

# SOCIALIST

**National Conference**

Youth **UNITED** against racism

**Saturday 14 May**

11:00am - 5:00pm. Davenant Centre  
Whitechapel, East London.

Write for details to:  
Students Union, Southwark College, The Cut, London SE1

**ORGANISER**

*It will be socialism or barbarism!*

# UNITY!



- **Unite the anti-racist campaigns**
- **Defeat the BNP! Vote Labour on 5 May!**
- **Labour support for black self-defence**
- **Black and white, unite and fight**

Join the TUC demo against racism on 19 March. Assemble 11am Spitalfields, London



# Unite the campaigns, turn to the labour movement!

There should be one united anti-racist/anti-fascist organisation. The competition between the Anti-Nazi League, Anti-Racist Alliance, Youth Against Racism in Europe, and Anti-Fascist Action, is wasteful and destructive. In 1992 three separate marches were organised in South East London to protest at the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence! On 16 October 1993 the Anti-Nazi League and the Anti-Racist Alliance both held anti-racist marches in London, on the same day and on much the same demands. One big march would have been much better.

The sad fact is that each of the campaigns has a hidden agenda.

The Anti-Nazi League aims to build a liberal consensus against Nazis, within which the Socialist Workers' Party can recruit mem-

bers.

Youth Against Racism in Europe is designed to build "Militant Labour".

The Anti-Racist Alliance's "principle" of a "black leadership" is a cover to allow certain careerists to appoint themselves as leaders.

We want to see one anti-racist campaign that works in the trade unions, the Labour Party and the black communities, opposing all racism.

We need a movement able physically to prevent fascist groups from organising their thug squads. It should unite white and black workers in the fight for full employment and decent housing for all — thus cutting the ground from under the feet of the racist agitators.

A start has been made with local unity committees set up in many

areas to organise for the TUC demonstration on 19 March. Those committees should be continued, broadened out where necessary, and tied into a united movement.

The next big job will be to campaign against the fascist candidates in the May local government elections. Any serious anti-racist campaign — that is, any anti-racist campaign based in the labour movement — must call for a Labour vote against the fascists. It is another sign of the weakness and sectarianism of the present campaigns that none of them will make that call. ARA and ANL say no more than "don't vote Nazi" — i.e. vote Tory, Liberal, whatever else you like.

Unity, and unity based on an orientation to the labour movement — that is the way forward for anti-racist campaigners.

## How to beat the racists

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty organises socialists to fight for working-class solutions to the crisis. If we do not then black people, Jews and foreigners will be scapegoated; the working class will be split along ethnic lines; and we will all lose — black and white.

Socialists must be part of the basic organisations of the working class, the trade unions and the Labour Party and help to turn them outwards to campaign on the estates and streets.

- A decent home for everyone! Demand government money to enable local councils to undertake a crash programme of compulsory purchase of empty properties, renovation, and house-building, to create new homes at affordable rents.

- Jobs for all! Cut the work week

to 35 hours; create useful new jobs by restoring and expanding public services; provide training and re-training at union rates of pay. To pay for this: tax the rich, cut arms spending, take control of the big banks and financial institutions.

- Restore the Health Service and other public services.

- Jobs, training or education for all youth, with union rates of pay or an adequate grant.

- Make the police accountable to elected local committees. Defend civil liberties: fight to replace the existing bureaucratic, hierarchical capitalist state by a regime based on accountability and workers' control.

- Scrap the immigration laws! No more deportations!

- Fight for real equality in employment and housing.

Council-house allocation by need, not by race under disguise of a "sons and daughters" policy. Special training programmes to ensure real equality in employment for ethnic minorities.

- Equality in the labour movement. No toleration for racist prejudice: special campaigns to recruit and integrate ethnic minority workers.

- Labour movement support for black communities' self-defence; united black and white workers' defence squads to beat back the fascists.

The labour movement must stand up and fight! That is the only way to beat the Tories, the capitalists and the racists. Help us fight in the labour movement for these ideas!

Join the Alliance for Workers' Liberty.

## No to state bans!

"THE STRUGGLE against fascism, the defence of the positions the working class has won within the framework of degenerating democracy, can become a powerful reality since it gives the working class the opportunity ... to mobilise the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie on the side of the revolution, to create a workers' militia, etc... Anyone who does not take advantage of this situation, who calls on the "state", i.e. the class enemy, to "act", in effect sells the proletariat's hide to the Bonapartist reaction.

Therefore, we must vote against all measures that strengthen the capitalist-Bonapartist state, even those measures which may for the moment cause temporary unpleasantness for the fascists...

We have to take strong measures against the abstract "anti-fascist" mode of thinking that finds entry even into our own ranks at times.

"Anti-fascism" is nothing, an empty concept used to cover up Stalinist skulduggery".

(Leon Trotsky, *Bourgeois Democracy and the Fight Against Fascism, Writings 1935-6 p.242*. "Bonapartist" here means dictatorial, authoritarian).

"No matter how true it is that the social democracy by its whole policy prepared the blossoming of fascism, it is no less true that fascism comes forward as a deadly threat primarily to that same social democracy, all of whose magnificence is inextricably bound with parliamentary-democratic-pacifist forms and methods of government..."

The policy of a united front of the workers against fascism flows from this situation...

We will have to make agreements with the various social-democratic organisations and factions against

fascism, putting definite conditions in this connection to the leaders, before the eyes of the masses... We must return from the empty official phrase about the united front policy of the united front as it was formulated by Lenin and always applied by the Bolsheviks in 1917". (Leon Trotsky, *The Turn in the Communist International and the German Situation, 1930*)

"To bar the road to fascism, to bar it once and for all, it does not suffice that workers oppose it physically at demonstrations; it does not suffice to denounce its infamies in Germany and Italy. Today we defend ourselves against the rise of reaction, but... to be efficacious this resistance must transform itself into a struggle for power."

(Trotsky, *Conversation with a Dissident from Saint-Denis, Writings 1933-4, p. 292*)

## Black unity and workers' unity

THERE are about 55 million people in Britain, of whom just over three million, or 5.5 per cent, are members of ethnic minorities. About half of those are of South Asian backgrounds — 840,000 Indian, 475,000 Pakistani, and 160,000 Bangladeshi.

A further 885,000 are black people, including half a million Afro-Caribbeans and 200,000 black Africans.

The remainder are, according to the 1991 census, 644,000 "Chinese and others".

The bulk of these people live in

the London area and the West Midlands. Only 100,000 live in Scotland and Wales.

According to the TUC, black workers are more likely than whites to join trade unions. They are as likely as whites to attend union meetings, but are under-represented as union officers.

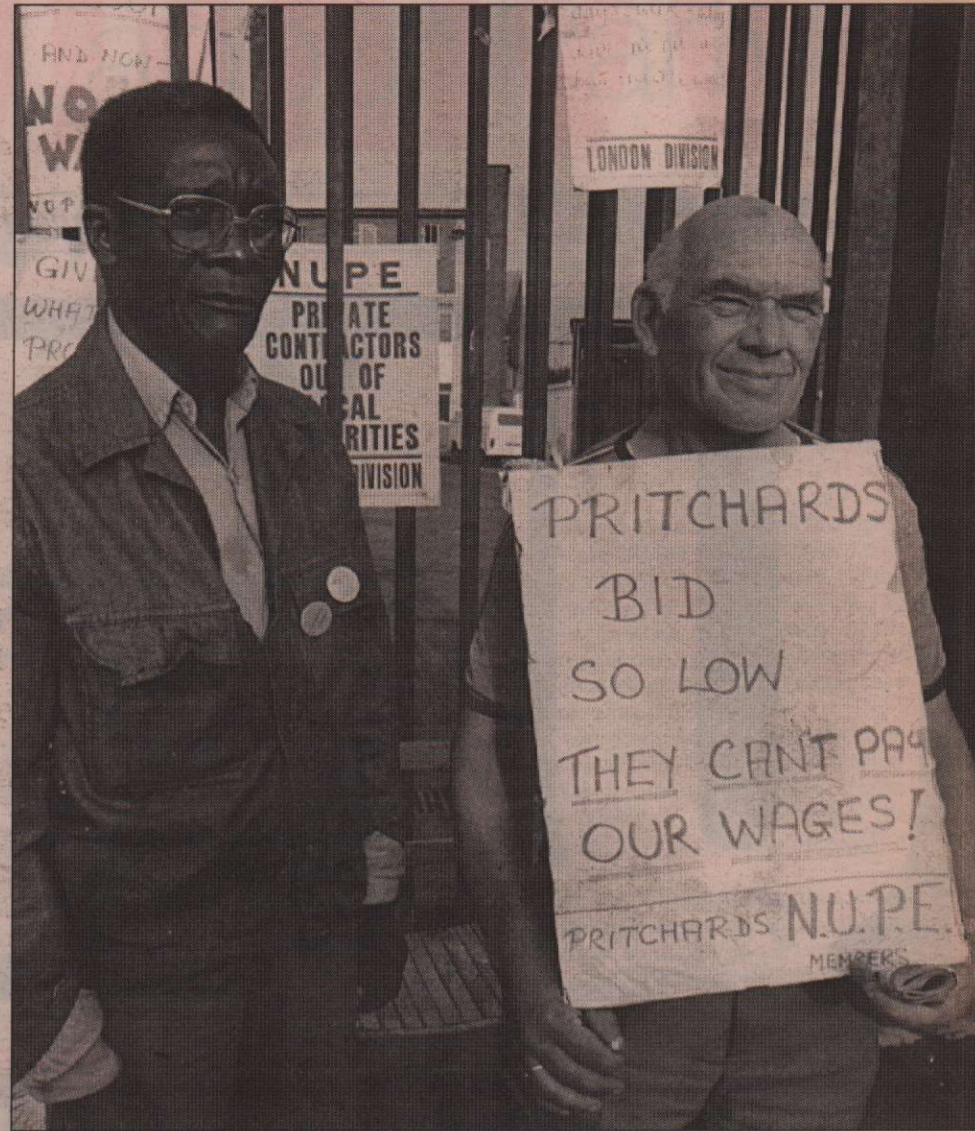
Among the different groups of non-white workers, there are big differences in unionisation rates. Among women of Afro-Caribbean background, the rate is 48 per cent. A lot of these women work in the public sector, an area of relative-

ly high unionisation.

Among Bangladeshi workers, by contrast, only one in four is unionised. The overall average unionisation rate in Britain is one in three.

In some immigrant groups, strong community bonds are double-edged, both a buffer against a brutal society and a mechanism which keeps workers pinned to "their" bosses.

Black people are much more likely to vote Labour than whites. The lowest estimate in the 1983 general election was 64 per cent for



Black and white unite and fight!

## Why are the racists growing?

Why are the racists growing? Because the labour movement is weak and right-wing-led. Because it does not put up an adequate fight against the Tory government. Because it does not denounce and fight the unemployment, the bad housing, the destruction of the National Health Service and the thousand other social atrocities to which the workers in Britain are subjected.

Nevertheless, only the labour movement can — under left-wing influence — can wipe out the roots of racism and fascism.

One of two things. Either fascism is now a freakish, marginal growth. Or it is a force with the potential to grow and do to the labour movement what fascism did in the '20s and '30s in Italy and Germany.

If it is just a matter of a few freaks and lunatics, then fascism can indeed be fought by poster parades, liberal speeches against racism, and a bit of rough-hous-

ing with fascist thugs here and there. But if the new fascism grows organically out of the rottenness spreading through capitalist society, with deep and strong social roots, then the only serious "anti-fascism" is the struggle for socialism — the struggle to overthrow a capitalism which is once again spawning mass fascism.

The signs point to the second alternative: fascism is now a more serious threat than at any time for half a century. Unity with maverick Tories and Liberals in the name of "anti-fascism" cannot take us forward.

The only serious anti-fascism now is that which organises workers to fight back against racism and fascism while immersing itself in the fight to renew the labour movement. Unless the labour movement is won to our ideas, we cannot hope to win.

That is why serious anti-racists must turn to the labour movement — Labour Party and trade unions alike — and help the left

transform it once more into a force for human solidarity and social progress.

### HOW TO BEAT THE RACISTS



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country, mixed with the Britishness of a Birmingham or London accent.

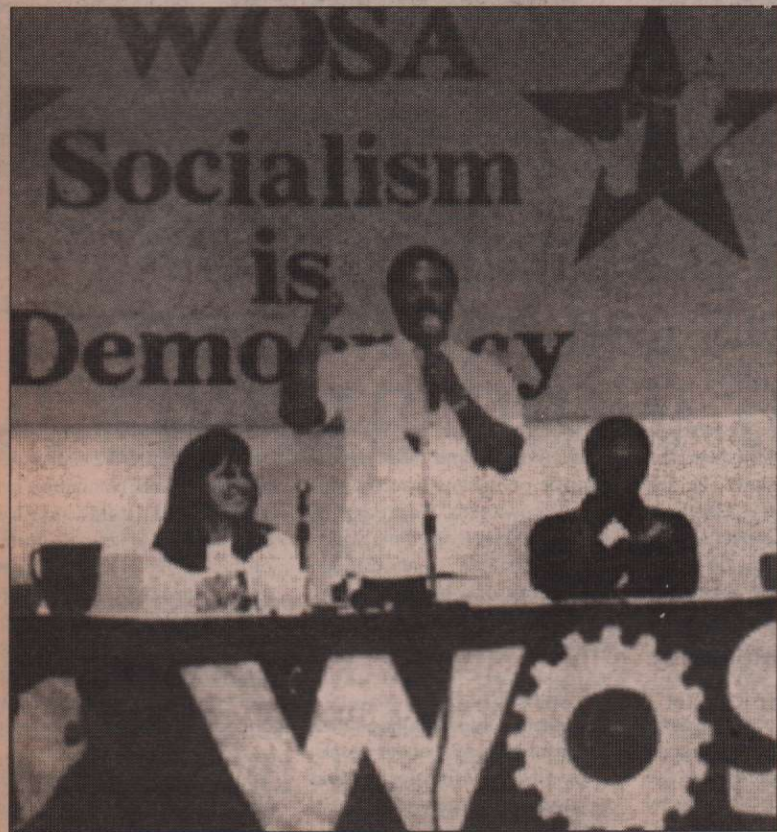
The black middle class — a base for "black nationalism" — is not one group, but many. The richer groups have money which can buy a little space from the sharp end of racism. As far as the middle class is concerned, the issue is an equal right to exploit, a fair chance in business or as a professional. In the class struggle, these groups will end up on the wrong side.

Workers' unity, not "black unity", is the answer to racism.



## South African socialists launch Workers' List Party

# "Only the workers can free the workers"



WOSA: one of the participating groups in the Workers' List Party



Black South African workers need a party that is prepared to attack the system

**The Workers' List Party of South Africa is an umbrella group for different left-wing groups, trade union and community activists who believe the workers of South Africa need their own mass workers' party. To this end they are standing candidates in next month's elections. We fully support the comrades' stand and will do everything we can to help organise financial and material support for them in the British labour movement. We have given over our editorial page to their manifesto.**

**T**HE WLP ENTERS the elections in order to promote the formation of a Mass Workers' Party (MWP). We believe that only such a Workers' Party will be able to carry forward the struggle of the exploited and oppressed masses of South Africa. We do not believe that any of the white or black nationalist parties can solve the crisis of unemployment, homelessness, disease, illiteracy and poverty that afflict the urban and the rural poor, those who live in the crime-ridden townships and squatter settlements of our cities, in the rural slums in the Bantustans and in the slave-like conditions on the white farms and in the dorps [small farming towns]. These parties cannot do so because they accept the capitalist system.

