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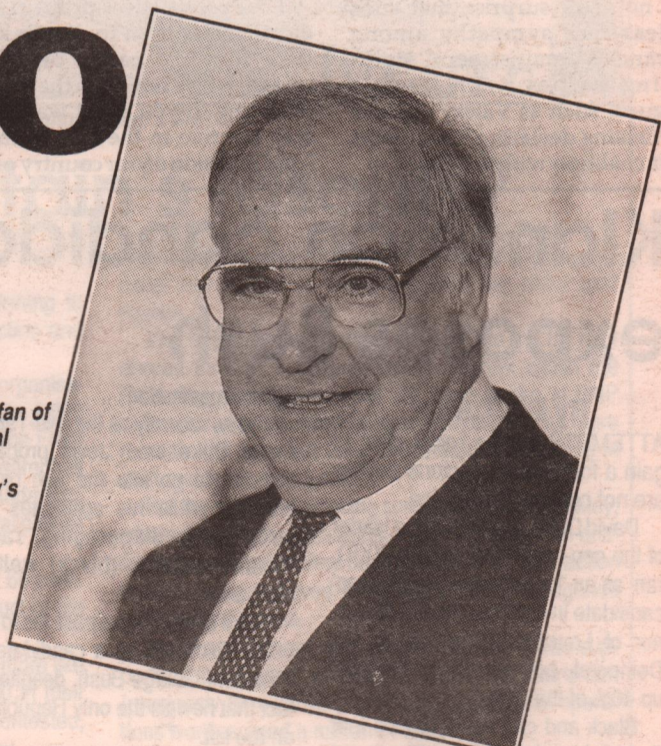
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# socialist **OUTLOOK**



PHOTO: John Harris

# Say NO to bosses' Europe!



Leading fan of  
the Social  
Charter:  
Germany's  
Kohl

DESPITE HOURS of media coverage and acres of newsprint devoted to it, the issue of European union and the Maastricht summit still leave most British workers cold.

Many feel, correctly, that they are being offered no real choice at all. Neil Kinnock's right wing Labour team is vying with John Major's faction of Tories and Paddy Ashdown's Liberal Democrats in their effort to appear the most enthusiastic supporters of European 'unity'.

This leaves the opposition under the domination of 'little Englander' Thatcherite Tories, whose main objection to a more integrated EC is that it concedes too much in the way of welfare benefits and rights to the working class.

Socialists object to the Maastricht proposals from a very different point of view. We can see the reactionary character of the 'united Europe' being pieced together by right wing governments in smoke-filled rooms, the Europe of Kohl and Major:

■ A CAPITALIST Europe, in which already almost 20 million are unemployed, and 44 million people have an income less than half the average of their country;

■ An IMPERIALIST Europe, forging 'unity' between capitalists in preparation for trade war against the USA and Japan, while feeding off the misery, cheap labour and raw materials of the Third World;

■ A RACIST Europe, tightening a web of immigration laws to increase discrimination against blacks and ethnic minorities, as we can see from Kenneth Baker's reactionary Asylum Bill (See Page 15).

Against those who seek unity with Europe's bankers under the fig-leaf of the powerless Social Charter, socialists call for a fighting unity of the European working class against capitalists and their governments.

Against the warlike unity of bosses in the looming trade war, we call for a united socialist states of Europe.

ANALYSIS, see centre pages.

# Thousands march against fascism

By Pete McDonald

ANTI-FASCISTS marched through the East End of London on Remembrance day to protest against the rise of racist attacks and the danger of the growth of fascism. It was the largest such demonstration for some time. Even the police estimated 4,000.

The demonstration included a large number of left wing organisations. The local labour movement was also well represented. Marchers were confident, despite police attempts to stamp out protest. There were few arrests, showing the importance of experienced stewarding.

Most encouraging was the turn-out of a large number of the Asian community to watch the demonstration and show support.

The demonstration was a step forward for anti-fascists, but the left should learn from the past – a united campaign is needed.

PHOTO: David Hoffman



## French fascist visits Britain

# Racism poisons left and greens

By Patrick Baker

JEAN MARIE Le Pen, French fascist leader, is coming to Britain, invited by the far right grouplet 'Western Goals'.

Le Pen, whose ideas are now shared by a third of French people, according to recent polls, looks likely to win the seat for Nice in regional elections in March.

The French fascists have been taking advantage of cross-party support for immigration controls to popularise their ideas. It is no great surprise that such ideas find sympathy among France's 'mainstream' right-wing parties, with leading figures such as Valery Giscard d'Estaing declaring his support for coalition with the Front.

But now the racists' ideas are eating away at the margins of the left and the greens. Over 20% of green supporters and one in six communists apparently agree 'with the ideas defended by Jean Marie Le Pen'.

As for the Socialist party, president Edith Cresson declared on July 8 that her government was ready to begin a policy of mass expulsions 'sending people back to their countries as soon as the law has established that they have no right to be here'.

The Front's latest propaganda tactic has been to distribute fake identity cards on the streets, with a notice on the back declaring 'If you don't want to stay inactive in the face of the legal invasion of our country or-

ganised by the socialists, contact the Front National.'

But not every political current has been seduced by Le Pen's propaganda. A coalition of anti-racist groups including SOS-Racisme have started to organise for a mass demonstration in Paris for 'Equal Rights for All'.

The demonstration, backed by a number of immigrant and political groups, is to call for a real right to asylum, to housing and social security, and an end to racist abuses of the law. It will pose a right to citizenship and a right to vote as an alternative to the current expulsions and hounding of immigrants.

Efforts are now being made to launch a broad coalition in Britain to oppose Le Pen's visit. A number of Euro-MPs, anti-

racist groups and the National Union of Students have issued an initial appeal.

Le Pen has been invited for a meeting of the 'Group of the European Right' – the fascist group in the European Parliament – between the 4th and 6th of December. Similar plans for a mass demonstration were made when Le Pen was invited

to a fringe meeting at the 1987 Tory conference. The result was that he didn't show up.

It is vital that the labour movement in Britain shows that Le Pen and his ideas are not welcome here.

Contact: Ad-Hoc Committee to Stop Le Pen's Visit, PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7. Tel: 071 277 0817

## Klansman candidate exposes Bush

By Bill Turner

ATTEMPTS by the racist right to gain a foothold in electoral politics are not confined to Europe.

David Duke, until recently a leader of the neo-nazi Ku Klux Klan (KKK), ran as an 'Independent Republican' candidate in elections for the Governor of Louisiana. Duke lost to the Democrat, but nonetheless picked up 40% of the vote.

Black and civil rights groups fear that his brand of racist politics is not confined to the Louisiana backwoods, and could run rampant through many US states. There is even speculation that despite losing the election, Duke might run against George Bush in next year's Presidential race.

Though Duke has disowned his fascist past, claiming that it was 'a youthful indiscretion', his links with the far right remain close.

Duke's campaign office was next door to the HQ of the 'National Association for the Advancement of White People', once run by Duke. He claims that the NAAWP is a 'civil

rights organisation'.

But as recently as the mid-1980s, David Duke said 'Jews probably deserve to go into the ash bin of history', while his speeches are larded with disparaging, racist remarks against (black) welfare claimants.

Duke's violent nazi past led to him being disowned as a candidate by President George Bush, despite the fact that he was the only Republican on the list.

But the fact that many of the ideas he preaches – opposition to positive action for black people and unemployment benefit – have been espoused by Bush himself, means that Duke was able to gain 'respectability' in many voters' eyes.

Anthony Lewis, a columnist for the *New York Times*, points out that Duke employs 'the same rhetoric ... used by President Bush and his people. It can be – and often is – a genteel code to evoke anti-black feelings.'

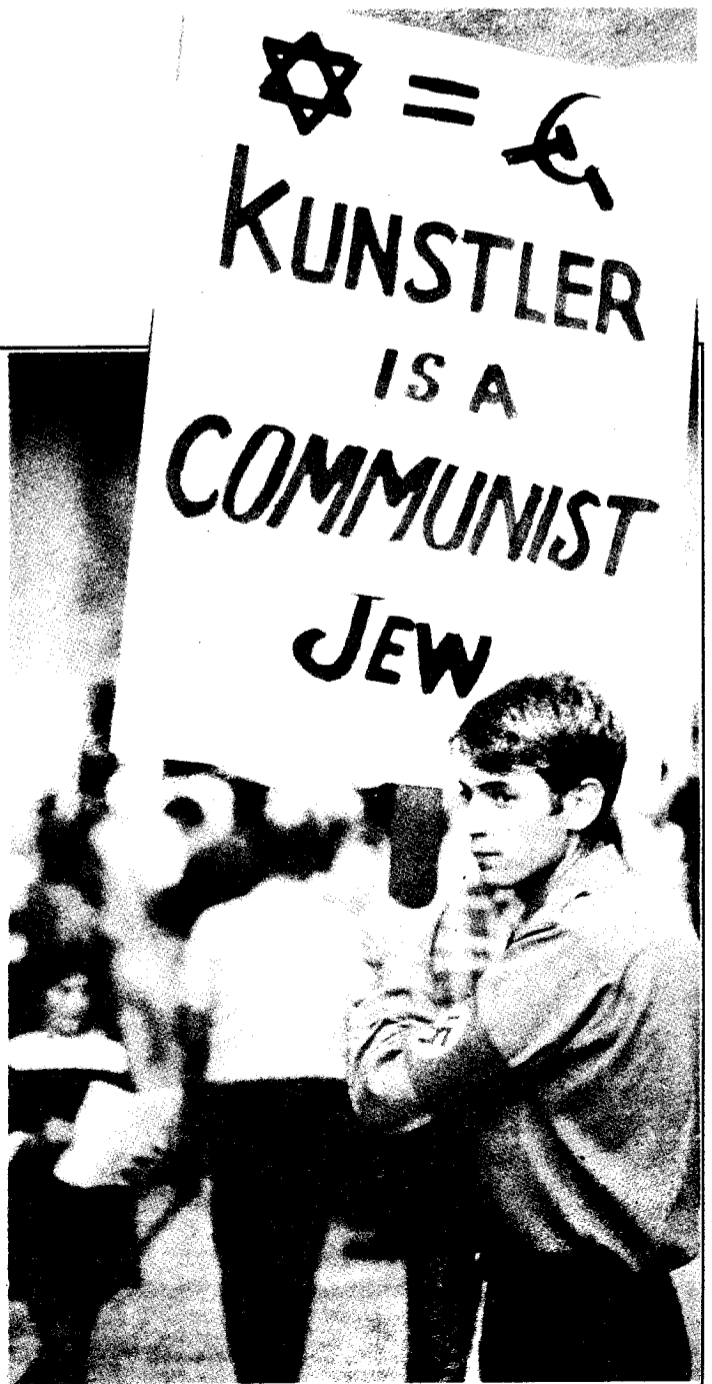
As with the Front National in France, the ideas of fascism are

gaining a new 'respectability' in US politics. Though the fascists have no mass party in the USA, their ideas are being increasingly espoused by the Republican right, much as they were in Thatcher's Tory party.

A coalition of forces opposed not just to the imagery of nazism, but the racist ideas underlying it, needs to be built to destroy this respectability once and for all. In Louisiana, anti-fascists in the 'Louisiana Coalition Against Racism and Nazism' have tried to expose the lies used in Duke's campaign.

A broad alliance, involving anti-racists, trade unionists and others is what is necessary to prevent the slide of US politics towards the racist ideas of David Duke.

Until the USA has a party based on its union movement that can represent workers' interests, the job of fighting racism will be an uphill battle.



# A new upsurge of fascism?

By Phil Hearse and Dave Packer

AT THE NEXT general election the British National Party and the National Front will put up more than 20 candidates. Isolated for more than a decade, the fascists are making a comeback. Why?

During the Thatcher years, the right wing leadership of the Tory party squeezed the space for the authoritarian right wing. With Thatcher and Tebbit at the helm, bashing the unions, bashing the blacks and bashing foreigners was a central government preoccupation.

Ultra-nationalism, wrapped in the union jack, was paraded in the Malvinas war. All the reactionary forces in society rallied round Thatcher.

But the catastrophe of the poll tax changed all that. Growing Tory unpopularity pushed Thatcher out. Under John Major, the right wing rhetoric has had to be toned down, if the Tories are to have any chance in the general election.

But 12 years of Tory rule have led to big social changes which give the fascists new openings. A new social base for fascist ideas and movements is being created. Who are the people the BNP could win support from?

All the opinion polls show the most consistently reactionary layer in society is the 'traditional' petty bourgeoisie - shopkeepers and owners of small businesses of all kinds. These people have been hard hit during the recession which followed the 'Lawson boom' of the mid-1980s.

During the boom years, personal consumption among the middle class rocketed. Tens of thousands of small businesses came into existence to meet the demand for personal services and consumer goods. Lawson relaunched the

economy after 1986 on a sea of credit; many of the small businesses borrowed heavily to get going and survive.

Now tens of thousands go bankrupt each year. Among these people, hatred of the banks, and hatred of big supermarkets is rampant. They are a fertile breeding ground for racist and reactionary ideas.

But the fascist shock troops come from a different part of society. Thatcherism has created a more unequal society than at any time since the 1890s. Mass and long-term unemployment creates inner-city areas of desperate poverty, the kind of areas which exploded in the late summer riots.

Unemployed youth and the new 'underclass' of paupers is another fertile ground for the emergence of fascism. It links into poorer sections of the employed white working class who are deeply imbued with racism.

Both the bankrupt petty bourgeoisie and the pauperised underclass share one thing - resentment of the system, without strong connections to the labour movement. The unions have refused to organise the unemployed, a massive strategic failure. Many young people have no experience of the labour movement at all.

