeois critics — for instance, his alleged "theory" of the "increasing immiseration" of the working class, supposed to plunge into a never-ending spiral of poverty.

Again, some writers claim that Marx predicted the rate of profit would fall in the same way that we can predict a ball will roll down a hill under the force of gravity.

Only people who think that human society works like a machine could hold such views, or accuse Marx of holding such views.

Marx's scientific method was much richer. As a result he has been proved to be the most farsighted thinker in the entire modern epoch. When Marx and Engels wrote the *Communist Manifesto* the entire world proletariat numbered less than the population of South Korea. Today, the workers make up the decisive majority of the world's population.

If the working class struggle is to be successful it needs theory. So if you want to be a better fighter against capitalism study this series.

THERE ARE TWO historical prerequisites to the genesis [beginning] of capital: first, accumulation of a considerable sum of money in the hands of individuals living under conditions in which there is a comparatively high development of commodity production. Second, the existence of workers who are "free" in a double sense of the term: free from any constraint or restriction as regards the sale of their labour power; free from any bondage to the soil or to the means of production in general — i.e. of propertyless workers, of "proletarians" who cannot maintain their existence except by the sale of their labour power.

There are two fundamental ways in which surplus value can be increased: by an increase in the working day ("absolute surplus value"); and by a reduction in the necessary working day [the hours necessary to produce the equivalent of the workers' basic consumption] ("relative surplus value"). Analysing the former method, Marx gives an impressive picture of the struggle of the working class for shorter hours and of governmental interference, first (from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth) in order to lengthen the working day, and subsequently (factory legislation of the nineteenth century) to shorten it. Since the appearance of *Capital*, the history of the working-class movement in all lands provides a wealth of new facts to amplify this picture.

Analysing the production of relative surplus value, Marx investigates the three fundamental historical stages of the process whereby capitalism has increased the productivity of labour [thus reducing the work hours necessary to pro-

duce basic food, clothing and shelter]; (1) simple cooperation; (2) division of labour, and manufacture; (3) machinery and large-scale industry. How profoundly Marx has here revealed the basic and typical features of capitalist development is shown by the fact that investigations of the so-called "kustar" industry of Russia furnish abundant material for the illustration of the first two of these stages. The revolutionising effect of large-scale machine industry, described by Marx in 1867, has become evident in a number of "new" countries, such as Russia, Japan,

*"The accumulation of capital accelerates the replacement of workers by machinery, and creates wealth at one pole, poverty at the other."*

etc., in the course of the last fifty years.

But to continue. Of extreme importance and originality is Marx's analysis of the accumulation of capital, that is to say, the transformation of a portion of surplus value [i.e., roughly, profit] into capital and the applying of this portion to additional production, instead of using it to supply the personal needs or to gratify the whims of the capitalist. Marx pointed out the mistake made by earlier classical political economy (from Adam Smith on), which assumed that all the surplus value which was transformed into capital became variable capital [funds to employ more workers]. In actual fact, it is divided into means of production plus variable capital. The more rapid growth of constant capital as compared with variable capital in the sum total of capital is of immense importance in the process of development of capitalism and in that of the transformation of capitalism into Socialism.

The accumulation of capital, accelerating the replacement of workers by machinery, creating wealth at the one pole and poverty at the other, gives birth to the so called "reserve army of labour," to a "relative overabundance" of workers or to "capitalist overpopulation." This assumes the most diversified forms, and gives capital the possibility of expanding production at an exceptionally rapid rate. This possibility, in conjunction with enhanced facilities for credit and with the accumulation of capital in the means of production, furnishes, amongst other things, the key to the understanding of the crisis of overproduction that occurs periodically in capitalist countries — first about every ten years, on an average but subsequently in a more continuous form and with a less definite periodicity. From accumulation of capital upon a capitalist foundation we must distinguish the so-called "primitive accumulation": the forcible severance of the worker from the means of production, the driving of the peasants off the land, the stealing of the communal lands, the system of colonies and national debts, of protective tariffs, and the like. "Primitive accumulation" creates, at one pole, the "free" proletariat: at the other, the owner of money, the capitalist.

The "historical tendency of capitalist accumulation" is described by Marx in the following well known terms:

*The expropriation of the immediate producers is effected with ruthless vandalism, and under the stimulus of the most infamous, the basest, the meanest, and the most odious of passions. Self-earned private property [of the peasant and the handicraftsman], the private property that may be looked upon as grounded on a coalescence of the isolated, individual, and independent worker with his working conditions, is supplemented by capitalist private property, which is maintained by the exploitation of others' labour, but of labour which in a formal sense is free... What has now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working on his own account, but the capitalist who exploits many labourers. This expropriation*