This system has not solved any of these questions anywhere in the world, especially not on the continent of Africa. Only a party that is firmly against the capitalist system can hope to do away with these conditions.

We believe that a Mass Workers' Party based on democratic socialist principles will find the solutions together with the workers of Southern Africa, of Africa and of the World. Nationalism has reached the end of the road of struggle for liberation; it has compromised with the capitalist class of bosses and apartheid bureaucrats. Only the workers can free the workers. To promote these ideals we have formed the Workers' List to fight these elections on the basis of the following manifesto.

### 1. The Right to Work

We stand for the right to work for every worker including the unemployed! A strong campaign against retrenchment must be immediately launched. Bosses who have retrenched or are planning retrenchment must be blacklisted and fought. We demand an immediate end to all retrenchment [redundancies], an end to unemployment and work for all or a living unemployment benefit. A powerful movement of the unemployed must be built in alliance with the unions.

Foreign investments will not solve the problem of unemployment. Foreign companies mainly come to SA to make quick profits from cheap labour. We stand for a massive public works programme of electrification, building houses, schools, creches, parks, halls and roads in primarily townships. This programme must be under workers' control. The unemployed must be drawn in at a living wage. There must be a paid, state-run training scheme for youth.

### 2. Health, Education, Housing and Social Services

We stand for state provision of free and compulsory education for all up

to and including matric. We believe that a right to free tertiary education is a necessity, state provision of adequate housing for all, as well as state provision of free health, legal, recreational and other community services that will ensure the highest possible quality of life for working people. We stand for paid education leave of 30 days for each worker per year as well as longer periods of training to be negotiated with worker organisations. We believe that an immediate mass literacy campaign is essential.

### 3. The Economy and Democracy

The alternative we propose to the undemocratic command economy that existed in the Soviet Union and the brutality of market capitalism which causes inequality, unemployment, wastage, war and environment degradation is a socialist democracy. This means that a democratic planning process, although calling for a central plan to ensure the main social needs like employment, housing, health, education and food are met, also allows for decentralisation of decision-making. This must extend down to the work place and community, so that working-class control over the means of production and distribution takes on real meaning. We believe in socialism from below. This is the essence of Democracy. Democracy is not about voting every five years. We can't eat the vote. Democracy is about controlling the fruits of our labour. It is about deciding what to produce and how to produce and how to live. It is not about production and distribution for the profits of a few, but about production and distribution for human needs.

In SA less than 0.1% of the popu-

lation owns over 80% of the wealth of this country through their control of the big monopoly companies like Anglo American, Sanlam, SA Mutual, Rembrandt and the Liberty Life group. We could not possibly have real freedom unless the wealth of the country, robbed by conquest and exploitation for over three centuries is taken from the minority and restored to the majority. Only in this way will the state have the resources to provide jobs, housing, education, health and social services for all. The

*"We believe that our demands can only be won through class struggle methods. Holding hands with the bosses is not the way to fight."*

production and distribution of goods will be based on human needs and not profits.

We stand for nationalisation under workers' control of the monopoly companies, banks, mines and land without compensation. The capitalists have been living in luxury for all these years at our expense. Small businesses will not be affected, but we insist the rights of workers be respected in these businesses. We also insist that areas that have been privatised or are about to be privatised like railways, electricity, steel etc. be re-nationalised under workers' control.

### 4. Trade Unions and Community Organisations



The MWP will stand for strong, united and democratic trade unions and community organisations. We will campaign for a living wage, a 35 hour week without loss of pay, an end to retrenchment, scab labour and lock-outs. We believe there should be a full right to strike and picket. Bosses should fully disclose information — there should be no business secrets.

We believe that our demands can only be won through class struggle methods. Holding hands with the bosses is not the way to fight. The National Economic Forum approach will result in workers having to accept lower wages and limit strike action as has happened in other countries. The MWP will not try to rescue capitalism, but to replace it. Direct action by workers is better than 1,000 joint forums with the bosses and the state.

Class struggle methods mean that trade unions and civics must be independent of the bosses, the state and of nationalist organisations. The MWP will actively campaign for the demands of the Workers' Charter and the building of a single, united, democratic, independent Trade Union Federation.

*"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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## WE SAY

### Mad Tory disease

BSE — THE SO-CALLED 'mad cow disease' — is still infecting cows in Britain. But despite the advice of both British and German experts — two years ago! — the Government is still allowing the brains and offal of calves to be used in meat products. Those who eat such products stand in such serious risk of killing illness that Germany may now ban the import of British meat products.

The Minister of Agriculture, Gillian Shepherd, dismisses the danger of BSE with the confidence, contempt and indifference to human life that you would expect from a member of this brutal Tory government.

The Tories don't care! They care for profit, not people. They look after the interests of millionaire capitalist farmers, not the health of the people.

Water pollution; filthy beaches; cancer-causing radiation levels around nuclear power stations; the widespread scrapping of health and safety laws; and now callous indifference to the BSE danger — that is the record on public health of this criminal government.

### Back to the debtors' prison

THE HABIT OF locking up the poor in debtors' prisons was abandoned in Britain 150 years ago. The debtors' prisons were closed or turned to other repressive uses.

People were still occasionally imprisoned for debts to the state in one branch or another, but for private debts you were unlikely to be jailed.

The bringing back of large-scale imprisonment for debt is one of the great Tory contributions to late 20th century British civilisation. It comes along with the impoverishment of millions of people at the bottom of the social heap.

Large numbers have been jailed for not paying the poll tax, by no means all of them people engaged in making a political protest. Many were just too poor to pay without great hardship.

Now comes the news from the prison service that last year 845 people were locked up for 14 days because they owed the BBC the cost of a TV licence — or rather because they would not or could not pay the £1000 fine, about 12 times the cost of the TV licence they could not afford in the first place, which our obliging law courts imposed as punishment for not having a licence.

Three hundred of those jailed were women, some of them people with young families.

Drive millions of people below the poverty line, and then use the full rigours of the law and the repressive apparatus of the state against them — that is the recipe for Tory rule in Britain today.

### Negotiate with Sinn Fein!

TRUTH — AS THEY SAY — is the first casualty in war, and the Northern Ireland "peace process" proves it once again. This "peace process" is no more than one front in the war it was supposed to be bringing to an end.

The cry for peace echoes the hopes and desires of most people in Northern Ireland, Catholic and Protestant alike, but since Christmas it has increasingly been turned into a cynical catchcry in the service of its opposite. For the Provisional IRA, it is being used as an enhanced moral sanction for continuing to make desultory war.

The recent issue of the Provo paper, An Phoblacht, reporting on the 1994 Sinn Fein Ard Fheis (conference) gave most of its front page to the slogan "Forward to Peace". It must be "peace through national self-determination", Gerry Adams told the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis.

But Sinn Fein's ideas of "national" and "self-determination" have absolutely no chance of acceptance by the Irish Unionist minority in north-east Ulster.

Before Christmas, the cause for hope — and *Socialist Organiser* hailed it, demanding that the British government respond positively to the Adams/Hume proposals — lay in Provo leader Gerry Adams's reported acceptance of the idea that the fundamental issue in Northern Ireland is the intra-Irish division there.

The Provisional IRA's leadership was also reported — by Hume among others — to be willing to discuss an immediate end to its military activities, which are mainly directed against Northern Ireland Protestants, in exchange for a declaration by Britain that it had no interest in opposing a united Ireland if the majority in Northern Ireland want it.

Since Christmas, however, the "demands" of the Provisionals have escalated. The sticking point seems to have been the demand that Britain undertake to "persuade" the one million Northern Ireland Unionists, the compact majority in north-east Ulster, to agree to go into a unitary 32-county all-Ireland state.

In the circumstances of Northern Ireland, this demand translates into the proposal that Britain begin a process of forcibly bundling the one million Northern Irish Protestants out of the UK.

Any such move would be a recipe for sectarian civil war in Ireland. Even a hint of it would stir up Unionist Ulster as it has not been stirred up for many years. Cut adrift by Britain, the Protestants would certainly set about winning their self-determination — from the rest of the Irish. A united Ireland would be much further away even than it is now.

Why did the Provisional IRA and Sinn Fein switch — and have they finally switched — from the course they seemed to be on in December? That there would be resistance in their ranks was certain; in question was only the strength of the opposition.

Reports suggest that a majority follows Adams, but that the minority is massive. So now the call for peace has — with great political skill — been given new content and annexed by the war faction as another name for "victory", another way of demanding "surrender".

No good can come of the Provisionals' war. Twenty years is enough! Peace is necessary. The sooner the war is ended the earlier the Northern Ireland labour movement can begin to rebuild itself.

The fundamental responsibility for the situation that generates war in Northern Ireland lies with this British government, as with other British governments in the past. They should resume negotiations with the Provisionals. But no-one should be fooled by Gerry Adams's hypocritical and Orwellian cries for peace.

"Forward to peace" is now just another Provo way of saying: "war!"

# The hour of decision in South Africa

## 'The people brought down Mangope'

Salim Valley of the Workers' List Party reports from Johannesburg.

THE AWB neo-fascists have suffered a severe blow, but they are not a spent force.

Their morale and prestige has been severely dented, but they can still create quite a bit of mayhem; together with the right-wing Zulu movement Inkatha they could cause unprecedented bloodshed. Already the AWB are training Inkatha people in the use of weapons. Inkatha has

a huge social base: they got 100,000 people on to the streets of Durban recently.

The proper way to deal with Inkatha is more of what we saw in Bophuthatswana.

In the space of three days the people of Bophuthatswana achieved more than in eleven

months of negotiation. We disagree with the ANC's reliance on the South African Defence Force to deal with people like Mangope and Buthelezi. We prefer to base our strategy on the mass of the people and to support building defence committees.

## "Only the workers can free the workers"

From page 3

### 5. Land to the Working People

The land shall be redistributed among all those who live and work on the land in accordance with acceptable principles of agricultural economics and democratic consultation. No land shall be used for purposes of exploitation and oppression. The land of absentee landlords and the defence force must be confiscated and used for productive purposes.

### 6. Equality and a Caring Society

The MWP will consistently fight against the oppression of women. Sexism at home, at the workplace, in the townships and on the farms must be exposed and fought against. Our demands will include the right to work and training for all women, full maternity rights, paternity rights, state provided nurseries and creches, the right of women to abortion, pap smears, contraception and other reproductive health rights and equality at work.

We stand for an end to domestic violence against women and sexual harassment at the workplace and in society at large. There should be no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. We also demand anti-sexist education and media, full equality in marriage and an end to women's status as minors. We will fight for the right of women, whether married or not, to have or not to have children. The struggle for gender equality is inseparable from the struggle for socialism.

Under Apartheid-Capitalism the aged, the very young and people who are disabled (both physically and mentally) suffered the most. A caring socialist society must ensure that the disabled receive proper rehabilitation and that obstacles be removed that prevent them from contributing productively to society.

We believe that men and women have an equal responsibility towards all children in their communities. Children's Rights should be entrenched in the constitution. The state must ensure that every child has three nutritious meals a day and be given adequate shelter and care. The aged must be cared for and not discriminated against.

Punishment and jailing of social offenders should be remedial and not punitive. Society should concentrate on removing the basis for crime. Under capitalism there is no equality before the law. The rich can afford better legal assistance than the poor. In a new society the legal system must be transformed so that there is genuine equality before the law.

7. Put the Apartheid Criminals on Trial

We are opposed to any general amnesty and will fight to bring to trial those who defended the Apartheid Capitalist Regime by means of torturing, detaining, maiming and killing those who struggled against the system.

We must have our own Nuremberg trials in SA. We also stand for the bringing to book of all those involved in state corruption. We say these things not to seek revenge, but to ensure that those responsible account for their actions, so that nothing similar happens again. People responsible for these acts must not acquire state positions. They cannot be trusted.

### 8. Accountability of Leaders

We stand for members of parliament to be paid the salary of skilled workers; that they should be subjected to the right of recall and that they should not have any business interest.

### 9. Apartheid Debt and the IMF

The MWP will campaign against the repayment of loans made by the Apartheid state from international capital including the IMF/World Bank. The debt of the Apartheid state amounts to over R18 billion. This is besides the failures such as the Mossog project which cost us over R10 billion as well as the debt of the corrupt homeland leaders. The negotiators have agreed that this money will be paid back. This money was used to oppress us. It is scandalous that we must pay for our own oppression.

The government of national unity hopes to get its money from VAT and from wage restraint instead of spending money where it is needed. We reject the IMF/World Bank plans, and we shall fight VAT, PAYE and wage restraint.

### 10. Apartheid Divisions, Ethnicity and Tribalism

The system of Apartheid Capitalism divided us into "Zulu", "Coloured", "Xhosa", "Indian",

"Tswana", "White" etc. We reject these divisions and those opportunistic politicians who use this for their own ends. We are against federalism based on ethnic principles. We believe is only through the actions of a united working class that a united socialist nation can be born.

### 11. Culture

Apartheid Capitalism has stifled the creative energies of our people. This will only be fully realised and released in a society where people's basic needs are met. A culture that places profits first dehumanises not only workers but also people from other classes.

We believe that the artists and cultural workers in our society have a vital role to play. They must be encouraged and financially assisted. The state must fund community based and factory based art groups. Funding must not be used to control the independent expression of artists. A democratic culture cannot be imposed from above.

Freedom of expression should be a fundamental practice of a new state. Immediately, this should involve free access to official information, the abolition of the Publications Control Board, the independence of the public broadcaster from political parties, and the provision of state resources for the setting up of community radio stations. While the state must not interfere with the press, it is important for editors not to conduct their own brand of censorship in the newsrooms by favouring some political parties above others.

Freedom to practice whatever religion should be allowed.

The policy of two official languages has been used to prevent people from controlling their own lives. All languages in SA must be recognised and be given equal status. The language spoken by most people in particular regions should be used as the linking language for that region.

### 12. Self Defence and Peace

Capitalism, which creates unemployment, hardship and divisions, is the root cause of violence. To have lasting peace we must end capitalism. We stand for peace but cannot allow the continuing attacks on us while we remain defenceless. We support the right of the oppressed to defend themselves by whatever means neces-

sary. Therefore we stand for democratically controlled and accountable self-defence committees in the workplace, in trains and in the communities. Changing the name of the SADF to "NDF" and the absorption of MK and APLA [the ANC and PAC's guerilla groups] into the SADF does not remove the need for self-defence and workers' militia. The NDF will not act in the workers' interests.

### 13. A Constituent Assembly

We stand for a genuine constituent assembly which is not tied down by undemocratic constitutional principles and deals like the Sun Clause [an agreement between the ANC and the National party] to have a coalition government until at least the end of this century. Protection of private property and protection of apartheid civil servants. Only grassroots structures can organise free and fair elections for a genuine constituent assembly. We reject the idea of Government of National Unity that includes the racists.