The bankrupt petty bourgeoisie feel no affinity for the labour movement. Only a strong and confident working class movement, making advances and with a clear programme for reconstituting society - including cheap credit for small businesses - could win them over.

Thus the creation of a new base for the fascists is above all a punishment of the official labour movement for its failures. None of the more desperate sections of society see any future in Kinnockism or

new realism. It is above all the defeats of key workers' struggles like the miners' strike and the Wapping dispute which gives the fascists their opening.

A new twist to this situation is given by the gradual emergence of a united capitalist Europe. In many European countries we are seeing the emergence of an 'anti-federalist' right.

Thus in Britain, as British capitalism goes more and more into crisis, the ideological basis is created for hostility to 'foreigners' interfering in 'our' business. Under Thatcher anti-Europeanism was effectively channelled by the government. Now this is much less certain.

Many liberals and certain democrats see fascism as a nuisance, but basically unimportant. A growth of fascists or unfortunates may lead to a few unfortunate consequences, like a stepping up of racist attacks, but this is seen as something



PHOTO: David Hoffmann

that can easily be solved by extra police vigilance.

Such views are light-minded and short-sighted. The growth of Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National in France shows why. Le Pen's movement has become a semi-permanent factor in French politics. The Front National is likely to be the largest right-wing party in next year's elections.

The days when fascism in Europe was a movement of a few disturbed people who held parties on Hitler's birthday are gone. They are gone because of the prolonged capitalist crisis which has existed for more than 20 years.

Clearly the left must turn to anti-fascist mobilisation. The

widest possible anti-fascist unity in action is needed. This has to involve full support for the self-defence of the black communities.

But anti-fascist mobilisation is not nearly enough to deal with the scope of the problem. The far right will be effectively fought when the labour movement offers a clear and attractive alternative perspective for the most downtrodden in society.

Anti-fascism must always be linked to an alternative programme for reconstituting society. And that means building a revolutionary current in the labour movement.



PHOTO: David Hoffmann

Staging the largest of the fascist groups' rally - John Tyndall's BNP

## Who are Britain's fascists?

By Patrick Baker

THE SCENE on Britain's far right is beginning to change, with the National Front in rapid decline and the British National Party upping its profile.

The NF, the best known of Britain's fascist organisations, still outnumbers the rest. But despite its 4,000 paper members at the beginning of the year, the Front is in decline. Its real membership is probably nearer half the paper figure. Under the leadership of Ian Anderson, the organisation has decided to turn to electoral politics in a big way.

The original decision to stand in more than 60 seats in the coming elections appears to be a product of the far right's success on the continent.

But in reality, they are more likely to stand more like a dozen candidates. They did have £100,000 in their election kitty - but the ownership of this is contested, and other party funds have been frittered away.

They may have some cash in their coffers, but the NF have considerable problems. Not only have three of their executive recently been arrested, but also recent NF events have badly flopped.

Less than 100 turned up to their St. George's Day rally, despite it being held in their strongest area, and less than 200 turned out on Remembrance Sunday. The latter used to attract thousands in the 1970s. The publications - The Flag, Vanguard and Lionheart - appear only sporadically.

But the BNP, led by John Tyndall, has been attracting increasing numbers with its hard line and high public profile. Though smaller than the NF at 1,500 or so, the BNP has been using its international links to stage some of the largest fascist rallies in recent times.

It has been recruiting from the NF. It will probably

stand in around ten seats in the coming elections - and could win support in London, judging by some past figures.

The 'British Nationalists' are linked into the far right abroad through a Belgium-based network called the Odal ring. Top German and US nazis spoke at BNP rallies last year, attended by up to 600 people. But more recently, the party has been concentrating on activity in east and south east London.

But the party is now facing some difficulties in Bexley, where it has its headquarters. After pressure from anti-fascists, local councillors have threatened to take action to have them removed if any more BNP propaganda appears in the area.

Blood and Honour, with around 1600 skinhead supporters, are based around the band The Klansmen (previously Skrewdriver), and have commercial operations worth around a million pounds.

The British Movement, a secretive operation run on the basis of false addresses and cells, numbers a few hundred. The undercover nature of the operation is perhaps explained by their members' liking for guns, not to mention armed robbery.

Other British fascist groups include the KKK, numbering around 400; two groups called The Third Way, each with 50-odd members (one of whom is Patrick Harrington); the League of St George, led by Keith Thompson, which has apparently gone rather downhill from its original millionaire membership; and a couple of hundred Friends of Mosley, largely ageing blackshirts led by John Warburton from Hackney.

● Much of this information is from *Searchlight* magazine, £12 a year from 37b New Cavendish Street, London W1M8JR

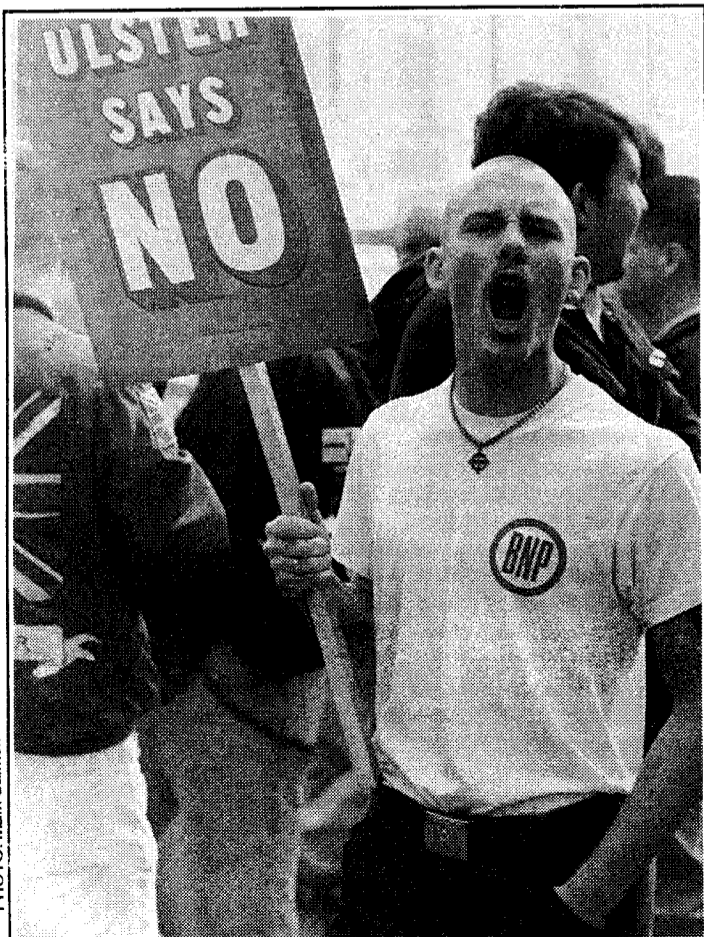


PHOTO: Mark Salmon

Birmingham fascists cash in on anti-Republican backlash

# Tories' housing scheme madness

by Phil Hearse

ONE of the most infuriating things about the collapse of the command economies in the east is the common presumption that capitalism is the most rational system. But if you are one of those people who clings to the 'old-fashioned' view that capitalism is crazy, then recent news can only have confirmed your views.

Local authorities are to take over the houses of people evicted for not paying their mortgages, and house the homeless in them. Can anyone have thought of a more perfect demonstration of the view that capitalism is nuts?

Home repossessions could go as high as 100,000 this year. On the surface of things this seems illogical; mortgage rates have gone down progressive-

ly. The reason of course is the rise in unemployment.

Once Thatcherism launched its all-out offensive against the public housing sector, home ownership became the only viable way to get a roof over your head for millions of people.

But as a result unemployment often means you lose your home.

There is another factor. In the 1980s credit was plentiful and bank profits were high. Now, with people struggling to pay their accumulated debts, banks' profits are down and the banks are getting mean. Robert Maxwell could get away with £3.5 billion debts, but ordinary punters are getting screwed by the banks if they let their payments slip.

Why has the government decided to let these homes to the homeless? Mainly to get the building societies off the hook.

Empty and unprofitable housing stock will now be oc-

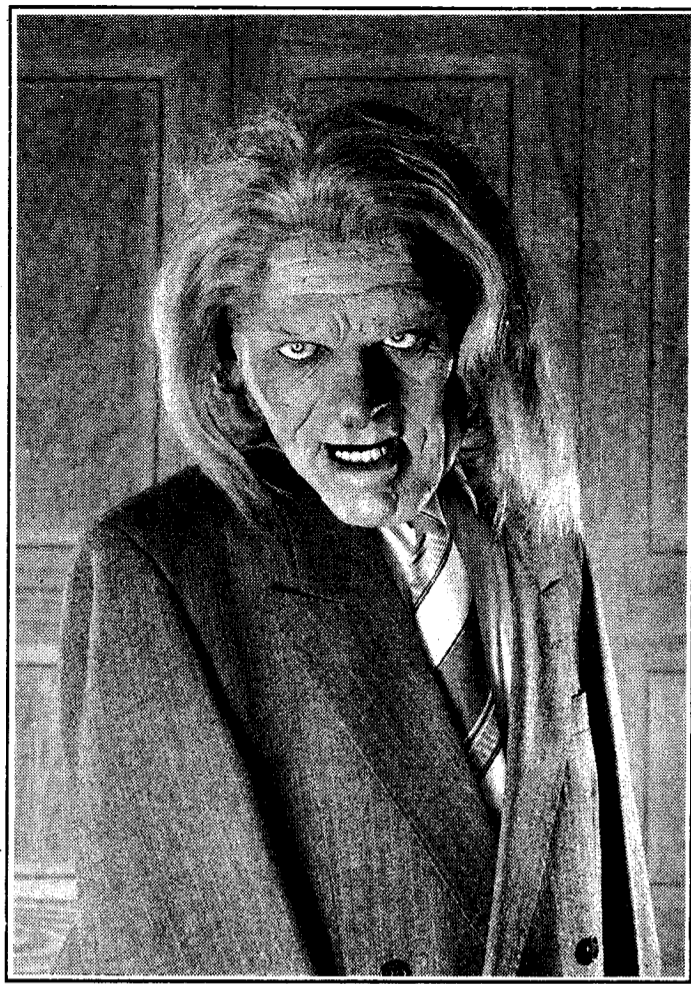
cupied, and paid for by local authorities.

Poll tax payers are asked to pay for a system which is incapable of solving the basic problem of housing.

● Meanwhile figures from Michael Heseltine's Department of Environment show that council rents are forecast to rise by up to 20 per cent or even more in many areas, with the higher increases falling in the south.

These increases come as a way of reducing government spending at the expense of working class tenants.

● Another piece of capitalist craziness: In the autumn budget the Chancellor allocated an extra £4.5 billion to social security, mainly because of the rise in unemployment. A rational social system would utilise resources to give people productive work. But not capitalism.



# Tories turn on squatters

By Sam Inman

IN THEIR latest search for a convenient scapegoat, the Tories have announced proposals for legislation aimed at curbing squatting.

Former press officer for Thatcher, Bernard Ingham - now employed by Westminster council - says that this is a basic issue of defending private property.

There are now around 50,000 squatted homes in Britain, some 30,000 in London alone. Virtually all are squatted because for many people, it's a choice between that or the streets.

The vast majority of squatted properties are owned by councils or housing associations. Very few are actually privately-owned residential homes. So the Tory-perpetrated myth of owners returning from holidays to find their homes occupied by dirty, drug-using youths is a million miles from reality.

Squatting is not a choice of lifestyle. It is a symptom of the criminal neglect of public housing that has taken place over the last decade. Nobody in their

right mind would actually freely choose to live somewhere with the threat of almost immediate eviction hanging over their head.

Both Tory and Labour councils in London have been vigorously evicting squatters for some time.

If anyone has any doubt that this leads to homelessness, then they only have to look at the figures in Labour-controlled Southwark council.

After a massive purge against squatters in this borough, the number of homeless people went up by exactly the same figure.

Socialists should not need any convincing that a mass campaign is necessary to kill this new anti-squatting bill. Within this, cheap, affordable, public housing has got to be demanded.

The Labour Party leadership has made much of the crime of homelessness, on a par with what they've said about the NHS. Now is the time to build a labour movement campaign to do something about it.



# SWP conference - a little less than honest

by Dave Osler

DISCUSSION at the Socialist Workers Party's recent annual conference centred on the notion of a prevailing 'vacuum on the left'. But does the organisation have the politics that can fill it?

The claim is that Stalinism, the Labour left and Militant can all be written off, leaving the SWP as the only organised force to the left of Kinnoch.

With the collapse of the competition, the theory runs, the SWP can both grow sharply and politically dominate all the activists it cannot - as yet - recruit.

There was a token nod to modesty in a speech by party leader Tony Cliff, who admitted 'Our 6,000 members alone are not enough to make a decisive difference'. But if a fighting periphery of just 10,000 can be built, he argued, 'we can be a decisive factor'.

The schema neatly leapfrogs such outdated and inconvenient concepts as building a mass party or consistent united front work. The SWP is not politically equipped to undertake either. Instead, it plans a go-it-alone stab at winning real influence, real soon.

In practice, the organisation still has to resort to misrepresentation in its attempts to draw wider layers around it. Hundreds of disillusioned former Labour activists were recently persuaded to sign an SWP-circulated open letter, condemning Kinnoch and demanding the formation of 'an independent socialist alternative to Labour'.

The deliberately ambiguous wording did not mention the party by name once, purposefully implying a call for exactly the sort of new broad left grouping ruled out by the 'vacuum on the left' posture. But then a more honest 'leave Labour - join the SWP' declaration would have attracted rather fewer signatories.

