

# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

For Workers' Liberty East and West

**Fight the Tories! Rebuild the left!**



**Back Benn and Heffer!**

# The face of Tory Britain

**By Tom Macara**

Mrs Thatcher's war on football violence is a bit like J. Edgar Hoover's war on gangsterism.

The football hooligans who have rampaged through the cities of Germany, shouting abuse and threatening violence against Germans, Turks, and Irish people alike, are fitting representatives of Tory Britain. They deserve a place in Thatcher's Hall of Fame, alongside Rupert Murdoch, Ian MacGregor, Peter Clowes, and the whole crowd of spivs, scabs, and strike-breakers who have profited from Tory rule.

Thatcher condemns the hooligans. When J. Edgar Hoover was chief of the FBI, he waged a ferocious war against crime. He published a regularly updated list of 'public enemies', a sort of 'top ten' of criminals. A gangster like John Dillinger would be proclaimed Public Enemy No.1 and hunted down amidst immense publicity.

Then someone else would be promoted to top of the list. Newspapers, movies, radio, and later TV, all publicised the FBI's 'war against crime'.

Meanwhile Hoover built up dossiers on politicians, and used blackmail to keep himself in the job to the end of his days. After his death it was discovered that he had been covering up for the vast and ever-growing network of Mafia-organised crime, which spreads its tentacles throughout American society, including both business and labour organisations.

Today John Dillinger is in his grave, but organised crime is as great a power as ever in American society.

Mrs Thatcher, likewise, has preached loudly against crime and violence, while presiding over its vast increase.

The brutal stranglehold of the wealthy over the poor has been greatly strengthened in Thatcher's Britain. Dog has been told to eat dog. The law of the jungle has been held up as the highest moral code of human society: "do to others what they might do to you, but do it first".

The number living below the official poverty line has doubled, and is now over nine million, out of 55 million. Meanwhile vast fortunes have been made in the City, by profiteers following Ivan Boesky's motto "Greed is good".

Peter Clowes has ripped off some £50 million from small investors. Around him hundreds of millionaires prosper by doing much the same sort of thing and not getting caught out. Outside the wealthy Square Mile, Mrs Thatcher's government harasses claimants on the breadline.

The rich flaunt their wealth amidst the hopelessness of millions. Lots of people are excluded from getting on in Mrs Thatcher's jungle because they lack money, or skills, or the 'right' colour skin. No wonder crime and violence are on the increase!

When Thatcher denounces crime, it is the leader of the licenced spivs and bootboys denouncing freelance spivving and violence.

Britain's soccer violence comes from that launching pad, and from

**Turn to page 2**





## Warning by Davies

The resignation of Labour's defence front-bencher, Denzil Davies, is a warning to Neil Kinnock that he may have badly misjudged the mood in the Labour Party.

Since the election last year, Neil Kinnock has been edging away from Labour Party policy on almost every front. Ten days ago he repudiated Labour's defence policy on TV, and in effect announced that Labour is no longer committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament.

He must have been surprised at the outcry against him. He probably thought that he had the Labour Party cut and dried.

He hasn't — not yet! Many

members of the Labour Party will not tolerate leaders who think themselves clever when they take David Owen's smelly old clothes and try them on for size.

Davies's main objection seems to be that Kinnock did not consult him enough before announcing changes. But his resignation must also reflect some of the uneasiness in Labour's ranks as Kinnock dances the dance of the seven veils in front of Thatcher, discarding Labour policies at every turn.

The left is organised and fighting back now, in the Benn-Heffer campaign for the leadership. Benn instead of Kinnock! Heffer instead of Hattersley!

## Witchhunt in CPSA

By Steve Battlemuch

Within a month of taking up office, the new right wing NEC of CPSA has started red-scare tactics again.

The victim of the witch-hunt is the Broad-Left-controlled Branch Executive Committee at Newcastle Central DHSS office.

Newcastle Central Office is the largest CPSA branch in the country, with about 4500 members. Until this year it was controlled by the Broad Left, and *Militant* in particular.

Earlier this year, a group was formed by four right-wingers called the 'Campaign to Defeat the Militant Tendency'. They mobilised for the branch AGM with the assistance of management, and ousted four Broad Left branch officials.

On taking office in March they found

themselves totally out of their depth, and management was suddenly not so cooperative. Three of the four have since resigned, but not before making complaints of intimidation against Broad Left supporters on the Branch Executive Committee.

The NEC has dispatched an arch-right-wing full-time official, Peter Thomason, to Newcastle to investigate the complaints. Apparently questions were asked about whether there was swearing at Branch Executive meetings and whether *Militant* was sold.

Thomason is due to report back to the NEC on 15 June, probably recommending the suspension of the branch. If this happens — and it will probably be the first time in the union's history that a branch has been suspended — there should be a massive outcry.

## Strike in Armenia

The Armenian Soviet Republic was in the grip of a two-day general strike this week.

The strikers were demanding that the neighbouring territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, most of whose people are Armenian, should be joined to their republic. Half a million people demonstrated last Sunday in the Armenian capital, Yerevan.

Armenians living in parts of the USSR outside their own republic have recently been subjected to attacks, and some have been massacred in race riots. Armenians know about massacres. Up to 1½ million of them were massacred by the Turks in 1915. Perhaps as many more died of famine and disease in the years after that.

The two-day general strike has the tacit support of the ruling party in Armenia, in defiance of the Kremlin.

National tensions and conflicts are the most explosive political questions in Soviet society today, where a majority of the population feel themselves to be nationally oppressed in one way or another by the Great Russians.

The weapon used by the Armenians is the great working-class weapon of direct action. The birth of Solidarnosc in Poland in 1980 showed how explosive such working-class action can be once the idea of it grips the masses of workers.

The mass strike which the workers of what became the USSR began to use against the Tsarist-capitalist system back in the 1890s is the natural weapon to hand for the working class in the USSR today. The strike in Armenia is probably only the beginning. The USSR's 'Solidarnosc' may be nearer than anyone thinks.

## Tory plans for coal

As previously, the guest speakers at this year's conference of the UDM were Coal Board chair Robert Haslam and Tory coal minister Michael Spicer.

Haslam explained that the Coal Board wants six-day working in all pits, not just the new ones. It wants to get rid of fixed pit holidays, to change the present three-shift pattern to four a day, and to have more arrangements whereby a group of miners contract for a job in return for a fee.

Haslam urged miners to moderate their "confrontational approach" — "I really wince when I hear British Coal referred to as the enemy" — and pro-

mised that only five pits would close this year if there were no strikes!

Spicer addresses the conference today (Tuesday). He has already told Parliament that he is looking to *treble* productivity in the pits, already at record figures.

The UDM's response to all this has been to suggest that they will go along with plans to privatise the pits.

Meanwhile, the Labour Research Department has just reported on the cost in lives and injuries of the Coal Board's drive to make the pits ripe for selling off. Even three years ago, deaths and major injuries were running at five times the rate in other industries, and at a higher level even than the construction industry.

## Golding and NCU

The conference of the telecom engineers' union NCU has voted by a majority of 56% to 44% to call for the resignation of its general secretary John Golding.

Golding has been ditched not for selling out NCU members but because of allegations about his personal life. In January of this year the *News of the World* printed a story about Golding's alleged sex life.

Yes, Golding should be sacked — but not for any alleged personal goings-on.

### From page 1

the boredom and alienation of life in Mrs Thatcher's jungle. Thatcher's noisy 'crusade' has about as much to do with stamping out violence as J Edgar Hoover's campaign had to do with stamping out crime.

In his time as General Secretary he has presided over a series of sell-outs. Only last year he narrowly survived a motion which called for his resignation over his appalling handling of the 1987 Telecom strike.

So far Golding has said nothing about the NCU conference decision. APEX, of which he is a member, wrote to the NCU before the vote arguing that it would be illegal to discuss the resolution.

Let's kick out the wholesale hooligans and wreckers — the Tory Government, and the profiteers whom it serves! That is the only way to a society based on human solidarity and cooperation — a society which fosters care and respect for others, rather than the spirit of devil take the hindmost.

# Lacking focus

By Alan Johnson

The second Socialist Conference in Chesterfield on 11-12 June drew 2200 people. It set up a national steering committee, called for regional Socialist Conference groups and planned a campaign Conference on the poll tax in the autumn.

All that was good. But it was left to a fringe meeting called by Wallasey Constituency Labour Party to provide a forum for Labour Party members to discuss Neil Kinnock's attacks on Party democracy, his threat to impose candidates on CLPs and his move against unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Some 25 CLPs were represented at the fringe meeting. They enthusiastically backed proposals for an exchange of contacts, a CLP newsletter and a Conference of CLPs before Labour Party Conference in the autumn. Richard Aplin, secretary of Wallasey CLP, spoke of the need to forge joint action. We must resist the moves towards policy by market research and the dictatorship of Walworth Road.

The gathering should not have been left to the fringe, but should have been brought into the heart of the Socialist Conference. Why wasn't it?

The Chesterfield Conference organisers have not answered a central question. Is this to be a project aimed at building a new labour movement from the bottom up, in parallel to the old one; or is it aimed at transforming, renovating and revolutionising the existing movement?

### Concrete

No-one wants to give up joint work around concrete struggles and joint debate between socialists in and out of the Labour Party. But a real problem does remain.

Only a few among the Conference organisers have come out clearly for a new socialist party. But many more are toying with the idea.

The notion of an 'independent left' is often counterposed to the struggle inside the Labour Party. It is sometimes a badge of honour for one of the sponsoring groups, the Socialist Society. (This is a loose network, mostly of academics, set up about six years ago).

In their leaflet they argued "The Socialist Society's independence, as an organisation, from the immediate imperative of inner-party struggles enables it to concentrate its energies on the Conference's ob-



Tony Benn in Chesterfield

jectives." They gave as the reason for not forming a new party for "the foreseeable future", the fact that there is a "reality we inherit from Labour's historical origins in the trade unions, an organisational legacy that is strengthened by Britain's electoral system".

Richard Kuper has gone one step further, and argued that this 'legacy' should be thrown away in favour of "a new alliance between the new social forces and a transformed trade union movement" and proportional representation. In other words the Labour Party is finished or at least these socialist have given up on the struggle within it.