### 14. Workers' Government

A genuine constituent assembly could be no more than a stepping stone to a Workers' Government which will be under the control of mass organisations. We want to build a Mass Workers' Party (MWP) one of whose tasks will be to assist the establishment of factory, township, village and other forms of worker action committees. These committees will become the beginning of workers' rule of society.

### 15. A Green South Africa /Azania

We stand opposed to the robbery economy of the capitalist class which ignores the destruction of nature's capacity to sustain life on planet earth and which will inevitably lead to the extinction of humanity. We stand for humanistic and ecologically sound policies in the economic and social life of our people.

### 16. Internationalism

We stand for the unity of working class internationalism which includes the Pan African unity of the toiling masses of the continent. We will support and promote all genuine attempts at building up the international unity of the workers of the world. This is the only basis for world peace and prosperity.



## SOUTH AFRICA



Inkatha could still unleash full-scale civil war. Above: residents of a squatter camp prepare to defend themselves against Inkatha attack.

# A severe blow to the AWB

By Anne Mack

THE VIOLENT death of three white neo-fascist storm troopers at the hands of black township police last Friday, 11 March, which was broadcast on prime time TV across the world, has dealt a blow to the South African far right from which they will find it difficult to recover.

No-one should underestimate the significance of the summary execution of Alwyn Walvaardt and Connie Uys.

The two men, typical members of the "Boer Commando" who claim they will fight to the last for a white state, were reduced to begging for their lives before being shot by a black policeman who had just, minutes earlier, witnessed the murder of two black people by the AWB.

This kind of thing is not supposed to happen to Afrikaners. They are a proud and tough people. Or at least that's how they used to boast about themselves when they believed that they could beat, whip and shoot unarmed black people and get away with it.

Now they are not so sure. Until last Friday the white far right — and the AWB in particular — had been able to play at civil war (the 'play' of murderers and terrorists.) For instance, last year they invaded the building where the multi-party negotiations were taking place, in the process abusing and intimidating black people, and got away with it. The white police did nothing. In fact, there was plenty of fraternising between the two 'sides'.

But then on Friday everything changed. They found out what a real civil war looks like — they did not like what they saw.

A predominantly black army and police turned on them, stopped them taking pot shots at any black person they could see, drove them out of town and ambushed them twice.

They then had to face the mainly white soldiers of the South African Defence Force (SADF) and were told that they had a choice: they could

either be escorted back to their farms or face the blacks and the SADF. They chose to be escorted home.

Large numbers of right wing whites like Alwyn Walvaardt and Connie Uys who had signed up to fight for their "Volkstaat" (white state) are now having second thoughts. They don't want to face the same fate as Walvaardt and Uys.

*"The AWB has been weakened, but the threat of full-scale civil war has not yet been squashed."*

They never expected the police and army to turn against them, and certainly never expected to have to face black soldiers and police loyal not to one of their pliant, corrupt, dictatorial allies but to "the people".

If the AWB and their remaining allies on the white far right do not succeed in launching a campaign of "white civil disobedience" in the next few days, and it looks like they

won't, then all hopes they had of stopping next month's election must be abandoned.

Some white town councils will still try to boycott the poll (100 have said they will) but the SADF can set up polling booths in the townships instead.

There will certainly be a big increase in neo-fascist terrorist activities.

Black trade unions and nationalist political organisations will be bombed, activists will be attacked, and, most likely of all, there will be an increase in indiscriminate AWB violence against black people.

And even if the AWB has been weakened as a direct threat to next month's election, the threat of full-scale civil war has not yet been completely squashed.

Chief Buthelezi, boss of the KwaZulu bantustan, is still saying that his "Inkatha Freedom Party" — a quasi-fascist political organisation of corrupt bureaucrats, lumpen petty-bourgeois gangsters and warlords — will not participate in next month's poll.

He also says that the "Zulu kingdom" will become an

independent sovereign state if the election takes place.

The question is: will DeKlerk use the troops against Inkatha to make sure the poll takes place?

De Klerk knows that the great bulk of Zulu people — around 60% or more — support the ANC, and fewer than 20% support Inkatha.

But he also knows that without Buthelezi he will have fewer potential allies against the ANC.

Surely De Klerk's favoured course will be to try to ease Inkatha back to the negotiating tables — Buthelezi's switch over the last few weeks to talking ever more desperately about the need for outside "mediation" in Natal suggest that he is weak and fears for his own future.

Even if the election does take place in Natal, a simmering civil war in the townships and peri-urban areas will continue.

The bloody divisions in Natal are now ten years old. The killing is part class conflict, part political faction fight, and part gang warfare. Violent death will not disappear from Natal whatever happens on 27 April.



After rampaging round Bophuthatswana, shooting dozens of black people at random, racist stormtroopers are killed by a black policeman.

## All power to the Finance and General Purposes Committee

NO DOUBT LIKE me, you have been scarcely able to contain your excitement over the re-launch of the TUC this month. In a bold thrust, John Monks has produced a statement promising that "the TUC should be a high-profile organisation which campaigns successfully for trade union aims and values, assists trade unions to increase membership and effectiveness, cuts out wasteful rivalry and promotes trade union solidarity." As proof of his earnestness in cutting back on wasteful expenditure and bureaucracy, Bro Monks then hired a firm of consultants who came up with the highly original slogan "leaner, sleeker".

The resounding success of the re-launch was confirmed when the Daily Telegraph immediately invited Bro Monks to write an article entitled "Why unions do matter" and Treasury Financial Secretary Stephen Dorrell agreed to attend a conference of public sector union leaders at Congress House.

Admittedly, Mr Dorrell told the conference that the Government had no intention of retreating from its de facto public sector pay freeze, which caused some disappointment. But the important thing was that he turned up and even had a cup of tea with Bro Monks — the first time in memory that a Tory minister has paid the TUC such a compliment. Mr Dorrell's

appearance is but the first fruit of the New Look TUC's commitment to building cross-party support for trade union influence in every sphere of the life of the nation.

This exciting new approach was conceived at a special two-day meeting of the TUC general council in November, and to ensure maximum in-depth discussion of the proposals a deadline of 11 February was set for consultation among constituent unions. Naturally, Shop Stewards Committees and branches buzzed with animated discussion throughout December and January as the rank and file hammered out their response to the proposals. Presumably the reaction was overwhelmingly favourable, because the re-launch went ahead on schedule this month. Just in case any of you are not aware of the full details, here they are:

- The eight committees of the general council to be suspended indefinitely — except for the finance and general purposes committee (F&GP).
- The F&GP to be renamed the "Executive Committee" and to meet monthly as the principal decision-making committee.
- General Council meetings to be cut from 12 to 5 per year.
- The TUC's seven industry committees to be scrapped and replaced by "forums" (sic) based on particular industries. These to meet only "when necessary."
- "Task Groups" to be established to deal with anything else.
- Er, that's it.

Clearly, Bro Monks's promise of a "leaner, sleeker" TUC is not an empty slogan: the new all-powerful Executive Committee (i.e. the existing F&GP) comprises just 26 members from 16 unions. There are a total of 68 affiliates to the TUC at present.

The annual TUC Congress will, however, continue because of "its value as a means of strengthening awareness of the TUC among unions and as a vehicle for projecting trade union concerns to the public" (i.e., as a PR exercise). However, half a day of Congress this year will be given over to "workshops" which will not exactly decide on anything but will most definitely "report back" to the full Congress. No doubt, the new Executive Committee will have no hesitation in "taking on board" all recommendations from these workshops.

But perhaps the most exciting aspect of Bro Monks's proposals is for the TUC to build bridges with all political parties and with the Government — getting away from the narrow, outdated identification with Labour. Stephen Dorrell's appearance at the public sector conference is but the start. Bro Monks has gone on to show that the TUC can contribute to the "back to basics" campaign as well: he writes in the Telegraph that "like the Prime Minister I have a strong attachment to the Britain of warm beer and village cricket... if in our relationships at work we behave in a civilised way, treating others' views with respect and co-operating in doing something that we believe is worthwhile, that is likely to be reflected in the rest of our lives. If we can get work right, a lot of other problems will stop looming so large."

Let all trades unionists (and, indeed, all citizens of good will) echo these generous sentiments. Who knows: perhaps John Major will respond by putting the F&GP/Executive Committee in charge of the nation's village cricket and/or beer temperature inspectorate?

### INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper



# Rattling the teacups

**T**O be in England in the spring — the crack of leather against willow, the bobby on his bicycle, tea with a mild-mannered vicar.

Even if England haven't won a Test Match for ages, and if you see a copper with a bike he'll have framed some kid for nicking it within the hour, we can still rely on the clergy for a little quintessential Englishness.

What could be more English than the vicar of Luton and Genedy Drove End in Lincolnshire?

"I would burn the bloody bitches", says the Reverend Anthony Kennedy, clearly rattling the teacups a little over the ordination of women. "I can't see why a woman can represent Jesus, who was undoubtedly male, at the altar. I would shoot the bastards if I was allowed... let those bloody women go off and form their own politically correct church... and religion. This whole issue makes me spit."

Anyone still searching for the myth of England is recommended to put on the kettle, toast some teacakes, and steer well clear of their local church.

**L** OUDMOUTH bigots in dog collars are not the only problem for the Church of England.

In the late 1980s, divinely inspired Church Commissioners miraculously managed to turn the Church's assets of over £3 billion into £2.2 billion. As a result new management techniques are proposed for the Church, in line with post-Thatcherite orthodoxy.

This includes "plant closure", new "flexible working" patterns for vicars (which are believed to include working during the week like everyone else), and raising more money from parishioners to meet the salary bill. Churches that fail to deliver what the religious consumer wants will end up as cut-price furniture warehouses.

As Karl Marx wrote some 147 years ago in the *Communist Manifesto*, a document that the media pundits constantly tell us is out of date: "The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to in awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest... into wage labourers... All that is

## GRAFFITI



By Cyclops

**solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses the real conditions of his life."**

**In the case of the Church of England we invite market forces to do their worst.**

**N**INTH March was a bad day for John Major. He announced that inflation was "under lock and key". Meanwhile, in another part of town, the deputy director of the Bank of England was insisting that any idea that the battle against inflation was over was "a delusion, and a dangerous one too." In political terms this goes down as a case of the right hand not knowing what the right hand is doing.

**O**K, so there's a recession and times are hard, but you'd think a large bank like Coutts could be just a little more generous. Last week three twelve year old boys found a cheque for £100 million and handed it back to the bank. The bank was so grateful to them that it gave them a ten pound note. Between three that is about enough for a quick visit to McDonalds. So remember, kids, where corporate capitalism is concerned, honesty isn't an option.

**H**AVE a guess which country is at the bottom of the *Economist* magazine's league of welfare benefits in Europe?

Could it be one of those backward Mediterranean countries whose economies revolve around olive trees and tourism? On the contrary. Portugal, for example, comes out rather well, topping the league table for unemployment and maternity benefits.

As if you haven't guessed it already, Britain props up the table. Bottom in four out of eleven classes. Invalidity, unemployment, maternity and widow's benefits are worse in Britain than in any other European country (measured as a proportion of average earnings).

# Guess the body-count — win a Metro!

## PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

**G**EORGE Orwell, so perspicacious in most matters, got it

wrong about murder. He reckoned that the golden age of the English murder was roughly between 1850 and 1925; no modern murders would stand the test of time in the manner of "Dr Palmer of Rugely, Jack the Ripper, Neill Cream, Mrs Maybrick, Dr Crippen, Seddon, Joseph Smith, Armstrong, and Bywaters and Thompson."

He even quoted readers of Sunday papers regretting that "you never seem to get a good murder nowadays."

Of course, Orwell was writing just after World War II, and he understood that the death camps and the gas chambers would forever change our perception of the crime of murder — just as they also made the gangster movie look trivial and irrelevant (for a while, at least).

But within a very few years of Orwell's farewell

to the classic English murder along came John Christie and a whole new genre was born: the domestic serial killer. Readers of the *News of the World* (the paper Orwell specified as essential reading for the murder connoisseur) would have plenty more classics to spice up the roast beef and Yorkshire over the succeeding few decades.

And the popular press has shown no signs of tiring of this favourite subject, either. The *News of the World* no longer corners the market in gore: the rest of the Sunday and weekday tabloids all love a good murder and can be guaranteed to give it the loving — forensic, even — coverage that was once the unique stock-in-trade of the *News of the World*.

Even the *Daily Telegraph* devotes its page three to such matters, under the "respectable" guise of law reports and courtroom coverage.

Of course, a classic murder must (as Orwell noted) involve sex as a "powerful motive". And here we come to the central problem for

decent, liberal-minded folk: when does legitimate public interest end and gratuitous, morbid voyeurism begin? And (given that most murderers are men and most victims women) isn't there a strong element of misogyny in the way the press rake over the details of these cases?

On the other hand, I noticed from the TV that many of the ghouls outside 25 Cromwell Street seemed to be female. Perhaps we shouldn't jump to glib conclusions on that particular angle.

Nevertheless, the *Sun's* eight page "Photo Special" ("House of Horror Exclusive") and its invitations to readers to ring in if they live at a No. 25 Cromwell Street or ever employed Fred West to work on their house is plainly not in the best possible taste.

Whether it represents something worse than bad taste or simply harmless old-fashioned escapism is a matter of opinion.

Still, at least Britain leads the world in something: according to John Stalker (quoted by Suzanne Moore in the *Guardian*), "we are cornering the market in this crime. Serial killing — from John Christie 40 years ago to gays murderer Colin Ireland last year — is the new British crime speciality. We are in danger of leading the world."

**O**N the subject of taste and the Murdoch press, consider the following remarkable coincidence: on 25 February Rupert Murdoch gives an interview in which he suggests that the days of the page three topless pin-up may be numbered. On 27 February the *News of the World* appears without a nipple in sight (unless you count those of boxer Nigel Benn).

Whilst this is clearly a welcome development, it does perhaps cast some doubt upon the much-vaunted "independence" of Murdoch editors — especially when you consider that the *News of the World* is currently being edited by the preposterous Piers Morgan on a trial basis. Morgan is a notorious creep who is desperate to keep in with Murdoch and hang on to his new job at all costs.

It is also a complete coincidence that the Digger's puritanical sentiments were expressed in Hong Kong, where they were bound to be picked up immediately by the Chinese government. The Digger has just invested £250 million in Star, the Asian version of Sky TV. The success of Star depends upon the co-operation of the Chinese authorities, not noted for their enthusiasm for sexually explicit material — in public, anyway.

# Make Women's TUC representative!

## WOMEN'S EYE

By Susan Jackson, Women's TUC delegate

**T**HE 1994 Women's TUC was held last week in Scarborough. Women delegates from all the TUC affiliated unions discussed ideas from low pay and casualisation to sexual harassment and domestic violence. Most debates were uncontroversial, condemning Tory attacks on the health service, education and public services. However, time was set aside

to discuss controversial proposals on the future of the TUC — structure and organisation. The options to make Women's TUC a "consultative" event with workshops instead of a motion-based conference proved unpopular. Most delegates backed a Women's TUC conference along the same lines as now.

Some delegates demanded a stronger lay member oriented conference. Other delegates criticised the pace of change and its motivation. Streamlining the bureaucracy seemed the priority, not the encouragement of more members' participation.