Any apparent vacuum in British politics results from the imminence of a general election. The present quiescence of the labour movement could rapidly shatter, especially after a Labour victory.

Stalinism and Bennism are both currently down, but they're certainly not out. 1992 could see significant regroupments around the CPGB's 'Democratic Left' project and/or the Socialist Movement.

Militant, even after the forthcoming likely split, will still be at least as strong as the SWP numerically, and

enjoy a qualitatively superior implantation in the working class. When it begins to work outside the Labour Party in Scotland, the SWP will soon notice the competition.

And while the Scottish National Party was not deemed worthy of a mention in the party's Anglocentric general perspectives document, it is now winning widespread working class support.

Dissident platforms appeared in pre-conference discussion bulletins for the first time since the mid-80s, calling for democracy inside the party and, in three separate instances, the adoption of a programme. Astonishingly for a revolutionary party, the SWP has managed without one since 1975.

Southampton members earlier this year circulated a call for the right to form permanent factions and a regular internal bulletin. A long-running external pro-democracy grouping is increasingly active and gaining members.

In response, the central committee has now abolished the standing national committee, the lay body which oversees it, on the grounds that it was 'largely irrelevant'. Democracy is obviously the vacuum in the SWP.

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## Women in the Unions

With the Women in the Unions Conference called on November 23rd by Women for Socialism and the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee, women now have an opportunity to re-build a movement for equal pay and conditions. Here CAROLYN SIKORSKI takes a look back at women's struggles in the past and at how we can use these lessons to move forward after the conference.

# Lessons from the past

UNLESS WE understand the roots of *how* women relate to the unions and *where* they're coming from, socialists are not going to get to grips with what is happening now – let alone understand what needs to be done.

There is a high level of ignorance about women and their relationship to the unions. But it is a history that can inspire, particularly in these demoralising days of a low level of class struggle.

In 1788 (before the 'Vindication of the Rights of Women' was even written), women spinners in Leicester fought zealously against their jobs being taken over by spinning mills. They organised riots of their 'menfolk' and formed their own union, called the 'Sisterhood'.

One of the most impressive examples of women's militancy comes from 1875 when women weavers in Dewsbury struck against a pay-cut. They formed an all-women strike committee and addressed meetings of between 7000 and 9000 people.

The creativity that women can bring to industrial action was shown in the Birmingham chain-makers' strike of 1911. Here the women were striking around the issues of recognition and pay. The women addressed meetings and marched in chains – symbolising their enslavement.

Also in 1911, during the great transport strike, women in Docklands – wives, mothers and sisters of the dockers – who worked un-unionised in confectionary factories spontaneously walked out. They brought out women from other factories too.

21 factories were affected and meetings of 15,000 people were seen in Southwark Park. As a result of their action, workers in 18 of these factories won pay increases.

At every stage of the upturn of working class struggle in Britain women have been there, often in the forefront. But what of the history of attempts to *organise* women in the unions?

During the 1870s the Women's Trade Union League was set up. It was initially intended to organise women's unions.

Showing its liberal roots, the League was not initially in favour of strikes or other industrial action. But in time women's struggles were supported and the League was involved with the famous matchgirls' strike in 1888. It was this year that the TUC first passed a motion in support of equal pay.

The League led to the formation of the National Federation of Women Workers. The leadership's general approach was to get women into the unions so that strikes could be prevented by union mediation. In 1922 this disappeared – literally – into the General and Municipal Workers' Union.

A big reaction against women at work was now taking place. Throughout the 1920s many unions passed motions arguing that married women should not be allowed to work. But in several of the main unions there were women's sections, reserved places on executives and women's advisory committees.

How does this relate to the militancy of women?

The first general pattern that emerges is that *women organise*



Fighting their way to the forefront: women make up over 70 per cent of health unions

through action. Throughout the period already referred to, women are generally disorganised initially. They then join the unions or women's sections in large numbers. But then after the action recedes they largely disappear from union activity or even from the union itself.

The matchgirls' strike is a good example. They had a demonstration which did not get them anywhere. Annie Besant, a fabian journalist, wrote a series of articles revealing how appalling their conditions were. The result was that the women who had given her the information were sacked.

Most of the 3,000 matchgirls were young Irish women and many were homeworkers – making it difficult to organise them. They struck around the issue of victimisation and also took up the question of their working conditions.

Receiving much support, the women were reinstated and their conditions improved. They *did* set up their own union. But after the strike women drifted away and the union only lasted for 15 years.

A League survey of trade union organisers in 1900 showed the majority of men who answered were extremely negative in their attitudes to women in the unions. They said that women were apathetic and irrational(!).

Women were also not taking part in the 'management' of the unions. This was true even in the better unions.

While women organisers also responded negatively, they did point out that once involved in the union, women actually made better organisers and were often more committed. They often had more invested in the union, as they had to fight the attitude that women should

be subservient to men.

Throughout the 1800s the nature of church and state propaganda on the role of women – as homemaker, mother and wife – intensified.

This was accepted by the majority of women and men, particularly in the higher strata of the working class. It undermined the struggle for equal rights and equal pay.

Without equal pay, women became a pool of cheap labour, leading to the depression of men's wages and also providing a pool of scab labour. It exacerbated the view that women were taking 'men's jobs'. When men were thrown out of work, women tended to be employed because they were much cheaper.

The ideological offensive has to be understood in terms of creating this pool of cheap

labour, in dividing working people, rather than in terms of forcing women back into the home. It serves as a valuable lesson today.

The key issues that socialists have to address, and will undoubtedly be discussed at the conference, are: 1. How to involve women in the unions in such a way that they will stay involved; 2. How best to build and harness the militancy of women workers; 3. How to take forward the cross-union approach of the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee amongst women activists – maybe a women's sub-committee of the SMTUC needs to be formed.

Information for this article has been taken from Barbara Drake's book, 'Women in the Trade Unions', originally published by Labour Research in 19...

## After the conference

CLEARLY the long term aim of socialist feminists is to work out how the militancy of women can be fed successfully into the trade union movement. This is something both the unions and the left are presently missing out on.

Both the creative approach and the commitment that women bring to workers' struggles is desperately needed. There should also be a perspective of orientating the unions towards recruiting other women, particularly homeworkers and telesales workers.

The Women in the Unions conference, organised by Women for Socialism (WfS) and the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee (SMTUC), is likely to attract a small but important layer of women who are

active in their unions or who are in struggles taking place at present – such as women involved in the Camden social workers' strike and the Pergamon dispute.

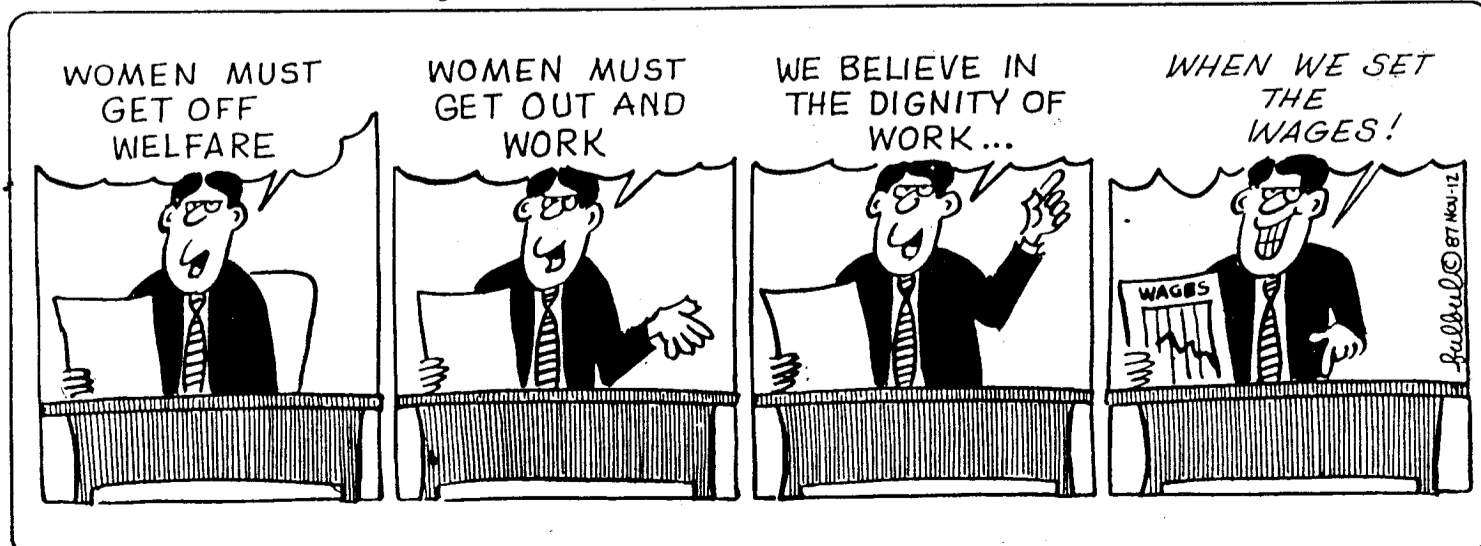
It has to be recognised that, particularly at the moment, it is difficult to reach wide layers of women trade unionists. What it may be possible to do from this conference is to start to build a network of women activists in the unions, in preparation for a bigger event in Autumn 1992.

Establishing a looser network would enable women to contribute ideas around what they would like from next year's event. It would also facilitate direct input of women's ideas into the SMTUC.

This is particularly important, given the low level of women's involvement to date, as women will have much to offer in terms of ideas for the organisation's 'Which way for socialists in the unions?' conference in July next year.

This conference will be looking at the new management offensive, new techniques for management and the fight against anti-union legislation – all of which affect women in specific ways.

The Women in the Unions conference could also launch some initiative around the issue of low pay, or at least help build up some head of steam around the issue.





Maxwell at the launch of one of his failed gambles: the London Daily News

## Unsolved riddles of Cap'n Bob's last voyage

By John Lister

ACCORDING to the tabloid press, Robert Maxwell spent his final few weeks as a reckless, hopeless gambler, squandering up to £1.5 million a night playing three casino tables simultaneously.

Though he never became the Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo, the crisis of his world-wide business empire, followed by his peculiar and suspicious demise off the Canary Islands could yet break some of the major banks and finance houses.

Like his fellow media mogul Rupert Murdoch, Maxwell was battling to save his ramshackle empire of publishing and printing interests against the ravages of a mountain of debts, variously estimated at £2.2 - £3 billion.

The complex web of interconnecting loans had become impossibly tangled, and as bankers and investors lost confidence, the value of shares in MCC, the key company, was falling fast. Among the casualties could be thousands of employees and pensioners from Mirror Group Newspapers, whose pension fund was hijacked by Maxwell as a handy source of cash, and is now dependent on MCC share values.

Maxwell's disappearance from the scene, leaving his two sons to

sort out the mess, seems to have

escalated the crisis. MCC shares have fallen another 60 per cent in value, and the race is now on to sell off sufficient assets to placate the banks before their notional value falls too low.

Meanwhile theories multiply on what actually happened on Maxwell's 15-foot yacht prior to the tycoon's unexpected final swim.

Everything has been suggested, from a duff plate of clams leading to him leaning too far over the side of the boat through to murder most foul or suicide.

As in *Murder on the Orient Express*, there is an almost infinite list of potential suspects, any or all of whom might have wanted Maxwell rubbed out.

New evidence even questions whether the bloated corpse winched out of the sea was Maxwell at all. Perhaps, some argue, he has staged a Reginald Perrin-style 'death' to cover a disappearance to some remote hideaway (possibly shared with Elvis and Shergar).

Incredibly, the first medical reports on the body described it as of 'athletic build' - hardly the obese Maxwell we all knew - and his dyed black hair was described as 'chestnut'. No dental check was allowed to positively identify the body, which was rushed to Israel and hastily buried before more questions could be asked.

Other evidence suggests a puncture mark - possibly from a hypodermic needle - and large discrepancies between the state of the body and the time Maxwell allegedly spent in the sea.

So was it the fat capitalist, or a lookalike? Was he pushed, did he jump, or could it really have been an accident or natural causes? As with the Kennedy assassination (now running yet again) there is ample material here for endless films and recreations.

Among the candidates for potential assassins, the Zionist intelligence agency Mossad is the most frequently mentioned: Maxwell had been embroiled in a scandal involving links with Mossad in the weeks before his death.

However Mossad must surely fear that in trying to bail out the disintegrating commercial empire Maxwell built, his sons might unwittingly uncover highly sensitive and embarrassing information.

One thing is clear: the resources needed to carry out the killing in secrecy would have been well outside the scope of any of Maxwell's main opponents in Britain - the thousands of print workers whose jobs he axed, and the 23 journalists he sacked at Pergamon Press 30 months ago for staging an official 24-hour strike.

Unlike Murdoch, Maxwell carried out his attacks on jobs and conditions by manipulating the trade union leaders. In this respect it was an advantage to him to hang on to a notional affiliation to the Labour Party.

Over many years Maxwell was easily able to buy the support of Labour's right wing through occasional ostentatious donations and the patronage of his newspapers.

Neil Kinnock and his team, fearful that they might lose the backing of Maxwell's *Daily Mirror*, would have been the most ardent mourners of the dead capitalist - sending Gerald Kaufmann to Israel for the funeral.

At the end, as the bankers lost confidence and even the casinos got worried, perhaps the Labour leaders were the only real supporters Robert Maxwell had. Here, surely is a motive for suicide!



## No end to world capitalist slump

By Paul Clarke

WORLD capitalism has been in a deep recession since the late 1980s. Everywhere pro-capitalist pundits are looking for signs that the 'worst is over' and a new boom is round the corner. But the signs are going in the opposite direction.

