

SOCIALIST

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LABOUR MUST FIGHT!

Report from Italy "Everywhere you go, some protest or strike"

Neil Hazlitt reports from a recent visit to Rome

IN THE few months since its election, the Berlusconi Government appears to have achieved what had previously appeared impossible: uniting broad sections of the Italian working class against it!

On Wednesday 5 October, the buses, trams and underground systems in all of Italy's major cities were shut down by a national strike. The demands of the strike included not only a pay rise and improved conditions at work, but also greater involvement of the workers in the running of the transport system.

Alongside the bus and Metro strike, a series of broader campaigns were active, including a demonstration of farmers and country residents opposed to the Berlusconi Government's plans to increase land rents in coastal areas, driving out the traditional inhabitants in order to "encourage tourism" and make large profits for the building and tourist industries. These are precisely the people who Berlusconi won over with his promises of low taxes, and the creation of a million jobs.

A campaign against the recent attacks on the pension schemes of Italian workers appears to be developing into a general campaign in defence of the Italian Welfare State.

In Florence, a series of factory occupations and strikes broke out as a Government pay freeze begins to bite.

And in Milan, catering workers at Milano Centrale station hung banners from the roof of the station attacking both the managers of the Italian state railways and the Government. This came after they were threatened with new individual contracts based on performance-related pay, and a series of job losses.

It seemed as though everywhere you go in Italy there is something happening, some protest or strike. But very little of it appears to be linked, and there was a marked lack

of presence of the left.

Most of the action was spontaneous, self-organised by whichever group of workers felt under attack. The one exception to this was the pension campaign, set up by the Italian CP. How much debate there is inside that campaign around strategy, and whether its aims turn out to be primarily an electoral rehabilitation exercise for them, remains to be seen.

The bus workers I spoke to, although enthusiastic and solid in their support for the strike, were surprised when I showed them a copy of Socialist Organiser. "In Italy, socialism is dead," they told me. "After Craxi, no-one wants to be a socialist. We will strike against bad laws and bad Government, but we won't strike for socialism. It means very little here now."

The striking bus, tram and Metro workers in Rome issued this statement, which was circulated at bus stations on the eve of the strike.

"Citizens: once again, the capital of Italy and the other cities in our region, have to make do without their public transport systems.

You may wonder who will benefit from this action. For the workers, they do not stage this strike only to defend their own collective interests, but also to claim and demand a right: the right to mobility for all citizens.

Our objectives are these: to call and attract more public attention in order to achieve a better running of public transport; a greater respect for environment and our quality of life; and a reduction in traffic and the consequent pollution of our cities.

The bus, tram and Metro workers have in the past proved their professionalism and their willingness to carry out sacrifices today in order to gain their objectives in the future. But at least their competence should now be recognised and respected in new contracts now being issued.

Yet the Government and the bosses have repeatedly prevented this, and so often refused to use their powers to avoid the inconvenience our whole community now faces."

Violence on the Criminal Justice Bill march

"The police just wanted a fight"

By Richard Love

THE police on last Sunday's Criminal Justice Bill (9 October) demo behaved like mindless thugs. It was the worst behaviour I have seen from the police.

At last year's anti-fascist demo in Welling, during the miners' strike and on other occasions I have seen them use extreme violence, they have always had a pretext to justify their violence. The pretext has never been reasonable, but it has been there. On Sunday the police simply wanted a fight.

Before the main violence broke out there was a series of incidents where the police were clearly provoking tension. At the tail of the march there were a number of sound systems mounted on vehicles, each surrounded by large crowds of dancing youth. The police attempted to prevent them entering Hyde Park but they were overwhelmed. In the end they were forced to unlock the gates and let them in.

In a rather pathetic show of strength they escorted the sound systems into the park with riot police. The police received a lot of laughter for this ludicrous display and what followed may have been in part some sort of revenge for their obvious humiliation.

Despite the obvious stupidity and blatant irrationality of the police and their attempts to create tension the crowd remained very good natured.

The main violence was sparked by scuffling between the police and a few protesters. I did not witness



this but by all accounts it was a minor affair. The scuffling attracted a crowd of protesters who mostly shouted well deserved abuse at the police. Many in the crowd were discouraging violent retaliation.

The police response was to throw a cavalry charge against a more or less peaceful demonstration! At one stage there were tens of police horses charging the crowd in several large groups from different directions. This caused panic. Tactically the police were in a bad position, outnumbered in a large open space. They regrouped several times and mounted more charges before leaving the park.

The police reassembled across the road behind the park fence, opposite a crowd of jeering protesters. Some people in the crowd threw missiles at the police, but it was not threatening. The crowd was not interested in looting, in attacking anyone or in stopping anyone doing anything. We were simply angry at the police. If they went away, we would have rejoined the party in the park.

The police were obviously embarrassed and desperate to show their power. The situation would have been immediately diffused if they had gone. But they were not going to lose face. For several hours they repeatedly charged at the park fence

— unable to get over the fence into the park — and truncheoned anyone at the fence. These charges were unbridled savagery with no perceivable purpose except to have a scrap. They were not under attack, they had no hope of getting into the park; their presence was the reason a crowd had gathered. The crowd responded to this absurd display with abuse, laughter (apart from the injuries it was amusing), and rounds of applause when they did anything especially stupid.

By 10pm the police had had enough. Assembling considerable forces at the main entrances they were planning an invasion. The crowd moved up towards Speakers' Corner with a sound system. We were intent on nothing more threatening than having a party. The police charged the newly assembled crowd driving us towards Marble Arch and Oxford Street, where we met lines of riot police.

The crowd was by now completely surrounded by riot police, some pushing us into Oxford Street, others pushing us away from Oxford Street, — mass arrests looked very likely.

This was very frightening. The riot police were pushing us in different directions, with no escape. Slowly the crowd were allowed out of the

trap in dribs and drabs. The streets around were full of police vans.

Our attitude to this has to be political. As understandable as it is, getting into a scrap with the riot police is futile for two reasons. Firstly in this sort of situation the police are likely to win, and secondly, the people you are fighting, despicable as they are, are following orders — we need to get at the people giving the orders. The rallying calls of anarchists have an appeal which is reinforced each time something like this happens, but they are futile and will usually end with a police victory.

The main problem is not individual officers that need a good kicking to put them into line. The problem is that the police are the front line of a state whose purpose is to defend the existing order and enforce the laws so as to get as much submission out of us as possible.

Our response has to be to organise to overthrow the system that generates the police. The main instrument of that struggle is working class action.

Socialist Organiser No. 617 will be out on Thursday 27 October



95p plus 19p postage from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. Cheques payable to "WL Publications"



Sample copies free, or bundles of 25 for £6 (£4 to pensioners), from Welfare State Network, c/o Southwark TUSU, 42 Braganza Street, London SE17. (Phone 071-358 0419)

Welfare State Campaign news

LONDON

Thursday 19 October

Wandsworth: lobby of the council to defend services

Thursday 20 October

Lambeth Campaign to Defend the Welfare State: public meeting with Keith Hill MP

7.30 Room 119, Lambeth Town Hall

Wednesday 2 November

Southwark Welfare State Network public meeting

Details 071-703 3493

Wednesday 9 November

Havering, Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham Campaign to Defend the Welfare State

Contact 0708-761 879 for details

BIRMINGHAM

Saturday 19 November

Community Conference

10-4.30pm, The Union Club, 723 Pershore Road, Selly Park

MERSEYSIDE

Saturday 5 November

Defend the Welfare State Conference

Speakers include Alan Simpson MP
11.00-2.30 Merseyside TUC
Hardman Street, Liverpool

SHEFFIELD

Wednesday 21 October

Lobby and demonstration to defend Hallamshire Hospital's Accident and Emergency Unit.

Assemble 12.30 at hospital Phone 0742-583854 for details

LEICESTER

Wednesday 19 October

Meeting of Leicester Welfare State Network

Speakers include local health activists
7.30 Leicester University students union

Putting flesh on the bones

LABOUR came quite well out of its conference last week. But, while delegates voted for a host of policies they can sell on the doorstep, the rather revolting catch-cry of the week was for the leadership to "put flesh on the bones."

Tony Blair talked about Labour's plans for fair taxes, but he didn't say what he means by that.

For us, fair taxes means that the rich should pay for the increased services the rest of us rely on, through higher income tax and less profits.

On a more everyday level, "flesh on the bones" means the Labour Party joining in people's struggles to defend their jobs and services against the assaults the Tories' tax policies imply.

It means, for instance, fighting to defend and rebuild the Welfare State.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty has good policies for the labour movement. We are involved in the Welfare State Network, build-

ing the fight against the Government. We are involved in the Labour Party. We are involved in the student movement, advancing the ideas we think the movement needs to defend and mobilise young people.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty has good policies and, moreover, we put flesh on the bones by spelling out what our movement needs to do to make them a reality, by organising campaigns and developing campaigning materials.

As Tony Blair is reluctant to admit, because he won't say where it's coming from, putting flesh on the bones costs money.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty needs money to organise meetings, pickets and demonstrations, produce publicity, produce this newspaper and other publications.

If you can afford to make a donation, send cheques/postal orders payable to "WL Publications" to: AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Half a victory against the fascists

By Mick Duncan

ON SATURDAY 8 OCTOBER the band "Blood and Honour" played a gig in Bloxwich, West Midlands, to raise money for the fascist British National Party.

A group of us from Birmingham United Against Racism and Fascism, Birmingham Anti-Fascist Alliance, and the Anti-Nazi League, went over to stop the gig.

We arrived in Bloxwich to see the Nazis redirecting cars from outside the George pub. They quickly moved, and the police blocked us.

At the end of the day, the SWP and ANL claimed that we had stopped the gig and won a great

victory. As far as I know, we didn't stop the gig. We did frustrate the Nazis, and we showed them that we won't sit back and let them organise freely, but we did not stop them.

We desperately need a united, labour-movement-oriented anti-racist and anti-fascist movement. We need better cooperation and communication.

The task is not an easy one, and no amount of false bravado will help achieve it.

For more information on Birmingham United Against Racism and Fascism, write c/o the Student Union, University of Central England, Perry Barr, Birmingham B42 2SU (021-356 5910).

JOIN THE FIGHT TO SAVE THE LABOUR PARTY

“Keep the red flag flying!”

An appeal from the Alliance for Workers' Liberty to all trade union, community, youth and student activists

EVERY SINGLE person who hates this Tory government and what they have done to working-class Britain over the last 15 years should be burning with rage at Tony Blair's plans for the Labour Party.

The debate sparked by Blair's attempt at a coup against Labour's constitution is important to everyone who wants to see an alternative to the Tories and their capitalist system.

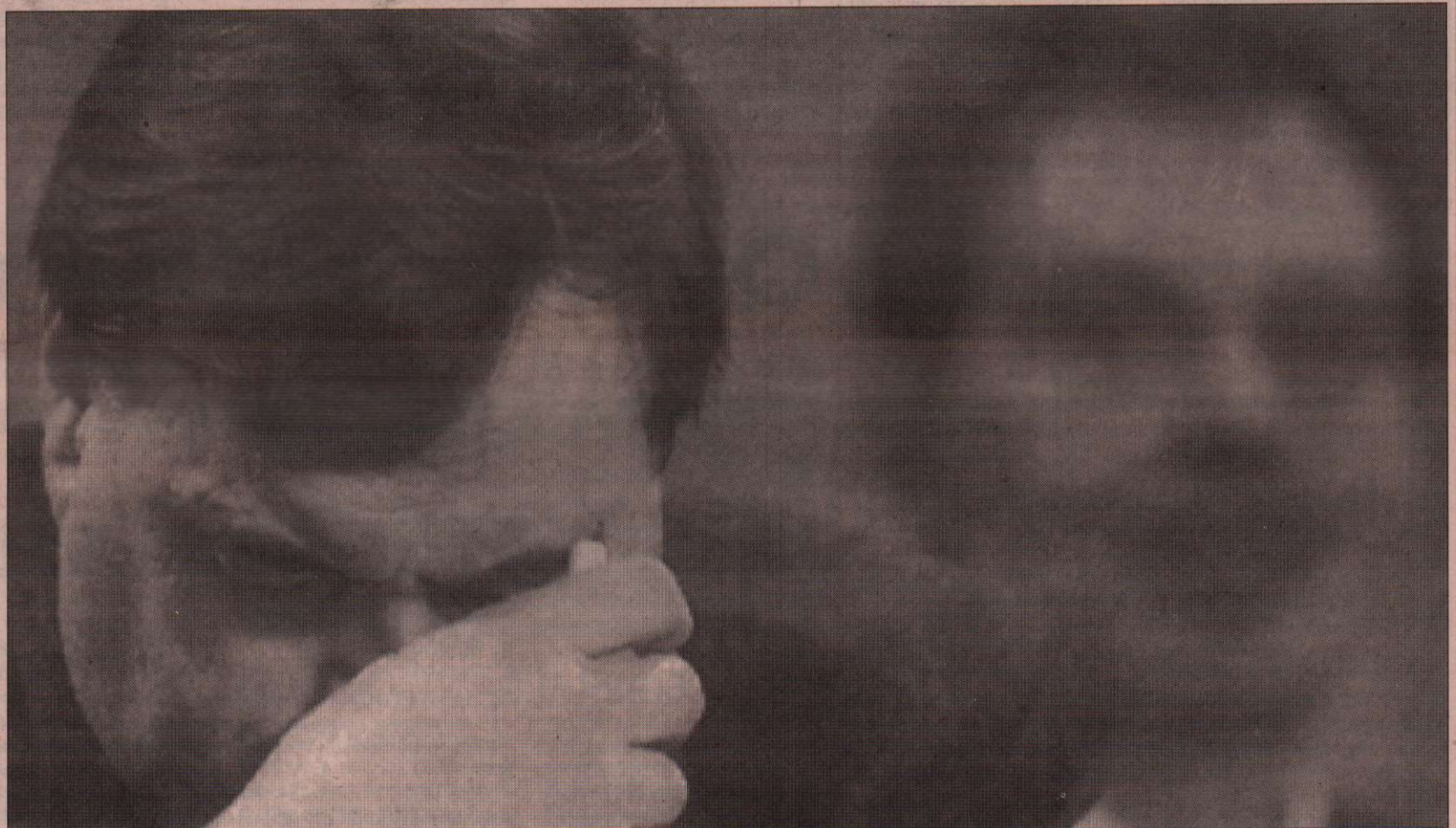
Blair, a yuppie lawyer with no experience of working-class life but plenty of contempt for working class people, has announced that *he* personally is going to rewrite the constitution of the Labour Party. He did not have the guts to reveal this plan in his election address for Labour leader.

His aim is not to update this or that old-fashioned phrase. He wants to redefine entirely the aims of the Labour Party and what it stands for. He wants to write into the Party's constitution the idea that capitalism is here to stay — forever.

He wants the Party to say that all that workers can ever hope for is a little bit of “social justice” dispensed from on high by morally and ethically enlightened fellows like himself. His aim is to go as far down the road as he can to making Labour a carbon-copy of the US Democrats — a party in which unions and workers have no real influence, where the show is run by corrupt middle-class cliques.

That is why Blair is proposing to redraft Clause Four of the Party's constitution. He will probably also seek to reduce the powers of Party conference and the trade unions' input into the Party.

Clause Four is important because it formally defines Labour as a party striving for common ownership of the means of production. Those who attack Clause Four today do so not as the left did around 1918, because they want a clear commitment to working-class revolution and the destruction of the capitalist state! No, they want to remove any trace of



Prescott hides his head in shame while Blair's false grin slips. The wonderful moment when the vote to reaffirm Clause Four was announced

working-class socialism from the Party's statutes.