*is brought about by the operation of the immanent laws of capitalist production, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist lays a number of his fellow capitalists low. Hand in hand with this centralisation, concomitantly with the expropriation of many capitalists by a few, the co-operative form of the labour process develops to an ever-increasing degree; therewith we find a growing tendency towards the purposive application of science to the improvement of technique; the land is more methodically cultivated; the instruments of labour tend to assume forms which are only utilisable by combined effort; the means of production are economised through being turned to account only by joint, by social labour; all the peoples of the world are enmeshed in the net of the world market, and therefore the capitalist regime tends more and more to assume an international character. While there is thus a progressive diminution in the number of the capitalist magnates (who usurp and monopolise all the advantages of this transformation process), there occurs a corresponding increase in the mass of poverty, oppression, enslavement, degeneration and exploitation; but at the same time there is a steady intensification of the wrath of the working class — a class which grows ever more numerous, and is disciplined, united and organised by the very mechanism of the capitalist method of production. Capitalist monopoly becomes a fetter upon the method of production which has flourished with it and under it. The centralisation of the means of production and the socialisation of labour reach a point where they prove incompatible with their capitalist husk. This bursts asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated. [*Capital* Vol. I].*

*"Under capitalism, cooperation in production develops to an ever-increasing degree."*

NEW AND IMPORTANT in the highest degree, further, is the analysis Marx gives in the second volume of *Capital* of the reproduction of the aggregate social capital. Here, too, Marx deals not with an individual phenomenon but with a mass phenomenon; not with a fractional part of the economy of society but with this economy as a whole. Correcting the mistake of the classical economists mentioned above, Marx divides the entire social production into two big sections: (1) production of means of production, and (2) production of articles of consumption, and examines in detail, with arithmetical examples, the circulation of the aggregate social capital — both in the case of production in its former dimensions and in the case of accumulation. The third volume of *Capital* solves the problem of the formation of the average rate of profit on the basis of the law of value. The immense advance in economic science made by Marx consists in fact that he conducts his analysis from the standpoint of mass economic phenomena, of the social economy as a whole, and not from the standpoint of individual cases or of the external, superficial aspects of competition, to which vulgar political economy and the modern "theory of marginal utility" are limited. Marx first analyses the origin of surplus value, and then goes on to consider its division into profit, interest, and ground rent. Profit is the ratio between the surplus value and the total capital invested in an undertaking. Capital with a "high organic composition" (i.e. with a preponderance of constant capital over variable capital exceeding the social average) yields a lower than average rate of profit; capital with a "low organic composition" yields a higher than average rate of profit. The competition of capitals, and the freedom with which they transfer form one branch to another reduces the rate of profit to the average in both cases. The sum total of the values of all the commodities of a given society coincides with the sum total of prices of the commodities; but owing to competition, in individual undertakings and branches of production commodities

are sold not at their values but at the prices of production (or production prices), which are equal to the expanded capital plus the average profit.

In this way the well-known and indisputable face of divergence between prices and values and of the equalisation of profits is fully explained by Marx on the basis of the law of value; for the sum total of values of all commodities coincides with the sum total of prices. However, the reduction of (social) value to (individual) prices does not take place simply and directly, but in a very complex way. It is quite natural that in a society of separate producers of commodities, who are united only by the market, law can reveal itself only as an average, social, mass law, when individual deviations to one side or the other mutually compensate one another.

An increase in the productivity of labour implies a more rapid growth of constant capital as compared with variable capital. And since surplus value is a function of variable capital alone, it is obvious that the rate of profit (the ratio of surplus value to the whole capital and not to its variable part alone) tends to fall. Marx makes a detailed analysis of this tendency and of a number of circumstances that conceal or counteract it.

## Glossary

In last week's "Elements of Marxism" we saw that:

- Marx's analysis starts from the commodity — a thing that can be bought and sold on the market.

This is the form that the products of human labour take under capitalism.

- The labour that produces commodities has a dual nature: it is both specific, producing a particular kind of useful thing, a use value, and it is also part of the general social labour of society, producing an exchange value (something that can be exchanged for something else).

- Exchange is only possible because the things being exchanged contain a common property: that of being products of labour.

But what commodities share in common in exchange is not this or that specific kind of labour, (if things were the same there would be no point in exchange), but simply the fact that contained in them is a part of the general social labour, what Marx called "abstract labour". As this has no specific qualitative properties it can only be measured by quantity.

- The measure of the value of any particular commodity is therefore the amount of socially necessary labour time needed to produce it.

- The general formula of capital is M-C-M (Money-Commodity-Money) — purchase for the purpose of profit. (Converting one amount of money into commodities in order to get the same amount of money back at the end would be purposeless. Its only rationale can be self-expansion).

- Surplus value is the difference between the original amount of money put into circulation and that taken out.

- The origin of surplus value is a particular commodity, labour power (a human being's ability to work), the use value and exchange value of which diverge.

- The use value of labour power is its ability to create new value while its exchange value is the labour time socially necessary for its production. (The cost of maintaining the worker and his or her dependents).

The purchaser of labour power (the capitalist) can use it far longer than the period of time that is needed to produce enough to maintain the worker and his or her dependents (what is called necessary labour time).

- This surplus labour time is the origin of surplus value, the surplus product for which the direct producer is not paid.

- Capital itself can be divided into constant (expended as means of production) and variable capital (expended as labour power).