### Defer

So the Conference was unfocused — geared to building a new party not to fighting seriously within the Labour Party. The overwhelming majority of delegates were Labour Party members, but we were urged to defer to those who are not.

The large and enthusiastic leadership rally for Benn and Heffer on

the Saturday night was not an adequate substitute for a serious conference of the Labour left.

One of the strengths of the Chesterfield network should be its potential to forge joint work between socialists in and out of the Labour Party. But socialist politics cannot progress in splendid isolation from "the immediate imperatives of inner-Party struggles".

The answer is not to shy away from the fight in the Labour Party because of the old IS/SWP fear of getting lost in the minutiae of internal battles, but to fighting the battle in a new way — turning the Labour Party outwards, and making it a fighting socialist party, a natural forum for the struggles of the working class.

We have to relate to the real working class of the 1980s and 1990s not the working class of the 1950s. But we can draw those forces into the Party, shake the Party up, make it habitable for those sections of the class who have been traditionally spurned by the labour movement, and renovate the Party politically.

## Anti-Orange march

# A diversionary protest

This Saturday, 18 June, the Labour Committee on Ireland, Anti-Fascist Action, and the Troops Out Movement will be demonstrating in Chesterfield.

Under the banner of the "Campaign against Loyalist/Fascist Parades", they are protesting against an Orange Order march commemorating 1688. The fascist National Front, they say, will be out in force on the Orange march.

Several different issues are mixed up here. Are we to protest against any commemoration of 1688? Against Orangeist's commemorating it? Of against fascists marching?

A counter-demonstration against fascists marching would certainly be called for, whatever pretext the fascists chose. According to the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight*, however, the Orange Order have told the NF they will not be welcome, and no large organised NF presence is likely in Chesterfield.

There is, however, an organised

discrimination and repression.

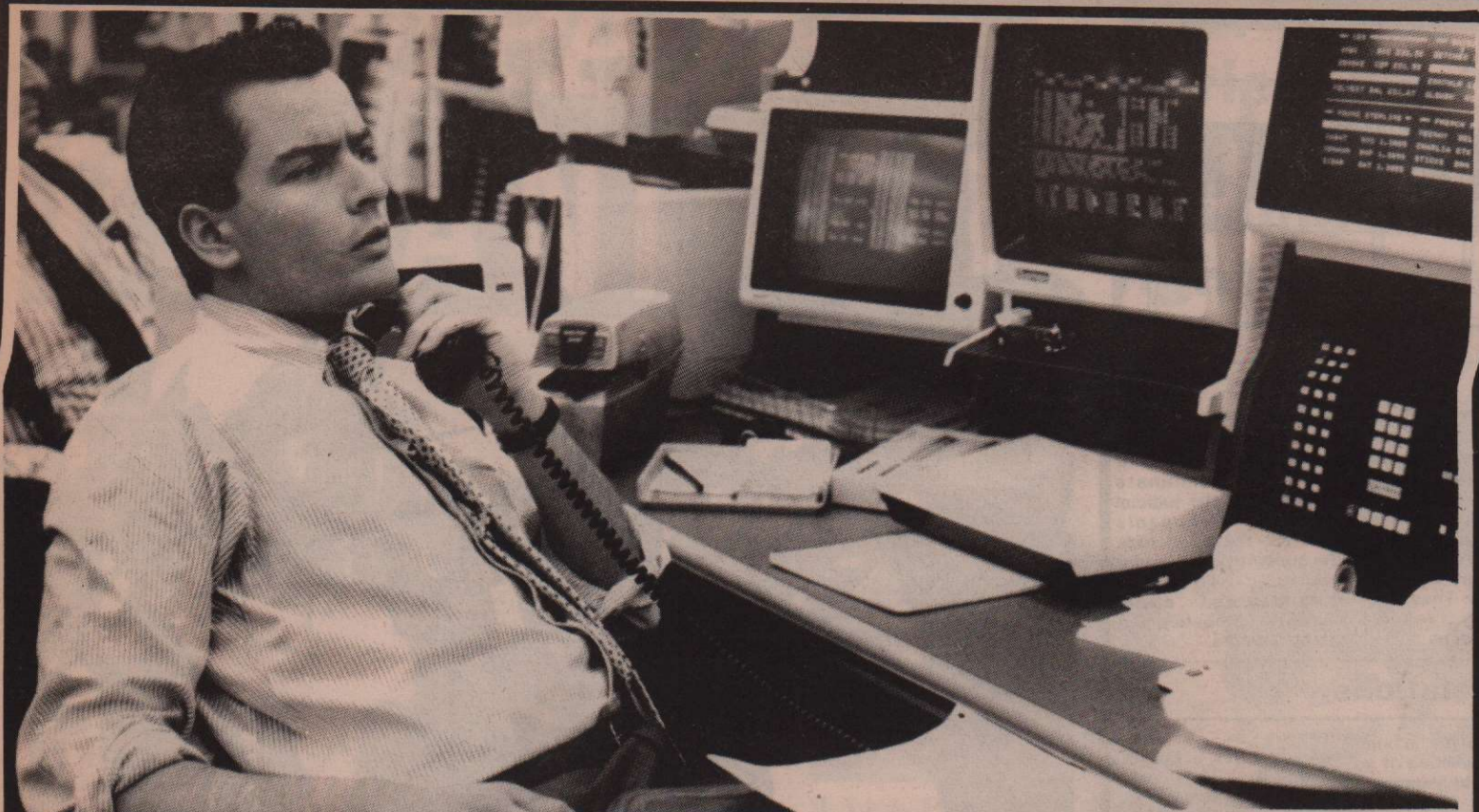
We must do so on the basis of seeking consistent democracy. To do so on the basis of seeking to suppress the Protestants — as one would seek to suppress fascists — is to go down a blind alley leading to the sort of communal warfare we can see in Beirut.

The organisers of the counter-demonstration seem to oppose any commemoration of 1688, even that organised by the Labour council in Chesterfield (which was an important site in the events of 1688). This is also folly. 1688 was followed by terrible results for the Catholic people of Ireland. But first and foremost it was the decisive struggle in establishing the supremacy of the Parliament over the King of England. Democrats should not leave the commemoration of that victory to Orangeists, still less to fascists.

The counter-demonstration is a diversion. Anti-fascists should instead be prepared to respond to any call for assistance made by the organisers of the Lesbian Strength march.

Socialists differ profoundly from the communalist politics of the great majority of Northern Ireland's Protestants. But to brand those politics 'fascist' is inaccurate. We must support Northern Ireland's Catholics against





The film 'Wall Street': a picture of the white-collar end of the dog-eat-dog ethic of Thatcher's Britain and Reagan's US

# Thatcher's strength is Labour's failure

Margaret Thatcher is on shaky ground with her ideological crusade. In the battle to define Britain's values she is losing.

A MORI poll, published in the Sunday Times, shows a majority in favour of a "mainly socialist society" — a society "in which public interests and a more controlled economy dominate, and in which caring for others is better rewarded than the creation of wealth — rather than a "mainly capitalist society".

Most unpopular among Tory policies are the poll tax, the privatisation of water and electricity and cuts in the NHS. 60% of all

## EDITORIAL

voters favour public as against private health provision — including 41% of Tory voters. A quarter of Tory supporters said they favoured a predominantly socialist system!

Perhaps the most telling figure is that though 49% of those questioned said they would prefer a mainly socialist society only 40% supported Labour.

The message is clear. Thatcher has not succeeded in breaking down support for the Welfare State, even among her own supporters she's

failed.

But Labour has failed, too. By presenting a clear alternative, by going on the offensive in support of the Welfare State, by challenging Thatcher on the ideological front, Labour could build a huge movement against the Tories. But Labour's leaders have failed.

Kinnock's response has been to shift over onto Thatcher's ground. The response to privatisation? Drop Labour's commitment to nationalisation. The response to cuts? Say it will be impossible to restore them. The response to unemployment? Say that getting the jobless figure down to one million in the near future is utopian dream-

ing. The response to the Poll tax? Mealy-mouthed shilly-shallying.

Why should people support the Labour Party if all there is on offer is a cheap imitation of the Tories? The Labour Party under Kinnock's leadership has thrown away opportunity after opportunity. It has virtually written itself off the political agenda.

It's not too late! The challenge to the Labour Party leadership by Tony Benn and Eric Heffer gives us a chance to re-raise socialist ideas, to make Labour into a real alternative to the Tories.

The support is there for socialism — Labour must go out and build on it.

## Anglo-Irish deal stagnates

By Ian Swindale

Last Monday's Panorama TV programme on Ireland had Tory Minister Tom King hopefully predicting that talks for a new settlement could soon start with both Unionist and nationalist leaders. As the programme was broadcast, these hopes had already been dashed by a Southern Irish Court's refusal to extradite IRA suspect Pat McVeigh.

The main achievement of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, signed by Britain and Ireland 2½ years ago, has simply been to survive despite strong Loyalist opposition. That survival has forced some Loyalist leaders to make concessions, or at least to appear to make concessions, in order to get back into the political decision making process.

Some Unionist leaders have said they will back Catholic-Protestant power sharing if Britain scraps its deal with Dublin. Ian Paisley continues to protest that Britain treats Northern Ireland worse than it did its colonies — "at least the Viceroy was resident, ours is an absentee Viceroy" — and insists that he will never agree to power sharing. But he and official unionist leader James Molyneux have secret proposals for a new Northern Ireland assembly with powerful committees to take over the functions currently being carried out by Tom King's team of Ministers. The Catholic SDLP would be granted the chairs of the committees in proportion to their strength in the Assembly and an 'external affairs committee' would enable the Unionists to meet Irish government Ministers "on an equal footing".

John Hume of the SDLP pointed out that in the Agreement Britain had committed itself to support for a united Ireland if a majority of people in the Six Counties vote for it. The chief obstacle to a united Ireland is thus, irrefutably not Britain but the Irish Protestants. Hume concluded that the IRA should stop its military campaigns so that the political task of working out an agreement for unification could seriously begin. Exactly what the SDLP has to offer to that political task is another matter.

Gerry Adams, startlingly agreed that the Protestants have the right to self-determination. But he insisted that the presence of British troops in Northern Ireland and the special relationship existing between the Loyalists and those troops meant that nothing could be achieved until Britain withdrew and assumed that withdrawal would automatically mean a united Ireland.