In the last two weeks, news has been given of planned interest rate cuts in Japan and the United States, in an attempt to kick-start these economies into growth. These were not enough to prevent a mid-November stock market crash in Wall Street and Tokyo, generating fresh fears of a generalised crash.

Output in Japan has declined by about 2 per cent last year; finally it is conceded that even the powerful Japanese economy is in recession.

Japan's problems are compounded by the enormous sum it promised to help finance the Gulf war - about \$12 billion. A new tax has been levied to meet this cost.

Predictions during the Gulf war itself that the costs would severely damage the United States economy have not been borne out.

Rather, the US insisted that its most wealthy allies, especially Japan and Germany, pay huge sums towards the war. Japan especially relies on oil from the Gulf, and was compelled to oblige. So while the cost of the war did not hit the US so hard, it is still taking a toll in keeping the world economy in recession.

But for different reasons, the US economy is itself still in recession. This is the legacy of the 1980s debt-led boom, when Reagan instituted his massive rearmament programme, paid for by borrowing.

American borrowing accumulated a mountain of debt, making the US the world's biggest debtor. The eventual and inevitable result was government budget cutbacks, which helped propel the world economy into recession.

To continuing recession in the US and the new one in Japan, recession in Britain can be added to the list. The Tories' hopes of an economic boom before the election have faded fast.

This continued international recession creates an obvious danger. Attempts are being made to overcome it primarily through interest rate cuts, a new reliance on Keynesian money-management techniques.

But cheaper money could easily start inflation raging again. Inflation is at a very low ebb internationally. If it climbs again, 'stagflation', slump plus inflation will be the obvious result.

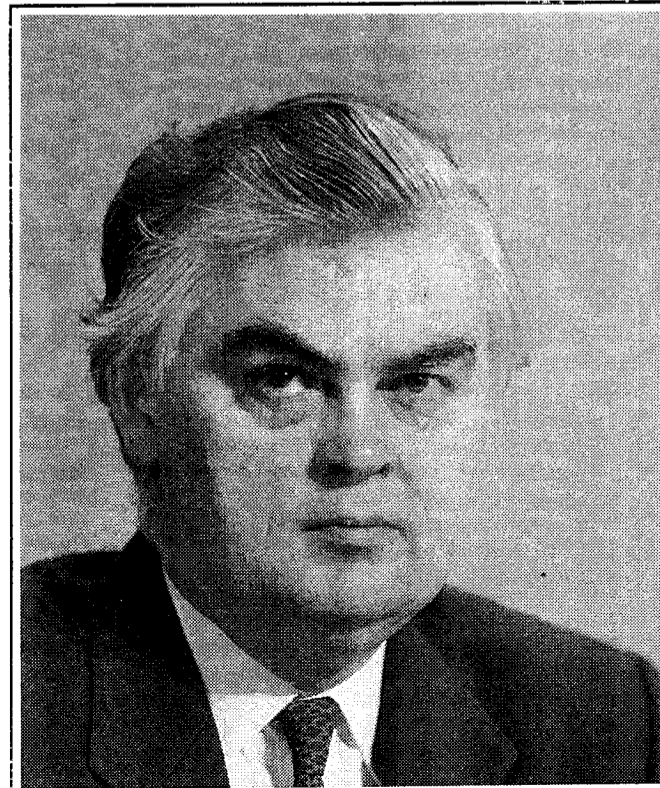
The emergence of a recession in Japan gives new clues about where we are in the long cycle of capitalist recession.

The first signs of a major recession in world capitalism emerged in the late 1960s. The oil crisis in 1973 led directly to the 1974-5 world recession. A temporary and hesitant upturn after 1976 turned into a new slump from 1979 - which continued until about 1982.

Then Reagan's military Keynesianism intervened, dragging the world capitalist economy into a speculative boom - the yuppie years. Now this has gone into a new slump from which the way out is not clear.

The history of the last 20 years shows that world capitalism is locked into a 'long wave' of recession, a deep-rooted crisis of profitability, which expresses one of capitalism's most fundamental characteristics - the tendency for the rate of profit to fall.

Restoring the rate of profits means a much deeper restructuring of the world economy, requiring much bigger defeats on the working class, than have occurred so far.



Still waiting for the upturn: Norman Lamont

# South African socialist on tour

## A fighting alliance against apartheid

SALIM VALLY, a leading militant of the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA), is currently on a speaking tour in Britain. Vally is a trade union activist from Johannesburg. He spoke to Patrick Baker from *Socialist Outlook* at the start of his tour.

### How did you get involved in the labour movement?

I joined SACCAWU, the commercial and catering union, six years ago when it was called CCAWUSA. It merged with other unions and changed its name.

I worked as an education officer for the Johannesburg branch, by far the biggest in the union - SACCAWU has 100,000 members and the Jo'burg branch is close to 45,000 strong.

The union has always been militant, since its inception in the late 1970s. Over the last few years we have led more strikes than any other union. Our guiding slogan is 'Unity, democracy and socialism'. It is a result of struggle within the union, and with the bosses and the state.

During the state of emergency in 1984 and '86, the union went on strike - not against any particular boss, but the state. That earned us a militant reputation, concerned not just with bread and butter issues, but also social and political issues.

### The recent general strike was widely reported in the West as the biggest ever. What was its real significance?

It showed the fighting spirit of the oppressed, despite the repression and attempts to co-opt the struggle.

At the July COSATU congress, SACCAWU and the Transport and General Workers proposed a resolution on mass action. This was because of the offensive against the working class - there is the Inkatha violence; and the severe retrenchment faced by the workers and the introduction of value added tax (VAT).

We linked this struggle to the call for the resignation of the regime and the convening of a constituent assembly. The COSATU congress agreed. The congress said 'If we don't get our demands within a month,



WOSA members demonstrate in Natal (above) others read their newspaper



we'll go on a general strike.'

We spelt out what this meant - factory occupations, sit-ins, sleep-ins, occupation. This is important, because we had stay-aways before which were not effective. They weren't effective because once people go home, they don't spend their time in political activity.

This would have been a real test of strength. It would put the question of power and workers

control on the agenda. But the union bureaucracy changed the call for a general strike to a two day stay-away, and negotiations over VAT. But the congress said 'The regime is illegitimate - it has no right to impose any taxation. Scrap VAT.'

The bureaucracy ignored all the other demands agreed by the congress. So while the action was significant - it was followed by 80 per cent of the working class, about 3.5 million workers - it was limited. The leadership reduced the action to a negotiating ploy to pressurise the regime, instead of allowing it to develop.

Despite this criticism, WOSA was involved from the outset. We were involved in all the committees and were a leading force in the demonstrations that preceded the general action. A number of our members were arrested in the actions before the strike as well as during it.

### The massive response to the strike conflicts with the picture in the West of the pillars of apartheid crumbling and democracy being a matter of negotiation. What is the real situation of the working class?

There is a concerted offensive against the workers. The reform strategy is nothing new - it predates De Klerk's 1990 speech. Botha had a strategy of reform and repression, and De Klerk has continued and extended this.

The masses are more im-

answered their problems. But the majority still believe that it will deliver the goods - and it's the Congress alliance that is sowing these illusions.

If you look at the reforms, some of the laws - like the Group Areas Act and the Immorality Act - have been lifted. But these benefit the black middle class, rather than the black workers, who are the vast majority. How many black people can now live in white areas? How many can buy land?

### You mentioned the role WOSA played in the general strike. But it's a relatively new organisation and not yet well known in the West.

WOSA was officially founded in April 1990, a few months after De Klerk's speech unbanning political organisations, allowing some space for socialist organisations.

WOSA came out of discussions between activists from a number of traditions. But its roots stretch back to the 1950s. Comrades in the 1950s and 60s were involved in the Unity Movement of South Africa. This layer of activists were driven into exile or jailed, like our chairperson Neville Alexander. He spent 10 years on Robben Island.

There was a trough in activity for about a decade after the Sharpeville massacre and the ANC and PAC were banned. The 1970s, with the rise of the black consciousness movement and from '73 the modern labour movement, and the uprising of '76 were formative years for

many of us. For a long time we were in other organisations or independent socialists. We were behind the creation of the National Forum. This regrouped the non-stalinist left in 1983-84.

Our experience in the National Forum - an attempt to build a united front - convinced us of the need for a distinct revolutionary current, clearly orientated to the black working class. We saw no separation between the struggle against national oppression and class exploitation, but rather as parts of one process towards workers' control of society.

That it is the axis around which WOSA was formed.

### WOSA has grown rapidly over the past year. What sectors has it based itself on?

Most importantly, WOSA has become implanted in the most revolutionary forces in society - the organised workers and the unemployed youth.

Our tendency comes from the Western Cape. Today the largest branch is in the PWV district in the Transvaal, where the working class is concentrated.

### What are the relations between WOSA and other organisations in the liberation movement?

We have tried to maintain positive relations. One of our principles has always been to try and organise a united front of the oppressed and exploited. We have involved ourselves in many united front activities, even when those involved were very hostile.

Recently the Patriotic Front was formed - but it has serious problems. Such a front should be a fighting alliance. It should have a programme of action, based on the concrete problems of the workers, working towards a democratic constituent assembly.

On a number of issues, we are close to the Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO) - we rejected negotiations with the regime and we believe that a united front can't include those working within a apartheid structures.

We have met with members and leaders of the South African Communist Party, the ANC, PAC and AZAPO. We also have many members of both union federations and emphasised building the mass structures, civic and trade union, which we believe must be independent.

### Hear the latest on South Africa!

Salim Vally, a member of the Workers' Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA), is in Britain for a tour sponsored by Socialist Outlook.

WOSA is a comparatively young organisation in South Africa, but has built itself a significant base in communities and townships, especially among the youth.

Vally's tour will be of interest to all those who want to find out more about the state of the liberation struggle, the political forces to the left of the leadership of the African National Congress. Provisional dates for the tour have been announced, venues will be announced soon. The dates are:

Birmingham	20 November
Manchester	21 November
Glasgow	24 November
Southall	28 November
Socialist Outlook rally	29 November

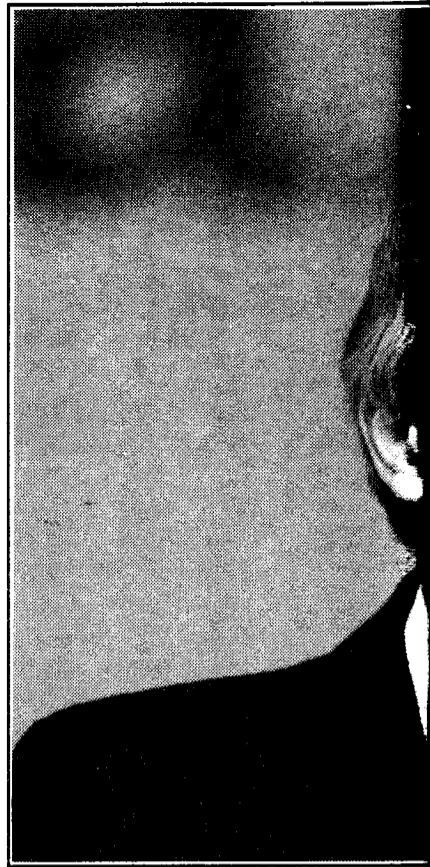
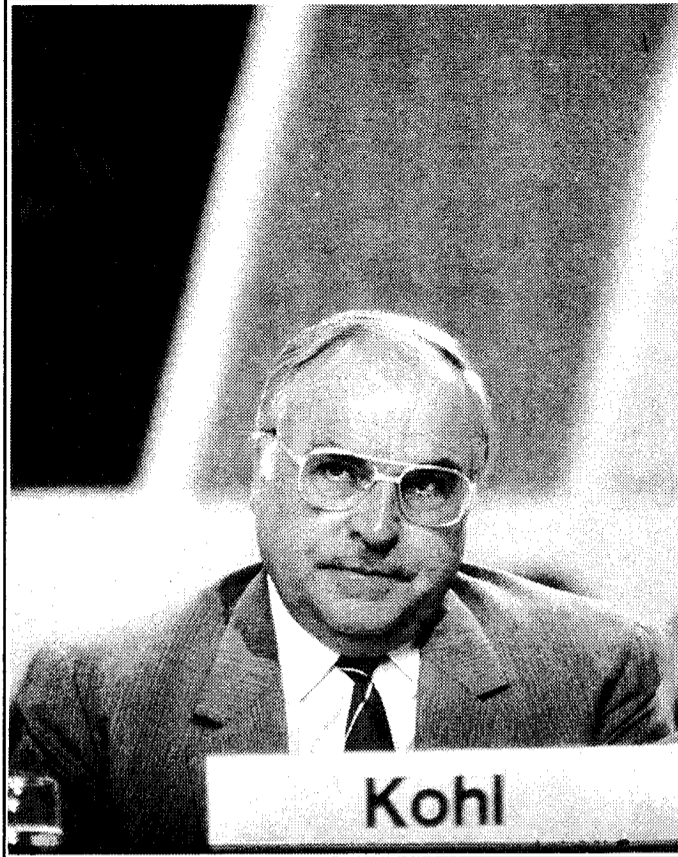
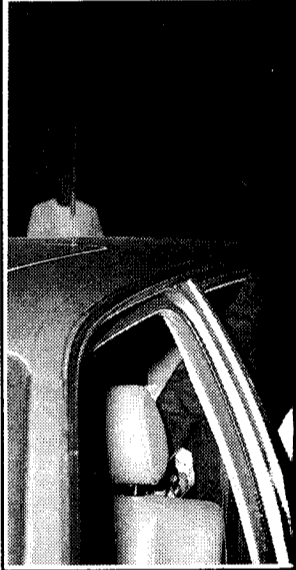


PHOTO: John Harris

Major under pressure from Kohl and Mitterrand (top) while Le Pen (left) and hard-right parties organise. Ridley (right) and Thatcher target Tory rank-and-file (above) using Jacques Delors (mid-right) as a hate figure



## Political union in Europe

# Playing for high stakes at

In December the much-heralded European summit takes place in the Dutch town of Maastricht. What is it really about, and what do the debates between the different European capitalist nations involve? OLIVER MACDONALD explains.