The preacher shows his sons the strait and narrow path

# Small-town bigotry made glossy

## Cinema

Belinda Weaver reviews *A river runs through it*

ROBERT REDFORD, who directed this film, made an acting career out of surfaces. In his case, the surface was golden, highly-polished, unruffled. He brought that sheen to this project — and killed it. Set in Missoula, Montana, between 1910 and 1935, the film is based on

Norman Maclean's account of his youth and of his younger, daredevil brother Paul. Their father, a stiff-necked Presbyterian minister, loves God and fly fishing, and he wants the boys to love them too.

Fishing, the love of fishing, is something the brothers share with each other, and with their father; it stands in for all the feelings they can't express.

The brothers spend years apart when the more staid and thoughtful Norman goes east to college. On his

return, he finds Paul even wilder than before, drinking too much, gambling, and involved with Mabel, a half-Indian girl whom the townspeople treat like dirt.

Norman, with his anxious but uncomprehending parents, can do nothing to stop Paul from ruin; Paul's tragedy is the heart of the story.

Or it should be, but Redford makes a mess of it. He shies away from it, and plumps instead for scenery shots and greeting-card wisdom — about

the timelessness of the river, about love and understanding. The drama occurs off-stage.

Redford puts all he can into the fishing scenes — music, beautiful scenery, lovely light — but they don't have enough weight to carry the picture. Yet without them, there would be no picture; the rest is thin, and oddly disconnected, as if vital links were left out.

The material isn't shaped, and things are haphazardly picked up and let drop again. Norman's parents disapprove of Norman's girlfriend Jessie being a Methodist, but the issue fades away. Norman's extreme hesitancy about his career plans sits oddly with his parents' rousing approval. Paul's 'daring' romance with Mabel simply disappears from the story; we never learn how the Maclean parents take it, or what, socially, it costs Paul to pursue it.

Redford uses voice-over, sepia shots and snatches of history to 'place' the story, both geographically and in time, but fails to bring the milieu to life. The Macleans seem to exist in a vacuum; it's just them, the church and the river.

There's a blandness to the film, a turning away from anything messy or chaotic towards the predictable and safe. The scenes of the brothers drunk and showing off seem hackneyed, as does the boys' home life — father sermonising, the family saying grace. It doesn't come alive, and nor do the characters; they're sketches, not portraits.

Redford seems afraid to fill them out, afraid to make them real; everything is flattened.

This retreat from feeling robs Paul's tragedy of weight. There was a story in *A river runs through it*, the rush to ruin of Paul, the golden boy, the fishing artist, who, in reaction against his distant, censorious, competitive father, courts his own destruction. But it's pushed aside.

At the end of the film, the Reverend, now grey-haired, sermonises about his lost son. He speaks of the possibility of complete love even without complete understanding. He's justifying his own failures.

Yet the words sum up Redford's failure to bring the film to life. He has put love and care into this project. It obviously means something to him; it has something he wanted to express. It's enjoyable, easy to swallow, a crowd-pleaser. But it's all surface.

# Dieting makes you sick and sad

## Television

Liz Millward reviews *40 Minutes*

LAST WEEK I said Roseanne and Dan could laugh at adversity. This week they stopped laughing. Not surprisingly, Dan has some difficulty with the idea of his 17 year old daughter married and living away from home, when she hasn't even finished high school. Okay so it isn't funny, but it's great telly.

Absolutely not funny at all is *40 Minutes* (BBC2, 23 February) this week dealing with anorexic teenagers. The programme has been hyped to the

skies, mainly in magazines carrying advertisements for diet and weight loss products.

A few years ago, when anorexia first hit the news as a major killer of young women, *Cosmopolitan* stopped carrying features on dieting. To date, no magazine has stopped using skinny models either in editorial or advertising. The connection between the media portrayal of female desirability as thin and anorexia is always referred to in programmes like *40 Minutes*. But a reference is all it gets — not the headlines it deserves.

1% of teenage girls have an eating disorder. 10% of them will die of it.

If they don't die, most anorexics may never develop a straightforward relationship with food, even after

years of treatment.

Roseanne is deliciously fat, which doesn't stop her being attractive or funny. The same is true of Victoria Wood and Dawn French, who has even opened a clothes shop for fat women. It seems okay for funny women to be fat on TV, indeed, it's almost a requirement, but what about having some fat women in "straight" jobs — newsreader, foreign correspondent, weatherperson? What about some fat sexy women in straight plays?

Bear in mind that television cameras make people look heavier than they are. What must some of these thin women look like in real life? Ugh.

All reasonable people can see that images of sexy, intelligent, sporty actors smoking cigarettes are likely to influence young people to smoke. The same reasonable people demand a ban on cigarette advertising. Clearly smoking is more dangerous than dieting, but the connection between dieting, misery and death is just as scientifically proven as that between smoking and lung disease.

Yet parents and friends who would ban smoking in the home actively encourage young girls to diet.

Go to WH Smith's. There will be 3 or 4 books on giving up smoking, and an entire case of diet books.

For every documentary on anorexia or magazine article on eating disorders there are 10,000 conflicting images and articles.

The truth, that persistent dieting leads to weight gain, ill health misery and even death, is buried under the propaganda of the diet industry.

Hopefully, in the not too distant future, historians will look back at the diet age with the horror with which we look at Chinese foot binding.