The Unionist leaders may meet SDLP leaders before the end of the year providing three conditions are met.

- 1) The SDLP must agree not to meet with Sinn Fein during the talks.
- 2) The three civil servants from Southern Ireland permanently resident in the North under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Agreement should be recalled "perhaps for a review of the Anglo-Irish Agreement" and
- 3) There should be no meetings of the Anglo-Irish Conference while the talks are in progress.

The pressure applied by the survival of the Anglo-Irish Agreement has produced some movement. But, as yet, not much. In the meantime it has poisoned Catholic-Protestant relations at the grass roots more than ever.

# Break this consensus!

At 9.15 on Channel 4 TV next Sunday there will be a Labour landslide. In a film called a 'Very British Coup', by a Labour MP called Chris Mullin, a Sheffield steel worker called Harry Perkins is the leader of the Labour Party and wins a huge majority.

He is a Labour Prime Minister who does what he said he will do: that is what the film is about.

The Labour Party leadership election is about advancing that General Election from 9.15 next Sunday on Channel 4 to where we are now. The campaign is not about Eric or myself. It is about enfranchising the Party in 1988, to allow Party members to give a judgement on the direction we believe the Party is taking and the

## Tony Benn's speech in Chesterfield last weekend

direction which it should take.

If there is a stagnation about British politics — as there is — it is for a very simple reason. There is now a wide area of bi-partisanship between the leaders of all political parties which has snuffed out real debate.

Let me give you an example of it. There is bi-partisanship on NATO. As a Labour candidate in Chesterfield last summer I had to go round telling people that if they voted Labour not a penny would come off the budget. It would just be moved

from Polaris to more ships and tanks and aircraft to keep the Russians from landing in the Chesterfield College of Technology.

You cannot win an election on that basis.

You cannot win an election by saying, Vote Labour and the American bases will stay. You cannot go to the people and say the same as the people you are opposing. You can't go on supporting the repression in Northern Ireland. When the shoot-to-kill policy was applied to Gibraltar, our front bench congratulated the government on what those SAS men had done!

We are contesting the Labour Party leadership because we believe that in the situation confronting working people in Britain today, and around the world, the socialist answer is required. If working people get together, they have the strength to change everything. That's what socialism is about.

Without wishing to upset any sensitive person here — it might be a Tribune reader or someone from Marxism Today — let me restate the class struggle. There is a difference of interest between those who sweat their guts out creating the wealth and the people who own it!

I did not join the Labour Party 47 years ago to have our manifesto written by MORI or Dr. Gallup or a Harris pollster. I do not believe you can win support unless people believe that you will do what you

say you will do.

The greatest illusion of all is the illusion carefully preserved in the latest Labour Party policy review, that the state is neutral.

Are we going to be asked to believe that the day Neil Kinnock goes into No.10 Downing Street, Peter Wright will return from Tasmania to help him maintain the viability of his government? Are we to believe that the civil servants are longing to reverse the policies they devised at the behest of Mrs Thatcher?

That the military are waiting to give up their nuclear weapons, itching for the chance to destroy instruments of war which make them powerful? That the magistrates and the police will readily give us power? Do you really believe that will happen?

We must look at the structures of the state as well as the policies of the government.

The complaint is not the Mrs Thatcher does what she wants to do, but that by our acquiescence we strengthen and legitimise and entrench what she does in the consciousness of people because they think there is no alternative.

What we have to say to people in this period running up to the election is you have the power if you stick together to change our future; and the only question is how long will it be before people realise the power they have, and how long before we tell them how powerful they are.

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**Next week's Socialist Organiser will include the new issue of Women's Fightback as a pull-out. The week after we will have a special pamphlet-format double issue on the Labour Party's policy reviews.**



# GRAFFITI

## Blacks and the law

'Black people are unfairly treated by our criminal justice system,' so says Vivien Stern, director of NACRO.

NACRO has just published a report, based on Home Office figures, which shows that black offenders are twice as likely to go to

prison as white offenders, even if they have no previous convictions.

Black people are less likely to be granted bail, and, once in court are less likely than whites to be acquitted. They also, on average, receive longer sentences.

The report says that there needs to be real attempts to eliminate racism from the judicial process. Proposals NACRO make include the appointment of more black judges, magistrates, court clerks and probation and prison officers.

## Improved industrial relations

VSEL is a naval shipyard company in Barrow in Furness. It was privatised two years ago and a quarter of shares in the company were sold to the workforce. A clever idea — give workers a stake in the company and they're less likely to cause trouble.

But now the majority of the VSEL workers are

threatening strike action over the introduction of a fixed fortnight summer holiday.

There have been two other disputes recently — both of which have led to lockouts. So much for 'improved industrial relations' bought by worker share ownership.

Local union official Frank Ward has been

quoted as saying: 'Nobody gives a bugger about shares. They never saw buying them as anything other than a transaction which would help them put down a deposit on a house or buy a bathroom.'

## Surprise!

It was a pleasant surprise to see Eric Clapton performing with Dire Straits at the Nelson Mandela birthday concert last weekend.

Eric probably qualifies as the boring old fart of the music world, and Dire Straits aren't much better — so it's certainly not in musical terms that Clapton's appearance should be welcomed.

But back in the '70s Eric was one of those rock musicians whose racist remarks led to the setting up of Rock Against Racism. Nice to see Eric's had a change of heart.

## Glasnost and history

Soviet schoolchildren have had their history exams for this year cancelled.

Officials have finally admitted that the history books that have been the core of the curriculum for years are so 'inaccurate' as to be worse than useless.

For this year the exam is to be replaced by an 'oral discussion'. For next year it has been suggested that a panel

of historians and economists should assemble a learning pack of agreed articles, to be used as a stop gap until the books are rewritten.

Despite the current spirit of glasnost, there seems little reason to expect that the new 'official' history of the Soviet Union should be any more reliable than previous ones.

## Imperialist bombs

Ships bought by Jewish leaders to ship concentration camp survivors to Palestine were blown up by MI6 in 1947.

The operation, carried out under the orders of Ernest Bevin, the then Labour Foreign Secretary, involved attaching limpet mines to the hulls of the ships, which were to be used by the Bricha escape organisation, when they docked in Italy. The devices were timed to go off once the ships had left Italian or Yugoslavian territorial waters.

The incident is mentioned in a new spy novel, 'The Friends' by Nigel West, aka Rupert Allason, a Tory MP. But the Observer newspaper has discovered that the events mentioned actually took place.

The MI6 officers involved insist that the bombs were timed to explode whilst the ships had

only caretaker crews on board, and that refugees were in no danger. But there is as yet unverifiable

information that on one or two occasions the devices blew up ships at sea carrying refugees.



## Taxes

Lester Piggot has been stripped of his OBE for fiddling his taxes — by the Queen, who doesn't pay any at all and never has done.

## Corgis

The *News of the World* revealed recently that the Royal corgis are not house trained.

So if you thought your taxes went to pay for the NHS, you were wrong. They pay for new Ax ministers in Buck House, Balmoral, Windsor, Sandringham, Glamis, and the other Royal houses.

## Home truths

Glasnost watchers would be well advised to have a look at International Pravda every now and again.

The latest issue contains readers letters on the problems of... decorating. Don't all rush at once, DIY fanatics. You won't find any handy hints on putting up shelves or installing your own French windows. No. It seems the main problem for would be home improvers in the great socialist motherland is

getting their hands on basic materials.

One correspondent had to travel from Kursh to Kiev for a tin of whitewash. But this is not the worst of it. He goes on: 'My main worry is wallpaper. Kursh gets deliveries twice a year. They usually deliver something dull, insipid and sparsely floral and not in very large amounts.'

Somehow I don't think Mikhail and Raisa would stand for this!



A 'new mood of anger'. Photo: Ian Swindale.

# End of the downturn?

The world has reached a great watershed: or at least *Socialist Worker's* view of it has.

For many years now *Socialist Worker* has insisted that we are in the depths of a historic 'downturn' in working-class militancy which began in the mid-'70s.

The miners' strike of 1984-5 was 'an extreme example of the downturn'. Activists who called for the struggle to be broadened out into a general strike were failing to understand this 'downturn'. Again and again, starting from the earliest weeks of the strike, *SW* insisted that it was about to collapse — and when the miners eventually were defeated, then of course that was the clearest proof of the 'downturn' there could ever be.

The strikes early this year by and in solidarity with health workers were also, it seems, part of the 'downturn'. *Socialist Worker* opposed strikes on 14-15 March, and derided efforts to build a national health workers' shop stewards' committee.

Now, after all these years, the 'downturn' is over! It has been replaced by a 'new mood of anger', according to an *SW* leaflet at the Chesterfield Socialist Conference.

The health workers' strikes now count as evidence for the 'new mood', together with the Ford strike, the movement against the poll tax in Scotland, and the seafarers' struggle. Why the health workers' strikes did not count as evidence of a 'new mood' when they were actually happening, or why other struggles in recent years could not be such evidence, *SW* does not explain. But *SW's* conclusion is entirely clear: out goes the 'downturn', in comes the 'new mood of anger'.

Now 'we are living through a period of global capitalist crisis in which socialist ideas have to be

translated into practical intervention in the struggles of the mass of people'. The *SW* line used to be that any concern for winning majorities — the 'mass of the people' — led straight to reformism (because, in the downturn, the majority of workers are not ready to fight), and that revolutionaries must concern themselves with the militant minorities. Now they seem to be moving towards a new approach.

## Abstract

The slogans at the end of *SW's* Chesterfield leaflet were very much in the spirit of the last few years. 'No fudging on socialist principles! Reject the new realism! Build a fighting socialist organisation!' All very good, but very abstract, and in line with *SW's* approach of trying to build its own mini-party on the margins of the labour movement by declamations and denunciations, instead of getting involved inside the movement.

So it is still not clear what *SW's*

new approach will be. We should watch that space.

Gerry Bates, Camden.

## Militant in NZ

It may be of interest to you to know that very lengthy bourgeois press articles attacking the British *Militant* tendency are reprinted in full in the bourgeois press here.

Ultra-right Labour politicians here warn the New Zealand public of the fearsome possibility that the (at present very timid) centre-left renovators in the Labour Party will carry through a *Militant*-style operation here with all its 'horrific' consequences.