Clause Four commits Labour:

“1. To organise and maintain in parliament and in the country a political Labour Party.

2. To cooperate with the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, or other kindred organisations, in joint political or other action in harmony with the party constitution and standing orders.

3. To give effect as far as may be practicable to the principles from time to time approved by the party conference.

4. To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.

5. Generally to promote the political, social and economic emancipa-

tion of the people, and more particularly of those who depend directly upon their own exertions by hand or by brain for the means of life”.

Blair hates the definition of the party as “a political party of labour” as much as the commitment to common ownership.

Clause Four links the idea of socialism to the movement of the working class. Blair wants to break that link. He is not content with the fact that all Labour governments, even the great reforming government of 1945, have managed capitalism. He wants an explicit commitment that Labour will *never* dream of doing anything more, and will have no special tie to the working class.

When he talks of “social-ism”, as his alternative to supposedly outdated “socialism”, he is proposing to turn the clock back to the early decades of the 19th century. Blair has consciously chosen to ape the phrases and formulas of the early utopian socialists, whose version of “social-ism” were well-meaning cure-alls for

the social inequalities of early capitalism. Like their “social-ism”, Blair's has no proposals to mobilise the working class to fight for its own interests.

That old “social-ism” was always deeply elitist. It saw social change coming through the reforming zeal of an enlightened few, not through the self-liberating activity of the majority.

But Blair is worse. Early 19th century socialists like Owen, Fourier, and Saint-Simon had a broad and emancipatory vision of the future and of humankind's potential to develop beyond the savagery of capitalism. They had a vision, even if they had no adequate idea of how to achieve it. And their failure to focus on working-class activity was based on the fact that in their day the wage-working class was still weak and unorganised. They were genuinely on the side of the oppressed; Tony Blair is not.

Blair has no vision of the future like theirs; but he does have a definite notion of the means needed to prop-

up decaying capitalism! He is aware of the size and potential strength of the working class; but he wants to stifle it.

All his talk of “community”, “social justice” and “fairness” is waffle. But Blair does have definite policies. He supports the anti-union laws. He opposes setting a minimum wage at a level that would help any but the very lowest-paid, and opposes any minimum wage for young people. He backs “workfare” and opposes bringing back benefits for young people.

Turn to page 4

- Defend Clause Four
- Defend party democracy and the union link
- Fight for socialist polices!

“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

Rotten to the core!

ON SUNDAY 9 OCTOBER the Sunday Times accused Mark Thatcher of raking off £12 million from the huge £20 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia engineered by his mother, Margaret Thatcher, as Prime Minister, in 1985.

Mark Thatcher has denied the charge, but the same accusation has been made before, from independent sources, and it is certain that he suddenly and unexplainedly became very rich about that time.

Tim Bell, a Thatcherite spiv described as "the only man who likes Mark", has said: "It may be that he is rather brash, rude and brutish..." And his own sister, Carol Thatcher, puts it like this: "I don't know how he does it. A house in London, a mansion in Dallas, while I work hard and have one small house in Fulham. I have never been able to fathom it".

Maybe she is sore about not getting her share of the sleaze. Her brother is one of thousands in the ruling class who have made millions out of the Thatcher-Major era by rotten deals at the expense of the workers who produce the wealth.

The quick buck. The smart deal. The pay-off. Those are the highest values of Tory Britain.

While hounding single parents, the homeless, and beggars, and grudging every penny spent on the Health Service and education, the Tories have made their friends very rich, very quickly, very easily.

The Mark Thatcher scandals — this Saudi arms deal is not the only one — are not the worst. The Tories have handed out over 70,000 jobs to their friends as "quangocrats", running vast areas of the public services without democratic accountability. They have sold off, or forced councils to sell off, huge swathes of public property cut-price, winning favour from quick-buck shareholders and from the ex-public industry bosses who can now vote themselves huge pay rises.

They have done on a national scale what Shirley Porter has done on a local scale in Westminster.

The official line that free-market economics reward effort and punish idleness and inefficiency, harshly but still effectively, is strictly propaganda. The reality: easy money for the rich, a hard line for the poor.

The Tories are drowning in a rising sea of sleaze and scandal. And this is the time that Tony Blair and his media-men choose to junk Labour's commitment to "the emancipation of the workers by hand and brain".

A vigorous campaign by Labour now, with clear commitments to rebuild the Welfare State and restore trade union rights, could mobilise millions, halt the Tories in their tracks, and force an early general election. Labour must fight!

Lift sanctions on Iraq

VAST US MILITARY forces have been moved into the Gulf since 7 October, when Iraq moved troops near the Kuwaiti border.

It is improbable that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein really wants another war against the crushing might of the American military machine. More likely, he is trying to put pressure to get UN economic sanctions against Iraq lifted.

By playing at military threats, he can compel the US to spend huge amounts of money to keep forces on standby in the area. Then Saddam can hint that the US can avoid this trouble by lifting the sanctions.

Saddam's is a dirty, cynical game, and Saddam himself is one of the foulest, most murderous tyrants in the world. But what of the substantive issue? Socialists should support the lifting of sanctions. We cannot decide our attitude just by saying no where Saddam says yes.

The sanctions hit hardest at the working people of Iraq, who now get barely enough food to stay alive. Saddam and his clique keep their privileges and luxuries. The sanctions probably help to keep Saddam in control, by enabling him to blame the hardships of the people on someone else. The way to hit Saddam is to support and help the working people of Iraq.

LABOUR PARTY

"Keep the Red Flag flying"

From page 3

THE COURTS capitalists, while planning to drive the unions to the margins of the Labour Party. He wants to "modernise" the Welfare State by refusing to make any pledges to restore the Tory cuts.

He thinks he can finally block off the Labour Party as an avenue through which working-class people can fight for policies in their own interests. He wants to turn it into a party fit for the notorious Gang of Four whose split to form the SDP helped keep the Tories in power for 15 years.

But Blair has made one big mistake. He has chosen to take on the working-class socialist left on the terrain where we are strongest. He has chosen to open up a debate about what Labour should stand for and what it should do in office.

Transfixed by his successes in wooing the media, he seems to be totally unaware that the bulk of the Party membership and of Labour's potential elec-

torate are far to the left of himself and his front bench team. Just think: one poll of 5000 Party members before the 1992 election defeat found that:

● 65 per cent of members agreed that "the central question of British politics is the class struggle between labour and capital";

● 60 per cent thought "the Labour Party should always stand by its principles even if this should lose an election";

● 81 per cent thought "the public enterprises privatised by the Tory government should be returned to the public sector";

● 72 per cent thought "workers should be prepared to strike in support of other workers, even if they don't work in the same place";

A lot of not-very-active Labour members and voters are well to the left of the more middle-class activists who have been willing to go along with the right-wing agenda.

These people, the rock on which Labour is built, are not

going to flock to Tony Blair's new constitution and statement of aims. They can be mobilised against it. If they are not mobilised, Blair can win. The relentless pressure of the media can push people into backing him. It all depends on what we do to mobilise.

Campaigners against the Criminal Justice Bill; students active against grant cuts and poverty; pensioners' groups; working-class parents defending local nurseries; and many other groups of people fighting for their rights, should join the Labour Party and take part in the debate on its future.

This is not just a debate about Labour's constitution. It is a debate about what the next Labour government should do. And — whether we like it or not — working-class people have no alternative government to the Tories except Labour. Neither the SWP or the Advance Party can pretend to be a mass working-class alternative!

Jim Mearns, the Glasgow

council worker who moved the resolution defeating Tony Blair on Clause Four, ended his speech by quoting "The Red Flag" — "So raise the scarlet standard high... and keep the red flag flying here".

Jim was not just appealing to deep-felt emotions. He was pointing to the Red Flag — the international symbol of the workers' movement — and saying that Blair was trying to take that banner away.

Blair's aim is no less than to remove the Red Flag from politics, and eventually to change the Labour Party so much that it is no longer in any sense a workers' party. He cannot be allowed to succeed.

Everyone who hates the Tories and what they stand for should get involved in the political debate now opening up inside the Labour Party.

As Arthur Scargill said after Blair's speech: "This is war". And it is a war which we cannot afford to lose.

Back to Labour! Defend Clause Four! Fight for socialist policies!

Quick off the mark

WHAT THEIR PAPERS SAY

THE *Independent on Sunday* (10 October) carried a report on how activists from the Socialist Campaign Group Supporters Network were able to take the initiative at Labour Party Conference and help turn the tide against Blair. The motion:

"The hard left had been quick off the mark in organising a fightback. Even as delegates streamed from the hall on Tuesday afternoon, pickets were in place urging them to sign a petition demanding no change in the party constitution. Now attempts to persuade Jim Mearns, the delegate from Glasgow Maryhill, to 'remit' or effectively withdraw his composite failed.

"So the debate took place and, by a very narrow margin, the leadership lost. By Friday morning, as Mr Blair's team

winned at the sight of headlines about the old Labour striking back, the streets outside the Winter Gardens were thronged

with militants handing out copies of a Socialist Campaign bulletin inviting activists to take part in the inaugural

conference of the "Defend Clause Four Campaign" hastily called in London for 12 November."

Child Support Act battle ducked

By Mildred Gordon MP

THE ATTACK on Clause Four was not the only major policy issue Tony Blair slipped in to his speech. Another coded message ran:

"The Left have undervalued the notion of responsibility and duty and it is time we understood how central it is to ourselves. Parents should have responsibility for their children. Fathers too."

Six resolutions called for the scrapping of the Child Support Act, yet the call for the abolition was not included in the final composite. The "debate" that followed consisted of only four speakers. A leading member of the National Executive said that they refused a full debate because they were afraid conference would sup-

port abolition as do millions of people throughout the country.

The opposition to the CSA is growing as the opposition to the Poll Tax grew. A televised debate would have been one of the first items on the news. But the weakness of the platform ensured that the debate was over before you could blink.

We must view with deep suspicion the refusal of Labour's leadership to support the abolition of this Act, to expose the cut in benefits it permits and to insist that while parents should be responsible for their children, the state too has a responsibility to support children and their carers.

The Tories are in great trouble with this Act and once again — as with the Poll Tax — a Labour leader turns away from dealing the coup de grace.

Scarves, bans and Islam

By Martin Thomas

THE French government has forbidden schoolgirls to wear Islamic headscarves, on pain of expulsion from school.

Some schools have expelled students. Christian, atheist and other students have, apparently, supported their Muslim classmates against these expulsions.

Yet there is very wide support for the ban on headscarves. All the teachers' unions back it, with various reservations and qualifications. France's biggest revolutionary socialist group, Lutte Ouvriere, denounces

all "those who defend the right for girls to wear the Islamic veil in public education institutions". "The real issue", they declare, "is women's oppression".

Another left-wing group, the Parti des Travailleurs, which campaigns heavily on education issues and among teachers, criticises the government policy because it fails to ban all religious emblems, including Christian crosses or Jewish emblems. They argue that the overriding principle is to keep all manifestations of religion out of the state schools.

The other main left-wing group, the Ligue Communiste

Revolutionnaire, is divided: one section denounces "any ban or exclusion", while another is close to the attitude of Lutte Ouvriere.

It is usually wise to be guided by the arguments of socialists on the spot, rather than trying to lay down the law on political issues world-wide from our very limited base of knowledge and experience. And many girls in Muslim families do suffer the most terrible oppression in the name of religion — on a level which, thanks to many decades of gradual erosion of religious authority, exists now only on the fringes of Christian religion.

Yet that oppression cannot be

fought by forbidding girls to wear headscarves. It is their minds, and their parents', which have to be freed from religion, not their heads.

The ban will drive some Muslim girls into Muslim schools or out of school altogether.

It enables Islamic fundamentalists to agitate under the banner of individual liberty, and thus strengthens them. The *Independent* (11 October) showed Muslim girls demonstrating against the ban — with placards which adapt an anti-racist slogan recently popular in France, "hands off my pal", to read "hands off my headscarf".

The idea of banning Christian crosses is a non-starter, and would be foolish if it were possible. The one-sided ban on Muslim insignia is bound to strengthen the racists, in a country where the viciously anti-Arab National Front wins ten to fifteen per cent of the vote and the other big parties repeatedly make concessions to their demagogy.

It will make Muslim girls even more the targets of venom and bigotry than they are at present — and thus, probably, drive many of them into sticking with the traditional religious prejudices of their parents as props in a hostile world.



Blair and Prescott: welcoming back the SDPers? Photo: John Harris

Clause Four, not the Gang of Four!

By Alan Simpson MP

THE latest leadership twist of the knife into the Party comes in the form of a 'welcome back' invitation to the Gang of Four. Apparently, Tony Blair was asked if he would now have Owen, Williams, Rodgers, Jenkins and fellow travellers back into the Party. The response which talked of welcoming back those who had left the Party 'for understand-

able reasons' will flabbergast ordinary members. It was not taken as a 'Come Back Dave Nellist' invitation. The Gang of Four cut deep scars in the memories and lives of Party members. Their object was to destroy the Labour Party - to prop up a deeply unpopular Tory government through a calculated division of anti-Tory votes. It is your choice - you can have the Gang of Four or Clause Four.

Yet we all know that people in this country are crying out for a Labour Government - one which will give them homes, jobs, rights at work, protection from harassment, decent benefits and pensions, a National Health Service ... in fact, a Welfare State. Labour must provide a programme which offers people the hope of achieving this. Above all, we must argue for Labour to be a real opposition, prepared to speak out and say

'no' to the Tory policies, and not simply to be a loyal poodle to a bankrupt government. The Tories have no mandate for their policies. Labour should be demanding a General Election now, not waiting for two more years of misery to be inflicted upon us. And we should be working for a Labour victory, based on the core values of full employment, a welfare state, common ownership and progressive taxation.

Keep the Party Labour

TONY BLAIR'S speech on Tuesday managed to turn a conference which promised to be no more than an uneventful week-long ovation into one which posed the entire question of what the Labour Party is for. The Party leader's declared intention to push on with constitutional changes regardless of yesterday's vote reaffirming Clause Four has opened the prospect of renewed internal conflict. Instead of seizing the opportunity to turn the party outward toward election-victory in two years' time, Blair made the choice to turn it inward. The issue surrounding Clause IV is whether the Party should abandon its commitment to fundamental change. It will up to those who articulate the

views of the majority who reject this view to ensure that Labour remains a party of reform and social change. The sooner they come together in a broad front around this goal, the better. Plans are already being made to bring this about, and CLPD will be playing its part. Labour's electoral chances will not be increased by pandering to Conservative and Lib Dem opinion-makers, but only by arousing hope and enthusiasm in the disadvantaged majority whose interests is elected to represent. This the message delegates should take back to their constituencies and trade unions.

From the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy bulletin



How we lost our fallback

CONSTITUENCY Labour Parites do not yet understand the blow they have suffered by the loss of Pete Willsman from Labour's Conference Arrangements Committee. His non-election is itself an indictment of the entire system of OMOV voting, which threw the election of the CAC to a postal ballot of members, few of whom have ever been to conference, let alone had a problem with a resolution which needed the intervention of the CAC.

The election of Doreen Cameron is to be welcomed. She is the first black woman on the CAC. The fact remains that if they had known that Pete Willsman is the only fallback that the party membership has had when faced with obduracy of the party hierarchy in blocking the operation of democracy and implementation of the rules at conference, they would have voted for him. Pete Willsman should stand again next year.