The larger unions such as the T&G and MSF were critical of the proposed changes,

as were several smaller and more recent affiliates, the Society of Radiographers and the Physiotherapists' Union.

Another issue that provoked heated debate was the motion from the lecturers' union NATFHE calling for four extra seats for black women on the TUC Women's Committee. Conference voted to support this motion despite objections from the Committee.

Several fringe meetings were held. A well-attended one on the Child Support Act discussed a charter for children and single mothers, proposed by the T&G. The Stonewall fringe meeting was also well-attended and delegates discussed work on les-

bian and gay issues that different unions had taken up.

The "Unite Against Racism" meeting was uninspiring, despite the forthcoming TUC mega-demo. There seemed to be no link between on-the-ground fighting against racism that is common in many workplaces and the moral exhortation to purge our hearts and minds of evil racist thoughts.

Women's TUC is a good opportunity for women from different unions and working backgrounds to get together and exchange information and experiences.

It should be kept motion-based and should get more lay delegates involved to break the bureaucratic stranglehold on political debate.



# Student women vote for action



Lesbian and gay protesters block London's Haymarket. Photo: Mark Sandell

*Lesbian and gay rights*

## Fight for equal age of consent!

"Outrage", a lesbian and gay campaigning group, organised a "march on Parliament" on Monday 14 March.

The march was stopped by police a mile from Parliament, but blocked the road for hours. Some protesters were arrested.

The demonstration was called in response to the House of Commons vote that failed to equalise the gay age of consent at 16.

Socialists must fight inside the trade unions and Labour Party to mandate the Parliamentary Labour Party to force a new vote on the age of consent and make all Labour MPs vote for 16.

When the Labour leaders left it to a free vote, 35 Labour MPs voted against equality.

## British workers and youth can follow French example

**F**RANCE'S conservative Prime Minister, Edouard Balladur, may be forced to back down from proposals to create huge

exceptions from France's minimum-wage law. If he does back down, it will be for one reason only — because the French labour movement

mobilised mass opposition.

On Saturday 12 March, trade unions organised protests involving more than 200,000 people. These came at the end of a week of action, including rioting by youth in some Paris suburbs.

In recent months Air France workers have forced the French government to back down on compulsory redundancies, and mass student demonstrations have won a retreat on education cuts.

The French workers and students are showing the way for us in Britain. The Tories are in a deeper mess than France's right-wing government, which was elected only last year with a huge majority. Mass action can turn the tide against the Tories, too.

## We'll watch what we like!

**I**N Nottingham, Asian religious leaders have warned parents not to let their daughters see the film *Bhaji on the Beach*. They say the film, which is about the lives of three generations of Asian women in Britain, will have a "damaging effect" because it shows Asian women drinking, smoking, and dancing in clubs.

Nationally, members of the Arya Samaj group are trying to get the film banned. Arya Samaj is a Hindu communalist organisation linked to the Indian BJP. In some areas they have mounted guards on cinemas to stop Asian women seeing the film.

Regardless of the quality of the film, youth in the Asian communities should oppose censorship and the attempts of religious leaders and chauvinist groups to tell young Asian women what they can or can not watch.



**S**A R A H Wellings, Left Unity's candidate for the National Union of Students [NUS] Women's Officer, beat Kate Skipworth, the Labour Students candidate, by 66 votes to 24 (with 35 votes for Re-Open Nominations) at the Women's Campaign Conference, held in Blackpool from 14-16 March.

This is a very wide margin of victory, and a sign that the left in NUS will be able to stage a major challenge to the NUS right wing at the NUS's Easter conference.

At issue is Left Unity's activist-based policy of mass opposition to the Tories' attacks on students and education versus the Labour right's do-nothing-and-hope-for-the-best policy.

## Support asylum seekers!

**O**NE-hundred-and-thirty-five asylum-seekers at Campsfield

House detention centre, near Oxford, are on hunger strike, protesting at the fact that they have been detained without charge or trial for up to a year.

They are demanding to be set free while their requests for asylum are considered.

The Asylum Act, introduced by the Tories in 1992, has made it

extremely difficult even for refugees in fear for their lives to get shelter in Britain. Several asylum-seekers have committed suicide to avoid deportation.

The whole British immigration system is racist. It is no accident that the hunger-strikers in Campsfield are from Zaire, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Angola and India.

We should demand their immediate release, and their right to stay in Britain.

## Bigot of the week

**B**IGOTED git of the week is Dr Robert Spink MP. On Monday 14 March, while protesters tried to march to Parliament to demand an equal age of consent for gay men, at 16, this homophobic old git was putting a Bill to the House of Commons demanding enforcement of the existing law by locking up any man who has gay sex under the age of 18.

He claimed that AIDS is a "gay disease". "Just look into the dark, hollowed eyes of AIDS victims", he said. Gay sex was "medically dangerous".

We say Dr Robert Spink is medically dangerous. Lesbians and gay men should have total equality in law and in their everyday lives.

Youth Fightback is...

... the voice of revolutionary socialist youth.

This page is separately edited.

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# The Alliance for Workers' Liberty debates M

# Socialism or re

Martin Thomas reports

**D**O OFFICIAL Labour politics offer any real hope today? Or must serious socialists, and even serious democrats, look instead to the revolutionary left?

Such was the question in debate before a packed audience at London's Conway Hall last Wednesday, 9 March, when John O'Mahony, editor of *Socialist Organiser*, a paper banned by the Labour Party leaders in 1990 for our Trotskyist politics, confronted Michael Foot, leader of the Labour Party from 1980 to 1983.

John O'Mahony accused the Labour Party leadership of paving the way for Thatcherism and then succumbing to it.

In 1974 a wave of industrial action brought down the Tory Government, and we got a Labour government. "That Labour government did not act even as a serious reformist government.

"It carried through some superficial reforms, but fundamentally it prepared the way for Thatcherism by demobilising the working class and beginning the process of cuts.

"But even in 1979-81 our movement was still very strong. We could have driven Thatcher from office as we drove Heath from office.

"Why didn't we? There was a tiredness in the movement, after what the Labour government had done, at the same time as a terrible slump and mass unemployment. But crucial-

ly the leaders of the labour movement surrendered. They surrendered in the most shameful way.

"The Labour and trade-union leaders accepted that the Tories had to rule, that we could not resist Parliament. They allowed the Tories to ride roughshod over our class".

John O'Mahony quoted the anarchist Enrico Malatesta, warning of what would happen in Italy after 1919-20, when workers occupied the factories and the bosses held on to power only "by the skin of their teeth". "If we let this auspicious moment escape us, we shall have to pay one day in tears of blood for the fear which we now inspire in the middle class".

The British working class, said O'Mahony, has been "paying for the last 15 years for the fear which we inspired in the ruling class in the 1970s, because the Labour and trade-union leaders have failed to fight - again

and again.

"They did not defend even their own Welfare State. They were driven down a whole decade, running before the Tories, until today the Labour leaders are not at all easy to distinguish from the Tories.

"They accept much of what the Tories have done to the National Health Service. Over the last 15 years the Tories have passed anti-union laws which have left Britain with the least free trade-union movement in Europe. Have the Labour leaders said they will reverse

those laws, and restore freedom of action to the working class? No, they have not. They have said that they will leave on the statute book substantial parts of what the Tories have done.

"I never felt for the old right-wing Labour leaders, like Hugh Gaitskell, such hatred and contempt as I feel for the Labour leaders now. They are not honest reformists. They are people who kow-tow to the Tories, gutless and shameless. They have forgotten everything except power - no, not power, office!"

In the early 1980s, O'Mahony recalled, *Socialist Organiser* had argued for the labour movement to mobilise direct action to stop the Tories, right across the country, in every area possible. People like Michael Foot argued that such action was "not democratic".

"Their conception of democracy", argued O'Mahony, "is far too limited. Even the bourgeois-democratic revolutions in America and France proclaimed the right of revolt against tyrannical governments. And the Thatcher government was a tyrannical government, despite its majority in Parliament.

"Democracy is real self-rule. In Britain we do not have real self-rule. One of the great achievements of the bourgeoisie over the last 150 years has been to take the idea of democracy, which people had understood to mean not just political democracy but also social democracy, and empty it out.

"Democracy today is accepted to be merely shallow political democracy. At work, decisions that affect our lives radically and fundamentally are made not democratically but by the capitalists.

"We need a struggle to extend democracy. We should start now with a fight for free trade unions".

Michael Foot explained that he had accepted the invitation to debate "because of the name of Leon Trotsky - one of the great socialist figures of this century, a man of action and a writer. No other socialist of this century has combined those two things so well".

Foot "deeply regretted" that in the late 1930s, when he first worked on *Tribune*, "we did not report openly and faithfully what was happening in the Moscow Trials - which was a grave departure from the original ideals of the Russian Revolution".

To O'Mahony, Foot responded by defending both the record of the 1974-9 Labour government and the politics of the present Labour Party leadership.

"The 1974-9 Labour government, even with the tiny majority we had, was a very much better government than the one we had in the previous decade. We were committed to do lots of socialist things, and many of them we did carry out.

"Some of what we did you could reckon in figures. The numbers of people in trade unions in this country in 1979, when that last Labour government left office, were higher than they had ever been before.

"Or take the numbers of people in employment. I was at the Department of Employment when the number of people unemployed in this country went up over one million. I was ashamed of the situation. We tried to reverse it.

"We used a whole series of measures to do

it, some short-term and some longer-term, with at least this result, that when we left office in 1979 more people in Britain were in work than ever before. And more women were in jobs, and better jobs.

"We introduced the best new Factory Act that had ever been produced for protecting workers. We extended the field of protection to some five or six million people who had never been covered by health and safety provisions before.

"For the first time in British history, we wrote into the legislation that trade unions on the spot must have the legal right to raise health and safety issues in their workplace.

"Those gains are not safe with a Tory government, and we've got to extend them much further - but they are part of industrial democracy. Extending rights to safety at work is a central part of democracy.

"We wanted to do more, but were not able to because when we lost our majority the Liberals were not prepared to vote for measures to give workers in the workshop and workplace a greatly increased influence and say. But I trust that is one of the things a new Labour government is going to do.

"Of course it was a terrible tragedy when the Tories won in 1979 and again in 1983. Some of us were trying to say to the trade unions, and everyone else: we really must stop this Thatcher lot from ever getting in. If they do get in, they are going to destroy what we have succeeded in building over the years.

"Tragically, it has happened. That does not alter the fact that warnings were given.

"Part of what we are arguing about is the methods by which democratic movements and labour movements can achieve their objectives. I am not saying, and anyone would be a fool who said, that it is only through Parliament that it can be done. But it's equally foolish to say that you don't have to worry about what happens in Parliament.

"There would not have been a Parliament with the rights we have today if it had not been for the struggles of the labour movement. It is true that one or two of the demands of the

Chartist movement [of the 1830s-50s] have not been carried out - though whether annual parliaments are a good idea I'm not sure - but the others have, and it shows what can be done by democratic action over a period.

"In the Chartist movement they had lots of arguments between people who said on the one side that they must only act under the law, and on the other side the so-called physical-force people, Julian Harney and the rest.

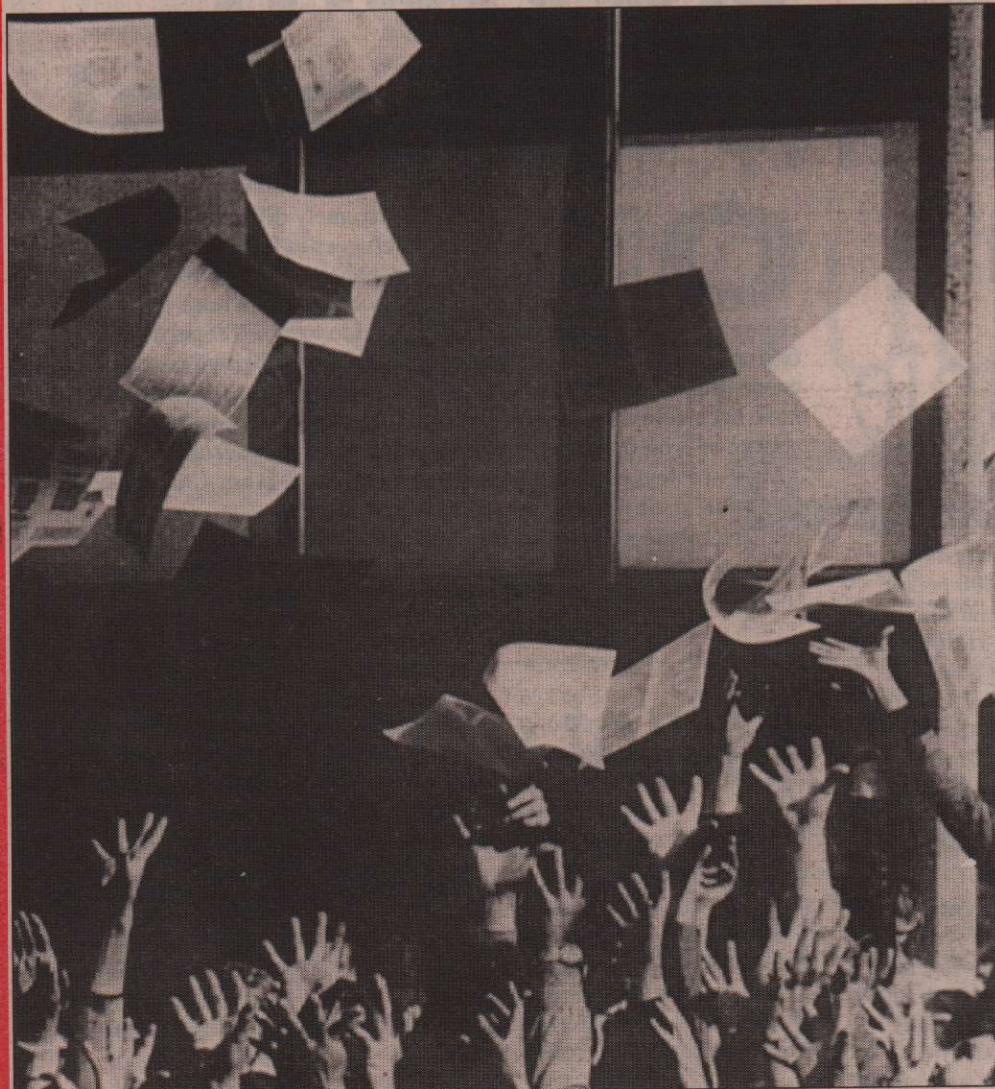
At the end, Julian Harney said that William Lovett, who put the case on the other side, was the best of them all. Harney was not giving up his own case, but he was respecting and understanding the argument between them.

"And that was when we did not have the vote, and the case of those who argued for direct action was much stronger than now, when we do have the vote. We've got to use the vote - and use it much more skilfully and aggressively. We've got to use both weapons - industrial power and political power.

"It's not true that the Labour Party is giving up the fight to defend the National Health Service. Not at all. As soon as we get a new Labour government I have not the slightest doubt that one of the very first things it will be carrying into effect will be the fullest possible re-establishment of a proper Health

*John O'Mahony: "The 1974-9 Labour government prepared the way for Thatcherism by demobilising the working class and beginning the process of cuts."*

*Michael Foot: "The 1974-79 Labour government was committed to do lots of socialist things, and many of them we did carry out."*



Workers' democracy in action: shipyard workers in Gdansk, Poland, in 1980.