If only the cretinous posturing of the *Militant* in Liverpool had achieved something worthwhile, it could have had an exemplary effect in places like New Zealand — quite apart from the UK itself.

Harry Holland, Wellington, New Zealand.

# Appeal from Poland

Dear friends, *Freedom and Peace* ask you for help and cooperation. Our objectives are:

- \* National independence
- \* Human rights defence
- \* Fight against militarism
- \* For ecological consciousness.

We deal with the problem of conscientious objectors, the army oath (which in Poland is one of loyalty to the Soviet Union), and military service in general.

Lately we have protested against pollution and the nationwide effects of the explosion in Chernobyl. Our actions have the character of non-violent protests and demonstra-

tions. We also invite you to commemorate the anniversary of Otto Schimek's death, a German soldier executed in 1944 after his refusal to shoot Poles. It falls on 16 November.

Contact us, writing to the address below.

*Freedom and Peace*, P.S. Please send us your publications.

Tomek Wacko, ul.Gersona 7/10, Wroclaw, Poland.

Leszek Budrewicz, ul.Swidnicka 6/7, 50-067 Wroclaw, Poland.

Marek Krukowski, Pl. PKWN 14/9, 50-045 Wroclaw, Poland.



# CAMPAIGN ORGANISER

Four pages on the Tories' new 'Employment Training' scheme and how to fight it.

## Work for the dole? No way!

From September the Government plans to bring in another cheap-labour scheme, 'Employment Training'. For unemployed people over 18, it means working 40 hours a week for dole plus £10. It will replace the Community Programme — which at least pays trade union rates and the abortive Job Training Scheme. No new money will be spent to provide real training. The new 'Employment Training' scheme threatens to be for over-18s what YTS is for 16-18s — cheap labour, and increasingly forced cheap labour. The 'ET' scheme will theoretically be voluntary, but in practice unemployed people will face increasing threats of having their benefit cut off unless they go on a scheme. Clearly the Government is moving towards the US system of 'Workfare' — working for your dole.

The TUC, shamefully, has supported ET. But the new scheme can be stopped! This broadsheet discusses how.



### Jim Denham looks at the background

The Manpower Services Commission came into existence early in 1974, shortly after Edward Heath's Tory government had been brought down by the miners.

It was one of many "tripartite" bodies involving representatives of the government, the employers (via the CBI) and the TUC. It gave the TUC leaders the pleasant sensation of having real power and influence in economic policy — which is one reason why they have been so keen to defend it ever since.

At first the MSC was a modest affair with a small budget and just 40 core staff. Its role was to plan and co-ordinate existing training and employment programmes, but not to take over control of them.

All of this changed dramatically in the mid-70s, as unemployment rose to the embarrassing level of 1.7 million and youth unemployment reached 15%. The Labour Government (by then led by Jim Callaghan) had to be seen to do something, and the result was the first of the "Special Employment Measures" — the "Youth Opportunity Programme" (YOP) and the "Job Creation Programme".

Over the years such "Special Employment Measures" were to

take up more and more of the MSC time, money and energy, while other services which actually provided real training — TOPs schemes and Skillcentres — were ruthlessly cut back.

The first suggestion that such schemes should be compulsory came from a Labour minister, Albert Booth, who wanted to deny dole payments to youth who refused a place on YOP.

### Permanent

From 1980 onwards, the new Conservative Government accelerated the process of running down TOPs and the old apprentice system and made the "Special Employment Measures" (originally envisaged as temporary stop-gap measures) a major and permanent feature of the economy. By the time YTS replaced the discredited YOPs in 1983/4 and the Community Programme was in operation for the adult unemployed, the budget for "Special Employment Measures" was over £900 million — more than the total MSC budget of three years before.

The TUC gave YTS full support, despite increasing disquiet amongst rank and file trade unionists, who were worried by the high level of 'job substitution' (i.e. properly employed workers being replaced by "trainees") and the appalling health and safety record of YOPS.

The TUC leaders replied that they had obtained great improvements including firm guarantees regarding training quali-

ty, health and safety and equal opportunities. They had also convinced the MSC to increase the training allowance from £23.50 to the princely sum of £25!

TUC General Secretary Len Murray was so enthusiastic about the scheme that he personally appeared in YTS advertising!

It was a similar story with Community Programme, which replaced the Community Enterprise Programme in 1982. The old scheme has paid an average of nearly £100; under CP this was cut to £65.

Initial opposition from the voluntary sector and individual unions was undermined by the enthusiastic support given to CP by the TUC. Interestingly, the TUC justified its position by explaining that the government had threatened to introduce a scheme which would pay participants their benefit plus £15-£20.

### Restructured

Clare Short describes what happened next: "At the same time (as the introduction of CP) public sector services were constantly cut back. The only money that was available for CP schemes. As public services were cut back, more and more projects caring for the elderly, improving community buildings and restoring the environment were funded by the MSC.

"But the jobs provided were temporary and very low paid. The adult labour market was being restructured in exactly the same way as the

youth labour market. Unionisation was weakened and low-paid. Insecure jobs became acceptable alternatives to unemployment."

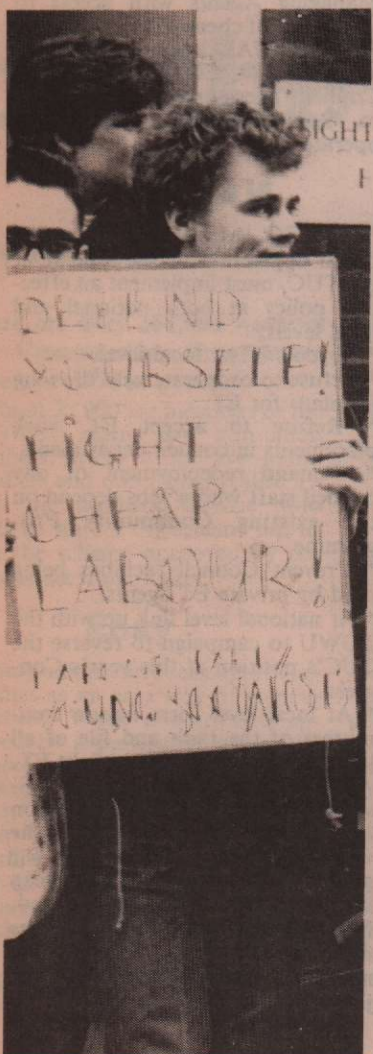
Now of course, even the old CP seems relatively good when compared with Government proposals for "Employment Training." The real lesson the TUC ought to learn from all this is that even though their participation in the MSC may have delayed some of the worst excesses of the government, the long term result has been to legitimise a continual erosion of the pay, conditions and expectations of unemployed people.

### Workfare

The "Workfare" principle that clearly underlies ET would have been totally unacceptable to any self-respecting trade unionist only a few years ago: now the TUC supports ET on the grounds that if they oppose it the Government will come up with something "worse" (what exactly could be "worse" than the 'benefit-plus' ET is not entirely clear).

Even the TUC's much vaunted ability to veto schemes on the MSC has now disappeared, as the employers have a built in majority over TUC representatives on the new "Employment Commission".

It's time the TUC got out of the MSC/Employment Commission and started to fight workfare. If there ever was a case for staying "on the inside" to fight for "reforms", that time is long gone...





# WORKFARE — A THREE

## The new scheme: what it means

By Richard Aplin

It seems impossible to imagine any trade union leader accepting a doubling of working hours and a cut in pay for their members, but that is precisely what the TUC did to Community Programme workers on 20 May this year when they voted to support the Government's new work-for-dole scheme, 'Employment Training'.

Community Programme workers currently earn about £56 for 20 hours work. Under ET they do 40 hours' work for benefit plus £10.

The Tories aim to push 600,000 people through the scheme every year. That is three times the size of CP. In many areas more people will

be working for their dole on ET than for any other employer.

The Government claim that ET will succeed as a voluntary scheme because it will attract people on the basis of 'quality training'. The truth is much different. The total money available for training 600,000 ET workers is less than is currently available for the 200,000 CP workers, yet they say CP is being abolished because of its lack of training!

### Skill

Martin Fletcher, a senior manager for NACRO, let the cat out of the bag by saying that NACRO will offer training in such skills as 'mixing'. A very useful 'transferable skill', he claimed, because 'If you can mix cement you can mix a cake'. Course two is evidently 'How to bullshit'.

A very important feature of ET is that two thirds of the workers will be placed in normal workplaces.

The aim is to get people working for their dole money next to workers earning a proper wage — one of the best ways of driving down wages for everyone. Many bosses will sack existing employees and replace them with ET labour.

### Rights

Workers' rights like the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Sex and Race Discrimination Acts will be denied to ET participants because the Government will label them 'trainees' rather than employees.

If ET succeeds, it will not be voluntary. How many people do you know who would volunteer to work for their dole?

As JTS proved, the unemployed will say "NO" to work-for-dole. The Government will be forced to introduce benefit cuts and suspensions for people who refuse a place on the scheme ie, make it compulsory.

**TUC  
agrees  
to  
'work-  
fare'**

By Jim Denham

The last meeting of the TUC General Council voted narrowly to give "conditional support" to the government's new Employment Training Scheme (ET).

This vote came despite the fact that ET plainly fails to meet any of the TUC's much vaunted '5 principles', by which all such schemes are supposed to be judged. These are:

1. All schemes must be voluntary.
2. Schemes must pay the rate for the job.
3. Quality training must be provided.
4. Trainees must have full employee status and protection under the law.
5. Trade union approval must be obtained at local level.

ET will pay just dole money plus £10, doing away with the rate for the job presently paid on Community Programme Schemes, and Employment Minister Norman Fowler has repeatedly failed to give a straightforward assurance that ET will be voluntary.

ET's funding arrangements make talk about 'quality training' a joke, and trainees will not be covered by Employment Protection and anti-discrimination legislation. The unions have already lost their powers to veto schemes at local and at national level.

### Edmonds

Despite this the General Council gave ET 'conditional support', to be reviewed again three months after the scheme's introduction in September. The vote was clinched by the GMB General Secretary, John Edmonds, who performed a last minute about-face despite having publicly denounced the scheme for months. Edmonds claimed that a recent letter from Norman Fowler to Norman Willis made significant concessions to the TUC's objections to the scheme. This is nonsense: Fowler's letter contains no new concessions whatsoever. ET remains what it always was: a cheap labour scheme paying benefit plus



Temporary, part-time, casual — and not

£10 to the vast majority of participants.