THE CENTRAL issue at Maastricht is that of 'political union'. This is not a project for a European super-state, but for a much tighter *alliance* of the European capitalist states to meet the economic challenge of Japan and the United States.

So far, the centrepiece of moves towards European economic unity has been monetary union, a single currency. But to really achieve monetary union, political union is also needed.

It's a matter of confidence. If banks and other institutions hold vast quantities of the future European currency, the Ecu, they will have to be sure that political union will hold and this currency will not collapse.

Even if there is agreement at Maastricht it does not mean that monetary and political union will be achieved; it will be more a statement of intent. Monetary and political union involves enormous upheavals.

For example, Italian capitalism runs an enormous debt and high inflation, which has been vital for financing the

patronage which maintains the Christian Democrats in power. After monetary union it will not be possible. It means a shuddering crisis of economic adjustment.

One of the biggest problems to be overcome is the world economic recession. If the American economy does not pick up, if there is a repeat of the 1981-2 recession, it could gravely harm economic and political integration.

In the last recession the customs union

**"If European integration was actually achieved at a time of economic crisis, then this would probably mean much more of a 'fortress Europe' at the economic level, with sharp trade wars against America and Japan."**

of the Common Market effectively broke down. France and Italy imposed customs duties on EEC goods in complete contravention of the Treaty of Rome, to defend their own economic interests. This could easily happen again.

If European integration was actually achieved at a time of economic crisis, then this would probably mean much more of a 'fortress Europe' at the economic level, with sharp trade wars against America and Japan.

Because it is easily the richest, the German government has the most options. If European political union turned out to be impossible, then Germany could go for the option of being pushed by the United States - effectively dissolving the EC into a broader free trade bloc with

EFTA and maybe some East European states, and joint US-German political dominance. So if the political union project collapsed, Germany at least would have other options.

But there would be overheads. Without political integration Germany, as the economically most powerful state, could be vulnerable to anti-Germanism in European politics - and this could open an opportunity to the Americans to reassert their influence in European

politics, playing one side against the other.

Political union means giving the appearance of democratic European institutions. But, of course, real power will lie with the different national governments.

The real push for stronger European political institutions, for more power for the European Parliament, comes from the German government. A more integrated Europe will be German-dominated and the power of German capital at the heart of Europe will be enormously strengthened. Weaker sections of capital will go to the wall.

In this situation it is very much in the interests of German capital to deflect discontent to Europe-wide institutions; and

to ensure that social demands become demands on European institutions and not protests against German wealth and dominance.

### Euro-militarism

Moving together in the most important realms of politics means moving together on military and security policies. This is what underlies the Franco-German proposal for a Euro-army.

The real debate on military policy and security co-operation concerns the future of NATO, which is dominated by the United States.

Monetary and political union implies that NATO domination is broken, and that European military and security policy decisions are made independently of the Americans. This involves both an independent command structure and defence industry. The proposal for a European military force is symbolic, because France is not in the NATO military structure.

The United States has a rhetoric of wanting a 'European pillar' for the Western military alliance, but of course in reality they are very much opposed to breaking the NATO structure, which would mean drastically reducing their influence.

For capitalist Europe a vital question now is whether it can impose its will in eastern Europe. What we have seen in Yugoslavia could be repeated in other military conflicts. This is being used as an argument for the necessity of a European 'peace-keeping' force.

If there is a big leap forward in





PHOTO: John Harris



# Maastricht

European capitalist integration, Britain cannot afford to stay out. British policy in the past has been to be fully involved in the EC as an economic zone, but to preserve its world political role through being America's loyal lieutenant in NATO. But political union would finish this kind of dual role.

## Britain's role

The Tory right, Thatcher, Ridley and friends want to maintain the old system. But it is unlikely that they can. There are other developments which are very threatening to the *Tory party* specifically, as opposed to the general interests of big capital in Britain.

Politics in Europe is dominated by Christian Democratic and social democratic corporatism, as opposed to the strong neo-liberal 'freemarketism' in Britain and the United States. Even if neo-liberalism is in reality strong in Europe, the ideological difference is very important. Tory ideology, with its commitment to strong nationalism, the ideology of 'Great Britain', is threatened by European political integration.

Also the Maastricht process threatens the Tories' social policies in the dispute over the 'social charter'.

What lies behind this is German opposition to what they call 'social dumping' - British goods, produced by cheaper labour with low welfare and social costs, undercutting German and other European goods. This campaign against 'social dumping' could end if there were a major relocation of German capital towards production in east

European enclaves. But for the moment German domestic industry is too profitable for that to develop rapidly.

## Neo-fascism

There is a real danger of the rise to power of the authoritarian right, particularly in France. This right differs in important respects from inter-war fascism. This doesn't mean that it is less dangerous, but in order to combat it we

**"The situation of the world economy in the advanced capitalist economies is a very dangerous one, with a possibility of a huge slump. If that happens, it will have a catastrophic impact in Europe. The labour movement could be massively thrown back, and the neo-fascist movements could gain in strength."**

have to know exactly what it is.

This authoritarian right, expressed in Le Pen's *Front National* in France, the *Vlaamsblok* in Belgium, by the Republicans and the German Peoples Union in Germany, the Freedom Party in Austria and by the far-right leagues in Italy, are not linked to pre-capitalist classes - as was pre-war fascism. It is not linked to small artisans and the old aristocracy. Thus it does not have the 'anti-capitalist' ideology of pre-war fascism.

All these parties seek to use the machinery of the liberal capitalist state, and are not calling for its overthrow. This political machinery, 'liberal democracy', can be used for very poisonous purposes. It reacts very violently to attempts by socialist forces

to take control of it and push it to the left. But it does not react to attempts by those who reject liberal-democratic values to take control.

The serious far right parties in Europe, unlike the skinhead gangs in Germany, are not plebeian in character. For example in France, where extreme rightism has always been a middle class phenomenon, the young technocratic political elite is going over to the FN. The new right intellectuals call themselves 'national liberals'.

There are strong affinities between some of the policies of these groupings and those of 1980s Thatcherism, which is sometimes obscured by their concentration on racist agitation. Meanwhile the old authentic fascist movement, led by the MSI in Italy, is in some crisis. Forces

like the FN embody 'popular capitalism', rather than what was, demagogically, the anti-capitalist ideology of Hitler or Mussolini. But there are many parallels between these organisations and fascism. They are extremely dangerous - much more so than the gangs of thugs who go round shouting 'Sieg Heil' in Germany.

The international orientation of these forces is not so clear. For example, the right wing of the US Republican Party is involved in financing the FN, which could lead Le Pen towards some form of pro-Americanism. On the other hand his movement embodies strong echoes of the Petain pro-German regime during the Second World War. We should never forget that Nazism was a rather success-

ful movement for European unity - under German domination, denouncing 'American plutocracy' and 'Judeo-Bolshevism'.

## Labour movement

The whole of the labour movement in Europe is reeling from the events in eastern Europe, which have destroyed the Communist parties. For example, the Italian Communist Party was one of the great bastions of the European labour movement, and this is in total collapse.

This crisis will be overcome - the question is how? The whole period of the 1980s has been very difficult for the labour movement to deal with. There have been huge restructuring attacks, high levels of unemployment, and the collapse of social democratic welfare Keynesianism. The social democrats have just aped the policies of the right.

The situation of the world economy in the advanced capitalist economies is a very dangerous one, with a possibility of a huge slump. If that happens, it will have a catastrophic impact in Europe. The labour movement could be massively thrown back, and the neo-fascist movements could gain in strength.

But at the same time it will lead to a search for alternative policies to beat the slump. Then the question will be whether the left will have a programmatically coherent platform for economic growth and social protection.

It is more and more obvious that we have to have a programme of demands posed at a European-wide level. The necessity for this is compounded by the potentially catastrophic situation in the Soviet Union. Privatisation would lead to the destruction of vast swathes of Soviet industry. The demand for aid for reconstruction in the Soviet Union, and not the utterly destructive policies of the IMF and the World Bank is an absolute necessity.

# Kaunda's downfall offers possibilities for socialists

By Bala Kumar

THE EXIT of Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's autocratic leader since 1964, in the recent elections makes him the most prominent of Africa's leaders to be defeated at the ballot box. His party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP), has been smashed, winning only 20 seats in the new 150-seat parliament.

Many socialists mistook Kaunda's support for national liberation struggles in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Mozambique, Angola and South Africa to be signs of a progressive regime. They were mistaken. Though he is a genuine anti-colonialist, he is rabidly anti-communist and was happy to do business with Western capital after independence.

In 1975-76 he intervened in Angola on the side of the South African and American-backed UNITA against the left-wing MPLA. In Rhodesia/Zimbabwe he supported the bourgeois nationalist ZAPU and destroyed the leftist ZANU's base in Zambia. The USA regarded Kaunda as a loyal ally in the region and attempted to support him recently by cancelling Zambia's \$250 million debt.

It was his mismanagement of the economy, IMF austerity measures and the allegations of corruption surrounding his family and close associates that led to Kaunda's downfall. Zambia is one of the world's largest debtor nations per head of population, owing £4.6 billion.

Twenty seven years after independence, 93% of the country's foreign exchange is earned by extraction of copper and cobalt. The mines were nationalised in 1974, coinciding with the collapse of world cop-



Victorious: Frederick Chiluba

per prices.

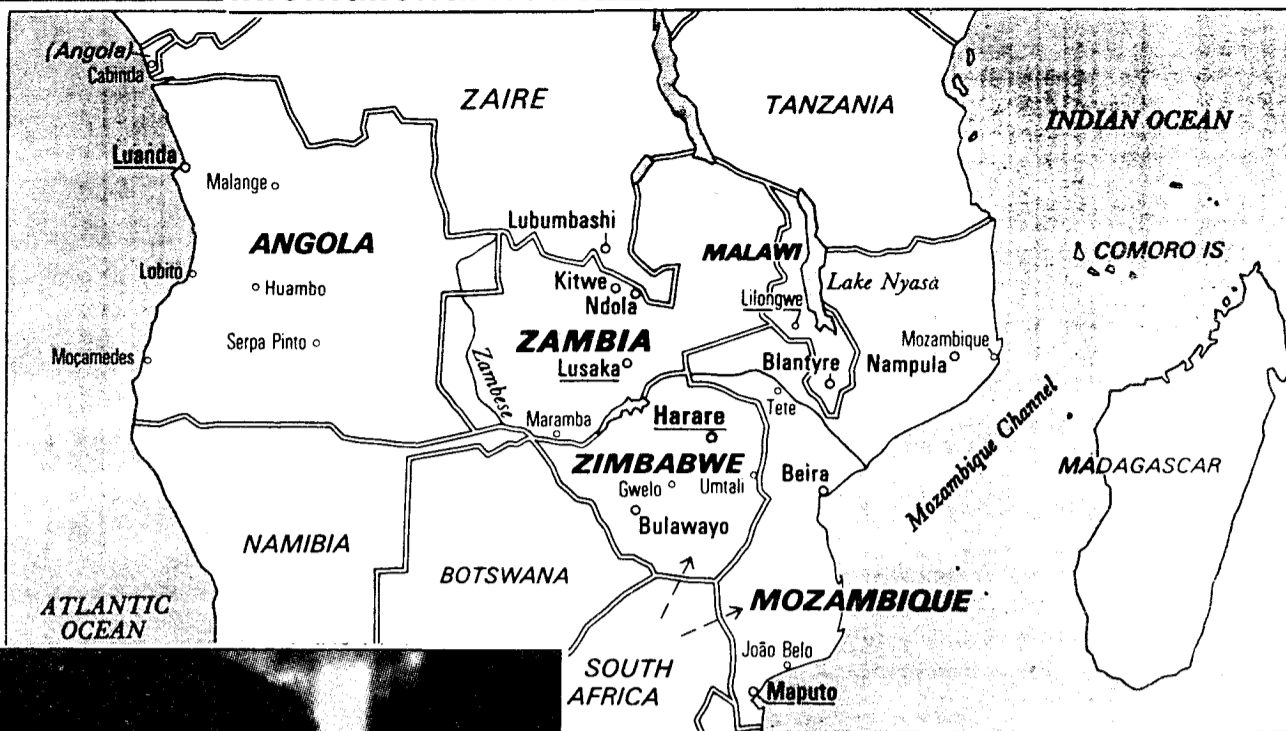
As a heavily urbanised country (60% of the population), the lifting of food subsidies in June 1990 hurt the poor. Food riots broke out and there was a short-lived coup led by a junior army officer. Though order was restored, a mass movement for political pluralism was born.

Popular pressure on Kaunda forced him to recognise the legality of the then-unofficial opposition coalition, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) and promise elections in 1991.

The new president, Frederick Chiluba, was leader of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, which represents 300,000 workers largely in the copper

belt. But his government includes businessmen and former cronies of Kaunda. He has promised to implement in full the austerity measures demanded by the IMF and has even raised the option of privatising the country's mines.