Remembering Ernie Roberts

LETTER

I MUCH appreciated your short note reminding us of the services of Ernie Roberts, an old friend of the left. He was not one of those whose radicalism disappears overnight as soon as they reach Westminster - not one of the growing number of Labour politicians of whom it was well said that they supported wholeheartedly the complete political, economic and social emancipation of the working class... one at a time, beginning with themselves. I can remember as if it were yesterday Ernie on a soapbox on Tower Hill in the driving rain, defending the imprisoned dock-

ers to an audience of no more than twenty people. It mattered not a whit to him whether a cause were fashionable or not. For years he was sent to Coventry by the right-wing bureaucracy of the AEU, although repeatedly elected Assistant General Secretary by the rank and file. For years he was kept off the parliamentary panel, but finally entered parliament for Stoke Newington and Hackney North in 1979. Ernie Roberts was a lifelong campaigner for Labour Party democracy; but where the right failed, the pseudo-left succeeded, and in 1985 he was removed, deselected by 42 votes to 35 in favour of Diane Abbott, although he had been nominated by eight out of the 11 wards to Abbott's two.

The group that pulled off this particular stunt included middle-class liberals, ex-members of the IMG, and even supporters of the anti-semitic Louis Farrakhan. Complaints made to Labour's National Executive that £500 had allegedly been collected unconstitutionally for this purpose were taken up by Roy Hattersley, and rejected on the motion of Tony Benn. I leave the judgment as to the quality of Hackney North's two most recent Labour MPs to the discretion of your readers. Perhaps it might even serve to point a moral and adorn a tale about the dangers of splitting working-class unity by means of race and sex. Al Richardson, London

"By hand or by brain"

TONY BLAIR'S declaration of war on Clause Four took most union leaders by surprise. Bill Jordan of the AEEU and John Edmonds of the GMB were the only General Secretaries to be tipped off in advance - and then only a matter of hours before the speech. Blair's closest trade union ally, Tom Sawyer of UNISON, must have known well in advance. But Rodney Bickerstaffe certainly didn't, and he personally ensured UNISON's delegation snubbed Sawyer by voting in support of Clause Four on Thursday.

Caught on the hop, unbriefed and un-nobbled, immediately after the speech, union leaders' initial reactions were instructive. Scargill, of course, was spotted, denouncing it as a "betrayal of socialism". Unfortunately, the NUM is no longer a crucial player in Labour Party affairs. Bill Morris's reaction - that he personally supported Clause Four, but that he was open to persuasion - was fairly typical of the 'mainstream left' union leaders. John Edmonds, keen to rehabilitate himself with the Labour leadership and no longer obliged to maintain a united front with the T&G, rushed to welcome the speech. The 'hard right' like Bill Jordan and Paul Gallacher (of the Engineering and Electrical sections, respectively, of the AEEU) said nothing. Whether this was canny circumspection or sheer bewilderment is not clear. The UNISON leadership also kept their own counsel, mainly because of a heated internal feud between Bickerstaffe (who isn't a Blair crony) and Sawyer (who is).

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

Since then, the union top brass have had a chance to reflect, and some significant shifts are already apparent. Morris now says "it (the review of Clause Four) gives this generation a chance - the first in over 100 years - to establish Labour's aims and values for the next century. They must reflect values which include full equality for women and black people and the growing importance of international solidarity". Fine words, but no reason to scrap Clause Four: if Bill is so concerned about women, blacks and international solidarity, why not propose a constitutional amendment?

Another "left" justification for going along with the review of Clause Four has been put forward by Alan Johnson of the UCW: "It (Clause Four) was the creation of middle-class Fabians and it's never stopped my members being attacked while the Post Office has been in public ownership".

At one level, this is a strange argument to come from the leader of a union presently engaged in a massive campaign to keep the Post Office in public ownership. But at another level, Johnson has a point: Clause Four is a top-down, bureaucratic formulation.

Nevertheless, Johnson's argument (which could be called the ultra-left case against Clause Four) misses the point. What Blair and co. object to about the clause is not its top-down language ("to secure for the workers ...") but the fact that it mentions the words "workers" and "ownership" at all.

Just as Tory legislation requiring ballots on the political levy forced union to go to their members to justify the Labour Party link, so Blair's attack on Clause Four is forcing unions to consider why they support Labour and what they expect of a Labour Government. Unions with members in the public sector (or the recently-privatised ex-public sector) may find that their members feel considerably more strongly about this matter than their leaders.

Even Paul Gallacher, the right-wing leader of the Electricians' section of the AEEU, has now said: "Public ownership and control must be in there. We are all agreed that we don't want to nationalise everything, but I want to see the words public ownership and public control in the revised statement."

The latest word is that Blair hopes to draw up a new "statement of aims" to replace Clause Four by the next national executive meeting on 23 November, and then put it to a consultative ballot early in the new year - thus pre-empting next year's union conferences. Rank and file union members must ensure that they are not disenfranchised in this way, and insist that the "review" takes union conference decisions into account. Clause Four may not be the perfect definition of socialism, but, for now, it's the crucial symbol in the battle to keep Labour a trade union based party.

Who's calling who mad?

YOU get a much better level of care with an NHS Trust. Ask Tom Pindar, businessman, Tory and Chair of Scarborough NHS Trust. During a meeting to discuss the release into the community of a 68 year old schizophrenic who was originally from Germany, Pindar greeted the patient by saying "Heil Hitler." Just who is running the asylum?

MICHAEL Howard is in hot water with the Police Federation. They claim that Howard's proposal for neighbourhood patrols will in fact mean putting gangs of potential vigilantes on the streets. Often under-educated and thuggish, such groups will tend to see their jobs as the meeting out of summary "justice", unregulated by the law and outside all public accountability. Dealing out summary "justice" is, of course, the job of the police.

STAND-UP comic Sandi Toksvig has been dropped from a Royal charity performance to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Save the Children Fund at the Barbican, which she was due to perform. Why? Has she been exposed as a bad mother to her own children: Jessie (6), Megan (4) and five-months' old Theodore? No one has suggested that. No, what Save the Children objects to is that Toksvig's partner of twelve years, Peta Stewart, is Ms. Peta Stewart. Rumours that the charity is about to rename itself "Save the Children from Lesbian Mothers" will, we expect, prove to be unfounded.

JEFFREY Archer has been banned from this year's Conservative Party conference. He has been dispatched to South Africa with the urgent job of signing up the Conservative faithful there. Nothing as paltry as dodgy share dealing can put off or embarrass these Tories who decided that South Africa was a pretty neat place to live in during the '60s and '70s.

NO doubt inspired by the probity and clean-cut image of Britain's Royal family, a conference has been held in Russia to discuss a come-back for their own beloved Romanovs.

Given that the last Tsar, Nicholas II, and all his children ended up buried under lime at the bottom of a mine shaft in 1918, the succession is causing a few problems. There are many candidates. There is the portentously named Grand Duke Georgy Mikhailovich, who is in fact a fat and spotty Spanish schoolboy. Prince Alexis II d'Anjou de Bourbon-Conde Romanov-Dolgoruky must be in with a chance too (if they can remember his name).

Sadly, the All-Russian Monarchist Conference broke up in disarray after delegates from the Black Hundreds — who, in the good old days, organised state-sponsored pogroms against the Jews — and others from the Union of Peasant Resistance sought to settle the succession in the time-honoured way. An armed fight broke out in the conference canteen. A scheduled church service to mark the end of the conference had to be cancelled.

SIZEISM is one of the last socially acceptable forms of prejudice. (The other is prejudice against trainspotters). Naturally, we in *Socialist Organiser* eschew this as well as other unreasoning prejudices. But, in the case of a fat Tory, how can we be sure our disgust is not generated by vulgar sizeism?

GRAFFITI

VIVELA
REVOLUCION

By Cyclops

Take the case of Kenneth Clarke for instance. Mary Spillane of *Colour Me Beautiful*, the world's leading image advisers — they count Ronald Reagan among their clients — says of Clarke: "We notice the jowls, the extra chins. He buys shirts that don't fit him. They might look new but they're the wrong size. He looks like a coronary waiting to happen. I suggest that until he gets his tummy under control — short of getting a corset — he should wear jackets that button up." So, if Clarke were to go on a diet, do you think you could learn to love him?

Spillane has also analysed the images of other leading Tories: Michael Howard: "...his voice is so irritating. It's that so superior tone."

John Major, according to Spillane, is the Alan Partridge of politics: "He looks like a bozo in casual clothes...he only has one pullover, a brown Viking number that he wears on every possible occasion."

Their appearance and mannerisms are the least of this crew's faults!

WHAT do old rock stars do? If they are very lucky they can become marketing concepts — like the Rolling Stones.

Having failed to produce a record that is better than pedestrian for 15 years, they need new sources of income to maintain the jet-setting lifestyle. Only so many repackaged albums can be sold; only a finite amount of merchandise can be sold on the ever-decreasing returns of the latest "last tour."

So the Stones have come up with the Rolling Stones Credit Card. Complete with Stones lips logo, this card will say more about you than money ever can, and, as a bonus, the more you spend on the card the more points you earn towards exclusive Stones merchandise.

Was it really only 29 years ago when Mick Jagger sang about the values of a consumer society in (*I can't get no*) Satisfaction: "...watching my TV / And a man comes on and tells me how white my shirts can be / But me can't be that man because he don't smoke the same cigarette as me"?

If the Rolling Stones image is going down well with the credit-card-carrying public then the same cannot be said of the Conservative Party. Their card, which is meant to raise funds for the party, is likely to be withdrawn by the Royal Bank of Scotland. Only 1,100 proud Conservatives want their political affiliations to be known to the check-out staff in Sainsbury's. The card has been making a loss for the bank, where the Tories have already run up a £16 million overdraft.

By contrast, the New Labour Credit Card is doing very well, with over 50,000 holders. Clause Four (part four) of the card's regulations states the object of the card: "To secure for the community the full fruits of their shopping and the most equitable distribution of shopping opportunities that might be possible upon the basis of the private ownership of the banks and the means of distribution and exchange."

Campbell and Blair in a spin

PRESS GANG

THE
GUARDIAN
TODAY
SUNDAY
MORNING
PRESS

By Jim Denham

NEW LABOUR, as we must learn to call it, had a good time at Blackpool. Even the *Mail* and *Express* liked what they saw and heard. The pistachio set looked lovely. Tony's big speech went down a treat. Everything was hunky-dory until that unfortunate vote on Clause Four. It wasn't, perhaps, a complete disaster for the Blair coterie, but it certainly shook them badly.

Of course, the spin-doctors launched an immediate damage-limitation exercise, assuring journalists that the vote was "of no significance" and not really worth even mentioning. When the BBC's reporter nevertheless insisted upon describing the vote as a "major set-back" for Blair, Alistair Campbell turned on the poor fellow with incandescent fury. This struck a lot of people as rather odd: Campbell was attending the conference in his capacity as *Today's* political editor. But, of course, he is also Tony Blair's press secretary-in-waiting.

Campbell's dual role accounted for some rather strange contributions to *Today* — notably on the day after Blair's big speech, when he wrote: "In the past few weeks, for which apologies to the editor, I have devoted more of my time to Mr Blair than I have to *Today*. But at least the editor thought the effort put in by Mr Blair and his team into (sic) the speech was worthwhile."

What Campbell seems to be saying is that he wrote the speech — or at least had a hand in it. This may well be true. What is certainly true is that Campbell knew of its contents long before most members of the Shadow Cabinet and that he was party to keeping it a closely-guarded secret right up until the very last minute. Campbell and Blair thought this was very clever and congratulated themselves on their brilliant tactics.

In the event, it turned out to be very stupid: the conference organisers weren't warned of the intention to attack Clause

Four and so scheduled the debate for two days afterwards and the union leaders had no opportunity to de-mandate their delegates. It was, in other words, a complete cock-up. No wonder Campbell, the supposed master of media manipulation, was so angry.

"CLAUSE Four is a clear and reasonable expression of the purpose of the political organisation of labour. Its most famous section aims to 'secure for the workers... the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service.' What is obsolete about that?

"The clause does not prescribe a particular method: it sets out an ideal and it is strange that Mr Blair wants to reject that ideal, for if he does so, what will he put in its place? We dread to think what politically correct waffle would be used to express Labour ideals in the 1990s."

It has come to something hasn't it, when the *Sunday Telegraph* displays a better grasp of basic socialism than the leadership of the Labour Party?

Back to that speech. The

press enthused over it, but only Joe Rogaly in the *Financial Times* took the trouble to quote the more philosophical passages in full:

"It is the task of the Labour Party today to restore hope and confidence to a disillusioned British people... We are not blinkered by a socialist ideology that assumes that omnipotence of the state... people are both individuals and social beings; they are individuals, answerable to themselves, but also citizens, members of a complex network of small communities which go to make up society — family, neighbourhood, church, voluntary organisations, workplace and so on... What we have to set out, and it is in the mainstream of socialism, is a political philosophy that goes beyond the state and the individual and begins to express in human terms the complex network of reciprocal rights and duties in an orderly society... There has to be a constructive partnership between government and industry."

All right, I cheated a bit: for "Labour" read "Conservative" and for "socialism" read "conservatism"; I also changed "man" and "himself" to "people" and "themselves" so as not to give the game away. But, otherwise, that was *The Right Approach*, a statement of aims drawn up by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party in 1976.

Sisters in suits

WOMEN'S EYE

By Maxine Heathcock

WOMEN ARE discriminated against in society. We are discriminated against at work, at home, and inside the Labour Party.

That's why I was glad to see that the 50 per cent quota for women was upheld by this year's Labour Party conference. I want to see more women elected as delegates to conference and chosen as Labour councillors and MPs.

I want more women to have a say in the Labour Party. I am a feminist — that is, I believe that women are equal to men, and I want a society in which women can live and work as equals. I want that equality inside the Labour Party, now.

So why do I feel uneasy about quotas?

Part of the answer must lie with Labour Party conference itself. I visited Blackpool last week for three days. I have never been to Labour Party conference before, and it was an extremely instructive experience.

I met lots of women there, and they were all different, as they are outside the Labour Party. Some were left-wing, some were right-wing. Some were young, some were older. Some had children, some didn't.

However, what struck me most was that many of the women who shouted most loudly about quotas were those who wear the business suits — the ones who walk around with their briefcases and tell us that we will spend money on the Health Service "as resources allow", who applaud Tony Blair when he attacks single mothers, and who sit on Labour councils and implement cut after cut after cut.

"But you just said" (I can almost hear them) "that women are all different. Why should we agree with you on everything?" Quite, sisters. That is the whole point.

Quotas on their own mean that women can be elected to important positions without accountability to other women in the party. Women's sections exist in some areas, but not all. There is a Labour Party Women's Conference, but its ability to take decisions has

been diluted to the point where it's virtually useless, a media exercise to show everyone how right-on the Labour Party is.

I am insulted by those who tell me I am an anti-feminist when I raise these doubts. Why should I support a system that favours women who are unaccountable to me, who pay lip-service to the aims of feminism and view me merely as election fodder? Quotas are not enough! They should not be an alternative to a fighting, autonomous, women's campaign.

Sometimes I find myself agreeing with opponents of quotas — some of whom, it has to be said, are sexist. What happens when no women come forward in the wards and constituencies? The answer is not to dismiss the people who raise such questions as macho sexist pigs, but to face the reality.

In some areas, there are problems persuading women to get involved in the Labour Party — practical reasons, and the fact that the Labour Party's policies do nothing for working-class women.