# The real Malcolm

## Periscope

*Devil's Advocate*, 12.00, 5 March, Channel 4

The huge revival of interest in Malcolm X, who died 28 years ago, has been given a mega-boost by Spike Lee's film, which is due to open in London on 5 March.

When making his film, Lee is said to have visited Louis Farrakhan, to get him to approve his project. Farrakhan is the present head of the "Nation of Islam", the

organisation which allegedly had Malcolm X shot in 1965!

The real Malcolm X is in danger of getting lost beneath the hype, the myths and the Lee-style profiteering.

In *Devil's Advocate* Darcus Howe examines Malcolm X, arguing "that Malcolm's failure to leave behind an effective organisation has seen his legacy hijacked by extremists and charlatans".

At 9pm on the same evening Channel Four is showing John Akomfrah's documentary on Malcolm, *Seven Songs for Malcolm X*.

# The virtues of family crisis

## Television

Mark Osborn reviews *Devil's Advocate*, Channel 4

LAST SUMMER I interviewed Darcus Howe for *Socialist Organiser*. I went round to his home in Brixton, but for a while I could not find him. It turned out that he was down the road on the look out for the police. Apparently, the day before the cops had flooded the area. He was worried that they were coming back.

In other words, Darcus Howe is a good bloke — well, you couldn't imagine Perry Anderson or Tony Blair or the latter-day Tariq Ali on a street corner, watching out for police harassment, could you?

On Monday night the first of Howe's new series of *Devil's Advocate* was shown. The issue was the Asian extended family.

Despite the fact that all types of family unit often provide stability and love in a brutal world, it is a good thing that the Asian extended family is coming under pressure from the basic bourgeois ideas of individuality, choice and equality. Those who defended the extended family on *Devil's Advocate* clearly reflected the pressure — they spoke for both the extended family and equality for women.

The problem was that this made for a dishonest discussion — the real, extended family in the real world is a place where women are oppressed. That family and its associated cultural values are more oppressive to women than the looser family structure which exists more generally in Britain. And, God knows, that can be oppressive enough!

The more general questions are: where are the Asian communities going? how 'comfortable' do these communities feel? what are the prospects for the socialist vision of a merging of peoples and cultures?

A sign of the problems of integration are the emerging arguments over Muslim schooling, or the anti-Rushdie demonstrations.

There is a visible growth of class divisions. It could not be clearer than it is in the East End of London. Alongside thousands of terribly poor and badly housed Bangladeshi families are a layer of Asian business people who are doing well.

They are on the same track — and probably occupy some of the same shops — as the Jewish traders of fifty years ago. The political reflection is the first Asian Tory MP and a Conservative Asian vote.

Then there is the tension between integration and the maintenance of a distinct community. There are now many British-Asian youth whose first language is English and who grow up with white friends. This is wholly to the good, organically binding communities together, removing potential barriers to common politics, and, on a more mundane level, allowing smoother human relationships.



# Why you should be a socialist

**W**E LIVE IN A capitalist world. Production is social; ownership of the social means of production is private. Ownership by a state which serves those who own most of the means of production is also essentially "private".

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

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

From that come such things as the savage exploitation of Brazilian goldminers, whose life expectancy is now less than 40 years, and the working to death — it is officially admitted by the government! — of its employees by advanced Japanese capitalism. From this comes the economic neglect and virtual abandonment to ruin and starvation of "unprofitable" places like Bangladesh and parts of Africa.

**F**ROM THAT COMES the cultural blight and barbarism of our society force-fed on profitable pap. From it come products with "built-in obsolescence" in a society orientated to the grossly wasteful production and reproduction of shoddy goods, not to the development of leisure and culture.

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

From it comes the unfolding ecological disaster of a world crying out for planning and the rational use of resources, but which is, tragically, organised by the ruling classes around the principle of profitable anarchy and the barbarous worship of blind and humanly irrational market forces.

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

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

From the exploitation of wage-labour comes this society of ours where the rich, who — through their servants and agents — hold state power, fight a relentless class struggle to maintain the people in a mental condition to accept their own exploitation and abuse, and prevent real democratic self-control developing within the forms of what they call democracy. They use tabloid propaganda or — as in the 1984-85 miners' strike — savage and illegal police violence — whatever they need to use. They have used fascist gangs when they needed to, and they will use them again, if necessary.

**A** GAINST THIS SYSTEM we seek to convince the working class — the wage slaves of the capitalist system — to fight for socialism. Socialism means the abolition of wage slavery, the taking of the social economy out of private ownership into common cooperative ownership. It means the full realisation of the old demands for liberty, equality and fraternity.

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

We want public ownership of the major enterprises and a planned economy under workers' control.

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

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

What are the alternatives now? We may face new wars as European and Japanese capitalism confronts the US. Fascism is rising. Poverty, inequality and misery are growing. We are deep in the worse capitalist slump for 60 years.

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

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

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

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

# The eye of the storm

## PLATFORM

Maria Exall reviews *The Eye of the Storm* by Kenneth Leech

**T**HE STORM that Kenneth Leech refers to in the title of his latest book is the same storm Martin Luther King spoke of:

"The storm is rising against the privileged minority of the earth, from which there is no shelter in isolation and armament. The storm will not abate until a just distribution of the fruits of the earth enables man everywhere to live in dignity and human decency."