Michael Foot

# Reformism?



Michael Foot and Alan Simpson MP (who chaired the meeting). Photo: Garry Meyer

Service on the same socialist principles on which it was started by the 1945 Labour government."

Despite repeated criticism from the floor, Michael Foot returned to the same assertions in his summing-up. "I'm not saying that all the last Labour government did was right. But we carried through every manifesto commitment that we could carry out.

"The Labour Party are going to restore the NHS as a major part of what they do in the next government. It may not be in exactly the same form, because after all Aneurin Bevan himself wanted to make the machinery of the Health Service much more democratically controlled. I'm sure that is included in the propositions put forward by the Labour Party."

John O'Mahony declared flatly that he did not believe Michael Foot on Labour and the Health Service.

"That does not affect our support for Labour in elections. The Labour Party does not belong to the scoundrels who lead it, it belongs to the trade-union and working-class movement.

"For ourselves, Socialist Organiser was banned in 1990, and we've had people expelled, but we haven't left the Labour Party. We organise ourselves in the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, both outside the Labour Party and inside the Labour Party.

"The general lesson of the last 15 years is that you do not get stable reforms under capitalism. You cannot win stable improvements without destroying the roots of capitalism.

"The class struggle goes on. Our side has suffered defeats. But capitalism generates class struggle. There is a tremendous build-up of explosive discontent in this country. The labour movement will revive. But we must learn the lessons of the past.

"Central to our socialism is the struggle for

democracy. We do not live in anything but the travesty of a democracy. We do not have democracy which is self-rule in our own lives.

"A campaign for democracy, if taken seriously, is a campaign to revive the ideas of socialism. I do not believe we can have a peaceful transition from democracy as we have it now to socialism, but nevertheless it is true that consistent democracy, applied through the whole of society, would be socialism. The democracy we have now is a hollow democracy."

Concluding, O'Mahony pointed to the central and immediate question of workers' democratic rights which, he said, Michael Foot had evaded. "We no longer have a free

trade union movement. The law bans working-class solidarity. We can campaign against this, and for free trade unions, and in doing so we should revive the struggle for socialism.

"We will fight back; and then we will make the ruling class pay in tears of blood for what they have done to our class over the last 15 years".

• A Workers' Liberty pamphlet has been published around these themes and includes articles by and arguments against Michael Foot, Socialism and Democracy — Marxists, Parliament and the class struggle.

Available from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. £1.95 plus 36p postage.

Cheques payable to "WL Publications"



Labour leaders failed to back the miners fighting back against police violence

## Israeli peace groups call for dismantling of West Bank settlements

The Israeli peace group Gush Shalom has made the following statement on the Israeli government's decision to ban the far-right Kach movement.

THE GOVERNMENT move to outlaw the organisations of Meir Kahane's followers will solve nothing of the present crisis. This step is designed mainly to appease Israeli and international public opinion, without going to the root of the problem.

Two racist organisations have been outlawed — but Prime Minister Rabin is adamant in his refusal to dismantle any settlement, which means that he is leaving, at the heart of Hebron and elsewhere through the occupied territories, thousands of armed fanatics who are not registered members of the two proscribed organisations but who nevertheless express outspoken support for the Hebron massacre.

The very bare minimum required of [Israeli prime minister] Rabin, in order to make any move towards peace possible, is to remove these gunmen at least from Hebron; otherwise, the danger of further massacres is a very real one.

The Association of Anti-Fascists and Victims of Nazism has made the the following statement.

WE ARE OUTRAGED by the massacre and the ongoing oppression and killings of Palestinians who fight a legitimate struggle for national liberation from occupation and occupationist terror. We estimate that the massacre in the Cave of Prophets was an inevitable consequence of the Israeli occupation...

Many of our members fought during World War 2 against the Nazi occupation of Europe... or are survivors of Nazi concentration camps and the Holocaust... We perfectly well understand the plight of the Palestinians under occupation and their aspiration to live in their own, free and independent, State, side by side with Israel in good-neighbourly relations.

We support the Israel-PLO peace process, and hope that it will soon be resumed and come to a speedy and positive end — comprehensive, just and lasting peace, respecting the national rights of all parties concerned.

As first steps to achieve this goal, we demand that the Israeli government remove all obstacles in the way of peace; announce their commitment to dismantle the colonialist settlements in the occupied territories, and first of all those in Kiryat Arba, in Hebron town, and in the Gaza Strip; to release all Palestinian Intifada prisoners; to implement the Oslo accord without further delay; and proceed immediately to a permanent and peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



## Visiting India: the City of Joy and southern Bihar

# Nightmare

Last week Joan Trevor described her first few days in India "sightseeing" in Delhi and Agra. She ends her journey in Calcutta and Bihar.

I HAD an interesting conversation with a member of the Indian ruling class on the plane to Calcutta. He combined the philosophy of the *Bhagavad Gita* with the social and sexual politics of, respectively, Malthus and *The Book of Genesis*.

It had been raining in Calcutta, West Bengal, and the drive from the airport along palm-fringed roads, past colourful shrines to the Goddess of Wisdom, put me in a better humour. I almost thought myself a tourist again. "This is better! This is better!" I exclaimed excitedly.

New Delhi was built as the capital of India for her independence. Calcutta was the old capital of the British Raj, and it must have been quite grand.

It stands on the banks of the Hooghly River, which is the lower reaches of the Ganges before the sea. It was an entrepot for the jute grown in East Bengal. Now Calcutta has no hinterland, East Bengal has no port, and both are doing disastrously.

Refugee movements from East Bengal, which — until 1971 — was part of the Muslim state of Pakistan, and then Bangladesh, and famines in the countryside have swelled Calcutta's population to over ten million, with scarcely any new sanitary or social provision.

It's a colourful, lively, relatively cheerful place, with ten million tons of crap poured on top of it. This destroys its appeal utterly. I thought India would smell like a sewer, not a scrapyard as Delhi had. Calcutta smelled like a sewer. I found a use for a new prefix —

"unimaginable". Thus: "unimaginable smell", "unimaginably dirty".

You can pay through the nose by Indian standards for a mediocre degree of comfort in Calcutta but, when your walk back from dinner in a smart restaurant takes you past tiny dirty bundles of rags on the street, which are human beings of god knows what dimensions and shape, you realise that rather than live here as they do for a day you would drown yourself in the Hooghly.

"If I could be a millionaire and live here, I wouldn't" was how one of my party expressed his distaste. But if you are Indian you have to go where there is work, and here there is some work. So you pick your way through the crap and count your small blessings: an apartment building with a concierge who lies across the doorway at night to stop undesirables entering in; electricity, even if it comes to you through cabling that's been added to again and again since the turn of the century till it looks now like a banyan tree growing in your own living room.

Who can you help? How do you help? Everyone makes their own settlement with India and you must get meaner the longer you are there. I would pay a coolie to carry my bags. I would not suffer my own person to be pulled around in a rickshaw, not even a cycle-rickshaw. For me to get into it, a mode of transport had to have a motor.

You can get very sniffy about these sorts of things in India. Some people reading this will

undoubtedly accuse me of cultural imperialism, or something, but, to paraphrase James Connolly, India without her people means nothing to me.

I gave to beggars. About £2 *in toto* I reckoned when I left! £2 went a long way to relieving that everyday feeling of anxiety you get when a needy individual corners you for money.

"You don't change anything by giving" is the best excuse people give for not giving... and "they don't want to work" is the worst! Well, you certainly don't change anything by not

giving, and if 10p conscience-money keeps that individual fed for a couple of days I'm happier. Staying happy and hopeful in the face of such desperate poverty is very important. When people talk about demoralisation they don't just mean feeling impotent and giving up hope of anything getting better... they mean, quite literally, losing your morals, the better feelings

that make you act. You, personally, are a worse person for being demoralised.

On the other hand, I've no patience for anyone who tries to persuade me of the dignity of the poor. Anyone who thinks I'm showing scant respect for the poor people I meet here is a one-nationer. India is a fantastically divided society, and I'm on the side of the poor, which means that I have to hate poverty.

Through ignorance of fantastically complex politics I can't say much more than that Calcutta has "Communist" local government of some variety.

A CP graffito proclaimed — to my mind incongruously — "Down with imperialism!"

Don't blame the Americans. In the first place blame the native bourgeoisie.

"But they're doing their best against fantastically bad odds!" many will cry. For my money, that sounds like the sort of apology people used to make for Stalinism.

Of course, you can only criticise if you are prepared to propose and fight for something better. But, again, what? Working-class power and socialist planning; yes, but how?

We met a man who'd spent "the best two years of his life" with family in Putney. When his visa expired he had to come back to spend the rest of his days in Calcutta; it even occurred to me that it would be a contribution to the

sum of human happiness if every unmarried European were to marry someone from the Third World and get them out of there!

What's the long-term solution?

Conditions in British towns at the start of the industrial revolution must have been like this. But trade unions and working-class political activity helped British workers gain a bigger share of the fruits of industrialisation.

In India, such strong working-class organisation and a redistribution of wealth would immediately improve the lives of the most miserable, that is, of the vast majority of people.

It would go a long way to cleaning up the stinking and catastrophic pollution that contributes to human misery here.

So would more democracy... The limited democracy Indians have is further distorted by poverty: vote-buying, ballot-rigging and other forms of corruption are rife.

*"If I could be a millionaire and live here, I wouldn't" — that was how one of my party expressed his distaste."*

## The background to misery

INDIA'S poverty is — deservedly — notorious. The average per capita income is £800 a year, or £16 a week.

Compared to our lives, the life of an average Indian is short and brutal. The infant mortality rate is 92 out of 1,000 — in Britain the figure is 8. Life expectancy is about 20 years less than in Europe. About half of all adults cannot read.

In a country of nearly a billion inhabitants the middle and ruling classes are a small proportion of the whole, but big in absolute numbers. Millions are rich while hundreds of millions live close to starvation.

Western manufacturers get very excited at the prospect of getting to that middle-class market. However, for all she is predominantly a rural society, India is rapidly increasing her own manufacturing industries. Three-quarters of her exports are of manufactured goods. More and more investors are attracted to India by cheap labour and relatively developed infrastructure. In the 1980s manufacturing production rose 7.1% per year.

This rapid industrialisation has produced appalling pollution. And, as yet, the

increase in the working class that industrialisation is bringing has not resulted in the workers' own organisation on any lasting-effective scale.

The poor of India are chronically divided by caste and religion. There have been Communist Parties who attempted to organise them but Communist politicians have tended just to back one or other of the bourgeois parties.

Now many Hindus are turning to fundamentalism, scapegoating Muslims and backing the Hindu-chauvinist party, the BJP, in their search for an answer to the misery around them.

The blame for all this begins with the British ruling class who destroyed India's native economy when they took control, and shaped a layer of middle-class landlords and tax-collectors to siphon off wealth and help them rule.

But their mantle has been taken on by the Indian ruling class since Independence in 1947. The politicians of the increasingly corrupt ruling Congress Party, while enjoying the fruits of Independence, have done very little to tackle the misery that surrounds them.

India needs investment to create real productive jobs. Much economic activity is just recycling old rubbish, or rendering a demeaning "service" to people rich enough to pay poor people to live the crappy bits of their lives for them.

Yet, just as India is beginning to grow economically, and the working class is becoming better organised, the factory owners are investing in new technology which puts the organised working class out of work with no compensation. While there are millions and millions of real jobs needing to be done building homes and hospitals and schools and roads — if someone will only pay for them.

FROM Calcutta we went by train to Jamshedpur, a company town in southern Bihar. Bihar is India's most populous and most depressed state. With a population of 90 million and a 38% literacy rate it merited only a dozen pages in the backpackers' bible *The Lonely Planet*... A state bigger than most European countries, insufficiently interesting to be on the tourist trail.

We arrived there at night. The platforms were blanketed in sleeping human beings, and as we stepped quietly among them and crossed the railway bridge to the exit I glimpsed dozens of thin coolies stretched out on the concrete floor of their night shelter, not much better off than the beggars.

Jamshedpur is relatively prosperous. The metal-working and car-making companies who are the main employers also run the place. There is a proper main street with prosperous shops. There are hospitals and schools, and numerous sports grounds. There are neat parks. So long as you work in a factory here you will have a company house — albeit a shabby flat by British standards.

There is a large though declining Anglo-Indian community with whom we spent some time. Many of them work or worked in the factories and lived in "Tinplate Colony" or some other paternalistic settlement, and they arranged trips for us round some of the factories of which they are very proud.

I am not qualified to judge the health and safety standards of such a factory. Perhaps out of respect to our hosts I would not like to say much more about the factories than that the dangerous, hot work in the factory is done only by men.

Chivalry?

You would think so until you realised that the poorer paid, unskilled job of unloading fuel in the coking yard is done by women!

I could see that our friends at Tinplate had more blessings than many to count, but most of them were desperately trying to emigrate to Australia, as so many of their friends and relations have done.

They were only secure so long as they were working. And they could only work so long as they were "good" workers...

There are unions in Tinplate, but the stewards were under enormous ideological pressure to knuckle down and make the business competitive. Strikes had once been admissible under the British, "but you don't do it now!"

Companies like this go in for new management techniques, where really they hardly need bother: the very best new management techniques are just at the city limits — very low employment rates and a non-existent welfare state.

The manager of one factory boasted of

*"Much economic activity is just recycling old rubbish, or rendering a 'service' to people rich enough to pay poor people to live the crappy bits of their lives for them."*



# made flesh



Slum conditions the norm across Third World cities

India's increasing competitiveness in the world market. For him the standard by which to judge everything is profitability and Indian industry is becoming competitive compared to British, say, so for him "Britain is a disaster". He's wrong. *India* is a disaster for most of the people who live there. And, in their attempt to make Britain "competitive", the British ruling class would like to ruin British workers, and are trying to make Britain as like India as possible.

Contrary to what you might expect, I could see many points of reference between British and Indian workers, areas where we could learn from each other and each others' struggles.

And beyond mere trade union collaboration, the possibilities of achieving the "best" we can achieve under "this" system, what

would British workers be prepared to do to help Indians achieve something like the standard of living we enjoy?

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that a workers' government in Britain, or a successful workers' revolution, should send money to the Third World.

That is not to say that British workers share some guilt for the ravages of empire, that they have gained their welfare benefits at the expense of Third World workers. They gained their welfare benefits in a fight with the British ruling-class robbers. We should now help Indian workers gain welfare benefits in their fight with the Indian ruling

class. And we should all collaborate to defeat increasingly internationalised capitalism.

I'm convinced that if people knew how people in the Third World live; if, more than

vaguely knowing about it, they actually believed it, as I've come to believe it, they could not idly put up with that knowledge, and they'd fight for a better way of organising and dividing human resources.

**A**S I stood one afternoon admiring the most attractive feature of the Jamshedpur district — its man-made reservoir — I was sulking that in all my trip to India I had neither ridden on an elephant — resisting the allure of a visit to Calcutta zoo which, my friends discovered, has one of the finest collections of dead animals in Asia — nor seen a single snake-charmer.

Whereupon I pulled myself up sharply and berated myself for once again forgetting the

number one incongruity of a trip to India for such as we from the First World — the inappropriateness of trying to be a tourist here.