Where is the prominent Labour woman MP who is campaigning for equal pay?

Or 24 hour nursery provision? Free school meals, abortion on demand, free contraception, increased maternity leave and pay, minimum wage and many other issues are ignored by the middle-class professional women who seem to think that quotas are the be-all and end-all.

To use ordinary women in the party as a launch-pad into a comfortable little niche in the system, instead of fighting to smash that system, smacks of the same arrogance that Tony Blair and his entourage show towards the working class as a whole.

I want real representation for women in the Labour Party. I want to hold women MPs accountable through the women's section and constituency structures. I want a real women's section that fights for the policies that ordinary women want to see from the next Labour government.

To women who want to change the system and don't feel happy with the sisters in suits, I say: join the Labour Party, and fight with the Marxists to obliterate privilege for the few, to wipe out inequality, and to eradicate poverty.

By any means necessary...

Fight the Criminal Justice Bill!

Defend the first victims!

TENS OF thousands of young people and students marched through London on Sunday 9 October to protest against the Criminal Justice Bill.

At the end of the demonstration the police attacked us. They blocked off all exits from the park, encircled a large number of people who were dancing, and charged into them.

The police also attacked other people. Many demonstrators were hurt and 33 arrested.

Those arrested are the first victims of the Criminal Justice Bill, even before it is law, and all those who are against the Bill must defend them. Local groups, trade unions, the Labour Party and student unions should back the campaign.

For students, it is important to win the National Union of Students to continuing to protest against the Bill. Many student unions sent coaches to last Sunday's demonstration, despite the fact that the leaders of NUS tried to stop them and said it was illegal. Students should ignore what the leadership says and join the resistance movement.

We need to organise a campaign

to defend those arrested, we need a campaign of mass disobedience, and we need to build solidarity for the victims of the Bill.

In order to discuss the way forward in the campaign, NUS London have organised an anti-Criminal Justice Bill campaign meeting at 7.30pm, Thursday 13 October, University of London Union, Malet Street (near Euston). Other student unions and Areas should do the same and make sure the action continues.

Labour and the Criminal Justice Bill

ON SUNDAY 2 October, as delegates were arriving for Labour Party Conference, thirty members of Young Labour Groups from the North-West lobbied delegates to oppose the Criminal Justice Bill and for a Labour Government to repeal the Bill's attacks on civil rights.

We also leafleted the first 'birthday party' of Young Labour, at which Tony Blair spoke.

The birthday party was a sorry affair, with a handful of young aspirant bureaucrats in grey suits trying to get as close as possible to Tony. It was only our leafleting and petitioning against the Criminal Justice Bill that forced the real demands of youth into the sickly atmosphere of Blairism.

It was Blair as Shadow Home Secretary who ordered Labour MPs to abstain on the last reading



Alliance for Workers' Liberty members and supporters on the big march

of the Criminal Justice Bill. Thirty decent Labour MPs still voted against it, but Blair wanted to look tough on crime, and couldn't think of any more imaginative way to do it than backing the Tories' draconian Bill.

In the last year thousands of youth have been drawn into political activity against the Criminal Justice Bill.

Seeing Blair's performance many youth may have given up on Labour.

That's understandable, but it is

wrong!

The Criminal Justice Bill is a political issue. It is also a class issue. The labour movement has a duty and an interest in joining the resistance to the Bill. Socialists in Young Labour need to show youth that we actively support the mass defiance campaign that is needed to defeat the Bill, and also that we will fight for the labour movement to support the campaign.

Only a united battle by youth and the labour movement can defeat the Tories' Criminal Justice Bill.

Labour students must defend Clause Four

LABOUR PARTY conference may have voted to keep Clause Four, but the campaign to defend it is by no means over. Labour students can play an important role in the campaign, and encourage more young people to join the party and join the fight.

We should:

- Organise and build mass meetings on the defence of Clause Four, inviting Campaign Group MPs and Arthur Scargill to speak.

- Set up debates between the Defend Clause Four Campaign and the right wing of Labour Students.

- Circulate the Socialist Campaign

Group petition.

- Book a minibus to the National Defend Clause Four meeting on 12 November in London (see back page for details).

- Send motions in defence of Clause Four to your local Labour Party, National Organisation of Labour Students Executive and Labour Students Conference.

- Produce Labour Club leaflets aimed at students involved in student debt campaigns, the Criminal Justice Bill campaign etc. to explain why they should join the fight in the Labour Party.

- All socialist youth should sign up supporters to the Campaign Group.

YOUTH
FIGHTBACK

Rebellion



Youth Fightback is...

... the voice of revolutionary socialist youth.

This page is separately edited.

Editor: Mark Sandell

Phone: 071-639 7967 for details of our activity.

Letters and articles to *Youth Fightback* c/o PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Self-defence is no offence!

SATPAL RAM is serving a life sentence for defending himself against a racist attack in Lozells, Birmingham in 1986.

In the incident, Satpal was attacked and both himself and his attacker were injured — his attacker later died.

In his court case Satpal was wrongly advised by his barrister and did not plead self-defence. The case was heard by a white jury and was held just after the Handsworth riot, in the climate of a racist media scare.

In prison Satpal has faced beatings and abuse from racist prison officers, and this year went on hunger strike for 10 days to protest his innocence and against his treatment in prison.

On 4 November Satpal will appear at the High Court in London to appeal for a judicial review of his case. Youth United Against Racism will be at the picket supporting the demand for a judicial review — Satpal Ram should go free! As long as Asian and black youth face racist violence they have the right to defend themselves.

Demonstrate!

4 November 1994

10am, High Court, The Strand, London

Free Satpal Campaign, c/o 101 Villa Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B19 1NH. Tel: 021-551 4518

Youth UNITED against racism

We are committed to...

- Uniting all campaigns in one democratic anti-racist movement
 - Active self-defence — stop the Nazis organising
 - Fighting police racism
 - Making the labour movement fight for jobs and homes for all
- Ring 071-252 4245 for details

Coming soon to a college near you: "SWP — the musical"!

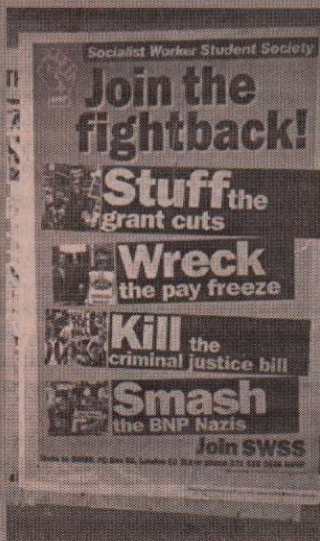
The theme song virtually writes itself, once you've seen the poster. Go on, try it: stamp your feet, snap your fingers and chant "Stuff" — thunderous stamp — then finger snap with "the grant cuts."

"Wreck", then snap fingers as you chant... And so on.

Whoever designed that poster obviously took as their model the omnibus ads on TV which re-run the previous ads in the series, in a trip "down Memory Lane", meant to "bring it all back to you."

Nescafé Gold Blend did it with their "boy meets girl" saga, and Mercury recently re-ran its one-to-one mobile phone series.

Serious militants know that the SWP lives in a world of its own. The foul-mouthed among them dismiss the SWP as "a bunch of w***ers." Yes. Here they indulge in a bit of good, clean, do-it-yourself satire.



The Brazilian elections, Lula and the Workers' Party

A party for the workers

By Cathy Nugent

LAST MONDAY (3 October) Brazilian voters — about 95 million people — went to the polls to elect their representatives to Congress, their state Governors and President of a Republic that has had fully direct elections for less than a decade.

Brazil is a country with some of the worst inequalities in the world. The richest 20 per cent of Brazilian society earn 27 times more than the poorest. It is a country that has undergone massive and rapid industrialisation since the 1960s. In Brazil vast wealth and productive power exists alongside enormous poverty and the relentless destruction of human life. In Brazil death squads systematically shoot down street children as if they were vermin. They do this with the collusion and sometimes the participation of the police. But now the street children and the workers in Brazil are fighting back.

For a long time before the election and up to the beginning of the summer the clear favourite to win the Presidential election was Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (known as Lula), candidate of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), the Workers' Party. Based on the trade unions and other workers' organisations, the PT is a party of radical left policies and traditions.

Lula's main opponent was a former government Finance Minister, the academic Fernando Henrique Cardoso. Cardoso, a member of the centre-left Brazilian Social-Democratic Party, was also backed by Brazil's right wing parties.

Cardoso seems certain to win the election, with up to 50% of the vote, though not all the ballots have been counted. The PT will probably get about 25% of the vote.

This is a huge turnaround in fortunes for both Lula and Cardoso. It is wholly explained by crude and cynical bourgeois vote-winning tactics. This is how they did it.

In July of this year, as Finance Minister, Cardoso introduced an anti-inflationary plan (known as the Real Plan) in order to stabilise inflation, which had been running at 50% per month. It was brought down to 2%. However, the experience of the five other anti-inflationary packages of the last 8 years suggests that success will be followed quickly by a new surge of inflation. Without other economic reform (for instance, higher taxation on the rich) the

plan will inevitably fail. Cardoso, trapped as he is by his right wing allies, will defend the interests of private capital; he will not introduce such reform.

Nonetheless, any respite from the daily struggle to buy goods before price rises make wages worthless was tremendously popular with Brazilian workers. They voted for Cardoso. They let themselves be taken in.

Despite this setback, the Workers' Party's overall vote was higher than its vote in the 1989 elections, when Lula (with the support of other parties) came within a couple of percentage points of winning the office of President. This result registers steady progress in building nationwide support and organisation for a party based on and accountable to grass roots working class organisations. The PT is still an inspiration to socialists all over the world.

Rapid economic growth in the 1970s led to the emergence of a radical trade unionism, particularly around São Paulo. It involved metalworkers (from which Lula was to come), leather workers, oil workers and electricity workers. They fought the military regime and demanded union recognition, the right to strike

and direct negotiations with the bosses. In 1983 the unions went on to found the Central Workers' Union (CUT), a radical left federation.

The late '70s saw a tremendous strike wave. By the end of 1978, over half a million workers were on strike in six states. They fought the government's pay policy, which involved restricting wages by lying about inflation (a practice the government continues today). 1979 saw 113 strikes, involving some 3.2 million workers in 15 states. The strikes unified workers and helped to recreate class consciousness and confidence in collective strength.

On 1 April 1980 the metalworkers went on strike again. Soon after the strike began, army helicopters hovered over the Vila Euclides stadium, the site of strike meetings, pointing machine-guns at the 100,000 workers assembled below. Later in the same month 1,600 union activists, including Lula, were arrested. They were held in jail for a month.

Such events helped to politicise many workers and union militants. The military government continued to repress the movement. In 1981, top general, Golberry do Couta e Silva said "Our objective on the labour front is to wipe out a powerful movement that has turned to political provocation."

The economic failure of the government guaranteed both internal and external pressure for political reform. The military government was forced in 1979 to allow the creation of new political parties. They hoped to split the opposition by doing so.

Before this in 1977, a group of São Paulo-based intellectuals and political leaders, together with union militants, had met to discuss the setting up of an independent socialist party, completely independent of both the communist parties (the Moscow-aligned and Maoist-inspired) and Brazilian populism. For various reasons, the intellectuals remained tied to the 'official' opposition party, the MDB (which was later to split and from which came the party of Cardoso, who has now been elected President of Brazil). The labour leaders, however, spurred on by the strike wave, became increas-

ingly convinced that Brazil's workers needed an independent working-class political party.

At the beginning of 1979, the Ninth Congress of Metalworkers, Mechanics and Electricians (representing one million workers) voted in favour of a proposal to create a Workers' Party. Despite opposition, particularly from the Communist Party, the Workers' Party was founded. The PT was officially launched on 10 February, 1980 at a meeting attended by 750 people in São Paulo. The founding statement read:

"The PT is born of the will for the political independence of the workers, who are tired of being putty in the hands of politicians and parties committed to the maintenance of the current economic, social and political order... [the party] will be the real political expression of all those exploited by the capitalist system."

Over the last decade, the PT has helped organise peasant unions, defended land squatters who have faced the most horrific repression by successive governments, intervened in the congress elections of 1982, "running its own ticket and preserving its political independence," but getting poor results. The PT has fought the wage freezes that have always accompanied attempts to control inflation. It has organised

rubber-tappers in the north-west Amazon regions, concentrating on developing rather than destroying the rain forest. It contested the 1989 election campaign. It has created campaigns in local areas against hunger.

The PT has always been a 'practical' party — organising campaigns, getting workers' candidates elected in federal and national elections. Though the PT has always declared itself a socialist party, it is not a revolutionary socialist party. It has never explicitly tied itself to any version of 'socialism': not to the so-called socialism of Cuba, or the ex-USSR or China; but not the unvulgarised traditions of Marx, Lenin or Trotsky either. It is a very heterogeneous and factional party and a resulting lack of ideological direction has been its weakness.

Political confusion is shown, for instance, by Lula's much-reported (and discussed) meetings with business people. But the PT's strength has been its absolute reliance on the workers and on workers' struggles. If they are reformists, then they are serious about reform and willing to fight for the interests of the Brazilian working class.

But the PT is now in a very delicate position and the press has talked of possible splits in the party. In Congress, it will be the second biggest party. Any formal coalitions with Cardoso's government will mean tying itself to an explicitly anti-working-class government. Lula has not talked openly of coalitions but hinted at a more flexible approach. Another bad sign is that the PT has actively supported the Social Democratic Party's candidate for the governorship of São Paulo.

Debate over the party's analysis of the nature of Brazilian capitalism and about ultimate goals and principles has always been very strong in the party, culminating in the Summer of last year with the adoption of a left programme. This debate continues, now with greater urgency.

Below we print an interview with Roberto Mader, UK representative of the PT, and short extracts from the Guiding Principles passed at the PT's June 1993 Conference.



An interview with F
British representat

**"The pro
developm
to be cha**

How do you analyse the election results so far?
I wouldn't call the result a defeat. If you compare with 1989 you will see that the PT has more than doubled its votes in the first round of the election.

In the second round in 1989 we had the support of the other parties. Lula by himself will probably end up with a quarter of the vote. This is very significant. In 1989 Lula had roughly 13% of the vote in the first round.

We will double our representation in Congress and will have at least 3 more senators (the PT has one at the moment) including the first black woman senator.

The defeat of Lula is a set back, but on the whole I think the PT went forwards. We are going to be more and more a key player in Brazilian politics.

What should we think of Cardoso?

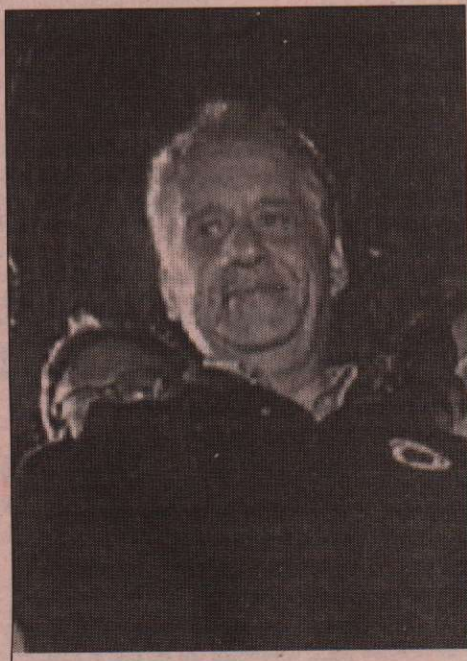
Cardoso has won nearly 50% of the vote, but let us not say the Brazilian people voted for a right-wing candidate or a centre-right candidate full stop. He is a guy that will work with us. But he can be trusted by the right because although he talks about social reforms he is also someone committed to the free market. He is, for instance, not committed to full employment.