Like King, Leech is convinced that Christian spirituality is a social spirituality based on a God whose salvation brings a transformation of the world. More specifically, Leech believes an alliance between prophetic Christianity and progressive Marxism offers the last, humane hope for mankind against the barbarism of our late-capitalist age and the fatalism and moral vacuity of our post-modern world. Leech wishes for a meeting of mystics and militants, a solidarity in struggle between socialists and Christians.

Leech has a lot to say about the historical and materialist aspects of the Christian tradition. He exposes the common 'spiritual' fallacies of otherworldliness, supernaturalism and the belief in two kingdoms

— of God and the world. As such, he is at the forefront of strands of theological thinking that emphasise wholeness as the necessary approach for a reunion with internal integrity and a relevance to everyday life.

He describes how the Christian themes of mystery, the desert and the kingdom are not, in truth, flights from the world and social responsibility but are, instead, spiritual resources for the pursuit of justice. Leech also believes it is vital to recognise that social justice is not an optional extra that comes with faith, but that grace is a call to participate in history.

The theme of liberation is the centre of this book: the liberation that is at the heart of the Christian gospel; the liberation that dominates Jewish history; the liberation that has informed the minority and rebellious tradition within Christian experience; which has spoken out against the individualistic and spiritualised interpretation of faith. Leech has more interesting things to say about the false dualism of 'spirituality' and materialism that is such a large part of our Western culture and much Christian tradition.

Leech sees this dualism as anti-Christian, denying the fundamental truths of incarnation (God becoming flesh), resurrection (raising of the body) and sacrament (the joining of the 'holy' and the 'common'). He is right, of course — anything less than this materialism is not tra-

ditional Christianity — except the persistence of the body/spirit dualism to this day shows it is the most orthodox heresy around.

Leech describes the main liberation theologies and progressive spiritualities; black liberation, lesbian and gay liberation; the struggle to acknowledge a spirituality of sexuality; green and creation spirituality; the spirituality and politics of non-violence; and feminist ideology. Leech sees a common thread in all these approaches — a starting point "at the bottom — where the pain is", and a central concern for the exploited, broken and marginalised in our society.

Leech believes the integration of political struggle with the search for personal identity in liberation struggles is very important. Nowhere more so than in the history of the movement for lesbian and gay rights. Leech holds that most of the confusion about sexuality in the Western world has projected onto lesbians and gay men. He highlights the inability of Christianity to deal with sexual difference and its consequential failure to deal with homophobia in the churches and in society. He believes issues around AIDS can confront the churches in their hypocrisy and narrowness and could lead to a positive and honest dialogue.

Leech comments on the rise of fundamentalism, both as identified with the political right and more generally as a limited religious vision. In all

its forms, he concludes, it is a backward force in human history. He also comments on the Tories' use of 'Christian values' and how it stands opposed to his own religious tradition of dissident, socialist Anglo-Catholicism. He explains his pastoral experience of anti-racist work, and work with homeless people. His personal approach to understanding the world around him and his faith is as an "ascent to truth... not gradual, gentle or free from difficulty: it involves struggle, conflict with illusion, and the encounter with darkness and doubt."

Truth figures quite highly on Kenneth Leech's agenda. A truth somewhere between the polarities of "sacred text and moral void", between the pseudo-certainty of fundamentalists, and the cultural pluralism of post-modernists. From the counter-culture of the '60s to New Age spirituality he sees elements of a striving towards the new, but also he sees the threats of a new religious fascism. Leech assesses a characteristic of our time as the loss of faith and hope in anything — particularly a loss of belief in the possibility of social transformation. He thinks most people experience an emptiness: a loss of rootedness in a living tradition. It doesn't stop him walking into the heart of the storm.

This is a profound book, worth reading if you are all interested in modern Christianity and its politics.

# Alliance for Workers' Liberty public meetings

## Thurs 25 Feb

**"Deportations from Israel — what we can do".**

Leeds City Poly AWL meeting.

12.30, Student Union Coffee Lounge, Old Castle Street.

## On Form

The latest Socialist Organiser workplace bulletin, *On Form*, has been launched by civil servants in Brighton.

Issue number 2 went out last week.

If you live in the Brighton area and would like to help us distribute *On Form* phone Garry on 071-639 7965.

## Thurs 4 March

**"Labour Must Fight"**

Leeds AWL meeting. 7.30 Adelphi

## Weds 10 March

**"Race and Class — which way for the black communities?"**

London AWL Forum. 7.30 Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road

## Thurs 11 March

**"Labour Must Fight"**

Sheffield AWL meeting. 7.30. SCCAU, West Street.

**"The Legacy of Malcolm X"**

Canterbury AWL meeting. 7.30 Sidney Cooper Centre.

## Health Workers

**Sat 27 February**  
Demonstration to Stop the closure of Guy's Hospital. Assemble 12.00 Gomm Road, Southwark, South London.

## Public Sector

**Sat 6 March**  
Public Sector Alliance

## Conference

Burslem Town Hall, Stoke

## Miners

**Sat 27 February**  
Conference to discuss the fight against pit closures 11.00 — 5.00 Manchester Metropolitan University  
Called by North West Miners Support Group

# Fight the right, sell the paper

"Dear comrades

Here is the money for the last couple of weeks' papers. I sold all the copies of *Socialist Organiser* and *Youth Fightback* you sent me.