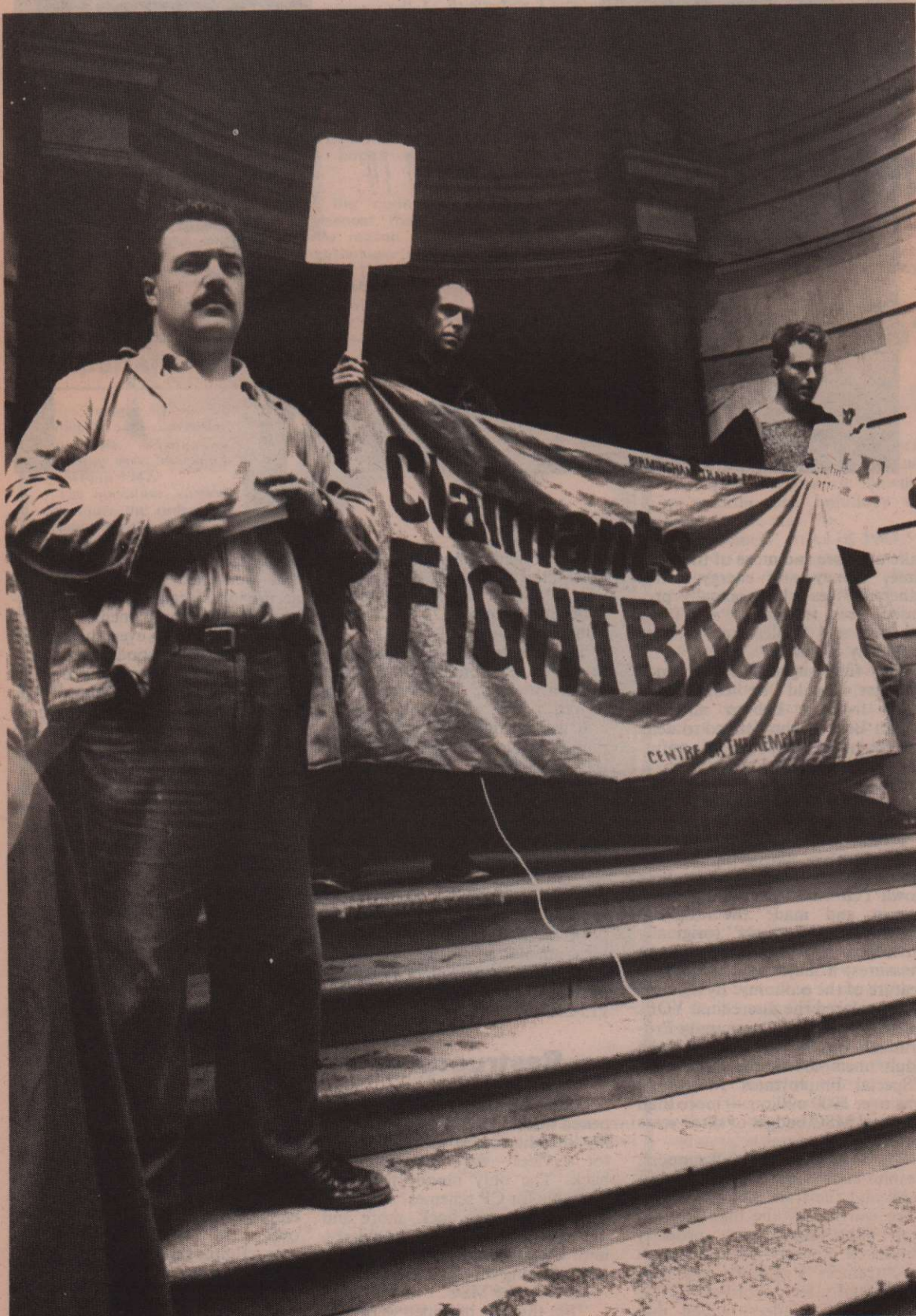
The General Council's decision was quickly followed by an announcement from the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, giving Labour councils the green light to put in their bids to become ET Managing Agents with access to thousands of cheap-labour trainees. However, NALGO and the TGWU voted against ET at the General Council. These unions hold the key to local authorities' ability to operate ET.

### NALGO

NALGO, which has so far led union opposition to the scheme at the TUC, must implement an effective policy at both national and local levels;

- \* Boycott ET at local level.
- \* Refuse to cooperate with drawing up plans for ET.
- \* Refuse to accept ET work placements in council departments.
- \* Demand redeployment of any council staff whose jobs depend on the existing Community Programme.
- \* Prevent Council facilities being used by private ET agents.
- \* At national level link up with the TGWU to campaign to reverse the TUC's position at this year's Congress.
- \* At local level form liaison committees of the rank and file of all local authority unions, to fight ET.

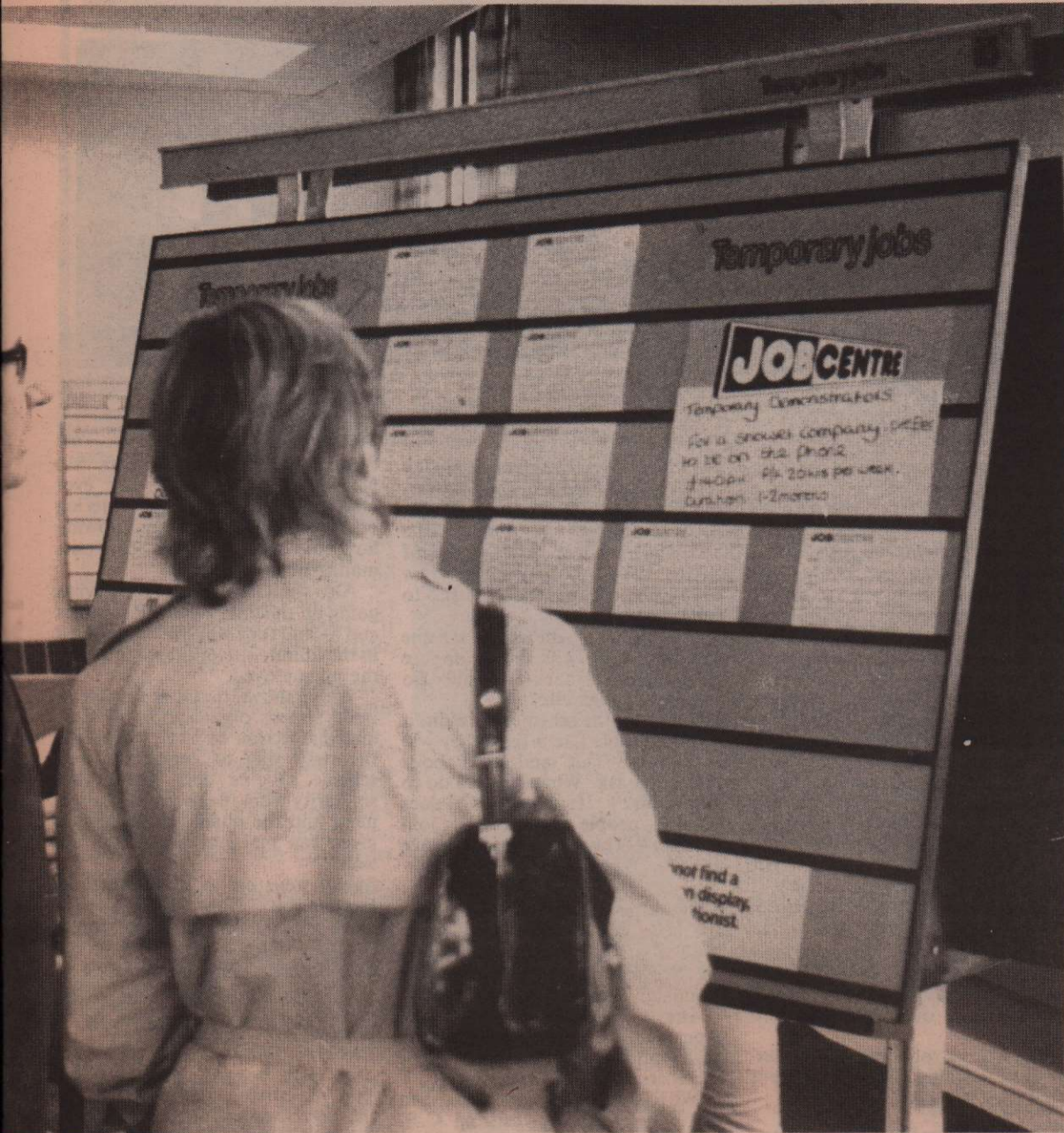
ET is a major step towards US-style 'Workfare'. It is an attack on the unemployed and on the employed; local authority jobs will gradually be replaced by cheap labour trainees if ET goes ahead. NALGO must continue to lead the fight against such schemes. We need real training leading to real jobs.



Protest against JTS. Photo: G. Makin



# AT TO ALL WORKERS



many of them. Photo: John Harris

## How to defeat the Tories' new scheme

By Richard Aplin

**Can we defeat this government on something as central to its economic and social strategy as 'Employment Training'?**

Many miners lost their jobs, their houses or even their lives in their year-long battle with the Tories, and they lost. What chance have partially organised CP workers and unorganised unemployed workers got?

### Worse

Some people conclude that the labour movement has no choice but to involve ourselves in ET in order to improve it from within. History is lost on such fools. Ever since MSC schemes began, none have changed for the better. Every new scheme has been worse than the one before it. To involve ourselves in ET will simply give it credibility and pave the way for even worse things in the future.

Others suggest that if we explain to the Tories the effect ET will have on wages and conditions then they will suddenly see the light. But such effects are the expressed desire of the government, not some accidental side-effect.

**The way to defeat the scheme is to organise scheme workers like 'proper' workers i.e. organise them into a fighting union that can take on their immediate bosses (the CP agencies) and win solidarity from other sections of the working class.**

98% of present CP agencies are either local authorities or 'charitable trusts'. The government could not get ET off the ground without the cooperation of these bodies. The aim must be to get these organisations to refuse to operate ET, by any form of action and disruption necessary.

### Exploded

CP agencies hate bad publicity. Everyone thinks of the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders, for example, as being a caring organisation. On the Wirral this myth has been exploded.