Cardoso is someone who bears some of the banners of the '70s: a strong and outspoken person against the military, someone who was in exile, clearly someone committed to a democratic system — within a capitalist system.

What was the significance of the Real Plan in your view and how did it help Cardoso win the election?

Cardoso achieved a stable currency with a very high price for the workers.

Our self-criticism in these elections must be that while the PT clashed head-on with the Plan in the beginning, people in the streets were supporting it. Why? Because the economy was in a mess. High inflation is eating their wages, no doubt! But the trouble is you should deliver the same economic plan without asking the workers to pay the price.



Cardoso



Roberto Mader,
 Vice of the PT

Success of government has changed"

What we always get in Brazil, in all the economic plans we have had to fight inflation, is the workers are asked to pay their share first. They say: the rich will pay, but pay later. But when it is time for the rich to pay their share, the plans are dismantled. That's the way to understand how economic plans work in Brazil.

But the PT underestimated the people's support for the Plan. We did not make clear that the Plan was alright — I mean we are in favour of stabilisation of the currency and to start anything you need that — but what we were against was freezing the wages of the workers and having the government intervene in negotiations between employees and employers.

You have European prices in Brazil but the minimum wage is £40 a month. Can you imagine living on £40?

What else worked in Cardoso's favour?

There are some crucial factors which came together with the economic plan.

One is the use of the government machinery to campaign for Cardoso.

The finance minister, Rubens Ricupero, was recording an interview with Globo television to be broadcast at a later date. Some satellite inadvertently dishes picked up the recording. He was caught saying how very fortunate it was that they had found this formula (the Real Plan) because it means the government can campaign for Cardoso without it looking like they are favouring one candidate or another. He also said, I have no scruples. What's good about the plan we show, what's bad we hide.

Now if Cardoso does some of the things he says he is going to do I would be a bit happy, but the trouble is, can we trust this guy...? Someone whose main supporter is a finance minister who is doing everything with his job to help one candidate.

The other big problem for the PT was the role of the media itself. Every single media instrument was in the hands of Cardoso's campaign — all the television men, all the newspapers, all the radio — and against Lula.

Cardoso was taken for a ride by the right. He thinks he can form a very broad alliance. He

forgets you cannot be on board with the same people who were the torturers of the '60s and '70s.

What did the PT stand for in the election?

In this election the PT's policy was within the framework of capitalist society but we had strong ideas in terms of where to go next.

Our campaign had some problems. We had the most complete, complex and interesting modern alternative for a government. On the other hand I think the PT was trapped.

We were talking about the economic plan all the time and I don't think we talked at all about the places where the PT has been in government for a while. What has that been about? We are living within a capitalist system, yes, but we need steps to move towards a more socialist society. The kind of socialism we want, might not be very clear for many of us on the left now but we certainly have some ideas that we want to stick to.

We want to build an alternative by working with the communities, and the grass roots movements. That means all the organisations there are such as for street kids, trade unions, rural unions and all sort of urban organisations. This is the essence of the PT's proposals. It is to ask the social movements what they want, not to come with a ready formula — either Marxist or Leninist or Trotskyist. It is to discuss and in the process decide.

For these elections the programme was anti-capitalist but very much a social-democratic programme. There would have been no way of standing for a socialist programme. But the Social Democracy we were standing for, was miles away from the Social Democracy of Cardoso.

Even in terms of economic proposals we were going a lot further, for example being committed to jobs. One of the key proposals for our government was one of creating a massive internal market, trying to bring into the productive process the people who have been excluded from it. So you create jobs and thereby create consumption. But we are talking still within the framework of capitalism.

We are trying to understand politics with a much broader mind and trying to make people understand the process of development has to be changed. We have to stop thinking about development and only talking about growth of the economy. We have a first world country for 10% of the people and they have wonderful European type lifestyles. But this is within a slum. Instead of quantity of growth we should talk about quality.

We were talking about a new kind of development: sustainable development with the redistribution of wealth. These are the two main things to be done at the moment.

One of the things in our manifesto was the proposal for minimum income, not just minimum wage: basically for a welfare state. We are achieving part of this.

The two Communist Parties [one formerly aligned to the USSR and the other Maoist] were with us in the elections. They have very different politics. On some big issues like privatisation maybe the Communist Party of Brazil [Maoist] is a bit stricter than the PT.

Within the PT you have two different visions on nationalisation: one that would accept privatisation of all sectors apart from communications and oil companies and some who want



Lula

no privatisation. The Congress deputies tend to be conciliatory.

But you can't accept privatisation of communications and oil. Especially as Brazil has such a promiscuous political system. There are no barriers between the state and private business. You can be a Minister today and tomorrow go back to your bank or company and then the next day you are a Minister again running for private interests.

The strong word about the PT is principles. That is how we are known. But there is in Brazil a whole mentality of looking for the strong man. It is like Italy and Berlusconi. This is also a country where there is a promiscuity between state and private sectors.

What will the PT do now?

I think the PT will stop and think what to do. Cardoso will certainly invite PT members to be part of his office. You will have some people in the PT supporting a kind of participation and we will have people totally against.

We will have to be very careful. There is a danger of splits in the party if we co-operate with Cardoso's government and anything he ask for. But on the other hand, we can't let Cardoso be cornered with the right. So we have to be very careful, in the way we deal with him.

What I defend now as PT policy is to be a strong opposition, but a constructive opposition. We should work together on some particular things in which we and the workers have an interest, because if we start ducking every single initiative of this government this is not going to be very good for Brazilian people.

We have started to consolidate. The impeachment of Collor [two years ago] was a great achievement. That was the point when the gains against the military and the work of the different grass roots groups started to pay off. I feel we are living in a much more stable political system where you can start to talk about a kind of citizenship. You have to use the new democracy to get the economic reform.

One of our leaders has said Brazil is like the Titanic, a boat where people are dancing and partying and suddenly they hit an iceberg. We must stop it! There will be a social disaster if we don't.



In Brazil's big cities, death squads systematically hunt and kill street children

The guiding principles of the Workers' Party

"Now, when the PT may well become the government, the establishment and its mass media is exerting enormous pressure to make us become part of it. We will not do so. The PT's struggle for government is basic to Brazilian workers achieving hegemony.

"However, we do not mistake government for power, which is much wider and rooted in economic and social relations. Nor do we confuse Lula's programme with our more radical, alternative strategic project, and in the 1994 elections the PT will argue for the construction of a new economic, political and social model.

"By taking this approach, the PT explicitly rejects two forms of struggle for socialism which have been unsuccessful in the past. The first is that of operating only outside existing institutions, or treating them merely as an opportunity for propaganda. The second is operating solely within the establishment. The PT reaffirms as a strategic objective the formation of a Popular Democratic Government from both a popular base and electoral majority...

"In the last fifteen years we have witness the emergence of the workers' movement in Brazil, which has radically reshaped the national political struggle and redefined the concept of democracy. One major result is that its political and social dimensions no longer appear to be separate. Democracy has stopped being a means or a stage in the struggle for socialism. It has combined with socialism in such a way that the values of liberty and equality cannot now be detached.

"It will fall to the Popular Democratic Government to take measures in which growth is linked to fair redistribution of income, construction of an internal mass market, radicalisation of democracy, state investment, incentives for technological research and development, urban reform, land reform, taxing the rich, elimination of indirect taxes and a fair tax system compatible with popular democratic reforms and the fight against monopolies, enabling a full frontal attack on the problems of hunger, unemployment, healthcare, education, property speculation, housing and transport suffered by the majority of the people. This supposes an independent foreign policy and the smashing of the privileges of the oligopolies, large estate-owners and financial conglomerates.

Reprinted from *International Viewpoint*, December 1993.

Revolutionaries and Britain's "political culture" Lever or sect?



Alan Johnson
reviews *The Good
Old Cause, British
Communism 1920-
1991* by Willie
Thompson
£12.95
Pluto Press

THOMPSON argues that the launching of the CP in 1920 was a mistake for three reasons.

First the setting up of an independent revolutionary party, flying its own flag, ignored British "political culture", in particular the dominance of the working class by Labourism and parliamentarism. Indeed despite the radicalising impact of the war, "only a minute segment of the British working class... had been sufficiently affected by these experiences to reject the British social and constitutional structure root and branch and to think in terms of an alternative soviet democracy."

Second, the CP was formed not by the winning over of sizeable layers of the old mass reformist party to a new political affiliation, but by the amalgamation of tiny sects. The CP's development was a demonstration of the law that mass revolutionary socialist parties simply cannot be built in this way no matter how energetic their militants. Moreover the political complexion of those sects was propagandist and syndicalist.

Third, the Communist International bent and twisted the CPGB denying it the possibility of developing organically within British politics, by imposing a "Bolshevism" out of place in British conditions, and then by subjecting the party to the foreign policy of a "blood-soaked tyranny."

For Thompson it was all over by the early twenties. The essential character was set; the future as a "marginal fragment" in politics guaranteed. The party tried again and again to break out of isolation: but all attempts failed, thinks Thompson, because the CP "embodied a form of domestic politics intrinsically alien to the British political culture" and because of the party's "soviet connection."

Thompson is, I think, right about a lot. He is right to identify sectarianism as the problem of the early years. It would have been better for the British communists to simply adopt the name of one of its components — the British Socialist Party — which was already affiliated to the Labour Party, than to set up independent shop and fire aggressive 'affiliation appeals' to the Labour Party (which, in truth, it hoped would be rejected).

Lenin's own advice to the British Communists, though it countered the worst excesses of sectarianism by urging affiliation to Labour, surely gave too much away to the sectarian attitude.

Thompson is also right to criticise the early anti-parliamentary cast of the party. In Britain electoral and parliamentary action is central to politics. To ignore it, or to imagine using

it simply as a microphone for the 'real' struggle outside, is actually to ignore much of politics.

Thompson is right to focus attention on what he calls Britain's 'political culture.' Lenin, in his desperate appeals to the ultra-lefts of his own day, urged socialists to "seek out, investigate, predict, and grasp that which is nationally specific and nationally distinctive, in the concrete manner in which each country should tackle a single international task."

We should recognise the particular long national development of parliamentary democracy — partially the result of working class struggle — and its consequent centrality to British political culture, and the position of the Labour Party within parliament (and of parliamentarism within Labourism). All this ensures that leftist anti-parliamentarism in Britain is a dead end, as is the abstract counterposition of soviets to parliament.

The line of march for socialists in Britain today must be a strategic combination of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary action both in the fight for socialism and in the institutional democracy of a socialist society.

Lenin again: "You want to create a new society but you fear the difficulties involved in forming a good parliamentary group made up of convinced, devoted and heroic Communists in a reactionary parliament! Is that not childish?" And: "In Western Europe, the

backward masses of the workers... are much more imbued with bourgeois democratic and parliamentary prejudices that they were in Russia: because of that it is only from within such institutions as bourgeois parliaments that Communists can (and must) wage a long and persistent struggle, undaunted by any difficulties, to expose, dispel and overcome these prejudices" (Left Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder)

Second the social weight of the unions, the organic connection between the unions and the Labour Party, and the open valve between the two and the continuing marginalisation of Marxism all dictate that the proper role of Marxists is an ideological 'lever' within the mass movement. Puffed-up self-proclamation of 'r-r-revolutionary parties' has produced only the white elephants and grotesqueries of Healy, Cliff and how Taaffe.

But this book has a mass of faults, predictable from a CPer of 30 years standing. As Al Richardson points out in *Revolutionary History* (Vol 5, No.2 pp148-151), these include the exclusion of Trotskyist sources, the naive treatment of the question of Russian influence, the ambiguous treatment of the Moscow Trials, and the "ritual recital of some hoary old falsehoods" about the CP itself.

For Thompson the CP could never have broken out of its isolation, no matter what it did. But surely the historical record suggests the CP could and nearly did break out of its isolation in the 1920s by the pursuit of the 'lever in the movement' approach, only for a disastrous mix of native sectarianism and the international



The CP was forced into an ill-fated flirtation with TUC lefts in the General Strike of 1926

Stalinism of the Third International to wreck the party.

We have not a case of a party inevitably coming to terms with an intrinsically for-all-time non-revolutionary 'culture' but rather of a genuinely revolutionary force tragically squandering great opportunities to play a fructifying role in a living, developing mass movement and to augment itself in the process.

The crucial events are the efforts of the CP in the mid 1920s to apply the tactic of the United Front in the British labour movement by creating the National Left Wing Movement and the Minority Movement and the abandonment of this political approach in 1929 in favour of the ultra-left lunacies of Stalin's Third Period. (See the essay by Brian Pearce, *The Communist Party and the Labour Left, 1925-1929* in Woodhouse and Pearce, "Essays on the History of Communism in Britain.")

In 1921 the Communist International — giving the lie to Thompson's view of a malign influence from 1920 — helped the infant CP to run to mass work using the tactic (which in British conditions is really a strategy) of the United Front.

The Party organised campaigns for 'Back to the Unions!' and 'Stop the Retreat!' offering positive proposals for strike action, fighting to strengthen local Trades Councils, withdrawing candidates where Labour candidates were standing. Support for the affiliation of the CP to the Labour Party rose. The Party press was transformed from a propaganda sheet to a living newspaper giving 'leads on live issues in the working class movement' (Pearce).

In July 1923 it was Moscow's influence which led to the establishment of the Minority Movement and which at its peak led one million workers. According to Pearce, by the end of 1923 the CP had 4,000 members, the circulation of the *Workers' Weekly* stood at 50,000 and "ties with the working class and its organisations were substantial and increasing." This was "a party full of promise."

So what went wrong? The

Comintern turned from a plus factor to a massive negative influence. In the run-up to and during the General Strike it forced the CP into an ill-fated flirtation with the TUC left-wingers at exactly the moment those lefts were preparing to play a terrible role in the strike. The defeat of the General Strike then became itself a factor in the inability of the CP to grow.

Worse followed: the ultra-left lunacy of the 'Third Period' from 1929-1935, and the collapse of distinctive Marxist politics in the liberal 'Popular Fronts' from 1935. The fundamental problem here was the degeneration of the Russian revolution and the Comintern, not the fact of international organisation.

The Central Committee minority — Dutt, Pollit, Arnot, backed from 1928 by Moscow — argued for the NLWM to be shut down as a centrist barrier stopping leftward-moving workers joining the CP. Harry Pollitt's words of 1928 are still watchwords of today's sectarians: "Our strength will grow in the degree that we can weaken the Labour Party."

The result of the decision to dissolve the NLWM and the MM — by 55 votes to 52 at the 10th Congress in January 1929 — was a precipitate decline in members, influence and political common sense. By May 1929 the CP called on workers to abstain and scrawl 'Communist' on their ballot paper, thus inaugurating a period in which the CP was, according to Brian Pearce "completely and utterly isolated from the mainstream of the British labour movement." Such were the fruits of the turn to open

party building.

The CP had been central to the earlier project of winning local Labour Parties and union branches to a serious socialist fight against the right wing and the Tories. But even here not the existence of the CP but its open organisational separation from the Labour Party was a standing contradiction to this policy, for every militant who left the Labour Party for the CP weakened the fight in the movement as a whole. And what Britain has is precisely a 'movement as a whole'.