The *Youth for Justice* campaign is going well. Even some of my teachers have signed the petition against police harassment

Sam, Suffolk"

**WHY NOT JOIN** the growing number of *Socialist Organiser* sellers. Take a few copies to sell at work or college: phone Jill on 071-639 7965 for details.



## THE INDUSTRIAL FRONT

## Support Timex strikers!

Mass pickets and demonstrations have taken place over the past week at the Timex factory in Dundee following the sacking of 300 striking workers.

The workers came out on strike on 29 January. Their union, the AEEU, had originally agreed to 110 temporary lay-offs at the plant. The union had demanded that, in fairness to the workforce, the lay-offs, which were expected to last about six months, be rotated. Management refused. Hall, the

boss of the factory, insisted on choosing the workers to be laid off. A pay freeze and attacks on other conditions were included in the package presented to the workers.

The original ballot for strike action was 92% in favour. Since then, workers have twice rejected deals negotiated by their union at mass meetings, despite threats by Timex bosses to sack the entire workforce.

Last week a mass meeting overwhelmingly rejected the

second so-called 'Peace Plan'. On Thursday morning the three hundred workers were sacked. Their jobs had been advertised in the previous evening's paper.

AEEU steward Martin Will spoke to *Socialist Organiser* about the dispute:

"On Christmas Eve, when the convenors and most of the stewards were on leave, management called a mass meeting in the canteen to tell the workers that 170 shop floor workers and 30 staff would have to be laid off for 12-26 weeks, starting during the holidays. They guaranteed that everyone would be re-employed after this period — they were not making compulsory redundancies. Management did not try to pretend that they were operating an objective selection criteria for the lay offs — supervisors were allowed to choose who they wanted. This resulted in one supervisor, who had only worked at the factory for two weeks, deciding to keep on a worker who had been there for two years, and lay off someone who had been there for twenty years. The way management went about it also made it clear their intention to de-unionise the factory. The convenor, deputy convenor and seven out of the ten stewards were laid off.

"The AEEU's response to this was to call for short-time working — a week on and a week off for all. After the Christmas break those not laid off report-

ed for work as normal while negotiations went on for two weeks. After the two week period a mass meeting agreed to ballot for all-out action, and there was an overwhelming 'yes' vote'. On the first day of the strike there were 250 workers picketing the gate.

"However, Timex got an injunction against the AEEU, and the convenors are due in court this week. Since then there have only been six pickets, the rest have been demonstrating.

"The 70 office staff in the factory have not come out on strike and have been doing shop-floor work. The MSF officials, apparently half-heartedly, advised them not to, but the staff have kow-towed to management's threat to sack anyone who refused to do the work of the strikers.

"After two-and-a-half weeks out on strike it was agreed to return to work. ACAS were to be involved in negotiations over rotating the lay-offs.

"However, Timex had proposed a series of attacks on working conditions during the dispute which include a pay freeze; increasing the working week from 37 to 40 hours; scrapping the end of year bonus; cutting their contribution to pensions by 3%; ending the employee savings plan; and doing away with the canteen subsidy with the aim of eventually shutting it. These attacks amount to a wage cut of 10% and were rejected by the workers. While the union meeting was going on management

locked the gates and subsequently issued all shop-floor workers with dismissal notices, including 16 workers who had been bussed in to scab on the dispute.

"After the lock out 50 police brutally removed all the pickets. The police are now trying to stop people going to work after weeks of trying to get people to go to work!

"The strikers have not buckled. Our members are solid. We have rejected 'Hoover-style' conditions, is the defiant message of the Timex workers.

"The day after the lockout management advertised for staff, and have contacted all ex-employees (not the strikers!) to invite them back to work. The strength of support the strikers have had from the community has meant that this strategy has failed."

The dispute is at a crucial stage. To ensure victory the Timex workers need the maximum solidarity from the movement as a whole.

There has been a very good response to bucket collections in Dundee, and levies have been started in local factories to fund the dispute. Cash and moral support is needed. The £30 official strike pay has not yet come through and donations are urgently needed.

Send donations to: AEEU, 2 Union Street, Dundee. Phone 0382-22406 for speakers and further information.

## London Buses

## Build on the buses ballot

London's busworkers have voted for industrial action against the attacks on their wages and conditions. Management are trying to force new contracts on all the units and have given them deadlines by which to accept. Each unit is being given different contracts and different headlines but the bus workers, rightly, see it as one attack across the whole of London and have responded accordingly in the ballot.

Many of the units' deadlines have already passed, or are being extended for a few days, but the London Bus Committee have not acted on the ballot result and called action. Workers are being sent letters through the post saying they will be sacked if they don't sign. But the union leadership are still dragging their feet, either looking to the courts or using the excuse of the need for a special conference to interpret the results of the ballot.

This is ridiculous. The courts, even if they thought they could win which is unlikely, could take years. The special conference is an unnecessary delay. The result does not need interpreting. In the meantime the best militants in the garages are being left in the air, not waiting to sign the new contracts but not having any lead over action from the union.