NACRO locally employs a few hundred CP workers erecting fences around council houses. Recently these workers delivered letters to

## Jobcentre occupation

**Early on Friday 4 June, about 25 T&G members walked into Birkenhead Job Centre. The intention was to occupy the offices to gain publicity for the fight against E.T.**

Banners and posters quickly appeared in the window arousing amazement and support from passers by.

The press, apparently bored with our 'stunts' barely covered the occupation, but when we announced it to be indefinite they soon began

the residents exposing NACRO's declared intention to operate ET. As a result NACRO has been flooded with letters from residents expressing their disgust.

CP workers are low paid and have no savings. Long strikes are a virtual impossibility. Instead other tactics must be employed.

### Disruption

On the Wirral the T&GWU has found lightning health safety checks a very effective form of disruption. Work has been stopped (without loss of pay) on some sites for up to three weeks before health and safety had reached even a minimum standard.

Most CP workers are part-time. That is bad for their wages, but it means that for 2½ days a week they can take any legal action they like against their employer without loss of pay. So occupations are an excellent tactic. They bring publicity; and it is possible to seriously disrupt an agency's work by shuffling their filing system while its head office is being occupied.

Any agency intending to operate ET is a legitimate target for all forms of disruption until it gives a public commitment that it will not operate ET.

Local authorities intending to operate the scheme can also be attacked through the political power of the Labour Party. It is essential that every constituency and District Labour Party has a clear policy of boycott, and that Labour councillors are made to push this policy through to council.

### Threat

The threat of ET to other workers must be made clear. Contact between CP and other workers is essential to ensure that every unionised workplace will refuse placements from ET. This coordination has become even more important since the TUC voted to support ET.

If the campaign is a success, it is unlikely that Norman Fowler will announce on the TV that he is withdrawing his plans for ET. But CP will not be scrapped. It will run in parallel with ET, which will remain a voluntary scheme and then die a slow and quiet death like JTS.

On the back of such a victory we will then be in the position to build a strong national CP trade union structure capable of forcing serious concessions from the government.

# How we organised on the Wirral

By Mick Cashman

**There are over 200,000 workers on Community Programme Schemes (CP) at present.**

About 25,000 are members of the T&GWU, many are non-union members, quite a lot are union members and don't even realise it.

At the moment anyone who wants to start a CP scheme has to have the scheme approved by the appropriate trade union.

### Easy

Some unions have seen approving schemes as an easy way of gaining members. When a scheme is approved by a particular union, the sponsor will often encourage the participants to join that union in return for an easy life from the union concerned. I have come across a number of 'sweetheart' deals on schemes.

The reason for our success in CP recruitment is that we started out with the intention of building genuine union organisation on each site. Yes, we wanted to recruit peo-

ple to the union, but not just for the sake of increasing the membership of the T&GWU. We saw it as a chance to convince large numbers of people of the need to group together to defend their interests and to assist people, many of whom had no experience of trade unions, to understand the need to build a strong trade union movement.

### Ensure

When we go to a CP site to recruit we always ensure that stewards are elected and that they are trained on union courses. We try to make sure that there is regular feedback between the membership, the stewards and the union office.

On the Wirral we have a stewards committee that meets regularly to plan our activity, and the stewards and members are taking on more and more responsibility for helping to organise union activity.

### Lose

We don't intend to lose that fight against the Government's 'work-for-dole' scheme, but even if we do the last three years of CP recruitment will not have been wasted.

The thousands of people who have learnt the importance of unions for the first time, the hundreds of people who have become stewards and learnt how to organise a workplace, won't disappear.

The good thing about helping to organise new trade unionists is that they are enthusiastic. They haven't been demoralised by the bureaucracy of the trade union movement, unlike many of our leaders. They haven't lost the will to fight even though they, like many others, have been sold out by the TUC. They can play an important part in rebuilding the labour movement into an organisation that is capable of defending workers' interests.

### Youth

The Tories are trying to convince a whole generation of people that the unions are old fashioned and unnecessary, and unfortunately some union leaders are helping them. They want people to believe that it is wrong to fight back. Unless we ensure that the CP workers, the youth and the unemployed are part of our movement, then they will win.

**For further information on the campaign against ET, contact Mick Cashman or Richard Aplin at TGWU, 2A Price St, Birkenhead, Merseyside.**



# Replacing despair with hope

**Wirral TGWU Community Programme Joint Shop Stewards Committee has led a 5-month long campaign of action against the new scheme. Shop stewards and union organisers met to discuss the campaign and the lessons it holds.**

The participants were Bob, NACRO shop steward; Karl, Apex Trust senior shop steward; Phil, CTF shop steward; Detsy, Alliance Enterprises shop steward; Sue, ex-Apex Trust shop steward and unemployed T&G activist; Mick, T&G organiser; Richard T&G organiser.

**Bob:** It's important that unions have the right to approve schemes, and it will be a disaster when that's done away with in September. But at the moment a lot of unions are approving CP schemes on the basis that they'll get the membership out of it.

They might give the management a batch of forms and say "There you are — part of the inductions"; and that's the extent of union organisation. There is no intention of servicing those members, and there is no organisation built on the schemes. All kinds of sweetheart deals are worked out, including on Merseyside.

**Phil:** The CTF sites in Liverpool are quite hard to get onto. We wanted to talk to the G&M stewards about the campaign of action against Employment Training. But the G&M blocked it! That's union fighting union. It's stupid. We should stick together.

**Mick:** What we set out to create was a C.P. stewards' organisation on the sites that would last, so they are not reliant on the official all the time. The stewards would be trained up, they'd meet and that organisation would carry on whether we were there or not.

That's worked to a great extent. On the Wirral schemes we've got a lot more stewards and a lot more members that know what's going on. We have more active members than most of the established union branches. We've built it on the basis of participation.

**Richard:** Once we got on the sites — and sometimes you have to force your way in — we haven't really had problems recruiting.

The real job is to keep the members in the union, getting stewards, training them, servicing the site.

**Phil:** The trendy charities like NACRO (the National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders), APEX and the churches are often the worst employers. At CTF we saw fire-exits blocked, windows boarded and fire extinguishers missing. CTF said it couldn't be true.

When we occupied CTF headquarters a week later we found a report from the fire-brigade telling CTF exactly what we told them. CTF had taken no notice of it.

**Sue:** When I brought up Health and Safety at APEX on a really knackered old site, the management said "We can't do too much work on the place. We've been told by head office not to upgrade this building because the landlord will rent it out for a higher price."

**Detsy:** Alliance Enterprises tried to sack me, but Richie came down and got it turned around. Then they said "If you have any trouble in future, come to us, don't go to the union." So I said: "I'll be coming to see you a lot more, anyway. I've just been elected shop steward."

You should have seen them! They hate to think there is someone who can answer them back.

**Sue:** You have to represent your members if management is giving out discipline. Try to get a written warning reduced to a verbal one or get it withdrawn. And recruiting new members is vital.

**Phil:** CTF will try and get all the lads round, all pally and 'help' them elect a steward. They set up stooges to inform on the campaign plans.

Another problem is that some stewards get drawn into becoming supervisors. That's an extra £40-60 in your pocket each week. They use stewards like that.

**Karl:** Last November an incident occurred and I didn't think one of the lads was being treated right. So next morning I took it on myself to set up a picket-line and tell the lads what was going on.

I didn't speak to management but I called up Mick and Richard at the T&G and they came down. Anyway, we were successful and no-one lost pay.

I've got a powerful hold on the employers now because they know I've got the backing of the lads.

**Richard:** As a result of the power we've got on WEP and other APEX sites, they have promoted one worker from part to full time, with full union time. That's a big victory and came soon after we shut their sites with no loss of pay for two weeks over Health and Safety.

They had no proper boots on a NACRO site. We shut it for a morning and hey presto! the boots appeared.

**Richard:** The Tories are looking at what British capitalism will need in the future. They aim at two very different workforces.

One is a core of very highly-skilled people, so we have City Technology Colleges and appeals for industry to sponsor its own training schemes.

Then they want unskilled, highly flexible, non-unionised, low paid workers. The 'workfare' schemes are about training a generation of young people to expect nothing more than that.

**Bob:** They are about conditioning the unemployed and the working class to accept low wages. If you are on £28 a week plus £10 on new C.P. for a 40 hour week and someone offers you £70 a week for the same hours you'll jump at it.

**Mick:** Most managers are dreading the prospect of having to control the workforce on the new job



schemes, disciplining the workforce to work a 5 day week for their dole money. How are they going to do it?

The workers will be resentful at being on the schemes in the first place. There could be a lot of violence. Supervisors could be putting themselves at personal risk.

With a conscripted 'workforce' of 60 or 70 people, some will resist. What will the supervisor do? Dock wages, which leads to more resentment? Or sack workers?

If you sack them, they lose their dole money altogether for six months. That's an explosive situation.

**Detsy:** There is only one step further, and that's forced labour camps or the workhouse. The basic right of every person in this country is democracy and the right to chose. They are taking that right away. They want to get back to the days of touching your cap, 'yes sir, thank you sir' and people standing in line to be picked out 'you, you and you'.

It's like introducing charity instead of legal benefits. Deference is what they are after.

**Richard:** The TUC attitude is very patronising. Firstly they just don't believe that there are proper unionised workplaces on C.P. When we lobbied the T.U.C., TGWU General Secretary, Ron Todd was having a go at us about the occupations, threatening to publicly disassociate himself.

He didn't even want to speak to us. We had to take action at the T&G to get to see him. We decided on a delegation of five, Todd told us we could have four. It was like negotiating with an enemy.

**Detsy:** I got in to see Todd. His attitude was that his job on the Government's Manpower Service Commission and his job in the T&G were distinct. We said to him 'We

pay your wages, your responsibility is to us. What we feel should overshadow the MSC'.

He said he was after the 'best of a bad deal' He was really proud of having upped the pay on the new E.T. scheme from benefit plus £5 to benefit plus £10.

We said: 'No, the whole scheme is wrong. The TUC should oppose it.' He just sat back and said 'Do you want a cigarette?'

But when the scheme comes in, it will hit people like a fist. They will look at the TUC and the Labour Party and ask 'What did you do to stop this?' If the TUC does nothing, people will ask 'Why join a union?' The credibility will have gone.