The same problem, recognised or not, is faced by today's revolutionary groups. The revolutionary left related to the mid-1980s local government struggles by demanding the Labour Party remained socialist and also built the struggle especially in the workplaces. Good. Many on the far left also argued that socialists leave the (trade union based) Labour Party and the council chamber in favour of 'the workplaces', and, of course, 'the revolutionary party'. Bad.

The problem cannot be avoided. As JT Murphy put it looking back in 1932 after he left the CP (he had previously been a member of the Socialist Labour Party): "I now realised that whatever contribution I had to make to working class politics had been given to parties which were nothing more than sectarian groups on the fringes of the working class movement. Instead of organising a body of opinion within the labour movement and seeking to transform it in its process of evolution, the Communist Party became an oppositional body." (Preparing for Power).

It remains the task of socialists today to organise that body of opinion and to transform the existing working class movement.

"Every militant who left the Labour Party for the CP weakened the fight in the movement as a whole. And what Britain has is precisely a 'movement as a whole'."

Tale of innocence



The Vietnam war is a major theme



Matt Cooper
reviews
Forrest Gump

Directed by
Robert Zemeckis

FORREST GUMP is a strangely contradictory film. It bears all the stigmata of a Hollywood blockbuster: a simplistic plot broken into very short and digestible segments, glossy packaging that emphasises form over content, and an unerring ability to pull its punches. Yet, there is a serious film there somewhere, and it is quite good in parts.

If *Forrest Gump* can be said to have a theme, it is of loss and suffering — that which is inextricably part of life, and that extra bit which is heaped on by other people's avoidable cruelty. The most telling sign that this film is more ambitious than the stale Hollywood norm is its fairly downbeat ending.

"The most telling sign that this film is more ambitious than the stale Hollywood norm is its fairly downbeat ending."

From the first moment of the titles, a camera tracks a feather as it falls and twists, buffeted by currents of air, down to street level and comes to rest on Forrest Gump's foot. He picks it up.

Such a shot could only be realised by quietly spectacular special effects. At their most obvious where Gump is inserted into archive film and introduced on three separate occasions to three US presidents, meets John Lennon on a chat show, and so on, special effects are the trademark of this film.

This may pull the crowds in, but the effects are at their best where, as with the opening shot of the feather, you don't see them as effects. They are used to strengthen acting performances and enhance the impact of the

film.

Along with the fantasy style of filmmaking, goes a fantasy plot. Gump, played with slow Southern-drawling sincerity by Tom Hanks, is a man with a very limited IQ. He is innocent of all the evil in the world. By taking everything and everyone as he finds them, he is a much better human being than all those who use their intellect to justify the injustice they see around them, and then pretend *not* to see.

Through his simple trust and faith in people, his belief in friendship, and his ability to follow simple instructions, he becomes a college football star, Vietnam war hero, international table tennis player, millionaire and cult leader. All of this is wittily done, if often superficially and episodically — nothing as complicated as a subplot is allowed to develop.

Two themes run through the film: the effect of the Vietnam war and Gump's pursuit of his childhood sweetheart Jenny (Robin Wright). Gary Sinise's portrayal of a legless veteran, Gump's former commanding officer, is well enough, if over sentimentally,

done.

The film is at its most unusual when it mixes Gump's uncomprehending innocence with bitter social satire as we see Jenny's life twisted by a series of abusive and violent relationships, beginning as a child with her father. The comedy built around this is mainly sentimental, but it is also sometimes hard-nosed and biting.

Forrest Gump is a flawed film, however. It has a kitsch moralising that is best ignored, and a kind of liberal version of the American Dream: sincerity, hard work and sense of community. If you can stand the hackneyed philosophy of the film (example: we all, like the feather, have a destiny, but one which is only realised through the twists and turns of chance and accident) it is a cut above the average.

A Rebel Song

Come workers, sing a rebel song, a song of love and hate;
Of love unto the lowly, and of hatred to the great,
The great who trod our fathers down, who steal our children's bread,
Whose hand of greed is stretched to rob the living and the dead.

Chorus
Then sing our rebel song, as we proudly sweep along,
To end the age-long tyranny that

makes for human tears;
Our march is nearer done with each setting of the sun,
And the tyrant's might is passing with the passing of the years.

We sing no song of wailing, and no song of sighs or tears,
High are our hopes, and stout our hearts, and banished all our fears,
Our flag is raised above us so that all the world may see,
'Tis Labour's faith and Labour's arm alone can Labour free.

Chorus
Out from the depths of misery we march with hearts aflame,
With wrath against the rulers false

who wreck our manhood's name;
The serf who licks his tyrant's rod may bend forgiving knee,
The slave who breaks his slavery's chain a wrathful man must be.

Chorus
Our army marches onward with its face towards the dawn,
In trust secure in that one thing the slave may lean upon,
The might within the arm of him who, knowing Freedom's worth,
Strikes home to banish tyranny from off the face of earth.

Chorus
James Connolly

Alternative therapies



BBC1
Sunday 2 October

Geoff Ward
reviews
Murder in Mind

THE "Screen One" presentation, *Murder in Mind*, was an engrossing psychological drama which managed to pack in a message about Britain in 1994.

This gothic story centred around a deranged private psychotherapist, played by the suitably intense Charlotte Rampling, a cross between a matriarchal "earth mother" and a black widow spider.

It was an allegory about Thatcher's and Major's Britain.

Rampling's patients, disillusioned with the running down of the NHS,

spend money to buy what they think is a safe haven, offering "alternative" treatment. Rampling's character bears a passing resemblance to the old Steve Bell caricature of Thatcher as a megalomaniac madwoman.

With icy coldness, she takes people into care and then selected those fit only to die. She drives each victim to suicide.

She can control and manipulate everyone around her to the point where she can determine who will live and die. Like God and, in her time, Margaret Thatcher, she is all-powerful.

Her criteria for deciding who will die is weakness and vulnerability — such people are, as we know from the Tories, *undeserving* of proper care.

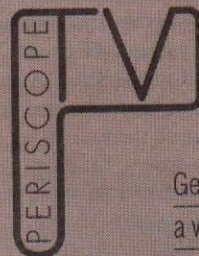
If this fictional madwoman is guilty of murder — and the cops think she

is — then what of the faceless bureaucrats and Tory hirelings who now run the NHS?

Their activities are state-licensed and therefore legitimate; it is not her lunacy that makes what Rampling's fictional character does unethical and unlawful. It is her lack of state backing!

The cop called in to investigate, played by Trevor Eve, ends up topping himself while Rampling looks on.

That too was true to the reality of Tory Britain: there was no glib happy ending. The Tories are still in power. We still have to fight for the "happy ending." Things look better than for a long time, but we still have a hard fight to break the power of the Tories and their inhuman, lunatic philosophy.



Wayne
Geoffries previews
a week's television

KARL MARX was a "Bardolator" — he had a great love for the works of William Shakespeare. If you are one of those who can't see why anyone should bother, then you are missing out on something wonderful. The BBC's month-long Bardfest might help you see what Marx and so many others have found in Shakespeare.

Bard on the Box (Sunday 16 October, BBC2, 8pm) kicks off the BBC's William Shakespeare season with a historical look back at his reputation over the years.

Panorama (Monday 17 October, BBC1, 9.30pm) reports

on the mood of the Unionist community in Northern Ireland in the wake of the IRA ceasefire.

Blood on the Dole (Tuesday 18 October, C4, 10.00pm) Selected by Alan Bleasdale from a pool of new playwrights for television, this play centres around the lives and challenges faced by four Merseyside school leavers.

Between the Lines (Wednesday 19 October, BBC1, 9.30pm) returning for a new series, with a hardhitting look at the seedy side of Tory law and order. Tony Clark has been slung out of his job for the murder that was committed at the end of the last series. Which only goes to show that no one is bullet-proof.

First Sight (Thursday 20 October, BBC2, 7.30pm) debates issues surrounding the permanent arming of the police.

Socialists and

TO MANY, it seems that the political arguments between socialists are all pointless bickering, and that we should forget them and instead sink all our differences, uniting behind some sort of left-consensus policy. One historical experience, above all others, shows the short-sightedness of this view: the collapse of the socialist parties at the start of World War 1 in 1914. In Germany, in Austria, in France, and in other European countries, sizeable "social-democratic" parties had been built over the decades before the war. "Social democracy" then meant Marxist and revolutionary — in words, at least. Many of the activists in these parties believed that they were advancing steadily towards socialist revolution. As the working class grew and became more organised and

educated, the social-democratic parties and the trade unions linked to them also grew — and they would grow, so they thought, until they became an overwhelming power.

The outbreak of war in July-August 1914 shattered these illusions of easy progress. They showed that behind their "Marxist" facades, the leaderships of the socialist parties had gone rotten. They supported their own capitalist governments in the war.

The party leaderships had come to be dominated by opportunists, tied more to their Parliamentary positions or trade-union offices than to the working class or to the Marxist phrases which they still used. Crucial in this degeneration was the parties' policy of hiding or smoothing over political dif-

ferences. Arguments, both from left-wingers seeking sharper, clearer commitments to struggle, and from right-wingers wanting to scrap the parties' formal revolutionary stand, had been stifled or fended off.

Political clarity was subordinated to bureaucratic time-serving. Only a few parties, like Lenin's Bolsheviks in Russia, had put political clarity first — and won a reputation as quarrelsome pedants and splitters. But they were the only parties able to stick to socialist principles in August 1914.

Max Shachtman told the story in this article, reproduced from the US Trotskyist magazine *The New Internationalist*, August 1934.

FOUR resolution does not foresee any specific method of action for the vast diversity of eventualities," said Jean Jaurès in urging the adoption of the famous anti-war resolution of the Second International at its special conference in Basel on 24 November 1912, "neither does it exclude any. It serves notice upon the governments, and it draws their attention clearly to the fact that [by war] they would easily create a revolutionary situation, yes the most revolutionary situation imaginable."

So the resolution did. The unanimous vote cast for the memorable document of Basel marked the highest point ever reached by the Second International. It was a solemn warning, not one syllable of which nurtured the illusion of "national defence", that the allied socialist parties of the entire world would reply to an imperialist war as did the Parisian masses in 1871 after the Franco-Prussian war and the Russian workers in 1905 after the Russo-Japanese war.

The great betrayal of socialism in 1914 by the Second International consisted in trampling in trench-mud the Basel anti-war resolution and the whole of revolutionary socialist tradition.

The main parties of the International had become so closely interwoven with the fate and interests of the capitalist fatherland that the declaration of 1912 was little more than a heroic echo of a revolutionary past. The vast institutions they had built up, the trade unions they had expanded, the steady growth of their parliamentary strength — all these conjured up in the minds of the socialist parties an idyllic picture of the co-operative commonwealth gradually emerging out of capitalist society without serious disturbances or convulsions.

That a war would actually break out, seemed a remote prospect. How to combat it if it actually supervened, was a problem about which few cudgelled their brains.

The fact is, as the Austrian chauvinist Karl Seitz pointed out, "The world war caught us unprepared." Unprepared to act like revolutionists against the imperialist war, but thoroughly prepared to support it with jingo enthusiasm. Nor was the bourgeoisie unaware of the inclinations of its respective social democracies. Quite the contrary. And these inclinations were part of the calculations of the warmongers who were driving towards action at a terrific speed in those crucial days.

"I never had any doubts about the patriotic sentiments of the social democracy in the event of war," read the memoirs of Victor Naumann, the intimate of the later Chancellor, Hertling, "and never understood the Berlin policy which constantly brought up the fearful question: will not the conduct of the social democracy, at the outbreak of a great war, produce severe conflicts in the interior which would be disastrous for the conduct of the struggle?"

In Berlin, six days after the ringing manifesto of the party leadership had proclaimed its opposition to the war which was clearly impending, the undeceived War Ministry released at 8 o'clock, 31 July, the following communication to the General Command: "According to reliable information, the Social Democratic party has the firm intention of conducting itself in a manner becoming to every German under the present conditions."



The cannon fodder of imperialist war

The assurance of the War Ministry was better than well founded. The dominant group in the party leadership and in the Reichstag faction had already determined to support the fatherland in the war — to support it regardless of whether this view was supported by the majority or not. Hermann Mueller had been dispatched to Paris to feel out the French socialists. The Austrians and Russians had already announced their mobilisation orders. Mueller proposed not to vote for war credits in the Reichstag if the Frenchmen would act similarly. "That we shall vote for the war credits, I consider out of the question." Renaudel and his confrères were agreeable — unless "France is attacked"; then the party would vote like a man for credits. Mueller returned empty-handed.

The Reichstag faction met with the party executive; Kautsky, among others, was invited to attend. The chauvinists prevailed. Kautsky could not summon enough courage to advocate a vote against the war credits; so he proposed abstention. Nether the left wing nor the right would listen — so he proposed to vote for the credits with a "demand" upon the government for certain

assurances! Out of several score votes cast, Liebknecht and his friends rallied a bare 14. By fraction discipline they were forbidden to vote against the credits in the Reichstag.

On 4 August the horrible tragedy occurred. Three days before the Kaiser has already pardoned his former opponents: "I know no more parties — I know only Germans."

Hugo Haase rose in the afternoon session of the Reichstag on 4 August, the only speaker on the list, and read off the statement of the fraction which had previously been submitted for approbation to Chancellor Bethmann-Holweg! "Now we are making good what we have always stressed: in the hour of danger we do not leave the fatherland in the lurch." The hall rang with tumultuous Bravos. For the first time in German history the social democracy joined in the frenzied *Hoch der Kaiser!*

The Austrian social democracy, already up to its ears in the chauvinist swamp, cheered effusively. Austerlitz wrote "Der Tag der deutschen Nation", his infamous editorial in the Vienna *Arbeiterzeitung* of 5 August: "Man by man the German social democrats voted for the loan. Like the entire international social democracy,

our Reichs-German party, that jewel of the organisation of the class conscious proletariat, is also the most vigorous opponent of war, the most passionate supporter of concord and solidarity of the people... Never did a party act more grandly and loftily than this German social democracy which proved its worth at this extremely serious moment."

For others it was harder to believe that the classic party of the Second International had committed so heinous a crime. Even Lenin, whose illusions were few enough about the German social democracy, could not bring himself to believe the report. "It cannot be, it must be a forged number", he told Zinoviev when the

"The great betrayal of socialism in 1914 by the Second International consisted in trampling in trench-mud the Basel anti-war resolution and the whole of revolutionary socialist tradition."



Jaurès

the test of war

first copy of the Berlin *Vorwärts* arrived in his Galician exile.

In Bucharest, the organ of the Rumanian social democracy, *România Muncitoare*, condemned the report that Haase had approved war credits in the Reichstag as a "monstrous lie" and to substantiate its view, proudly reprinted the anti-war speech which "Bebel's successor" had delivered in Brussels only the week before.

"The war burst asunder the International, it was its first victim," wrote Friedrich Adler dejectedly. "The Second International is dead, the Third must be built" said Lenin; and at that moment there were only two others to hear him: Zinoviev and Krupskaya. The International was dead — not just German social democracy.

On 29 July 1914, the peerless Jaurès was still saying at Brussels: "As for us French socialists, our duty is simple; we have need of imposing a policy of peace upon our government. I am practising one... I have the right to say that at the present the French government wants peace and is working for its preservation." Jaurès — Jaurès who had been second to none in laying bare the base diplomatic intrigues between France and Russia — could not elevate himself to an understanding of the main forces of imperialist politics! As the words fell from his eloquent lips, the Russian ambassador at Paris, Izvolsky, was sending a telegram in code to Sazonov in St Petersburg to inform the Tsar that Viviani had given renewed assurances of the determination of France to act in full harmony with the Russians. Everything was ready for the European war and Jaurès was in the toils of illusion. Three days later he was mur-

dered by an assassin as he sat with his friends in a restaurant.