There are lovely places to visit in India — beaches, forests, temples and mountains — but in all of them you cannot ignore what we experienced unrelentingly in our tour of the grottier parts — that background noise of poverty.

That background noise that builds up in your own brain astonishingly quickly.

People talk about going to India as a "spiritual" experience. I don't believe in that, but it does work very uncomfortably at some subconscious level. If it was any consolation at all, by the end of a week there I hated my night-times and the dreams I had more than I hated the days.

The most poignant thing I saw in India was a Health and Safety notice in Tinsplate factory! It urged people to wear their helmets for "Your skull is as weak as an egg!"

"Your skull is as weak as an egg!" summed up many of my feelings about what I'd seen.

The best thing about life in the First World — as it is now and before the ruling class gets to dismantle it for the majority of us — is that most of your fears are completely irrational and that very little really nasty will ever happen to you. Even if it does, there are cushions of the welfare state, and of other people's comfort, to remind you that yours is a temporary and "unreal" nasty state.

The nastiest thing about the Third World is that your worst imaginable nightmare is all around you — even if you're relatively well off, it hangs around you all day long. The unreal is horribly real. You have the unpleasant experience of seeing the worst bits of your subconscious made flesh.

The eternally potentially vulnerable human being at their most vulnerable, everywhere.

We left Jamshedpur at a run, fleeing to the station and enduring a long, cramped train journey in increasingly bad states of health.

At Calcutta's Howrah station we fought our way through the coolies and cabbies who literally fought *each other* for the privilege of assisting seven Europeans and their luggage to the airport.

We drove in the small hours past a city that had never really slept, saw the men, running with sweat, who are there now pulling heavy loads of scaffolding, and naked people taking advantage of the semi-darkness to wash by the side of the road.

Whereas we had planned before we left Britain to spend these last hours admiring exhibits in the Indian Museum or marvelling at the architectural splendours of empire, now we camped in the sweltering airport for hours to get on our plane, rather than spend another minute in the City of Joy.

For the past couple of days the accumulated knowledge of misery had begun to break

my heart. I don't mean that by way of a metaphor for "feeling very sad". It was a very real and unpleasant *physical* feeling. I would say that I left not a moment too soon, but that's rather precious. It's no hardship to look at the place compared to what it must be to live there.

Since I got back several people have asked me how my "holiday" was and I had to reply truthfully that it was terrible. "Yes, I am going round to India House in the

morning and asking for my money back." Well, not quite, but India did my head in and on my worst days now I would rather not think about the worst of what I saw.

*"The manager of one factory boasted of India's increasing competitiveness... the standard by which to judge everything is profitability."*

*"The nastiest thing about the Third World is that your worst imaginable nightmare is all around... the worst bits of your subconscious made flesh."*



## Obituary

Vassili  
Manikakis

By Janet Burstall

VASSILI Manikakis died in Athens on 28 February, aged 32. 800 people, mainly from the Greek community, attended his funeral in Sydney on 14 March.

He had been living in Greece for nearly a year and was about to return to Australia to his job as a television journalist with SBS (the multicultural channel).

Vassili was sympathetic to the politics of *Socialist Organiser* and had been a supporter of the Australian paper *Socialist Fight* from 1983 until 1988, when it folded. *Socialist Fight* shared *SO's* politics. He also worked with *SO* comrades when he visited England.

Vassili grew up in the politics of the Socialist Party of Australia (Moscow line) which his father supported. As a student in the early 1980s, he began to doubt that the USSR was socialist. His first step towards Trotskyism was to join the Spartacist League, although their rabid "Defend USSR" line enabled him to entertain doubts about the USSR without really challenging his understanding of current events.

When Vassili recognised that the Spartacists were irredeemable sectarians, he left. He considered the politics of a number of other left groups. After much argument, *Socialist Fight* convinced Vassili of the need to oppose the USSR invasion of Afghanistan and in 1983 he joined *Socialist Fight*.

He frequently went back over old ground on Stalinism, as though it was hard for him to shake off his upbringing, but he was always keen to talk this over and to re-establish his support for *SO's* politics.

Vassili was very talented at engaging people in discussion. He was an excellent paper seller, and maker of contacts. He was more a talker than a writer. So he turned to work in community radio, and then to television and a programme called *Vox Populi*, based on popular interviews. He explored issues of concern to youth, immigrants, workers, socialists.

He had worked since 1989 in community radio and TV journalism where he earned the high regard of his colleagues for his skill and his commitment to changing the world. He could see national conflicts abroad dividing migrant workers in Australia. His interviews were aimed at getting local leaders to accept the justice of competing national interests, particularly Serbs and Croats.

He worked to persuade the Greek community to acknowledge Macedonian claims. This approach was at some personal cost. He felt strong ties to, and worked extensively in, the Greek community. He did this not as a nationalist but as a socialist internationalist. He experienced and recognised the damage to workers' unity from national chauvinism, repression of national rights, and racism.

His last active involvement, in Greece, was a campaign against Greek chauvinism and in solidarity with Macedonian rights.

Vassili was an internationalist. He looked forward to workers' revolution and it is sad that it was, after all, "not in his lifetime."

## OUR HISTORY

## The Chartists' last stand



The last big Chartist demonstration, Kennington, 1848

**Gary Scott concludes his series on the Chartists. The Chartist movement, founded in 1836, fought for votes for working-class men, for annual elections to parliament, and for other demands to widen parliamentary democracy. At that time, when the permanent, unelected state machine was still flimsy, these demands added up to a claim for working-class power.**

**After mass petitions and direct action — armed uprising and a General Strike (in 1842) — the movement adopted a Land Plan which sought to secure a livelihood for working-class people by reclaiming the land but soon collapsed. This last article deals with Chartism after the Land Plan.**

**D**ESPITE its ultimate failure the Land Company was an example of "practical" Chartism that had improved the lives of some workers at least. It had also held together the Chartist movement between 1845 and 1848.

While the economic depression of 1847 led workers to look to settling on the land as a means of escape, it also coincided with a revival in Chartism.

A new petition was drafted and mass meetings organised throughout the country. Though the meetings were not as large as those held in 1839 they were larger than any meetings held since then. At Halifax a meeting was held attended by 10,000 people.

Throughout the early months of 1848 revolutions swept across Europe. In February the French king was driven from the throne and a republic proclaimed. There followed insurrectionary activity in other parts of Europe; in Italy and Germany.

The Chartist movement could not

help but be influenced by these insurrections. In 1845 George Julian Harney had helped found an organisation called the Fraternal Democrats. It advocated much more than the six points of the Charter. Engels wrote for their journal, the *Red Republican*, and the Fraternal Democrats were to publish the *Communist Manifesto*. They had kept in touch with and welcomed the revolutions that were sweeping across Europe and advocated the same for Britain, except they were to be led by the working class.

Ernest Jones, elected as a delegate to the Chartist Convention at the Halifax meeting, proposed that in the event of the Chartists' third petition being rejected the convention was to transform itself into a National Assembly that was to assume government of the country. They were to ask the queen to dissolve parliament and "call to her council such ministers only as will make the People's Charter a cabinet measure".

The convention decided to present the third petition after a huge Chartist meeting and procession to the Houses of Parliament.

As in 1839, in the Chartist strongholds of the industrial north drilling was to take place, particularly in Yorkshire. Many Chartists advocated the carrying of arms at the proposed mass meeting in London in anticipation of the army being called in to disband them.

In April 1848 it seemed the country was on the verge of revolution, the presentation of the petition and its inevitable refusal signalling the beginning of an armed insurrection.

In a riot that took place in Glasgow on 6 March 1848 people marched through the streets shouting "bread or revolution!"

The ruling class were also aware of the threat of revolution and prepared accordingly. Leading up to 10 April, special constables had been sworn in in large numbers. The Duke of Wellington was given military command of London with a huge army and Queen Victoria was packed off to the Isle of Wight where it was thought

she would be safe.

The law, as well as the military was used to ward off the threat of revolution. New legislation was rushed through parliament: the Aliens' Removal Act, the Crown and Government Security Act and the Irish Crime and Outrages Act.

The 10 April meeting was large — estimates range from 25,000 to 125,000 — but the procession was abandoned and the petition was taken to the Houses of Parliament in a cab.

O'Connor had claimed there were 6 million signatures on the petition. Many of the signatures were forged and when the signatures were counted it was announced that there were fewer than 2 million on it.

Many official histories of Chartism see the 1848 demonstration as the death of Chartism, particularly as, at a convention meeting following the demonstration, the question of armed insurrection was debated and they decided against it.

In fact Chartist activity was to continue into the 1850s and in some areas, like Halifax, it was to be stronger than it had ever been.

In Yorkshire and Lancashire Chartists continued military preparations. At Bradford the Chartists fought and defeated the police, killing one and wounding others but were forced to retreat when the army was called in. There were other outbreaks of violence in Ashton-under-Lyne and Liverpool while Chartists were prepared to take up arms in Leicester and Glasgow.

As well as being faced with the police and army and laws quickly rushed through the Houses of Parliament to severely limit working-class organisations, the Chartist movement was riddled with police spies who were responsible for the arrest of prominent Chartists.

Plans for insurrection were most developed in London. There were believed to be 80,000 organised in London who were in touch with Irish revolutionaries. One of the leaders of the plot turned out to be a police spy. He reported the plan — which he had helped work out — to the police and

most of the leaders of the revolutionary executive were arrested.

**A** NUMBER of reasons have been given by historians for the failure of the Chartist movement, including the lack of working-class consciousness, disunity, the development of a labour aristocracy...

Those on the left of the Chartist movement such as George Julian Harney, who learned their politics from the unstamped press movement and had links with continental revolutionaries, believed the fault of the Chartist movement was the lack of a link between political and social issues.

Bronterre O'Brien, writing in 1849 stated: "The Chartist movement has failed — yes, failed... it is because a thorough discussion of social rights has not been permitted."

Writing in the *Friend of the People* in 1851 George Julian Harney stated "the Chartism of '51 is not that of 1839 or 1848... Defeated, disappointed of the political victory they had hoped for in 1848, the hard working thinkers turned their attention to social questions."

The 1851 Chartist convention adopted a programme that was concerned with social as well as political emancipation. It included clauses dealing with nationalisation of the land, the separation of Church and State, national, secular and compulsory education, the right for the poor to receive "substantial relief when out of work."

Learning from the use of the state machinery to defeat the uprisings of 1839 and 1848, the programme of 1851 included a clause that stated: "standing armies were contrary to the principles of democracy and dangerous to the liberty of the people". It asserted the right of individuals to bear arms and be afforded the opportunity of military training.

It was a programme based on the struggles of the Chartist movement and a programme of demands to be fought for by future working-class organisations.



# Theology and twaddle well-acted



Matt Cooper  
reviews  
*Shadowlands*

Directed by  
Richard Attenborough

**SUSPECT** *Shadowlands* is not intended for British audiences at all. It oozes quaint Englishness out of every pore.

Period settings in Oxford are thrown in by the bucket-load, and antique charm is applied by predictable trowel after trowel. Old professors wander vaguely around amidst dreaming spires and occasionally rolling green countryside, being quaintly absent-minded, but very clever in an other-worldly kind of way.

This is a world of tweed, tea, cakes and age-old tradition, clearly tailored to be sold to an American audience.

Add to this a lot of rather incoherent Christian philosophy about how pain and suffering are really God's way of reminding us that we are free human agents, and this sounds like a film to avoid like the plague of Biblical locusts.

The central character is C S Lewis, author of the "Narnia" children's books and a theologian whose literalist interpretation of the Bible has posthumously endeared him to right-

wing American evangelists like Billy Graham.

The film is rescued by the acting of Anthony Hopkins in the role of C S Lewis, ably supported by Debra Winger as Joy Gresham and Tim Mazello as her son Dougal.

The film gives Hopkins a chance to perfect a character type that he has played before, most notably in *84 Charing Cross Road* and *Remains of the Day*. In *84 Charing Cross Road* he can only be himself in letters to someone the other side of the Atlantic; in *Remains of the Day* he can never do it; in *Shadowlands* he can only do it when confronted by the imminent death of the object of his love.

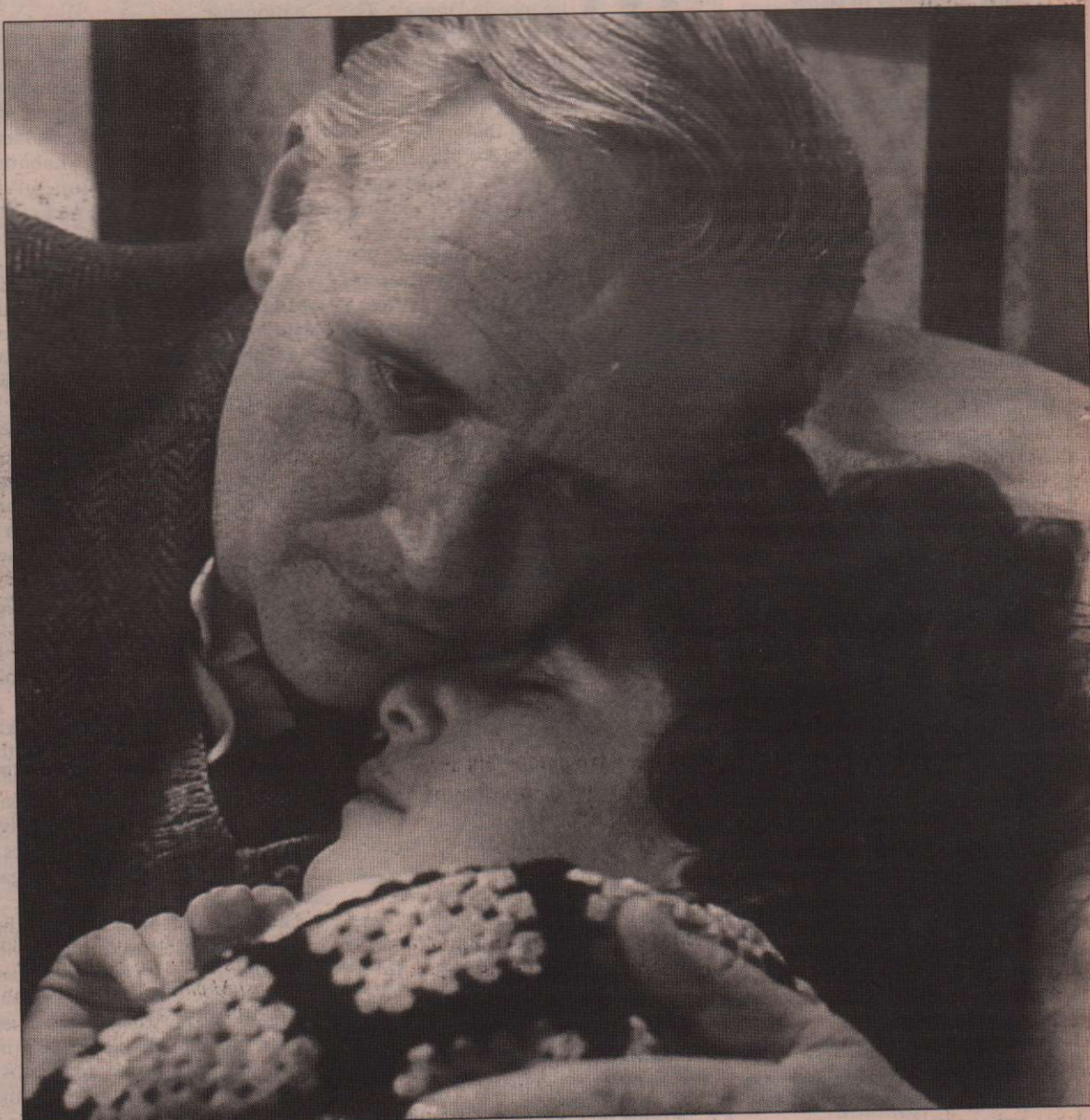
Lewis is emotionally constipated, the film suggests, as a result of the death of his mother when he was nine years old. Into his world comes Gresham. Lewis retreats behind layers of self-defence.