**Karl:** After the Apex occupations, the news got to London. We had ACTSS officials travelling up to see us. Not to talk about building the campaign, but to tell us to stop!

They said our tactics would make Apex pull out of the scheme and that would threaten the jobs of their members who were supervisors.

We told them that if we win, then we've defended the existing C.P. It's Apex policy to pull out if the scheme becomes compulsory. We suggested that ACTSS should campaign to stop the new scheme. They suggested instead that we get a petition up, and get Baroness Sear to speak to the Tory minister Fowler!

**Richard:** It might be pushing the analogy a bit far, but one day they'll be arguing over members in camps for the unemployed. The T&G will be fighting the G&M for the warden, ASLEF and NUR for the rail workers driving the slaves in and ACTSS and MSF will be arguing over the supervisors of the whole bloody thing.

**Mick:** The organisation that has been built on C.P. and the education C.P. workers have gone

through over the last few years will benefit the movement for ever afterwards. They will be entering other workplaces already knowing how to organise, how to resist management.

Also we'll have a layer of activists going on the dole — all CP schemes end — and they will still be involved in the union, attempting to organise the unemployed.

We've shown that it is possible to build serious organisation on C.P. and that action by C.P. workers is the only way to defeat the new scheme. We've also learnt that solidarity from the rest of the movement and the quality of leadership given can make or break that action.

**Sue:** I went on a TUC course at Eastbourne. They asked us for ideas about how to educate young people. Well, I think what Region 6 TGWU has done is the answer. We've made a lot of people aware of things about the schemes, about how to fight, about politics.

**Richard:** We've learnt that cosy deals with bosses, paper membership, and sweetheart deals aren't the way forward but organisation, solidarity and action are. We've learnt lessons about our own movement and how that needs shaking up. We've learnt and are learning how to break the attitude of 'we can't win' among the membership by hard work. Small examples of successful action can build confidence.

It's not surprising that people who have been on the dole for years feel powerless. They have had an 'education' of having no control, of seeing things as inevitable, like the weather.

To change that feeling of powerlessness by activity and replace it by confidence in class organisation — that's been worthwhile.

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# Twenty years after

By Penny Newell

I was 'grown up' in 1968 and, like most other people, I wasn't at Grosvenor Square.

What was I doing? What was 1968 like for the majority? My 1968 memories are very vague about Vietnam. It was a bad war — that was becoming very clear — but I had other things on my mind.

In May '68 I was 21. I had two children and was pregnant for the third time. I remember going to the doctor because I thought I could get an abortion. The Abortion Act had been passed the year before. No more hot baths and gin, I thought.

"Abortion?" said the doctor in amazement. "You're a young healthy woman!" I didn't argue. I just started to worry about how I would manage with another baby.

Twenty years later, we've just beaten David Alton's attempt to change the 1967 Act. But you still can't get an abortion within the time limits in many hospitals. If you can't afford a private abortion, you have the baby.

In 1968 I was living in Brixton. My husband was black, so naturally no white landlord would have us.

"Sorry. No coloureds. No dogs", the cards in the sweet shops used to say. So we lived in cramped conditions with lots of other black families. We had 2 rooms, and shared the cooker with three other families.

Houses were always catching alight because of the dangerous paraffin heaters people used because they were cheap. The rent was high. Black landlords felt no solidarity with their tenants. They wanted to make money. Everyone wanted to go home to the West Indies.

Twenty years later, working class black people still live in the worst housing. The Housing Act will make this worse. Much good housing has been sold to tenants already. Very late, some councils are trying to tackle the legacy of twenty years of racist housing allocation. 90% of the families in bed and breakfast in Southwark borough are black even now.



The Police Bill is now in effect. Photo: Andrew Moore.

In 1968 I was doing cleaning jobs, my husband was mostly unemployed. When he did work, it was in the factories and laundries in the area who were prepared to employ black people.

The Race Relations Act had been passed in '67. This meant that when employers registered vacancies at the Unemployment Benefit Office in Brixton they could no longer say 'no coloureds'. But everyone knew the places that didn't employ black

people.

Twenty years later we still have the Race Relations Act. Some now call themselves equal opportunities employers. But this means little when they are not filling their vacancies — like Lambeth Council, the biggest employer in its area.

In 1968 we found it hard to manage. There were no rent rebates and most of our money went on the rent. I did get a £25 maternity grant to buy things for the baby.

Twenty years later, benefits are shrinking all the time. The maternity grant has been abolished. Rent rebates have been cut. Unemployed people are being forced to work for benefit money, below the poverty line.

In 1968, the Brixton police were bad. They searched black people on the street. They were openly racist. They picked up my husband and took him to Brixton prison. The first I knew about it was a week

later when I got a letter from him on prison paper. What a shock!

I remember going to Brixton police station. I just got blanked. They couldn't tell me what he was being held for. White women who lived with black men were all prostitutes, people said, so it was all right to abuse them.

Twenty years later — the Police Bill passed in 1984 is in full swing. Both of my sons have had the police bursting into their flat and binding them hand and foot on two occasions. The police were in full riot gear with guns. Neither time were my sons charged with anything.

We witness new confidence on picket lines. Marbles were used against police horses at Grosvenor Square, so I understand. You'd need a whole marble factory to stop the police on demonstrations now!

In April 1968 Martin Luther King was murdered. Everyone was talking about black people organising themselves in the United States. Afro hair styles were the latest sensation. Black Power was just around the corner.

Twenty years on: the anniversary of Martin Luther King's historic march is marked by another march on the same route. The Ku Klux Klan mobilise thousands for it.

Black sections are a fact in the Labour Party. We have three black MPs and the first black woman MP. What is their impact? It's hard to tell.

The second generation black working class are very different from the first generation. The riots have changed attitudes. Yet black youth don't have a collective identity that would make them a powerful force — yet.

I also remember music from 1968. Aretha Franklin was in the charts with, "I say a little prayer for you". A new music was on its way from Jamaica to replace rock steady and ska — called reggae.

In the '70s the Anti Nazi League recognised the political power of music. Today, despite many good political lyrics in reggae music, the Communards etc, the top ten is dominated by summer slush pop music. The one exception is Aswad — an Anti-Nazi League band. Bringing back Aretha Franklin, I say.

## Ta Thu Thau, Vietnamese Trotskyist

In 1975 the Vietnamese people won a great victory over the armed might of the US.

They had been struggling against French and then US imperialism for almost 30 years. Their heroism had inspired millions of activists across the world.

Yet today thousands of refugees are fleeing police-state repression and grinding poverty in Vietnam. The country is drained and discredited by its military occupation of Cambodia.

It could have been different. Vietnam is one of the few countries in the world where Trotskyism has had a mass influence. The life of Ta Thu Thau is the story of how that influence was won, and how it was destroyed by Stalinist repression.

Ta Thu Thau was the fourth child of a large and very poor family. His father was a carpenter. In 1925, he began work as a teacher in Saigon. At the age of 20, in 1926, Ta Thu Thau joined the nationalist group Young Annam, which was soon dissolved by the French colonial government.

In 1927 he went to Paris as a student. He joined the Annamite Independence Party (PAI), and soon became a leading figure in it.

In January 1929, following a clash between French right-wingers and PAI supporters, Ta Thu Thau attacked the French Communist

Party (PCF) for its failure to intervene on behalf of the Annamites (South Vietnamese) arrested at this meeting, and wrote about the "bill to be paid by the Colonial Commission of the PCF" for its "counter-revolutionary fractional work" within the PAI. A leaflet written by Ta Thu Thau concluded: "From our unspeakable slavery, we cry out to all the oppressed of the colonies: unite against European imperialism, white or red, if you want a part of the world for yourselves".

But by 1929 Ta Thu Thau had abandoned his earlier nationalist views and entered the Trotskyist Left Opposition. He was 23 years old. He set out his political perspective in a French Trotskyist paper (April 1930):

"The artificially-created indigenous bourgeoisie is not capable of making any revolution... A revolution based on the organisation of the proletariat and peasant masses is the only one capable of liberating the colonies... the question of independence must be bound up with that of the proletarian socialist revolution".

Ta Thu Thau was expelled from France in May 1930. When the clandestine Trotskyist Left Opposition was formed in Saigon in late 1931, he was one of its founders.

But the group soon split into three factions. Ta Thu Thau organised a group which published

a duplicated news-sheet, *Vô San* ('The Proletarian').

Repression against all the Trotskyist factions was severe, and not long in coming. 41 people were arrested, including Ta Thu Thau.

But in the Saigon municipal elections of April-May 1933, Ta Thu Thau was able to carry out legal agitation in collaboration with the Stalinist Nguyễn Văn Tao, the nationalists Nguyễn Văn Ninh, Trần Văn Thạch, Lê Văn Thu, Trịnh Hưng Ngâu, and others. This group constituted a 'workers' list' for the elections.

A French-language newspaper, 'La Lutte', was published to support the campaign (Annamite-language papers were subject to prior censorship), and two candidates from the 'workers' list' won places on the municipal council.

In 1934, this 'united front' of Trotskyists, Stalinists and nationalists formed a group called 'La Lutte', and relaunched the paper.

Their elections to office were annulled, so the group's members presented themselves anew for the municipal election of May 1935. Ta Thu Thau was among those elected.

Sought by the authorities for 'subversive activities by way of the press', he was given a two-year suspended prison sentence in June 1935. He was arrested again in

December 1935.

The coming to power of the Popular Front government in France in June 1936 triggered off a vast popular movement in Indochina, with strikes in the rubber plantations, in the Arsenal, and on the railways, and peasant demonstrations. This movement took shape as the 'Indochinese Congress' at a meeting in August 1936, principally of militants from the 'La Lutte' group and leaders of the constitutional-nationalist party. A committee was formed to prepare a charter of democratic demands.

This 'Congress' movement was banned in September, and Ta Thu Thau was jailed. In the summer of 1937 the French Communist Party — which, because of its Popular Front policy, had shelved the demand for independence for France's colonies — ordered the Vietnamese Stalinists to break with the Trotskyists.

A general strike of railway workers landed Ta Thu Thau back in prison in July 1937. After a hunger strike of 12 days, he was brought back in front of the court on a stretcher.