They must put pressure on the union to act on the ballot result, and start all-out, London-wide action as soon as possible. If deadlines are passed in the meantime, sign the contracts — there is no point in the best militants being heroically sacked as individuals. The garages need them where they are, in the garages — but build for action during which the new contracts can be ripped up.

## No more Cambuslang here!

Timex management's bullying tactics are part of an overall offensive against workers by Scottish Engineering, the bosses' organisation. The successful use of similar bullying tactics against the workforce of the Hoover plant in Cambuslang has given the bosses confidence to have a go.

The workers at Timex, three-quarters of whom are women, have taken a heroic stand. Their refusal to be intimidated by the employers' hard-line policy has galvanised support from workers right across Scotland. Meanwhile, at Yarrow's Shipyards in Glasgow the three

week strike remains solid. 1,300 workers are still out for a decent wage offer. The employers, who originally refused to negotiate, have now been forced to the table.

The defiant stand of both Timex and Yarrow workers sends a clear message to Scottish engineering bosses — in the words of one Dundee placard "No More Cambuslang Here!"

The Scottish TUC should name the day for a major demonstration for jobs which could link the battles at Yarrow's and Timex to the need to kick out the Tories.

## Miners and railworkers: step up campaign for strike vote

By a railworker

The Tories are delaying and delaying the release of the promised White Paper on

the future of the coal industry.

The report, originally promised for this month, is now unlikely to appear before the middle of March at the earliest. All the signs are that the vast bulk of the 31 collieries on the Tories' hit list will be closed. The number of pits 'saved' could be as few as five.

A major battle to defend both pit and rail jobs is necessary.

That battle starts now. It is vital to do everything possible to build for a huge 'yes' vote in the forthcoming joint NUM-NACODS-RMT ballot.

The key to that is campaign-

ing. We need mass meetings, canteen meetings, special leaflets, etc.

Most of all, the leaders of the RMT have to go out and convince people to vote for action. That means linking the issue of jobs losses to the pay freeze, privatisation and the new machinery of negotiation.

Pressure has to be put on the ASLEF leadership to link up with the RMT's action. In the event of the ASLEF leaders refusing to ballot, ASLEF rank and filers need to get over the arguments for not crossing picket lines.

## Breakthrough at Burnsall's

After seven months of stalemate, the Burnsall's dispute in Smethwick is beginning to bite. The mainly female Asian workforce went on strike last summer demanding recognition of their union, the GMB, and improvements in their lousy pay, working conditions and health and safety.

However, the employers have steadfastly refused to offer and concessions, or even negotiate. A scab workforce has allowed the company to maintain production.

Now it looks as though a breakthrough has been achieved: Jaguar Cars (which account for 70% of Burnsall's business) have

told their component suppliers to start looking at alternative sources of metal coating. Already a major Jaguar supplier has stopped using Burnsall's.

This, combined with a series of tribunal cases to be heard next month, will massively increase the pressure on Burnsall's management. The feeling of the strikers is that if Burnsall is not prepared to make major concessions very soon it will be forced out of business.

Donations and messages of support to Burnsall Strike Fund, GMB, Will Thorne House, 2 Birmingham Road, Halesowen, West Midlands.

## BT workers face 'flexible' hours threat

By a Central London BT engineer

Managers in the Personnel Communications Division of BT (the people who work on residential phonedlines and phone boxes) are determined to push through a new 'flexible' hours system. They want:

\* Seven day working, with Saturday and Sunday as part of the 'normal' working week.  
\* The abolition of 'fixed' start and finish times.

The carrot attached to this stick is the introduction of a four day week and a one hour reduction in total working hours to 36.5 per week.

Telecom engineers need to be clear on how to respond:

\* We do not want any *divisional* deals. Any agreement on hours has to be a national deal for *all* engineers. We must not be divided.

\* We need to argue for a big increase in basic rates and the defence of existing overtime payments for weekend working.

\* We must defend fixed start and finish times. It makes your life a nightmare if you do not know when you will finish at the time you start. Why should our managers have the right to dictate when we have free time.

\* We must send a clear message to the NCU leadership — no secret deals! We need full and detailed reports to branches at every stage of negotiations.

## Boycott English SATs now! Mobilise for action for pay!

By an NUT member

It may be hard to believe this but there has never been a better time for teachers to take on the Tories.

It is true that the Tories continue to mount a sustained attack on comprehensive education. It is true that under the impact of Tory cuts class sizes are rising everywhere whilst teachers face the sack or worsened conditions of service. It is true that the Tories intend to reintroduce streaming and condition working-class children for their 'place' in society. It is even true that the current paltry pay offer heralds the imminent introduction of

performance related pay and an end to national pay bargaining. *In toto* the Tories continue to successfully turn education into a mirror image of the dog-eat-dog capitalist market place.

But, unlike previous years, there are signs that teachers have not only had enough with the Tories, but are prepared to do something about the situation. Although the signs are limited, rank-and-file teachers must look to turn the anger into action.

Grounds for optimism appear in the universal opposition to English tests for secondary students. Even headteachers, inspectors and some LEAs have said they will boycott these tests, or SATs as they are known.