Such anti-working class policies will lead to significant splits in the MMD base after a short-lived honeymoon period. Meanwhile, conditions are better now than ever for independent working class organisation. Socialists in Zambia have an opportunity to intervene in the debates of the MMD and society as a whole. This offers the best chance to build a party of workers and peasants, representing the Zambian masses.



## Call for Lockerbie inquiry Hands off Libya!

By Bill Turner

Five years after the last US bombing of Libya, George Bush is once again sabre rattling against the Arab state. Under the pretext of bringing suspects for the Lockerbie bombing to justice, the US government is threatening unspecified action.

Given the length of time since the bombing occurred, it is clear that this has little to do with the new torrent of bellicose rhetoric. The 'new world order' and Bush's efforts to ensure US domination of the Middle East through the current 'peace conference' are the real background to the threats.

### Dark mutterings

Along with the dark mutterings about military action go appeals for an economic blockade from the G7 group of industrial nations and the European Community.

Not only is the USA thinking of a symbolic raid, aimed

at showing Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi who's in control, but also it's planning economic strangulation.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union as a superpower, Bush's agenda has been straightforward: to strangle all opposition. Whether through the economic blockade of Cuba or the Middle East 'peace conference', the US government is intent on imposing its will worldwide.

This is the meaning of the threats against Gaddafi's Libya. And this is what should determine the left's response. Whatever we may think of the Libyan leadership, if there is no opposition to Bush's attempts to play global cowboy, its power to intervene wherever US interests are threatened will be limitless.

The current campaign has nothing whatever to do with Lockerbie - and the left should say loud and clear 'Hands off Libya! No to the blockade!'

## UN no answer to Croatian crisis

THE WALLS of Dubrovnik are crumbling. The death toll among both Serbs and Croats is estimated at ten thousand, and could well be more.

At least one third of Croat industry is in ruins. And any solution to the conflict looks as far away as ever - despite the announcement of Lord Carrington's thirteenth attempted ceasefire.

Appeals for military intervention - from either the NATO, the EC or most likely the UN - are multiplying, inside and outside the beleaguered state. To many Croats, it must appear the only solution after so many failed agreements to end the massacre.

But these are not the forces

that will bring peace and independence for the Croats. Armed intervention from any of these bodies - even the 'neutral' UN - would add up to the end of any hope for real independence.

The UN showed its true colours during the Gulf war - the stars and stripes under a blue cover. A Croatia born through military intervention by the West would be a statelet controlled by the West, and would give legitimacy to the idea of these bodies storming into any European conflict, guns blazing.

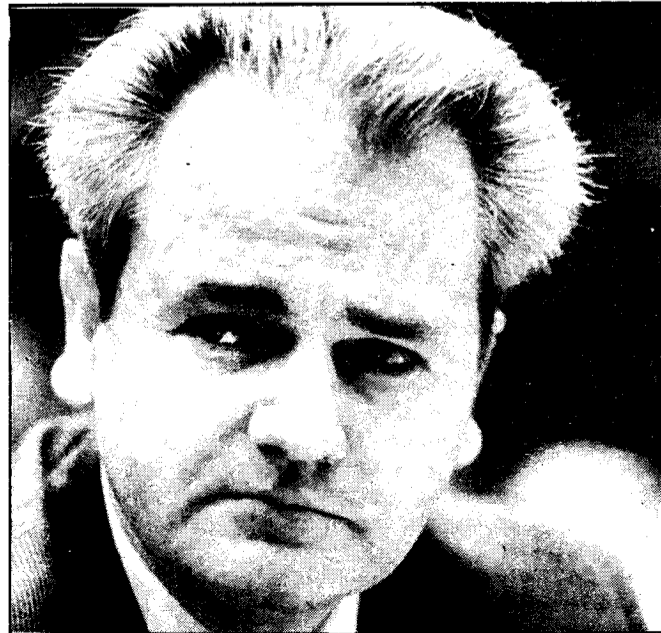
It is only the Serbs, the Croats and the other peoples of Yugoslavia that can achieve a lasting peace. The people of Serbia do not want this war. There is ample evidence that large numbers of Serb con-

scripts are deserting.

And as more and more corpses return from the killing fields of Vukovar, Vinkovci and Dubrovnik and the queues for basic supplies get longer, opposition to the war will mount. It is this which is now forcing Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic to begin to look for some way out.

Meanwhile, the other peoples of Yugoslavia - in Bosnia and Macedonia - are demanding their independence. Slobodan Milosevic cannot hold them all down by force indefinitely.

It is this, and popular revulsion at the slaughter, that can achieve a just solution for the Serb and Croat peoples. Neither the UN, nor the EC or NATO, have any positive role to play.



Serbian leader: Milosevic

## Ooh Missus!

## As outrageous as they like

## Ooh Missus!

Performed by the Red Rag Women's Theatre Company  
Written by Winnie Elliott and Lois Charlton

Reviewed by Sam Inman

'DE-DYKE THE ROOM!' – a hauntingly familiar scream for any lesbian not out to her parents when Mother appears unexpectedly on the doorstep. She is of course left there until every dykey trace has been expunged from communal areas of the house.

So it is in 'Ooh Missus!'. And captured with the maniacal farce that really does sometimes exist in real life. Except in most lesbian households there is not the advantage of having reversible pictures on the wall, photos on the mantelpiece or even noticeboards above the phone. Hmmm – worth thinking about, that one...

The play is brilliantly funny, packed with all man-

ner of 'post-right-on' humour. Set in 'Sisters Avenue, SW11', a whole range of lesbian stereotypes are savagely sent up. In its preview *Spare Rib* warned 'grim feminists stay away or you may come out another woman'.

Penny and Jenny (Jinny Keatinge and Denise Francis) are the sickly monogamous middle-class couple. Penny the therapist, and Jenny the Earth Mother. Jenny's attempts at self-insemination – to complete their cosy little family – are wonderfully thwarted by the appearance of Jenny's mother, Audrey (Jan Haydn), who 'just happened to be passing' while canvassing for the Tories.

Interruptions abound for Penny and Jenny. They have a new next-door-neighbour, Hettie (Winnie Elliott), who while emphasising her happy heterosexual marriage, constantly reveals her closet curiosity about what lesbians do in bed. Who doesn't know a straight women like this?

There is the 'wham-bam-thank-you-mam' scene-dyke,

Fran (Laura Bridgeman), who also lives in the house. She constantly preens herself in a butch sort of way, and is forever showing-off her finely tuned biceps and pectorals. No monogamous relationships for her. It would be selfish in the extreme for Fran to deny her body to any woman who should desire it. And who wouldn't?

Two others, deliberately both named Jane, make up the cast. Jane 1 (Jackie Clune) and Jane 2 (Maureen Philbert) both, confusingly, appear as new tenants for the spare room.

Jane 1, a former lover of Fran's, gets into the house by deception. She's the 'don't-give-a-shit-about-anything' dyke, who's happy so long as her dope-bag is full, has a roof over her head and gets laid once in a while.

In stark contrast, Jane 2 is the young, wonderfully naive and embarrassingly unhip lesbian who came out of the closet and consequently was thrown out of her parent's house. Her attempts at following in Fran's super-



cool footsteps make the audience cringe.

Maureen Philbert's performance as Jane 2 was perhaps the best. But all the characters were played incredibly well by the cast. The play itself caricatures aspects of lesbianism that every dyke will recognise in herself, her friends, acquaintances and lovers.

One sad thing though, is

that few others will get to see the play, particularly outside London. As the *Spare Rib* preview said, the reason Red Rag can be as outrageous as they like now, is that they have no funding. Consequently no-one gets paid and touring is severely limited. That's bad news for anyone who, like me, enjoys a good laugh at themselves.

## The American way of death

## Boyz 'n the Hood

Directed by John Singleton

City of Quartz:  
Excavating the  
Future in Los  
Angeles

Written by Mike Davis  
Verso, 1990

Reviewed by Jane Kelly

John Singleton's *Boyz 'n the Hood*, his first film at 22, is an impressive and mature debut from one of the new black American directors who, like Spike Lee, are making films which reveal the lives (and deaths) of the black urban population of America.

One out of every 21 young black men in LA dies at the hands of his peers we are told, and the film goes on to chart the oppression which poverty, unemployment, poor housing and drugs combine to create amongst the young black men of South Central LA along with their self-defeating response to it. The film's critique of the macho behaviour they adopt, reaching for a gun, as a first rather than a last resort, is clear enough, and the central character, Tre, is shown eventually rejecting violence in favour of his father's solution of education of education.

The positive side of the film is the stark representation of

what life is like for the urban black working class in the richest state of the richest country in the world. The often mindless violence of the black gangs against each other is only matched by the violence of the state, in the form of the notorious LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department), against all blacks. It shows young children viewing dead bodies as though they were so much trash, growing up to accept that black death on the streets is an acceptable and everyday occurrence; growing up to shoot or get shot themselves. But because the film's politics are separatist and uncritically capitalist, the solutions are unconvincing and make for a weak ending.

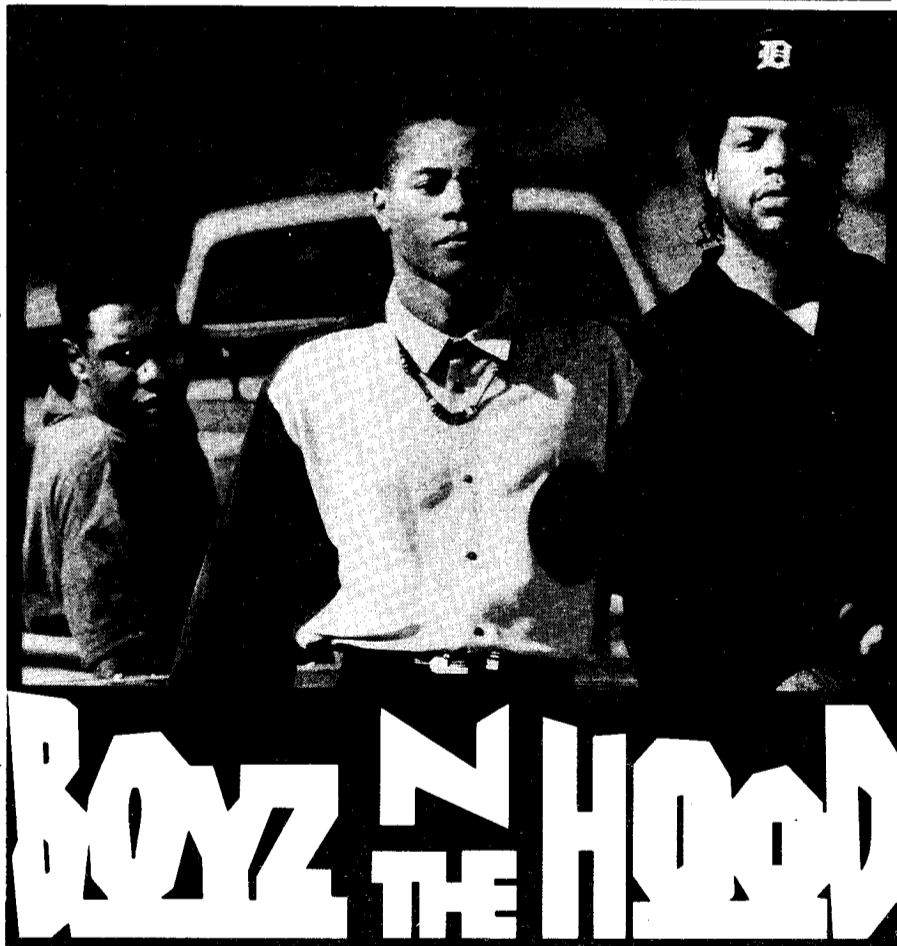
The answers offered by the film's director (and producer) to the horrors of life in the ghetto are placed firmly within a black separatist and capitalist framework. In a speech in front of an advertising hoarding offering to buy out the poor blacks 'in order to yuppify the area' and make big real estate profits, Larry Fishburne, playing Tre's father, argues that drugs and guns which are killing the blacks, make profits for the whites. Instead the black population must educate itself, set up business in South Central and build a black economy. And that is what Tre sets out to do, by choosing to go to university rather than avenge the death of his friend, murdered by a rival gang.

Apart from Tre's mother, who is significantly training

to become a teacher, and his girlfriend who accompanies Tre to university, black women are shown throughout the film in a thoroughly negative light; they are stereotypically 'bad' mothers and sex objects, often addicted to drugs which take priority in their day to day lives over looking after the kids.

But as Mike Davis shows in his compelling book on Los Angeles, the violent gangs based on a drugs economy, are not the result of the rejection of education in favour of some more immediate financial reward, but rather are the culmination of a more complex process of the political defeat of black self-organisation in the early '70s and the complete withdrawal of welfare support in the face of the economic collapse of the area in the '80s.

With unemployment amongst black youth of LA County running at 45% through the late '80s (and probably now even higher), 40% of all children living below, or hovering on, the poverty line, the job creation



programme, slashed by the Reagan years, offered money for one hundred jobs for 'high risk' youth in 1988. At the same time the City Council estimated 50,000 youth organised in gangs and gave a budget of \$400 million to the LAPD!

Davis reveals that the leaders of the black gangs of South Central and Watts in the '50s, became the political leaders of the Black Panthers of LA in the '60s, following Malcolm X in his search for a socialist solution through black self organisation, not separate, capitalist development. It was only with the defeat of this movement, carried out in murderous attacks and killings by the state, that

the gangs of LA fell back on fighting each other rather than organising against the real enemy.

So *Boyz 'n the Hood* is progressive in its critical documentation of life in the black ghetto and black on black violence, giving a black perspective so often lacking in attempts to represent black lives on film; but it offers wrong solutions. Such solutions are not open to the majority, but only available to a small percentage who will create a black petty bourgeoisie so that the exploitation of the black majority will continue, albeit in a more humane way.