On 4 August, the French Chamber of Deputies also rank with an unprecedented unity. The whole socialist fraction joined the vote for all the government measures, for war credits, and proclaiming a state of siege, for the suppression of free press and free assemblage. "It is a matter today of the future of the nation, of the life of France. The party has not hesitated," exclaimed the manifesto of the party. "Spontaneously, without waiting any other manifestation of the popular will, he [the head of government] has appealed to our party. Our party has replied, Here!"

On 27 August, Marcel Sembat entered the cabinet of the Sacred Union as minister of public works, and Jules Guesde — Guesde the Master, the orthodox Marxist! — as minister without portfolio. Later Albert Thomas became under-secretary of state of munitions. Marcel Cachin took the place of Jaurès at the head of *l'Humanité*, and like the German chauvinist Suedekum who represented the Kaiser in flying trips

of Italy, Rumania and Sweden, was sent to persuade the Italian socialists to help the Entente. They gave him a cold reception, but he boasted on his return that the King of Italy had helped him on with his overcoat.

Vaillant, the old Blanquist whose articles in *l'Humanité* became so violently jingoist that even the editors felt constrained to eliminate them little by little, until he was completely silenced by death in 1915, wrote when the war began: "In the face of the aggression, the socialists will fulfil their whole duty for the fatherland for the republic and for the revolution." "More than that," answered the satisfied editor of *Le Temps* on 4 August, "we do not ask of M. Edouard Vaillant and his friends."

Each social patriot sought to outdo his fellow and the bourgeoisie itself. "Come generals! We are giving you men, give me victories!" cried Comperre-Morel.

"We promise to fulfill our duty completely, as Frenchmen and socialists faithful to the International," came the pledge made at Jaurès' grave by Marcel Cachin, who later fulfilled his duty just as completely under Stalin.

"Who then is fighting against the work of

national defence? Who then is disinterested in the fate of the country? Is there then any incompatibility between the International and the fatherland?" asked the same Paul Faure who in 1934 pledges himself so glibly to lead the French proletariat in the struggle against war.

The Belgian socialists took the same road. With the blessing of the party, Emile Vandervelde joined the reactionary clerical cabinet of his most august majesty, Albert, king of the Belgians and butcher of the Congo. Louis de Brouckere, who had served a term of six months in his youth for an anti-militarist article, quit the editorship of *Le Peuple* to join the aviation corps. Into the same nationalist wave plunged the young "radical", Henri de Man, who enlisted in the army with the same enthusiasm with which he now seeks to enlist the radical Belgian proletariat for his equally treacherous "plan".

In England, the Labour Party was enthusiastically bellicose. Arthur Henderson, John Hodge, Brace and Roberts joined the government of National Defence. The Independent Labour Party adopted a pacifist position, but its members in the Parliament never voted against the war budget.

Ramsay MacDonald, who gained a reputation for opposition to the war, nevertheless wrote the recruiting drive and spoke at the ILP conference in 1916 against expelling the chauvinists Clynes and Parker because he "was not going to say that men who had participated in the recruiting campaign should be turned out of socialist organisations".

HM Hyndman, who had advocated preparedness, together with Robert Blatchford, long before the war, turned bitter-end patriot and wrote: "Everybody must eagerly desire the final defeat of Germany." His party split in two, one wing forming the internationalist British Socialist Party.

In Bulgaria, the leaders of the right wing "Broad" socialists, Sakasoff, Pastukoff and Dsidroff, concluded a civil peace with their bourgeoisie and entered the cabinet, first of Malinoff and then of Theodoroff.

In Poland, the split in the ranks of the International was more favourable to the left wing than in many other countries. After hav-

"Everything was ready for the European war and Jaurès was in the toils of illusion. Three days later he was murdered by an assassin as he sat with his friends in a restaurant."



Luxemburg

ing denounced the reactionary Polish Club of the Austrian chamber as the "Shlakhzizenklubs," the leader of the Polish Social Democracy in Austro-Hungary, Daszinsky, together with the other Austro-Polish social democrats, joined it in a burst of national enthusiasm. Together with the reactionary Polish Socialist Party, they made open and common cause with the Hapsburg monarchy, established the Supreme National Committee of patriots, formed the Polish Legion with Josef Pilsudski at its head and fought for Polonia Irredenta. The Social Democracy of Poland and Lithuania (the party of Rosa Luxemburg and Jogisches), joined with the left wing of the PPS and the Bund in an anti-war position and proclaimed: "The proletariat declares war upon its governments, its oppressors!"

In Holland, all the right wing socialists voted for military credits "for the protection of neutrality" — while the group of Gorter, Pannekoek, Roland-Holst and Wijnkoop (the Tribunists) took a militant internationalist stand.

In equally neutral Sweden, the social democrats, allies of the tools of French imperialism sent Hjalmar Branting and three other party leaders into the Eden cabinet; Branting and three other party leaders into the Eden cabinet; Branting later became president of the council.

In Denmark the social democrats, here the allies of the tools of German imperialism, permitted Stauning to accept a ministerial post in the bourgeois cabinet.

Second part of this article: next issue



MacDonald

Glossary

Austrian ultimatum to Serbia: In June 1914, the heir to the Austrian throne was killed by a nationalist student in Bosnia, which was then ruled by Austria. Austria and Russia were rival big powers, each seeking advantage in the area that was to become Yugoslavia. The Austrian government held (pro-Russian) Serbia responsible for the killing. It sent an ultimatum to the Serbian government, basically demanding Austrian overlordship over Serbia, and then invaded. That started World War 1.

Basel Manifesto: In 1912, the Second International — the world association of socialist parties — held a congress in Basel about the looming threat of war and decided to oppose war and to act to "hasten the downfall of capitalism" should war break out.

Bebel: August Bebel, main leader of the German Social-Democratic party; died in 1913.

Chancellor: roughly, equivalent of Prime Minister.

Chauvinist: extreme nationalist.

Entente: the alliance led by Britain, France and Russia.

Franco-Prussian war: In 1870 France declared war on Prussia, the most powerful of the then disunited German states. The Prussian army quickly swept in France. As the French government crumbled, the workers of Paris seized

power in the city for nine weeks (the "Paris Commune").

Guesde: one of the main leaders of the French socialist party, considered more orthodoxly Marxist than his rival Jaurès.

Haase: leader of the German Social-Democrats' parliamentary group after Bebel's death.

Hapsburg: ruling family of the Austro-Hungarian empire, which covered Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, parts of Poland, Croatia and Bosnia.

l'Humanité: newspaper of the French socialist party.

Hyndman: founder and leader of the first Marxist group in Britain, the Social-Democratic Federation. Marx and Engels were always highly critical of him.

Independent Labour Party: was then a sizeable force, as an affiliated party within the Labour Party.

Jaurès: a leader of the French socialist party, right-wing on many questions but renowned for his opposition to war.

Jingo: warmonger, extreme nationalist.

Junker: Prussian landlords. "The Junker reaction" was the most backward-looking, feudalistic political force in Germany.

Kaiser: Emperor, or king, of Germany. By tradition, the MPs in the German parliament cheered him ("Hoch der Kaiser", or "Up the Emperor") at the start of each session. Until 1914 the Social Democrats had refused to join those

cheers.

Kautsky: main theorist of the German Social-Democratic party.

Liebkecht: German Social-Democratic left-winger who defied the party whip to vote against the war budget. Murdered in 1919 by right-wing soldiers under the sponsorship of the Social-Democratic leaders.

Reichstag: German parliament. The "Reichstag fraction" of the German Social-Democracy was their group of MPs.

Russo-Japanese war: Japan and Russia went to war in 1904 over control of Korea and Manchuria. Russia's defeat was followed by workers' strikes and uprisings in Russia in 1905.

Second International: the international alliance of socialist parties, set up in 1889. Collapsed in 1914; was re-established, but in very feeble form, after World War 1.

Vaillant: a leader of the French socialist party. Before the different socialist factions united at the turn of the century, he had been a leader of the "Blanquist" group, a group inclined towards conspiratorial organisation for an armed uprising as the road to socialism.

Vorwärts: paper of the German Social-Democratic Party.

Zinoviev: one of Lenin's closest comrades at the time.

Alliance for

WORKERS'
LIBERTY

Meetings

LEICESTER

Tuesday 18 October

Why be a student activist?7.30pm Room 2, Student Union
Leicester University

LONDON

Wednesday 26 October

Should Clause Four be kept? A debate between the AWL and John McTernan7.30 Lucas Arms, Gray's Inn
Road, Kings Cross

Saturday 5 November

Educational School: The German revolution, 1918-1912.00-4.00: details from Mark on
071-639 7965

YORK

Thursday 20 October

Defend Clause Four

1.00 York University

Sunday 23 October

Day school: the politics of workers' liberty

12.00-5.00, York University

MANCHESTER

Thursday 13 October

How to stop the Criminal Justice Bill1.00 Manchester Met. Students
Union

Thursday 27 October

Defend Labour's Clause Four

8.00 Unicorn pub, Church Street

BIRMINGHAM

Friday 21 October

What future for the left?Sean Matgamna debates Robin
Blick

7.30 Union Club

Thursday 27 October

Is there a God?1.00 University of Central
England, Perry Barr site

NEWCASTLE

Saturday 22 October

Day school: the politics of workers' liberty12.00-5.00 Northumbria
University Students Union

LANCASTER

Monday 17 October

How to beat the racists

8.00 The Albert pub

Wednesday 19 October

The police and the state

1.00 Lancaster University

Saturday 5-Sunday 6 November

Weekend school: the politics of Workers' Liberty

PLATFORM

Anti-racists must turn
to the working class

EYE ON THE LEFT

By Mark Osborn

THE Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA), which meets for its national conference on Saturday 15 October, has for months been beset by bitter in-fighting. Accusations of "racism" (unlikely), "megalomania," and "vote rigging" (unproven as we go to press), have been liberally banded about during this squabble royal between former friends.

In one corner stands Ken Livingstone, backed by Socialist Action, and in the opposing corner, Marc Wadsworth. Livingstone even



ARA secretary Marc Wadsworth

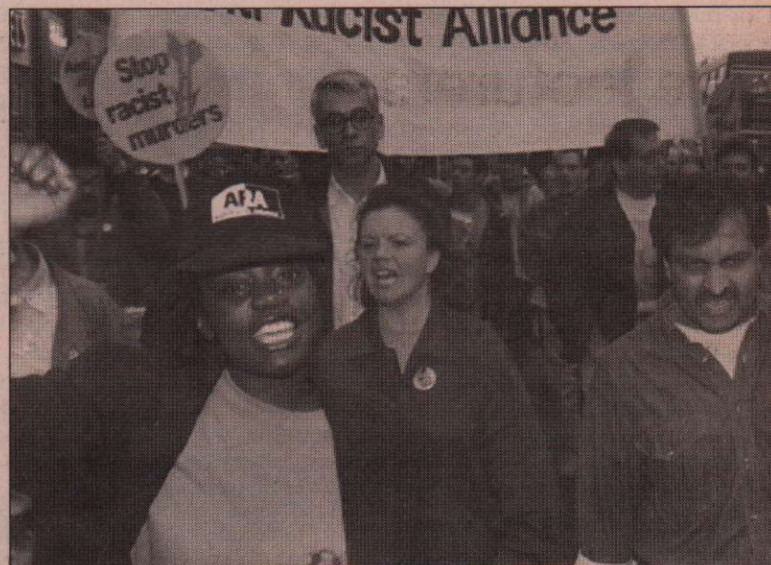
took the matter of voting at ARA conference to court, before dropping it with the claim that Wadsworth had capitulated and handed over the information he had been asking for. According to the *London Evening Standard*, Livingstone ran up legal bills of £6,000.

The *Standard* reports that Livingstone is demanding that Wadsworth pay his costs.

Nevertheless there are certainly good reasons to be bothered about Wadsworth. Anyone who saw Wadsworth on Darcus Howe's *Devil's Advocate* TV show, after the ARA and Anti-Nazi League had clashed demonstrations on 16 October last year, would conclude that the man is, at least, seriously stressed out.

Demagogically "Black", Wadsworth advocates "Black Leadership." And he does not mean any Black Leadership, he means Marc Wadsworth's leadership.

Wadsworth uses Black Leadership as a political club, to beat people over the head with. For our part we prefer Good Leadership. Some members of a Good Leadership will be white and some should be members of the various Black and Asian communities. The leadership of a multi-racial, anti-racial movement should not be selected on the basis of race: the leadership of a mass anti-racist campaign which aspires to unite black people with white people against the



ARA has failed to mobilise on the streets

racists cannot be selected on grounds of race.

A good anti-racist movement leadership in the end is based on politics and priorities.

The Livingstone people want ARA to be a more "sensitive" anti-racist campaign.

The Wadsworth-led ARA has not built on its substantial trade union backing or any serious anti-racist campaigning in workplaces and on working class estates. That is the decisive measure.

ARA has not built a mass mem-

bership campaign with vibrant local groups. Instead it has concentrated on a propaganda and lobbying campaign for legal changes which would make racially motivated crimes carry heavier punishment.

But the police and courts are not going to deal with racism adequately.

Energy also needs to be directed to helping working-class black and white people campaign on the ground against racism. If necessary this means opposing the police and courts, rather than seeing them as helpers.

Popper: the thinker
and the apologist

By Martin Thomas

KARL Popper, who died last month aged 92, was an important and original thinker who became — by his own choice — the chief intellectual backer for smug social conservatism after World War 2.

At the age of 17, in the intellectual hothouse of Vienna after World War 1, Popper formulated his key idea: "it must be possible for an empirical scientific system to be refuted by experience". The traditional idea that scientific theories are built up from observations makes no logical sense. Science proceeds, and must proceed, by formulating theories which produce precise and testable predictions, then by testing those predictions. "A hypothesis can only be empirically tested [i.e. not proved] — and only after it has been advanced".

By his own account, Popper developed this idea as a weapon against Marxist and Freudian theories, which he considered to be so full of references to underlying realities different from immediate empirical facts that they could not recognise any fact as disproving them and thus were not

scientific.

His hostility to Freud was not total: he said that Freud's theory, though not precise enough to be science, was "of considerable importance and may well play its part one day in a psychological science which is testable".

His hostility to Marxism was more thorough. In his most famous book,

"Popper was the chief intellectual backer for smug social conservatism after World War 2."

"The Open Society and its Enemies" (1945), he spun off a view on society from his views on science. Given the complexities of society, he argued, grand theories were bound to be unscientific. Social action based on them would thus end up as imposition of unjustified dogmas. All grand social theories, from Plato through Hegel to Marx, led to totalitarian-

ism. Instead, social action should proceed through "piecemeal social engineering" and small adjustments by trial and error.

This was no more than a rationalisation of the "consensus politics" of the 1940s, '50s, and '60s. In the harsher times of the 1980s and 1990s, neither the Thatcherites nor their serious opponents have any time for this principle of little-by-little.

Intellectually, his social theory was built on the weakest part of his philosophy of science: its inability to explain the great shifts in scientific thinking which replace, not just one detailed hypothesis by another, but a whole paradigm by another.

Yet the 17-year old Popper's ideas on the nature of science had more to them than the mumbo-jumbo of the 43-year old professor would suggest.