The most significant sign of resistance is the NUT's indicative ballot showing that 91% of English teachers are prepared to boycott the tests and over 80% of all secondary teachers are prepared to strike if teachers are victimised for refusal to conduct tests.

Some readers might think that the 0.55% pay award linked to performance related pay should concern trade unionists more than the tests. They would be wrong. The two issues are linked. But, unlike the pay front, there is evidence that teachers want to fight the tests.

These tests are a key plank of Tory education policy. A successful boycott will show that if English teachers can resist SATs, other teachers can also win. It will be possible to throw out the government's whole system

of testing.

And if the tests can be stopped, why not opting out, performance related pay and cuts?

A successful boycott will show beyond doubt that the best way to resist the Tories is by national action. A successful SATs boycott will contrast starkly with the national union's feeble efforts to resist job cuts where, despite the best efforts of some local left branches, LEAs continue to reduce the teaching workforce.

Most important of all, a successful boycott will show that the Tories can be beaten. What better way to promote a pay campaign and begin a national crusade in defence of teaching jobs?

We now need to turn the NUT's indicative ballot into a real one. The left must get as many associations to pass resolutions urging the National Executive to ballot *now* for a full boycott of English SATs, and prepare to resist all SATs.

Without pressure from below, the Executive will use any excuse, particularly a partial government climbdown, to avoid confrontation. The left must also use the SATs issue to mobilise opposition to the pay settlement and build support for national resistance to job losses.

Action against SATs could yet be one of the sparks to light mass working-class resistance to the Tories.

## The Industrial Front

Miners at Ellington colliery in the North East have voted for a series of one-day strikes against the use of outside private contractors.

Workers at Peugeot were due to strike for one day on Monday 24 February. The action is the start of a campaign against this year's pay deal.

Night-shift workers at the metal stamping and body plant at Fords Halewood walked out last week in protest at threats of redundancies.

## Striking designs

By a Wandsworth NALGO member

Wandsworth Council graphic designers walked out on indefinite strike on Tuesday 23 February. They had been threatened with the loss of two designers' jobs.

The branch executive supports the strikers but the District does not — yet. They will not give the dispute official backing because they do not consider it an emergency and there has been no branch meeting to discuss the issue.

We are not prepared to hold off action until a branch meeting can be held. An immediate strike disrupts the Council's plan for leaflets on the Council Tax.

At our emergency branch meeting we will also decide to go for a branch-wide ballot for a one-day strike against redundancies on 18 March. In the meantime we will have the best designed leaflets ever seen — but no thanks to our NALGO District!



# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

## Help your socialist weekly!



Health workers can win wide support. Photo: John Harris

### UCH prepares for action

# Fight the NHS cuts!

#### Socialist Organiser spoke to the NUPE Branch Secretary, University College Hospital

**W**ORKERS AT University College Hospital began a work in on 10 February

Although we are not on strike we expect to be taking action within the next few weeks. Management are threatening to close and padlock the main building by 31 July.

UCH management are planning to shut wards, and move other wards to the nearby Middlesex Hospital.

They planned to move a plastic surgery ward to an old children's ward at the Middlesex but found that the beds were too big and too heavy for

the floor. They also say they will build new wards, but it is difficult to see how this can be done by 31 July.

It is impossible to get a figure for how many jobs are at risk, but immediately hundreds of jobs could be under threat. In the longer term thousands could go.

Management claim they will save £11-12 million by closing UCH. £6 or £7 million of this figure will be either job cuts or ward closures at the Middlesex.

We had some battles here last year. This time we realise we are actually up against the government. We have responded by launching a Save UCH campaign in the local area. We have just raised £1,000 from local pubs, tenants' associations and trade unions.

Caretakers and NUPE members from Camden Council are distributing our campaign broadsheet round local estates.

Camden Labour group have sent a message of support and taken collections.

#### How you can help the UCH workers

- GET A SPEAKER to your Labour Party or trade union meeting. Phone 071-387 9300 x 5479.
- SEND A DONATION (Cheques payable to "UCH strike fund") to the UCH unions, UCH, Gower Street, London W1.

**S**OCCIALIST ORGANISER has been raising extra funds to help our expansion plans. In the past two years readers and supporters have raised and donated thousands of pounds to help Socialist Organiser. Most of the extra money has been used to buy new equipment for the production of the paper. The effect is a better quality socialist weekly.

But we still need your help. New openings have emerged since the explosion of anger against the Tory pit closure plans announced last October. Many working-class people are looking for answers to unemployment, cuts and crisis. One of our comrades, Mark Serwotka, is running for the President of the CPSA as the left candidate. In the colleges and in the National Union of Students our comrades are the focus for the left as the Tories try to smash up NUS.

Making the most of new opportunities includes encouraging people to join our organisation and to sell Socialist Organiser. We are also asking for donations to help our work.

#### Help our work!

IF YOU THINK Socialist Organiser's message is worth hearing, why not send a donation? Send cheques/POs (payable to 'Socialist Organiser') to: PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

This week we have received promises of over £1,500 towards our fund drive. Thanks to all comrades involved in raising this money.

#### Join us!

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