# Transitional demands and the fight for socialism

By Harry Sloan

WHEN Harold Wilson's Labour government won a wafer-thin majority in the February 1974 election, it took office in the midst of a rising tide of trade union militancy.

Wage demands and battles against plant closures and job losses were followed after 1976 by a wave of struggles against cuts in health, education and other public services.

Almost all of these struggles remained at the level of minimum demands, seeking concessions from the existing employers in the existing system, raising no challenge to the 'right' of capitalists to make and increase their profits.

On the other extreme, the propaganda from hard-left socialist groupings called without avail for Labour (or somebody) to carry out 'socialist policies', most notably the nationalisation of the banks and basic industry without compensation and under workers' control.

## Missing link

The missing link was any agitation to popularise these issues to mobilise the working class to press these demands.

In general the left failed to find any way of linking the spontaneous reformist militancy of trade union activists in struggle to the fight for an explicitly socialist programme.

Some strikes and struggles succeeded in winning concessions – even the repeal of Ted Heath's anti-union laws – while others failed: but there were few political lessons learned in the process on the character of the Labour government or the need for a socialist solution.

Under Wilson and Callaghan Labour in office rode roughshod over the interests and demands of the working class that had elected them: but though the hard left organisations grew in numbers the question of a genuine programme of action that could offer an alternative way forward, a road towards socialism, for the labour movement rank and file remained unresolved.

The problem itself was not new. It had been addressed in different ways by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*, by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution of 1917, by the early Communist International, and by

Leon Trotsky in the fight against Stalinism.

It was Trotsky who most succinctly summed up the problem in the 1938 *Transitional Programme*, the key founding document of the Fourth International:

"It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist programme of the revolution.

"This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

A transitional demand is therefore one that appears reasonable to many people, but which in essence is unattainable without the overthrow of capitalism. Trotsky explained that it was no accident that social democracy embraces no such 'bridge':

"Classical social democracy ... divided its programme into two parts independent of each other: the *minimum programme*, which limited itself to reforms within the framework of bourgeois society, and the *maximum programme*, which promised substitution of socialism for capitalism in the indefinite future.

"Between the minimum and maximum programme, no bridge existed. And indeed social democracy has no need of such a bridge, since the word *socialism* is used only for holiday speechifying."

## Redundant

The 'bridge' is equally redundant for those propagandist and sectarian currents on the left which prefer to talk abstractly about socialism rather than to engage in real struggles.

But for the building of a socialist, class struggle current in the labour movement, transitional demands will be vital. Trotsky's series of transitional demands centred on questions that appear grimly familiar in today's situation, and which will loom even larger if a Kinnock government is elected:

- Defence of workers' living stand-



Fighting for a shorter working week: the Transitional Programme calls for a sliding scale of hours

ards;

- Fighting redundancies and unemployment;

- Development of class struggle opposition in the unions;

- Challenging the bosses' icons of the 'right to manage' and financial 'viability' by raising demands for the abolition of business secrets and the opening of the account books and plans to the scrutiny of trade union committees;

- Fighting for workers' control in the workplace and in whole industries, leading to the development of a workers' plan for production;

- Mobilising behind demands for nationalisation of specific groups of capitalists, of banks and finance houses;

- Defence of picket lines and working class neighbourhoods against attack from police and fascists;

- Fighting imperialism and war;
- Building workers' councils, local organisations of working class power to challenge the centralised power of the capitalist state;

- The fight for a workers' government, independent of the capitalists.

These demands still obviously retain their general relevance: but they were never intended by Trotsky as a complete or infallible recipe for revolutionary politics. They were always seen as an addition to the democratic demands and the minimum demands which are thrown up spontaneously by workers and the oppressed in struggle.

And it was necessary for workers to fight for these demands for them to lead anywhere at all. This is obviously more difficult in periods when the class struggle itself has receded to a low ebb as a result of repeated sell-outs and defeats.

If Neil Kinnock wins the next election, there will be no instant repetition of the militant upsurge that greeted Wilson in 1974: this rested in large measure on the strength of an industrial shop stewards movement and an active rank and file, both of which have been substantially destroyed or repressed by twelve years of the Tory onslaught.

## Stop Tory attacks

Many of the demands most likely to trigger early conflict with a Kinnock government are not transitional at all, but simply demands that Labour cease the Tories' attacks on the working class:

- Demands for the repeal of the anti-union laws;

- Demands for the repeal of racist immigration and nationality laws;

- Demands for an immediate end to the Poll Tax, the Council Tax, and an amnesty for Poll Tax prisoners and other victimised labour movement militants.

- Demands for big increases in pensions and state benefits;

- A cash injection to restore services and standards in the NHS, education and social security.

More radical elements in the Labour Party and wider labour movement will also be receptive to a number of political demands which are implicitly anti-

capitalist and anti-imperialist:

- For a crash programme of useful public works – including housing, hospitals, community care, schools, colleges, transport, energy research, environmental protection – to remedy serious social problems and create new and worthwhile jobs for 4-5 million jobless youth and adults at trade union rates of pay.

- For a shorter working week without loss of pay.

- Scrap defence spending and Trident. Troops out of Ireland and the Malvinas. Britain out of NATO; disband all British bases overseas, expel all US bases from Britain.

- Cancel the debts of Third World countries with British banks: open new negotiations for trade on equal terms.

- For national assemblies in Scotland and Wales.

## Workers' control

None of these demands is in itself socialist: but each will nonetheless be resolutely opposed by a Kinnock government. A socialist alternative will also need to answer a series of wider problems and build up a system of transitional demands for the 1990s, among them:

- *Workers' control* of the banking and financial sector, coupled with the *nationalisation* of the banks, building societies, insurance giants and pension funds.

- A *sliding scale of wages*, giving increases in take-home pay to match rising prices.

- *Work sharing without loss of pay* to combat redundancies.

- An *expansion* of production, which points to the need for *expropriation* of key productive industries, and of vital infrastructure industries such as BT and British Gas. Many other democratic and partial demands will find a following, especially those for the liberation of black and ethnic minorities, women, and lesbians and gay men.

However there is no magic to be worked simply by the incantation of transitional demands. The key factor is the mobilisation of workers in *struggle*, in which they can learn political lessons which no amount of propaganda can teach.

As workers rediscover their self-confidence and raise more ambitious demands, the conditions become more favourable for agitation on transitional demands.

Though other developments are not excluded, the most likely conditions for such an awakening are in the aftermath of a Tory election defeat, when workers will look in vain to Labour for assistance.

Like seeds in dry ground awaiting the rains, Trotsky's transitional demands require the moisture of class struggle to enable them to flourish. Meanwhile the more popular the form in which marxists learn to present these demands, the greater the possibilities when the opportunity for action arises.



Defending industries against closure: transitional demands include opening the books

Derek Wall is a supporter of 'Green Revolution' and a member of the Green Party. His book *Green Politics and Marxism* will be published by Greenprint in 1992. Here he summarises some of his views.

# Karl Marx and the Green revolution

PHOTOS: David Hoffman



Illegal teak logging in Thailand's tropical rain forest

FOR MOST members of the Green Party, our politics are 'neither left nor right but ahead'. For myself and other eco-socialists, Green politics without socialism is inequitable.

Far from being a new form of politics making old divisions of left and right redundant, 'Greenery' enhances the issues of scarcity, choice and class struggle. Pollution has always hit the working class hardest. This was as true for Engels' Manchester of the 1840s as it is for Brazil in the 1990s.

If resources are finite or carbon dioxide emissions are to be cut back, who picks up the bill? Rich or poor? Affluent middle classes or urban workers?

So-called Green taxes supposedly encourage energy conservation and reduce environmental damage. In reality they are highly regressive, tending to squeeze the poor while allowing the rich to go on consuming as before. Liberal 'neither left nor right' analysis will simply generalise poverty and do nothing to solve the crisis.

Rainforests do not cut themselves down. Their disappearance is a direct result of the operations of multinationals and peasants driven to desperation through the workings of the international banking system.

## Economics

Green politics, therefore, demands a very solid grasp of political economy. Without an analysis of capitalism, the Green movement will remain impotent.

Many people are now aware of the damage done by the arms trade, by poverty in the South of the globe, the Greenhouse effect, nuclear waste disposal, toxic waste dumping, to name but a few obvious problems. But awareness on its own does very little. To transform society very much more is demanded of us.

Despite being currently unfashionable, marxism is essential in seeking an answer to this question of transformation. There are a number of key concepts developed by Marx

that are extremely useful in this respect.

Some of the most important are contained in Marx's analysis of economic systems. This is both more subtle and of greater contemporary relevance than most critics believe. *Capital*, despite its length and the fact that volumes 2 and 3 were never truly completed, still remains essential reading.

Capitalism demands infinite growth, ever greater production, waste and exploitation. But apart from in this material sense, Marx also shows how capitalism disrupts life in more underemphasised ways.

Much of what he writes about alienation, the destruction of human potential through division of labour, and even some of the comments on environmental issues – forest destruction, soil erosion and pollution – would pleasantly surprise many Greens.

Marx's attack on 'essence', the idea that humans have an intrinsic and unchanging nature, is also vital. We can make our own nature and our own history through our own creative actions.

## Stunted

In a capitalist society, where we are stunted in all manner of ways, humanity's lack of autonomy, creativity, ability to cooperate without the need for hierarchical structures, is labelled by the right-wing as natural rather than social. Time and time again, reactionary notions of human potential are defended by this appeal to what is natural.

So lesbian and gay sexuality and Black and women's liberation are labelled unnatural. Ag-

**"Rainforests do not cut themselves down. Their disappearance is a direct result of the operations of multinationals and peasants driven to desperation"**

gression, deference to authority, greed, racism, sexism and homophobia are seen as natural.

For Marx, we make our own history, but *not* 'in circumstan-

ces of our own choosing'. Therefore if workers can struggle and remove the dead-weight of 'circumstances', everything is up for grabs.

Materialism links into this concept of anti-essentialism. Living, as we do, in a physical world, what affects people materially has an obvious and major impact on their inner – conscious and subconscious – world. Put simply, this means people learn not by being told, but by what they do.

## Dialectic

Marx's use of the dialectic is also important. Everything is a process that unfolds and is driven by internal contradiction. Nothing has a wholly positive or negative make-up.

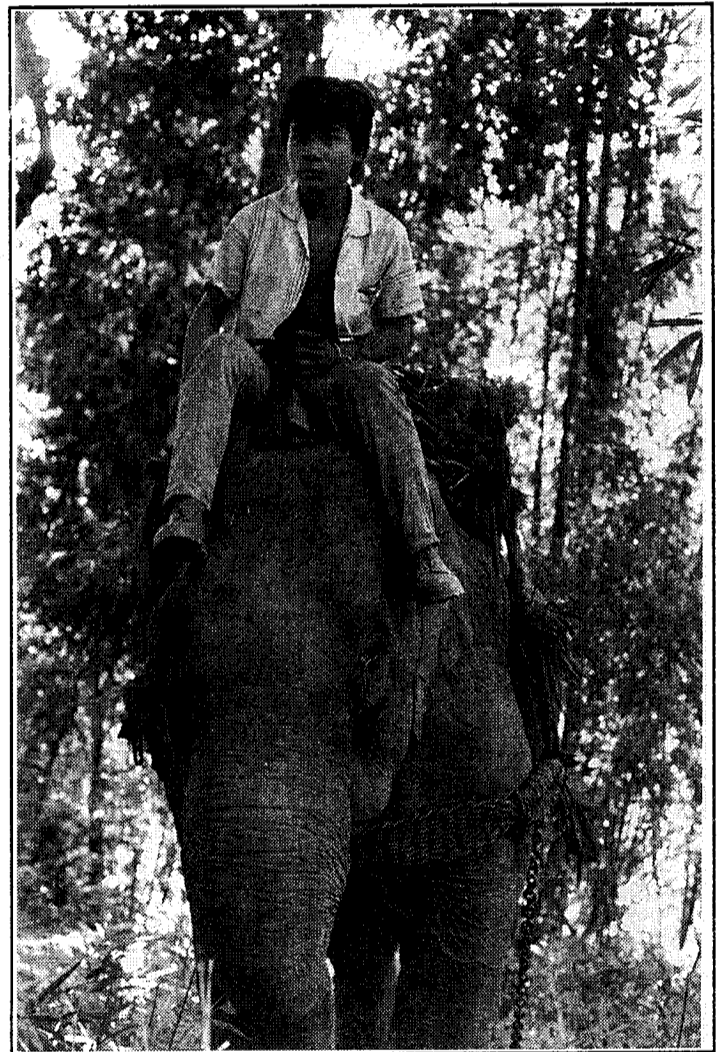
But there are elements in Marx's thought that I would want to criticise. Capitalist society is attacked because it is exploitative and alienating. But it is seen by Marx as being, dialectically, the source of a communist society. There is a risk that this can be interpreted in a productivist way.

Marx is also dangerously undialectical in his approach to science, technology and industrial growth. Far from being irreducibly good, technological developments such as nuclear power and genetic engineering are potentially catastrophic.

He puts forward in much – but, significantly, not all – of his work, a view of nature that seeks to dominate and exploit. But Marx wrote long before anyone could conceive of a potential global ecocatastrophe.

The point though, is surely not to engage in a lengthy abstract intellectual debate, but to look for ways in which both the Green movement and revolutionary socialism can be strengthened by debate and common action. If even only a portion of the Green critique proves to be true, we risk survival if we don't succeed in changing the world.