As Gresham falls terminally ill, the protective layers Lewis has built up over the years are peeled away to leave a man stripped naked. Lewis starts out smug with an

answer to everything, but he is left only with vulnerabilities, doubts and uncertainties.

The message of this film is flawed by a lot of theology and sentimental twaddle. But if you want to see a riveting performance of a man confronting himself and discovering how to really touch others and to love, masterfully acted, then this film is for you.

*"The film gives Hopkins a chance to perfect a character type he has played before... emotionally constipated."*



Anthony Hopkins as C S Lewis

# Don't blame the adman



Geoff Ward  
reviews  
*40 Minutes*

BBC2  
Tuesday 8 March

**A**DVERTISING in the Philippines was the subject of *40 Minutes* "Manila — the real thing".

It focused on how multinational companies spend vast sums of money bombarding Filipinos with advertisements in a country where over 50% of the population lives below the poverty line and the average worker earns around £4 per day.

The ad executives interviewed presented themselves as if they were social workers — people whose main concern was to promote a "better life".

Commercials, they argue, had miraculous powers. They could give people "hope", "dreams" and a means of escape from their miserable lives.

They gave people something to aspire to. By oiling the wheels of the

economy they could bring prosperity. By persuading them to buy brand X rather than brand Y they could create deliriously happy families!

The advertising images inflicted upon the Filipino people would be familiar to us, though they seem to be even more hackneyed and even more nauseating.

The programme directed strong

*"Filipino workers cannot be as docile as the programme suggested — they overthrew Marcos."*

moral outrage against the ad industry because it operates in a country with such high rates of poverty. But is the advertising industry really more obscene than here?

For instance, is high-pressure advertising amidst the poverty of the Philippines any worse than advertisements here pushing "easily afford-

able" healthcare schemes while the Tories dismantle the welfare state? Worse than signs on tube trains in London which tell people not to "encourage" begging by giving money?

It struck me that the programme was slightly off beam, hitting the wrong target. Its fire would have been better directed at a system which gives selling Coca-Cola to Filipinos a higher priority than ensuring that they have clean, running water in their homes. Advertising is more symptom here than cause.

A Filipino woman obviously enjoyed the advertising on television. What concerned her was not the images of, say, a washing machine thrust at her but the fact that she can save only £4 per year and therefore can't afford one; and even if she could buy it she has nowhere to plumb it in!

Filipino workers and peasants cannot be as docile and contented as the programme suggested — a few years back they overthrew Ferdinand Marcos who had ripped off something like \$10 billion from the country's economy.

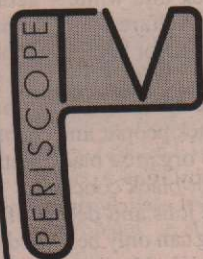
The documentary convincingly

demonstrated that the capitalist market does not deliver what people need in the Philippines. Filipino and British workers have much in common! They are exploited by the same multinationals; the surplus they produce is expropriated by a ruling class. Though absolute poverty is worse in the Philippines, the income of the

lowest 20% as a proportion of GDP is roughly the same here as there.

The documentary hoped that Filipinos would embrace something real rather than the "Real Thing" in the Coca-Cola ad. The way to a better life is not through imitating commercials but by embracing international working-class solidarity.

## Going home



Minnie Ryan  
previews  
*Timewatch*  
"Birthplace"

**F**IFTY years ago a handful of Jewish families in Poland escaped annihilation in the holocaust because they managed to go into hiding.

Henryk Gryndberg, then aged six, was one of them. *Birthplace* — winner of seven international film festival awards — follows him as he returns to the Polish village in which he was born, looking for traces of his murdered family.

BBC2,  
Wednesday 23 March, 8pm



## Militant and the splits in "Panther UK"

# Working-class politics or black nationalism?

## Alliance for WORKERS' LIBERTY Meetings

### YORK

"How to beat the racists"

7.30 Thursday 17 March

Speaker: Richard Bayley

Room 3, Priory Street Community Centre

### LONDON

"Students and the fight for socialism"

1.00pm Wednesday 16 March

Goldsmith's College SU committee room

Education school — Socialists and the Labour Party

1.00 — 5.30 Sunday 20 March

Details: 071-639 7965

"Elections in South Africa — what should socialists say?"

7.30 Wednesday 23 March

Speakers: Tom Rigby from the AWL and a member of Qina Msebenzi

Calthorpe Arms, 252 Grays Inn Road, Kings Cross, London

### NEWCASTLE

"Students and the struggle for socialism"

1.00pm Friday 18 March

University of Northumbria SU

### LEEDS

"Ten years after the miners strike"

7.30 Thursday 14 April

Adelphi pub

### LANCASTER

"Students and the struggle for socialism"

8.00 Thursday 17 March

Students' Union, St Martin's College

### HALIFAX

"Students and the struggle for socialism"

12.00 Tuesday 22 March

Students Union Calderdale College

### MANCHESTER

"Should anti-racists vote Labour?"

7.30 Wednesday 23 March

Details of venue, 061-861 9978

## Germany's role in Europe

A one day seminar in London  
Speakers include Pete Gowan, Gunter Minnerup, Colin Meade and Gus Fagan  
Saturday 7 May 10-5.30  
Details from Pete Gowan  
071-607 2789

WL '94 will take place from Friday 8 to Sunday 10 July at Caxton House, North London

### EYE ON THE LEFT

By Mark Osborn

**M**ILITANT Labour is in crisis. It is a crisis of politics, organisation, finance and morale. The crisis has deep roots in the organisation's half-century-long history.

Their "black work" around "Panther" is a useful starting point for an examination of this crisis.

"Panther UK" was launched as Militant Labour's black front organisation. Its "We Fight For" column in issue number 4 of its paper, "Panther", dated Summer 1991 demands "jobs for all" and advocates "black and white workers" control, a 35 hour week and a minimum wage.

It demands "decent homes and equal education" — not for black people alone, but for all workers, black and white.

It is strongly against the Tories and for "a socialist Labour government" which it calls on to bring about the "nationalisation of the 200 big companies... under workers' control."

This is Militant as anyone who spent any time in the old, Militant-run Labour Party Young Socialists will remember them: general socialist propaganda, usually wooden and — as when they called on the Labour Party to bring about socialism — more than a little foolish. Nevertheless, this was a class programme, of sorts.

Move on a year to "Panther" no.5, summer 1992. There is a new "We Fight For" column, called "Panther Programme". It reflects the new approach of Militant Labour.

It is now a black nationalist — or, more accurately, pseudo-black-nationalist — programme, not a socialist one.

Gone are all references to white workers, to trade unions, to the Labour Party or even to the need to get rid of the Tories. They want "proper jobs" (for black people) and "decent homes" (for black people). They want to "advance the black struggle", to "raise the consciousness of black people" and to put an end to "substandard education for black children."

We certainly need to campaign for proper education for black children, for example. But to try to separate out a black struggle for jobs and homes from a white working-class struggle for jobs and homes is reactionary communalist utopianism. In an integrated labour movement it is very divisive. Black people alone will not win these demands for jobs and homes as a separate group, and a battle between black workers and white workers over who gets what share of an inadequate supply of jobs and homes can only set back the whole working class. Even in education, vast numbers of white working-class children are also victims of substandard provision.

We must fight for united working-class — black and white — action to restore the Welfare State, for proper education, and for homes and jobs for all workers. Within that we must address the specific discrimination faced by black people, and encourage and help to organise black sectional militancy for black concerns.

Issues like jobs and decent affordable housing can only be settled on a national level. National politics requires majorities, and the whole non-white population of Britain is only 5% of the total!

So how do Panther see their demands being implemented? By which political party? How? Outside of a united, class-wide movement how can black people satisfy their needs? They do not say. They have become more incoherent as they become more nationalist.

In the year between issues number 4 and 5 of Panther, Militant's political crisis had reached the convulsive state. The USSR had collapsed, shattering their world outlook of 45 years. They had stood against Labour in the Walton by-election, giving Labour's right wing an excuse for a new purge. The organisation had split.

Ted Grant, the fountainhead of Militant's politics for half a century, had been expelled and Peter Taaffe and his friends had begun to take what remained of Militant a long way from its old politics.

Today, Grant's monthly magazine, Socialist Appeal, continues the old, passive, dull, propagandist Militant tradition — its politics now rendered utterly incoherent by the death of European Stalinism and the collapse of the so-called "workers' states" in Eastern Europe, which Militant believed to be post-capitalist and the living (though deformed) embodiment of an ongoing world revolution.

Militant Labour has broken with their traditional bury-yourself-in-the-Labour-Party politics. They have tried to build a more activist organisation, but in fact have largely collapsed into identikit far-left politics as a supposed short-cut to a mass organisation.

They have not made the gains they hoped for. In fact, according to their own internal documents, they are in deep trouble. They have lost many members and have had to implement "a painful, but unavoidable, cutting down of the full-time apparatus". The equipment they use to produce their paper is "antiquated and near to breakdown."

The black-nationalist turn of "Panther" was an expression of the general political turn by Militant Labour. And its first, quite predictable, result was a black-nationalist split-off from the organisation.

In September 1993 "Panther UK" split. The split went through the original Militant black cadre and there are now two Panther papers, one run by Militant Labour and one by a group of ex-Militant members: Emerson Webster, Gregory Vincent and Albert Collymore.

Both sides of the split have pub-



Panther 1991: socialist. 1992: pseudo nationalist. 1993: split

lished statements.

The Militant "Panther" begins: "Panther was founded in the best traditions of democratic organisation. Our heritage comes from the Black Panther Party" [a militant black party in the USA in the 1960s].

So Panther UK was as democratic as the BPP? Oh dear.

It is impossible to find out from this statement what the political lines in the split were. The Militant people allege violence from the ex-comrades and condemn the use of the "racist press" by the Webster-led faction to publicise their side of the split. A bit cheeky really, given the many press releases issued by the Militant in the last ten years.

The non-Militant "Panther" identifies some political disagreements. They say they have "the perspective of becoming a party at a later stage." First they want a "genuinely independent black and Asian organisation" — that is free of Militant control. Their statement reflects a reaction to Militant-style socialist politics and a retreat into community politics.

The Webster faction also hint at differences on the question of black self-defence.

Militant went on a nationalist binge, hoping for a short cut to black youth. They geared their paper to the instincts of black youth on the streets, not to the needs of black workers. Cultural questions and Black History displaced serious consideration of the problems black workers face in the workplace.

Militant only took up the ideas of the Black Panther Party and Bobby Seale as "marketing devices" — but then some of their people came to

believe them! They drew the indicated conclusions and took the politics to their logical conclusion. They split and now they produce a left-wing black community paper, not a socialist paper aimed at black workers and youth.

Militant have followed the road of the IS/SWP in the 1970s, who also lost black comrades to Black and Asian front organisations which split off from the parent organisation.

When Militant was advocating a crude workerist version of class politics, they were grossly insensitive to black people's concerns and specific oppression.

In the notorious Imperial Typewriters dispute, in Leicester in 1974, for example, they destructively counterposed "class unity" calls to support for the struggle of black workers demanding equal treatment on the job and in promotion prospects. (The workforce was split).

When they had control of Liverpool council in 1984-6, they provoked bitter and probably unnecessary conflicts with the leaders of Liverpool's black community, and conducted a savage campaign of racist stereotyping against them, in the LPYS for example, denouncing them as "pimps and gangsters".

They reduced class politics on the fight against racism to a foolish caricature, and helped to discredit those politics among black people. Now they switch over to crude black nationalism! Militant is consistent only in being foolish.

• Send £1 to WL Publications and we will send you copies of the texts mentioned in this article.

## No anti-fascist unity here, please, we're SWP!

ON WEDNESDAY 9 March SWP leader Tony Cliff spoke on fascism in Leeds. Local AWL and Socialist Outlook supporters had produced a leaflet calling for anti-racist unity, especially in building for the TUC march on 19 March. The SWP could not tolerate this! After a short while we were asked to leave and given our entrance money back.

That AWL members were excluded was not a surprise. This time however, the Socialist Outlook comrades were also asked to leave.

No reason was given but it seems it was because they had the audacity not only to disagree with the SWP, but, sin of sins, to agree with Socialist Organiser.

Leeds AWL supporters have initiated an anti-racist/anti-fascist unity committee through the local Campaign Group. Since then the local AFA, ARA and YRE groups and others have leafleted together for the TUC demo.

The SWP and ANL have quite literally stood to one side and continued alone, despite the fact that this has meant a series of fascist attacks on their paper sales.

## Oh no, debate... call the cops!

AT THE Socialist Workers Party's (SWP) Students Fighting For Socialism event on 6th February, Militant Labour members selling papers and discussing with students were threatened with the police by SWP officials.

How strange that a 'party' who consider the police to be 'an arm of the capitalist state' will use them to settle their arguments. (From Militant, 11 February 1994).



# Where now for Sheffield council workers?

By Chris Croome, shop stewards organiser, UNISON no.2 branch

IN THE LAST two years Sheffield Council has reduced its spending in line with the Government's wishes by almost £80 million. The Council's workforce has been cut by 20% since 1987 through several rounds of voluntary severance and early retirement. These cuts have had a devastating effect on services. Yet the Council would rather cut back services by another £31 million in the next financial year than stand up to the Government.

New planned cuts involve, among other things, class sizes soaring as teaching jobs are cut; stopping adult education classes; severely cutting back on the youth service; closing old people's homes; and cutting elderly day-care services.

The Council's budget contains a planned £9 million cut in employee terms and conditions. This equates to a pay cut of about 2.75%. This is the third year running that the council have looked to their workforce to make up for systematic underfunding from central government.

Last year a 3.25% pay cut was agreed and the year before a three-day pay cut was accepted.

This year the (ex-NALGO) UNISON no. 2 branch is opposing cuts in members' conditions; but the GMB and TGWU have indicated that they are prepared to negotiate on their 'share' of the £9

million. Negotiations on the budget have been split down into white-collar and manual discussion. This division will only serve to assist the council.

All the council unions, manual, white collar and teaching, should be uniting and striking together against the cuts in conditions, jobs and services, not allowing the council to divide and rule.

The council plans a major attack on jobs and conditions. Exactly what this will involve and when is not clear. It is possible that the council will postpone action until after the elections on 5 May.

The current industrial action policy of the white collar part of UNISON involves departmental balloting for action against redundancies and a 24 hour walkout across the whole council in the event of a single notice being issued.