Against some of the "ultra-left" versions of Marxism current in central Europe in 1919 — like the idea of Georg Lukacs that Marxism was defined only by a disembodied "method", and that its validity would therefore be untouched even if every one of Marx's concrete predictions were disproved — and against official Stalinist "Marxism", Popper's argu-

ment had force.

It seems Popper never took the trouble to comprehend authentic Marxist theory — but that theory does provide for testing by practice, and can be and is revised when the test shows theory to be wrong. Against the most important ideologues of Popper's social views, the orthodox academic economists, Popper's argument is, however, devastating: the ideas of "marginal utility" depend entirely on abstract assumptions so defined as to be impossible to test against facts.

Popper's ideas also cut hard against a still-influential conservative view which sees science as building up "established truths" by sheer accumulation of "facts", with those "facts" existing independent of all theory. It tells us that scientific truth is always provisional, and that "facts" are always conditioned by "theories".

On the other side of the argument, Popper's ideas also cut against a fashionable scepticism which denies the possibility of scientific progress. Popper was a forthright "realist", or materialist. He argued that material reality exists, and that theory can and should achieve better and better approximations to it.

Tube union leaders call off the action

By a Central Line guard

LAST Friday's (7 October) tube strike was a lot better supported than media reports would suggest. The Central Line was the most solid with few trains running. Other strong areas included the

Victoria, District and Piccadilly lines.

Even those lines where a lot of trains ran due to most ASLEF members working, tube journeys were still difficult as connections to other lines caused serious problems.

In total London Underground

Ltd only managed 50% service in the morning and 30% in the afternoon and evening, despite claims of 95% service!

Unfortunately, the local and national leaders have decided not to build on last Friday, but instead have called off any further strikes. They have effectively abandoned

the dispute. This is a mistake as the strike could have been spread with more picketing.

Most of the blame for the winding down of the tube pay battle rests on the shoulders of the leadership of ASLEF, which organises about half the drivers.

ASLEF first agreed to common

action with RMT, but then last month, after 71% of the members had rejected 2%, the executive suddenly accepted 2.5%! This move was seen by many tube workers as a direct attempt to undermine both workers' unity on LUL and the signal strike which was then still going on.

Tubeworkers need to learn the lessons of the last four months. Rank and file links must be built between the tube unions. ASLEF activists have to clear out their rotten union leaders in order to break completely from the destructive cycle of ballots and the cancelled or postponed strikes.

Are lecturers professionals? Or workers?

EDUCATION FOR BARBARISM

By Colin Waugh

THE BOSSES OF Further Education colleges are trying to force lecturers onto new contracts which will:

- raise weekly teaching hours from 21 maximum to 25 minimum;
- increase the working week from 30 hours maximum to 37 minimum;
- lengthen the working year from 38 weeks to 45;
- abolish the entitlement to an annual salary increment;
- cut redundancy notice entitlement by 75%; and
- make teaching materials the property of the employer.

Other changes that result from the 1993 incorporation (i.e. semi-privatisation) of the colleges include cuts in taught hours (replaced by self-supported study in learning bases) and new methods of assessment (NVQs and GNVQs).

Some lecturers have responded by saying that we must defend our "professional status". But this is a dead-end.

Traditionally, a profession is an occupational group whose members have been given the legal right exclusively to exploit a given body of knowledge. They charge fees for doing this, set the standards, regulate entry to their own ranks, and expel those deemed unfit. The majority of professionals, strictly speaking, are self-employed. They own just enough of the means of production to exploit their own labour power.

In this sense, Further Education lecturing has never been a profession, only a job. The average Further Education lecturer's job is

more like that of a craftsperson, one who has a relatively privileged position based on his or her capacity to deploy a limited body of knowledge. It is those "craft" privileges which the college bosses are now seeking to withdraw.

However, many Further Education lecturers have aspired to become self-employed. Many have turned to lecturing only as a second-best to jobs as supervisors or partners in business; others aspire to become university-type lecturers, with jobs where the obligatory publication and research is essentially a disguised form of self-employment.

The latter, academic, side has grown in numbers and influence at the expense of the vocational or industrial side.

But both groups are now confronted with bosses who want to turn themselves into capitalist managing directors of educational business enterprises. The idea of "professional status" perhaps permits the two groups of lecturers, vocational and academic, to unite in opposition without having to perceive themselves as trade-union militants — though trade-union militants, fortunately, is what many have in fact become.

The problem is that college bosses too will want the professional ethos — as a weapon to stop strikes, promote unpaid overtime, and cover-up their programme of deskilling, downgrading and casualising the job.

The only answer is for socialists to build, within the college lecturers' union NATFHE, a rank-and-file organisation that fights without quarter in the field of pay and conditions but which links those struggles with a working-class and socialist — as opposed to petty-bourgeois and professional — analysis.

Attendance patterns deal accepted by Telecom Engineers

By a central London BT engineer

CUSTOMER engineers in BT have accepted a compromise deal on attendance patterns by a majority of approximately two to one.

Only 15,000 engineers voted, out of 27,000 affected. The previous ballot on the CSIP weekend working proposals saw an 85% vote — with 82% saying no.

The latest ballot came with a recommendation from the union executive to vote 'yes', though many branches were urging their members to vote no. Although the deal, negotiated by the union's senior

officers, allowed the new patterns to be voluntary, what is obvious was that the scheduled day off patterns would not be protected.

Already some local managers are threatening to introduce the CSIP proposals in two weeks' time, including a 5 day week for all those who have not volunteered for weekend working. Managers are also using the fact that scheduled days off are under threat to encourage more engineers to sign up for the Monday to Saturday cover and promising to back date the signing so staff can get the £1,000 pay off.

This sorry tale of CSIP has several consequences for the future:

The inability of the NCU negotiations to achieve anything more than minor damage limitation means that the proposals for other groups of telecom engineers Business Comms., or Payphones, and eventually all BT staff — will meet less resistance.

The way the initial consultation ballot result, which was a massive rejection, was squandered, meant that the opportunity to push BT to concede on the other union demands — more money for Saturday working, protection for supervisors grades, and a shorter working week — has been lost.

The next stage of CSIP for engineers that have been balloted will

be the fight to protect scheduled days off. NCU branches must prepare to defend existing work patterns of those who have not volunteered for Saturday working.

This should be straightforward. Scheduled days off are very popular, and there have been several successful defences of the scheduled days off patterns recently. People enjoy having a day off every fortnight, or three weeks.

On the other hand, with the acceptance of the compromise deal, morale is not great at the moment. It is very important to stand firm. The framework negotiated by the union Executive is not good enough.

Bold on demands but hesitant on action

By a UNISON health worker

DELEGATES TO this year's UNISON Health Sector conference showed themselves in militant mood over what they wanted from a future Labour government, but were unconfident about their ability to defend themselves against immediate attacks on their terms and conditions.

Despite the fact that UNISON is currently consulting its NHS members on a pay offer worth roughly 2.5% which includes the introduction of 'Performance Related Pay' and the recent threat by the Tories to offer nothing at all to nurses next year; the mood was downbeat

and resigned as the conference met in Bournemouth on 29-30 September.

The bulk of the blame for this lies with the union's full-time apparatus and Section Executive, who sought to pour cold water on every initiative that would have committed them to action. In part, though, the mood of conference was a product of the poor state of organisation of UNISON in the NHS, reflected in the low attendance (just 60% of the union's membership represented in the only card vote) and some very bad results for the "Sign-Up" campaign in London — a crucial battleground.

The more upbeat debate on

Labour policy was a reflection of this, showing how the lack of confidence in taking industrial action can lead workers to seek political remedies for their ills.

Geoff Martin (London Voluntary Agencies branch) got the debate off to a good start, calling for the Labour Party to produce a stack of P45's now, to be issued to Trust executives on the first day of a Labour government! Delegates made it quite clear that sticking a few elected representatives on to Trusts' Boards of Directors was not enough; they demanded the scrapping of the "internal market" and end to Trust status and the abolition of C.C.T.

On the last afternoon, much to the embarrassment of the platform, a resolution was passed, calling for Labour to remove all private contractors from the NHS without compensation, and for the compensation of all those workers who have lost out to C.C.T. in the NHS under the Tories.

At this conference however there was none of the tension between the "old" unions that make up UNISON of the sort that dominated the first annual conference. This was undoubtedly due to there being a far smaller proportion of former NALGO delegates in the health sector than in the union as a whole.

Trade union model motions on Clause Four

PASS THESE motions at your union branch, shop stewards' committee, district or region. Send to your union Executive.

Model motion for trade union which do not have a commitment similar to Clause Four in their own constitutions.

We note that Clause Four of the Labour Party's rules commits the Party: "To secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service"; and, "generally, to promote the political, social and economic emancipation of the people, and more, particularly of those who depend directly upon their own exertions by hand or by brain for the means of life".

We further note that this Clause has stood for many decades as the basic statement of the principles of the Labour Party, to be taken into account by trade unions when deciding on affiliation.

We therefore believe that this

Clause should not be changed without a proper democratic discussion and decision in the Labour Party and in all its affiliated trade unions and other organisations.

We resolve that this union's votes in the Labour Party should be cast against any change to Clause Four unless and until a new formulation is presented to and approved by this union's conference.

We further resolve that no new formulation should be supported which omits the commitments to working-class interests, to common ownership of industry, and to industrial democracy, included in the current Clause Four.

Model motion for trade unions which have a commitment similar to Clause Four in their own constitutions

We note that Clause Four of the Labour Party's rules commits the Party: "To secure [etc]"

We further note that our union's constitution (rule book) commits us to the same principles. (Insert excerpt from constitution/rule book).

We therefore resolve that this union's votes in the Labour Party should be cast against any change to Clause Four unless and until this union has decided to change its constitution (rule book) to commit us to new principles. We further resolve that no new formulation should be supported

which omits the commitments to working-class interests, to common ownership of industry, and to industrial democracy, included in the current Clause Four.

Model motion for Constituency Labour Parties

This CLP supports the decision of the 1994 conference of the Labour Party to reaffirm Clause Four of the constitution.

We note that Clause Four commits the Party:

(1) To organise and maintain in parliament and in the country a political Labour Party.

(2) To co-operate with the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, or other kindred organisations, in joint political or other action in harmony with the party constitution and standing orders.

(3) To give effect as far as may be practicable to the principles from time to time approved by the party conference.

(4) To secure for the workers [etc].

(5) Generally to promote the political, social and economic emancipation [etc]."

We believe that these basic principles are still valid. If the clause is to be changed it should be only after thorough democratic debate.

We call on leadership and the NEC to abandon their proposal to engage in a debate on the Party's constitution. Such a debate can only be divisive at a time when maximum effort should be put into campaigning against the Tory government. We remind the NEC of the pledge made by John Smith MP and the current deputy leader John Prescott to the 1993 conference that the proposals adopted by that conference meant that programme of constitutional reform was at an end. We further regret that the proposal to abolish Clause Four was not presented to the party by either the leader or deputy leader in their election manifestos.

We are concerned at suggestions that Clause Four should be replaced by a new statement which will not include the existing commitments to working-class interests, common ownership of industry and industrial democracy.

We therefore commit this CLP to oppose the current plans to replace Clause Four.

We further pledge ourselves to defend

* The sovereignty of conference as the supreme policy making body in the party.

* The existing involvement of trade unions in the party, including the right of collective voting.

We resolve to circulate this resolution to all affiliated trade union branches, asking them to take up the issue in their unions.

Right to strike conference

Saturday 26 November 10-5

Union Club, 723 Pershore Road, Birmingham

This conference has been called to discuss how to fight for the right of workers to withdraw their labour, to discuss alternatives of the Tory laws and to organise solidarity with those hit by these laws.

For more information contact: Right to strike Conference, c/o TUN, PO Box 6498, London N1 1QW. Tel: 071 700 1550.

Industrial brief

700 manual workers at British Aerospace Woodford Cheshire have won a pay rise after just one day of strike action. Their new pay deal amounts to 3.5% this year, 4 per cent next year and 5%

in 1996.

The union leadership at Rover are to put a new pay deal purportedly worth 10.7% to a ballot. The agreement includes a substantial set of strings, so acceptance is far from guaranteed.

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Scottish students fight poverty

Defend Clause Four

Defend Socialism!



Glasgow students are organising a demonstration to highlight student poverty on Wednesday 26 October. The University of Strathclyde Students' Association explain why they have launched a campaign against student poverty:

STUDENT POVERTY is a real and pressing issue for the hundreds of thousands of students in further and higher education.

Not only does it affect those who go without proper food, accommodation, clothing and heat, it also affects those who are effectively denied the right to an education. In years gone by it was perfectly reasonable for individuals to undertake a course in the hope of one day getting a degree. It was assured that if they studied they would get decent benefits and grants, people had the right to work to change their lives and futures.

Now it is impossible to claim benefits, the grant is worthless, and the student loans scheme means many years of debt, even after earning a qualification. The problems students face are often the same ones that confront many other people. Like pensioners and single parents, students are now amongst the poorest in society, with full grants of only £1,970 for a full year to pay for rent, clothes, food, books and equipment.

The government are cutting this again, by another 20% over the next two years. Students starting this year can expect debts of around £8,000 by the time they finish their studies.

It is time to fight. We must all stand together and beat the government to ensure that every school-kid and every worker will have the right to a decent education and decent standard of living.

A rthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers, calls for a campaign to defend Clause Four of the Labour Party constitution, which Tony Blair wants to abolish.

"THAT WAS a declaration of war by Tony Blair on Tuesday [4 October]. They talk about destroying the one thing which distinguishes this party from all others. It is the cornerstone of the Party and its socialist faith. We may be a broad church but there is no room for non-believers. Clause Four is the basis of what the Party stands for. Margaret Thatcher declared that it was her intention to wipe socialism off the agenda of British politics. That speech was a step along the same road. It was an insult not only to the Party Constitution but to the Conference itself.

"The campaign to defend socialism should start 'yesterday'. This is the fight for the soul of the Party. I appeal to everyone to agree to

— Activists Meeting —
Defend Clause Four Campaign
Saturday 12 November
London
Phone 071-639 7965 for venue

work together in a campaign — we need rallies and meetings in every city and town. Defend Clause Four, Defend Socialism."

What you can do:

- Move a motion in your Labour Party and/or trade union re-affirming support for Clause Four. In your union call for opposition to any constitutional changes until they have been discussed at your union conference. To do otherwise, in

many unions, would place the union leadership in breach of their own constitution which affirms support for the aims and objectives of the Labour Party.

- Build up local activity in support of Clause Four. Hold town and regional rallies with Socialist Campaign Group MPs, union activists and people from local community campaigns so as to link Defence of Clause Four to the question of what policies a Labour government will carry out on the minimum wage, universal benefits, full employment, trade union rights and the NHS.
- Recruit people to the Labour Party to fight for socialist policies.
- Send a delegation from your union branch, Labour Party or local campaign group to the Defend Clause Four campaign meeting in central London on 12 November.

Support education for all

Wednesday 26 October

Assemble 10.30am, Blythswood Square

Rally 11.30am, George Square, Glasgow

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Demonstrate! Stop the Grant Cuts

Newcastle

Wednesday 26 October

Rally 2pm, University of Northumbria Quad

March 3pm, Rally at Newcastle University

Lancaster

Wednesday 19 October

1pm St Martin's College for march and rally

Speakers from NUS, AUT and RMT

Contact: Cumbria and Lancashire Area
NUS Tel: 0524 65201 Ext.2210
Left Unity fringe meeting after the rally