Ted Trainer, in his book 'Abandon Affluence!', argues that a fusion of Green politics and marxism is needed. Both, in his view, have major weaknesses. But together they pro-



Young Thai worker and elephant

## Earth First! launched in Britain

EARTH FIRST!, the controversial US-based environmental group, has been launched in Britain. This summer the group's international day of action around rainforest destruction in Sarawak, received much media attention.

Earth First! had been much criticised within the Green movement for various racist and homophobic statements from a leading spokesperson, Dave Foreman. It led to a split in the organisation. The right-wing left, including Foreman, and he has subsequently been trying to explain away his previous views – on account of his right-wing Republican background!

The remaining left-wing in Earth First! have much more of an orientation towards mass direct action. It is the

vide an essential mix.

This century has seen Marx's thought perverted into an undemocratic and deterministic chimera. But far from rejecting Marx, as is currently fashionable, we need to reinvent a creative, vital and fighting marxist politics – both by going back to the original texts, and by allowing for the new

left-wing approach that the group in Britain are trying to base themselves on.

Murray Bookchin, a leading opponent of Foreman, has been a leading proponent of a social ecological rather than a deep ecological Green politics since the 1950s. He is coming to Britain on a two week speaking tour in May 1992. This will be in National Environment week, just before the much-hyped 'Earth Summit'.

Donations and general enquiries should be sent to: Social Ecology Project, c/o 47 Margaretson House, Stamford Hill, London, N16 5LE.

'Green Revolution' the newsheet of the Green revolutionary left, can be contacted at: PO Box 845, Bristol, BS99 5HQ.

material conditions we face.

Revolutionary socialists of all hues should be debating together and, despite theoretical differences, should find ways of working together practically. Given the ecological realities of life on the eve of the 21st century, we literally cannot afford to fail.

# Fight for Pergamon strikers!

ACTIVISTS in the journalists' union, the NUJ, are preparing to take on acting General Secretary Jake Ecclestone over the withdrawal of support for the Pergamon strikers.

Opposition is mounting to Ecclestone's abuse of power since he took over the post some months ago. After cutting resources to the union's equality committees and sacking financial controller Daniel Stafford, Ecclestone has now refused to reinstate financial support for the Pergamon strikers.

Support for the strikers was originally cut off when the NUJ's cheque facilities were withdrawn. But when the facilities were reinstated, the acting General Secretary refused to restore the Pergamon 23's

strike pay. This was despite a 14-3 vote on the National Executive instructing him to do so.

Union activists point out that the ex-general secretary, Steve Turner, was sacked due to his failure to carry out union policies. Now Ecclestone is doing exactly the same. Meanwhile Dutch print unions have increased their support for the strikers.

NUJ members should press union branches to send emergency motions calling for the reinstatement of strike pay to the next National Executive.

In addition, Ecclestone must be brought to book at the unions coming conference. If it does not result in a leadership that carries out the union's policies, nothing will have been gained from the whole Steve Turner saga.

## Home News



PHOTO: John Harris

# Appeal date set for Tottenham Three

CAMPAIGNERS for the Tottenham Three, wrongly convicted of killing PC Keith Blakelock during the North London riots of 1985, have announced that a date has finally been set for their appeals - 25 November this year.

The decision to hold all three together is a minor victory for campaigners. There was some doubt that this would be the case.

The case of the three men - Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite - who were convicted solely on the basis of uncorroborated evidence, was referred to the Court of Appeal following the

emergence of new evidence. This showed that vital interview records had been tampered with, and incriminating statements added in place of innocuous replies.

A report from Essex police about the activities of Detective Chief Superintendent Graham Melvin, the officer in charge of the investigation, has been forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

A statement from the men's families said, 'We have always known that these men are innocent, and we want it established in open court for everyone to see. The eyes of the world will be watching what

goes on in that court. They know that if there is any justice in this country, Winston, Engin and Mark will have their convictions quashed before Christmas'.

Even if the men do get out though, there will still be many more innocent people left to rot in jail for crimes they did not commit. While the real criminals - the judges and the police - will not, at present, be brought to justice.

Only when we have a publically accountable and instantly recallable judiciary and police force, will we be sure of being able to overturn miscarriages of justice fairly and quickly.

## socialist OUTLOOK 300 Club prizes drawn

Socialist Outlook's 300 club has now drawn its first two lucky winners, with PADRAIG FINN from Brent winning the first prize of £50 and PAUL WOZNY from Southampton winning the second prize.

The 300 club was launched to give us the minimum regular income we need to continue with the high standards we hope we have achieved over the past six months. The idea is to get 300 readers to contribute a standing order of £5 a month; and each month those in the club stand a chance of winning £50 in our prize draw.

We think there are easily 300 regular readers who could afford £5. It's a small sum, but it would guarantee our finances for the foreseeable future.

These are tough times for socialists; activists in particular have a lot of calls on their finances. But we think that Socialist Outlook has provided a serious regular voice for revolutionary marxist ideas which must continue. We ask all our readers to support it by joining the 300 Club. Please fill in the form below and send it to us.

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# NHS abortions slashed in Kent

FROM NOVEMBER 15 the Medway district health authority in Kent has slashed by two-thirds its provision of NHS-funded abortions. It has also removed 'poverty' and 'severe social deprivation' from its criteria for free abortions.

Financial chaos and starvation of resources, resulting from the new contract system of NHS funding, has been blamed for the cuts. The district's budget of 78 million is reported to be overspent by 432,000.

Medway is not one of the notorious anti-abortion health authorities. The proportion of NHS-funded abortions was only 8 per cent below the national average of 48 per cent last year - an increase on the 1989 figure. But with these savage cuts this will drop to between 12 and 15 per cent.

The official line is that these cuts are only intended to last until the end of the financial year, and that NHS abortion provision will be restored after that.

But with no real massive injection of resources foreseeable in the short term, there is likely to be substantial pressure on the authority to continue its objectively anti-abortion stance.

As more and more health authorities are teetering on the edge of bankruptcy, further slashing of abortion facilities will seem an increasingly attractive option to the largely male grey-suited bureaucrats who control health authority budgets. The Medway example could be followed by many more.

Socialists should be organising now to try and prevent this from happening. The warnings

given from the National Abortion Campaign about the effects of the process of NHS privatisation have now certainly begun to ring true.

NAC can be contacted at Wesley House, Wild Court, London, WC2B 5AU. Tel: 071 405 4801.

# Labour pains in Camden

WORKERS from Camden Social Services are entering their 27th week of official strike action at the time we go to press. The result has been that there are no statutory social work services being provided to vulnerable people in the Labour-controlled borough.

The dispute arose on 22 May when social workers began limited industrial action over Camden's failure to implement a national agreement on regrading.

The regrading agreement recognises the extra duties placed on social workers and social care workers by new legislation. It was signed by Camden council in February 1990. But, unlike even their Tory counterparts in neighbouring London boroughs, Camden has refused to pay up.

Back in May, staff were told to go home when they took limited action. This provocation resulted in indefinite all-out strike action.

Camden council has consistently refused to even talk to the strikers about the national agreement. It continues to save 250,000 a month through renegeing. The Labour group's intransigence can only mean that the council have an interest in prolonging the strike. In contrast the strikers want to return to work as soon as possible.

The strikers are asking for labour movement support.

For further information contact: Camden NALGO, 7th Floor, Camden Town Hall Extension, Argyle Street, London, NW1. Tel: 071 278 4444. Cheques should be made payable to 'Camden Social Services Support Fund'.

## Prisoner of War

War resister, Vic Williams, who was sentenced to 14 months in prison for refusing to fight the Gulf War, has been moved to a civilian prison.

Please write to: Vic Williams, HMP Chelmsford, 200 Springfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CN2 6LQ.



# Kill the Asylum Bill!

TORY MPs once again used the racist scare-tactics of a flood of 'bogus asylum-seekers' to push through their new Asylum Bill. 'If this is not a racist Bill, why is it that there are so many well-known Tory racists present in this debate?' demanded Bernie Grant MP.

But such honesty was a little too much for 'parliamentary procedure'; he was forced to withdraw the

remark. But the debate did indeed show that the Tories are increasingly moving the same way as their counterparts in Europe. As the far right gains strength, their racist policies are becoming common currency on the right.

The new bill, which withdraws any right to appeal and means that immigrants cannot even apply to appeal after 48 hours, was carried by 78 votes. And Labour did little to challenge the ideas behind it, agree-

ing on the need to 'stamp out abuses'.

The Tories meanwhile used the spectre of the growth of fascism as an excuse for adopting the racist law - 'If we don't do it, they will', runs the argument. Home Secretary Kenneth Baker went on 'A phenomenon of this order cannot be ignored ... it would be gross irresponsibility to ignore it.'

But studies based on government statistics show that total im-

migration into Europe - legal and illegal - in the next ten years is likely to total less than 1% of its current population. So much for the 'tidal wave' of immigrants.

But the racist right of the Tory Party lapped it up. 'Bogus refugees are bleeding Britain of £100 million through benefit fraud ... they think it's hilarious' said Tim Janman MP.

The debate clearly demonstrated the need to build a movement in defence of immigrants and against

racism in Britain. As Bernie Grant said 'This Bill is meant to play on the racism that is around'.

Immigrants and Britain's black population are convenient scapegoats for the Tories, as their economic promises fail to materialise.

The labour movement and the black community must unite to fight racism and pin the blame where it really lies.

## Hundreds say 'Never again!'

By Pete McDonald

FIFTY THREE years ago Nazi stormtroopers unleashed terror on the Jewish community in Germany. Today racism is again sweeping the country, with attacks and murders of immigrants throughout the country.

The German government's response has been to set up 'camps', claiming the move protects immigrants, rather than any serious attempt to tackle those perpetrating the crimes. This was the background to a picket of the German embassy on November 11.

More than two hundred took part, asserting 'Refugees have their rights - here to stay, here

to fight'. The action was organised jointly by the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism and the Newham Monitoring Project.

Speakers, including Bernie Grant MP and Jeremy Corbyn MP drew attention to the Tories' attempt to 'play the race card', with the 'fast-track' system of vetting refugees, cloaked in the demonology of 'bogus' applications.

Activists are now preparing to combat the threat of fascist candidates in the general election, attempting to cash in on the racist atmosphere created by the Tories. Such an initiative offers the opportunity to build a broad and democratic campaign, involving anti-fascists throughout Britain.

PHOTO: David Hoffman



Demonstrators place wreath outside German Embassy

## 'Crisis in London' conference success

A CAMPAIGNING organisation, Crisis in London, formed to fight for a reversal of cuts in public services and privatisation, recently held a successful conference of labour and union organisations.

Speakers included representatives of London's TGWU busworkers, the NHS Support Federation, London Health Emergency and the Homeless Monitoring Group. More than 54 trade union and campaign organisations from a dozen London boroughs attended the meeting.

Speaker after speaker gave examples of the devastation inflicted on the capital's public

services by 13 years of Tory devastation. Many were critical of the way Labour councils are now supporting and carrying out the cuts.

Crisis in London's first annual general meeting will be held in February 1992. Campaign spokesperson Ed Hall, secretary of Lambeth NALGO, said 'Crisis in London does not want to substitute itself for organisations that already exist, but rather to be a point of contact for those fighting for public services.'

The campaign plans to lobby next year's London Labour Party conference and call a London-wide demonstration. In the meantime the campaign will take its message to London's housing estates, hospitals, schools and throughout London's public services. A campaign spokesperson said 'Let the people who work in the public services and those who use them join together to defend these services and build organisations throughout the capital for mutual support and action.'

More information from: Ed Hall 071 737 2134 or CiL, 6a Acre Lane, London SW2 5SG.

National  
Demonstration  
for Palestine  
Solidarity

Sat. 7 December  
12.30, Embankment  
called by Joint Committee for  
Palestine



socialist  
**OUTLOOK**

### Rally

## November 29, 7.30pm

Kingsway College, Sidmouth  
Street, off Grays Inn Road,  
London WC1

**Socialism  
and the  
new world  
order**

**Ernest Mandel**

(United Secretariat of the Fourth International)

**Janette Habel**

(author of 'Cuba ... the revolution under siege')

**Salim Vally**

(Workers' Organisation of Socialist Action, South Africa)

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# socialist OUTLOOK

PHOTO: John Harris



Campaigners have only just seen the release of the Birmingham Six, now many more are threatened with internment

# Beat back internment

Internment without trial in the north of Ireland looks to be back on the political agenda again, nearly seventeen years after being abandoned by the Wilson government in 1975. As we go to press, reports suggest that high-ranking RUC and Army chiefs, alongside Loyalist politicians and the Northern Ireland Police Federation, are strongly urging government ministers to bring back a desparate and brutal tactic.

Internment would be a massive gamble for the British state. When it was last used, from 1971 to 1975, there was both a huge escalation of sectarian violence and also the emergence of a mass civil rights movement.

But it could be a gamble that the Tories find themselves forced to take, despite the fact that Secretary of State, Peter Brooke, was told quite starkly by the RUC and Army last week that the 30,000-strong security forces could not cope without the reintroduction of inter-

ment. Already, extra troops have been despatched to the six counties.

Last week's bombing in St. Albans and press speculation over anticipated wave of Christmas bombings, may fuel the fires of reaction further, on both sides of the water.

Bringing back internment without trial will not be easy though. The British state already stands accused of gross infringements of civil liberties and repressive torture practices at the Castlereagh Remand Centre, as a result of evidence presented to the United Nations.

Socialists and Irish solidarity activists should be preparing now to build a broad-based mass campaign against any reinstatement of internment, as well as the routine repression of the British army in the Six Counties.

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