But this departmental approach leaves those who are facing the greatest threat isolated and more likely to opt for some kind of pay-cut deal as a way out. The Land and Planning Department and DEED have delivered very good ballot results for strike action against redundancies, but also proposed to the last UNISON mass meeting that there be a ballot all members for a pay cut.

The ballot in the Design and Building Services Department, where at least 11 staff are threatened with redundancy, went down, with 70 yes votes and 81 no.

Building Services and Standards has delivered a yes vote for action against redundancies. The

Libraries Department has successfully conducted two ballots for strike action over reorganisation and service cuts.

Everything possible should be done to enable maximum legal industrial action in the event of notices being issued. Every Department should organise meetings to agree ballots for strike action.

Any proposals for further pay cuts must be fiercely resisted. They have done no good so far. Each time the Council has come back for more. With the fourth largest city in England undercutting the national pay rates, there is a real threat to national pay bargaining.

## A fair deal for Sheffield?

By a member of Sheffield Labour Party

SHEFFIELD City Council's budget has been set at £5.5 million above the Government's spending limit of £378 million. Yet it still involves £18 million of service cuts, £9 million of cuts in employees' terms and conditions, and £3.6 million from cuts in management and organisation, when compared to last year's spending.

The Sheffield Labour Party has launched a major election campaign, "A Fair Deal for Sheffield", leafletting and petitioning all across the City. It is a huge con which could potentially backfire against Labour.

The UNISON branch is committed to holding a mass meeting as soon as any compulsory redundancy notices are issued. At their meeting a decision should be taken to ballot all members in addition to taking immediate all-out action across the whole council to demand that notices are withdrawn.

A ballot is vital because it will be very hard to sustain any action that has not been balloted for: there will be no strike pay, the council could well take legal action, and the union regionally or nationally will instruct members to return to work.

Maximum action and maximum unity: that is the way to win!

The council is asking the Government for permission to raise an extra £5.5 million in council tax from the people of Sheffield. They are not asking for a single penny from the Government. The tax rise would go together with service cuts, i.e., Labour want to see workers in Sheffield pay more for fewer services, and this is the main plank of their election campaign for the 5 May council election!

The Sheffield Labour Party should be launching a massive campaign involving service users and council workers to oppose all cuts, and demanding that the Government grant Sheffield enough money for desperately needed local services.

## RMT clerical conference

By a conference delegate

THE National Conference of Supervisory, Clerical and Other Salaried Grades of the rail union RMT was held in Edinburgh on 5-6 March.

Reports from delegates highlighted an ignorant management indulging in a free for all of attacks on conditions and negotiating rights. This includes an attempt to do away with the third (national) level of negotiation at which the RMT is most effective.

As far as action this year was concerned, senior union officers admitted that the legal situation was now unfathomable reference being made to the recent NATFHE ruling and the court's supposed power to make any dispute illegal. But some delegates called for strike action in defiance of the law if necessary. One officer expressed it. "The alternative to sequestration of funds by the courts is sequestration by our members who will leave if we do nothing to defend them!"

## NATFHE: keep up the fight!

EDUCATION

By a NATFHE lecturer, Southwark College

NATFHE members continue their battle over the principle of national pay and conditions. Six union regions have demanded a recall FE Sector conference to reverse the drift towards local bargaining. This FE sector conference meets on Wednesday 16 March.

It is absolutely vital that this conference countermands the FE Industrial Relation's Committee (FEIRC) decision to abandon national negotiations.

Our national officials are saying that they are unable to force an acceptable deal from the hard-nosed college employers forum (CEF). So they have left relatively inexperienced and overworked branch officials to the mercy of Thatcherite bully-boy Principals determined to do John Patten's dirty work.

Some colleges are already drifting towards local negotiations with Principals offering to give concessions not on the new contracts but on "management guidelines" as interpretations of the contracts. But once the contracts are in place management will impose the harshest possible "interpretation".

We must reverse the drift towards local bargaining, we must re-ballot immediately for national and rapidly-escalating strike action. And we need a vigorous campaign for a massive "yes" vote. Branches and regions under attack should not wait — they should ballot for strike action now. But those branches in the front line must link up, spread action and help re-build a national campaign.

**Advertisement**  
NATFHE comrades in London are invited to an open rank and file meeting to discuss the way forward. On Wednesday 16th March 6pm, Conway Hall. Sponsored by NATFHE branches Southwark and Tower Hamlets.

## Brighton and Hove buses strike

BRIGHTON and Hove bus workers have voted for an unofficial strike unless management withdraw their attacks on terms and conditions.

Tragically, officials of the bus workers' union, the TGWU, have been doing their best to block any

action. They've said management are within their rights and an official ballot would be illegal.

If the strike goes ahead the Brighton and Hove busworkers will need our full support and solidarity.

(Detailed report next issue)

Attend our conference

### Alliance for Workers' Liberty meets

THE Alliance for Workers' Liberty conference will be held in London over the weekend of 26-27 March.

As we meet the far right is set to gain in the Italian elections. At the end of last year the fascist Liberal Democrats won 24% of the vote in Russia.

Although much smaller, the British fascists are organising for the forthcoming local government elections in May.

How should socialists respond to the fascist threat? What can socialists do to help get rid of the Tories? And what are the prospects for Labour?

The AWL will debate all the major issues with the aim of preparing ourselves as an active force, fighting for socialist change.

Why not attend our conference?

Write to the AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA for details.

### The next Socialist Organiser

Because most Socialist Organiser sellers will have their time taken up with the AWL conference, SO will not be published next week, 24 March. SO594 will be dated 31 March.

The next issue of Socialist Organiser will contain the next part of Rob Dawber's column, "The God Squad".

## Strike ballot in BT London

TELECOM

By a Central London BT engineer.

ALL NCU London Engineering members who work for BT are to be balloted from 21 March for strike action against the bringing in of contract labour to do core engineering work.

The proposed action is a one day 'protest' strike.

A ballot around the issue of jobs has been on the cards for several

months. It has come to a head now because at the end of the financial year BT has made 1,250 staff in London 'surplus' — that is, not allocated to core work — and is attempting to bring in hundreds of contractors to do work that these engineers could do. The hidden agenda of compulsory redundancies.

For several months, the anger about jobs has been constant, with BT bringing in more reorganisations to make everyone feel their job is insecure. The important thing is that people vote yes

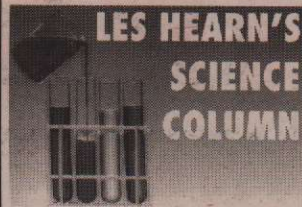
expecting something from the union.

The danger of having a one day 'protest' strike is that this will be perceived as inadequate to stop BT — too little and too late.

Also there is the problem of what happens between now and the action if contractors are brought in anyway: a policy of non-cooperation without a ballot could lead to suspensions and unofficial action.

Balloting starts next week and the results will be known after Easter.

# Looking the wrong way



FORGET THE Hubble Space Telescope! The next generation of telescopes observing stares on distant galaxies will be deep under water or beneath the Antarctic ice sheet. And they will be looking downwards!

Astronomy has extended its scope from visible light to take in all the forms of electromagnetic radiation, such as infra-red (heat), ultra-violet, micro- and radio waves, X- and gamma rays. These radiations travel through the vacuum of space from the billions of stars, galaxies, quasars and black holes to the Earth. Some cannot penetrate the atmosphere, hence space-based telescopes. But stars emit other "radiations" as well, principally the mysterious neutrino.

The neutrino is one of that growing class of things that are predicted by science on the basis of some theory. Hitherto unsuspected, these are then observed, perhaps with some apparatus designed in the belief that the theory cannot lie. Another example is the positron, or positive electron, the first example to be observed of anti-matter.

The neutrino was predicted because some radioactive decays appeared to contradict a law thought to be fundamental, that momentum is conserved in all collisions or explosions. Some 70 years ago, it was noticed that when a neutron decayed, the products, a proton and an electron, possessed less momentum than the neutron had had to start with. A new particle was predicted that could carry away the missing momentum. It would have to be very low in mass, if not massless, and electrically neutral. It would have to be very difficult to detect, else it would have been found by then. Calculations showed that neutrinos could be carrying most of the universe's energy in a form that was virtually undetectable.

The nearest large-scale source of neutrinos is the Sun. Solar neutrinos pass down through us unnoticed by day and up through us by night, via the Earth. They can be detected with extreme difficulty, one neutrino "telescope" consisting of a gigantic tank of dry-cleaning fluid in a disused mine in the USA. A very few of the countless solar neutrinos passing through collide with chlorine atoms, converting them into argon atoms, which are periodically removed and counted. The fact that there are less of these than predicted is called the "solar neutrino problem": it still awaits solution.

A more interesting source of neutrinos is the type of exploding and collapsing star known as a supernova.

Supernovae are rare occurrences but can produce enough light to be visible during the day on Earth. One such was seen by Chinese astronomers in 1054 AD. Its remains are visible by telescope as the Crab nebula, an expanding ring of hot gas thrown off by the dying star. One recent supernova, unfortunately too far away to be seen without telescopes, gave out a burst of higher energy neutrinos, some twenty of which were detected on Earth.

Other sources could include orbiting pairs of stars called X-ray pulsars: these are thought to be the origins of cosmic rays, subatomic particles that shower onto the Earth's atmosphere with incredible energies — as much as that of a fast cricket ball! Active galactic nuclei, the bright centres of some galaxies, thought to be enormous black holes sucking in matter, could also be sources of high energy neutrinos. The new neutrino telescopes will be designed to detect such high energy neutrinos.

These telescopes require effective areas of some 10,000 square metres (a hectare). Clear regions of such a size are to be found in deep bodies of water or ice, in Lake Baikal, the Mediterranean or at the South Pole. The neutrinos will not be directly

*"Astronomy has extended its scope from visible light to take in all the forms of electromagnetic radiation"*

seen: they will be observed indirectly through the rare collisions they will have with ordinary matter. The energy they will give to their targets will send these shooting through the water or ice at more than the speed of light. Before you say "That's not possible. Nothing can go faster than light!", it should be pointed out that the speed of light in water is only about two-thirds of that in vacuum.

Such particles will give off the light equivalent of a sonic boom, a flash of Cerenkov radiation, a ghostly blue light which will be picked up by a bank of detectors. The detectors will be aimed downwards to pick up neutrinos coming up through the Earth from distant sources. This is to filter out Cerenkov radiation produced by other sources.

By studying these ghostly but energetic particles, we may find out more about the future of the universe. Like much "pure" research, it is difficult to see an immediate application to our everyday lives but I would be surprised if there were no spin-offs from the technology being developed.



# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

## Fake left rules in Scottish Labour Party

### As BR privatisation deadline looms

# Unite to defend jobs! Vote "yes" for action!

By a railworker

**T**HE RMT rail union has decided to ballot all members on 29 March in defence of the Promotion, Transfer and Redundancy (PT&R) agreement which provides a degree of job protection.

The ballot will coincide with ballots on Rail-freight Distribution and London Underground, and a separate ballot over an interim payment for signalling grades.

This ballot has been described by a member of

the RMT Executive Council [EC] as the "most important decision ever taken by the RMT in its history".

In addition there is the real possibility of a ballot over defence of the Machinery of Negotiations by mid-March.

The thinking behind so many ballots is to fight privatisation without using the word, that is to comply with the law as much as possible but not repeat the mistake of last year where false assurances from management — on the PT&R arrangements — led to the end of strikes which

had coincided with the miners' campaign for jobs.

Railtrack, which takes over the running of tracks and signalling, will not be legally bound by TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment). This means that conditions of service can be attacked from 2 April onwards.

Railtrack accepted all of the British Rail recommendations over Machinery of Negotiations, hence the balloting of the signalling grades under BR. This grade will be under Railtrack after 1 April. It seems that the RMT EC is determined to fight privatisation this time round.

The problem here is that since the abolition of check-off by BR management in the aftermath of last April's strike, getting ballot papers to all members is going to be even more difficult than when check-off operated. BR management's refusal to release the names of its employees is not helping.

However, this year there seems to be a determination by two-thirds of the EC not to allow a repeat of last year's fiasco, and not to allow what recently happened to NATFHE to happen to the RMT.

The point should be made to the right wing on the EC that their positions are on the line too, and any repeat of the Grand Old Duke of York tactics would destroy the union. They must not make a fetish of Tory law.

Branches should not wait on publicity and organisation from union HQ at Unity House. We have only two weeks to get a "yes" vote. Mass meetings at District and Branch level should be organised quickly and publicity done locally.

ASLEF and TSSA members should put pressure on their own union executives to ballot over PT&R also. Privatisation affects all grades and if it goes ahead no worker will have the rights of transfer while retaining current seniority.

The bottom line for ASLEF and TSSA members is solidarity with their fellow railworkers. This must be placed before any loyalty to Executive Committees that have repeatedly sold their members short in recent years. Respecting a picket line is the oldest rule in the trade union book. And the most basic one.

### Dale Street reports from the Scottish Labour Party conference in Dundee

**T**HE Labour Party (Scottish Council) is no more. At its conference in Dundee on 12-13 March, delegates voted to rechristen it the Scottish Labour Party.

However, the same gang of fake-lefts, spawned by the Labour Co-ordinating Committee of the early 1980s, maintains the stranglehold on the "new" Scottish Labour Party that it had on the old organisation. It stamped on all attempts to commit conference to left-wing politics.

A composite calling for the abolition of all anti-union laws and their replacement by a Charter of Workers' Rights was "remitted" at the behest of the Scottish Executive. They objected to the word "all".

Composites advocating that water authorities be restored to local government control without compensation, and that Labour should campaign for a democratically planned economy geared to people's needs, were likewise "remitted". So too was a composite on racism and fascism which called for the abolition of racist immigration laws and the Asylum Act.

On a more positive note, the conference voted to:

- maintain Labour/union links;
- support the maintenance of universal benefits;
- condemn the public sector pay freeze. (But will this prevent Labour-controlled local authorities in Scotland implementing that pay freeze? No!)

All in all, there was no hiding the sorry state of the Scottish Labour Party. Membership has fallen below 20,000, active campaigning is probably at an all-time low, and the conference lacked any real life or controversy. Fringe meetings were sparser than in previous years.

Yet for socialists in Scotland it remains vital to transform and win support for the Labour Party as the mass, worker-based alternative to the Tories and the Scottish Nationalists.

If Labour continues to decay, more and more workers and youth will be repelled towards divisive and diversionary nationalism.

A change in name will not stop the rot! What's needed is a radical change in politics, and a commitment to fighting the Tories now rather than marking time until the next election.

## Sheffield council workers strike against cuts



Three thousand members of UNISON in Sheffield City Council struck for one day on Thursday 10 March to protest against planned cuts as the Council met to set its budget for 1994/95.

Despite a campaign in the media, legal threats from the council, and opposition from the leaders of the other council unions and the ex-NUPE and ex-CoHSE branches of UNISON, the strike was well supported. There was a very lively march and rally, which was well received by passers-by.

More on page 15

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**SOCIALIST** Inside this week  
**MALCOLM**  
 Behind the hype  
 see page 15

Buses, rail, pits, public sector

**STRIKE TOGETHER!**

Unite to beat sackings, sell-offs, cuts