'La Lutte' became an Annamite-language paper, 'Tranh Dâu', and now supported the Fourth International. In February 1939 Ta Thu Thau was released from prison, and immediately started campaigning for the Colonial Council elections

in April. He was elected with two of his comrades.

War broke out. 'Tranh Dâu' and the group that published it were banned. Ta Thu Thau was deported to the Poulo Condor island concentration camp in October 1940.

After his return from the camp at the end of 1944, Ta Thu Thau worked to build a Socialist Workers' Party. The Japanese coup put an end to French colonial power on 9 March 1945, and replaced it with the government of Bao dai. By the middle of 1945, Ta Thu Thau had made his way to Tonkin (further north), and was helping to publish the clandestine paper of the Socialist Workers' Party of North Vietnam, 'Combat'.

Ta Thu Thau participated in clandestine workers' and peasants' meetings in the mining areas. After the fall of Japan and the coming to power of the Stalinist leader Ho Chi Minh in August 1945, Ta Thu Thau hoped to get back to South Vietnam, but he was arrested by the Vietminh and assassinated in September 1945.

In 1946 Ho Chi Minh told Daniel Guerin: "He was a great patriot, and we mourn him... but all those who do not follow the line we have laid down will be broken".

[Abridged from an account prepared by the Vietnamese Trotskyist Group in France].



## Les Hearn's SCIENCE COLUMN

### Causal links?

Three topics in the scientific and general press last week — leukaemia and Dounreay, miscarriages and VDUs, Alzheimer's disease and aluminium — illustrate the problem of proving a link between harm and its possible causes.

In each case, there is a *statistical* link. At Dounreay, there is about six times as much childhood leukaemia as would be expected on average. A study of 1600 Californian VDU operators has shown an 80% greater chance of miscarriage. And, potentially most far-reaching, the risk of getting a type of dementia called Alzheimer's disease increases as the amount of aluminium (Al) in drinking water. More than 3.5 million people in Britain drink water with higher levels of Al than allowed by European Community regulations and research shows a link even at levels below EC limits.

This has alarmed the water authorities who routinely add Al to some water supplies. This is done to get rid of small particles of solid that might protect harmful bacteria from the chlorine that is added to kill them.

Other causes of Al in water include acid rain. Al is the third most abundant element on Earth but most of its compounds are insoluble unless the water has been acidified.

Al is also present in tea (!) and may get into food from cooking utensils. Unlike most metals, Al dissolves slowly in both acids and alkalis. Hence, fruit should not be cooked in Al saucepans (and caustic or washing soda should not be used in them either).

The water authorities have decided to look into alternatives to Al compounds in treating water. They are doing this because this is the first time the possible health hazards of Al have been spelt out, this as yet unpublished research being the best evidence so far.

But is Al responsible for Alzheimer's disease? This tragic disease involves loss of memory; loss of practical abilities such as talking, dressing, using tools; loss of vocabulary and reading; indeed, loss of personality. Unfortunately, the victim may have some idea of his or her condition as extreme anxiety is also found.

Changes in the brain occur, with strange tangles of fibres in some cells (similar tangles are found in the brain cells of Down's syndrome people). Brain cells die in large numbers and, by death, the brain is much reduced in size.

Is it a hereditary disease? Is it caused by an environmental factor, like Al, as suspected for some time? Is it due to a mixture of factors?

Whatever the answer, it seems unlikely that Al is to blame. Other groups of people with high levels of Al in their blood have not suffered increased rates of Alzheimer's disease.

This does not mean that the water authorities should carry on pouring Al into the water. It may or may not be harmful in other ways and it would be prudent to reduce the amount of a substance not normally found in such quantities in our drinking water.

The situation with VDUs seems similar. There seems to be no way VDUs could have the effect of causing miscarriages — the amount of radiation they produce seems negligible. More relevant would be the stress of working in the conditions required of VDU operators. The case against Dounreay is much stronger, however. Leukaemia is known to be caused by radiation. Assurances that Dounreay emits too little radiation to cause this much leukaemia can be answered in two ways. Either Dounreay emits more radiation than detected or admitted or the radiation is more potent at causing leukaemia. Or both!

# A rag and bone thriller

By Mick Ackersley

Did you see the movie about the gangster on the run who gets involved with the priest? Or with a sweet blind woman who puts him back in touch with real people and good wholesome ordinary life? You must have, sometime or another, because there are many such movies.

'A Prayer for the Dying' is about a soul-sick ex-IRA man (Mickey Rourke) passing through London who encounters an ex-SAS priest (Bob Hoskins) and his blind niece, and clashes with a very odd gangster-mortician (Alan Bates).

He is also being chased by some of his former comrades, under orders to either persuade him to "come back" or shoot him.

It's a right rag-and-bone cart collection of plot and character clichés. Yet it is a good enough thriller. For some reason I liked it and even found myself warming to it.

Maybe that is because the cliché characters are cliché versions of human beings rather than stereotypes of two-dimensional creations who never existed outside of an American comic book or TV series.

There is violence of course, but less than you expect in a thriller

## WOMAN'S EYE

# 'Greatest evil of our time'

By Lynn Ferguson

Around 22% of babies in Britain are now born to unmarried women. The statistical report "Regional Trends" which produced the figures says that if this continues to rise at the same rate "illegitimacy" will become the norm in 20 years time.

According to Tories like Rhodes Boyson, single mothers are the 'greatest evil of our time', worse apparently than Third World famine and the threat of nuclear war. Yet under the administration of those same Tories, the proportion of babies born outside marriage has doubled since 1979.

Stuart Hall doyen of Marxism Today, Channel 4 and Polytechnic Sociology courses, is of the opinion that young women opt to have babies because it brings them a bit of status and a bit of unconditional love in a world that has no place for them other than a YTS scheme and allows them no worth.

Catherine Ponteus of the National Council For One Parent Families is of a similar view "it is the one way a girl can feel one has



Alan Bates as the London gangster

such a subject made for today's cinema audiences. Apart from possibly one scene none of the violence is gratuitous or glorified with the bloodthirsty relish we have grown caloused to in cinema. It's a warm-hearted movie about mainly decent people.

Politically it's unusual too. The ex-IRA man (Fallon) gives up his cause in disgust when a school bus is accidentally blown up in a road mine he'd helped set for the British Army in a Northern Irish road.

Yet what we see of the IRA presents them as people fighting for a possibly reasonable cause, decent people who do not, by what they are shame or dirty their cause and whose cause is never slighted or condemned.

When the London gangster tries to blackmail Fallon into killing a rival

gangster Fallon makes a speech about never having killed for money or any venal, personal, self-serving reason.

The nearest we get to a condemnation of Fallon's old cause is when he condemns himself to the priest for having taken one side in a fight in which both sides unreasonably will settle for nothing other than full victory. Tame enough, I suppose, but not bad for mainstream commercial cinema.

'A Prayer for the Dying' is based on a Jack Higgins novel. I think it also owes a lot to an early '50s British movie "The Gentle Gunman", in which John Mills played a man trying to break out of the IRA. Someone could write an interesting article about the IRA in the movies especially in British movies.

As I say, I liked 'A Prayer for the Dying'.

## ACTIVISTS' DIARY

**Thursday 16 June.** Newcastle SO meeting, 'After Alton'. Speaker Rosey Sibley. 7.30 at Newcastle Poly.

**Sunday 19 June.** Leeds SO educational: 'Lessons of May 1968'. 5pm at Leeds University Student Union.

**Sunday 19 June.** South London SO meeting, 'Hungary 1956'. Speaker: Ray Ferris. 7.30, 'The Station' pub, Camberwell.

**Monday 20 June.** 'Defend free comment in the left press!' A meeting to celebrate Socialist Organiser's victory over the libel cases brought by Vanessa Redgrave. 7.30, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square.

**Tuesday 21 June.** Manchester SO meeting, 'Back Benn and Heffer! Rebuild the Left!' 7.30, Manchester Town Hall.

**Thursday 23 June.** Sheffield SO meeting: 'Fascism in France'. Speaker: Martin Thomas. 7.30, SCCAU, West St.

**Saturday 25 June.** Gay Pride March, 2pm from Hyde Park to Jubilee Gardens, London.

**Sunday 26 June.** South London SO meeting. 'The black civil rights movement in the US'. Speaker: Dion D'Silva. 7.30, 'The Station' pub, Camberwell.

**Sunday 26 June.** North London SO discussion meeting: 'The workers' struggle in Poland'. 5pm.

**Wednesday 29 June.** Northampton SO meeting: 'The Struggle in South Africa'. Speaker: Bob Fine. 7.30, Guildhall.

**Friday-Sunday 1-3 July.** Workers' Liberty 88 summer school, at Sir William Collins School, London NW1.

**Sunday 10 July.** South London SO meeting. 'The workers' struggles in Poland'. Speaker: Cate Murphy. 7.30, 'The Station' pub, Camberwell.

**Sunday 10 July.** Leeds SO educational: 'The Transitional Programme'. 5pm at Leeds University Student Union.

**Friday-Sunday 8-10 July.** Conference of Socialist Economists 1988, at Sheffield Poly. Queries: CSE, 25 Horsell Rd, London N5.

**Sunday 24 July.** Leeds SO educational: 'The workers' struggle in Poland'. 5pm at Leeds University Student Union.

something to live for".

There is some truth in this. Being a mother does give you a role in life, and for many young people today, not just girls, it is difficult to find a place in society. But we would not analyse the baby-boom among 35 year old feminist "career women" in quite the same way.

There is a distasteful implication in the way Hall puts it: the middle-class women may choose to have babies for positive reasons, but working class women have babies only out of despair and demoralisation.

Hall does argue for "low-cost childcare and flexible working arrangements so that single parents can provide good homes for their children." Which is fair enough.

The Right, however, have another view. Right wing ideologue Patricia Morgan thinks fathers are essential. "There is a heavy correlation between paternal involvement and children's success." And just listen to Richard Whitfield, chairman of the National Campaign for the Family: "The best prospect for a child is a viable, stable relationship between its two biological parents." Not only does this rule out single parents, but presumably also families where the children are adopted!

The problem, in reality is not





Occupation against NHS cuts in Manchester (Jan 1988). Photo: John Harris (IFL).

# Democracy is the key to a real Broad Left

By Nik Barstow

Trade union bureaucrats love talking about democracy — but they hate it if it hits back in their own union.

NALGO's local government leadership got a real scare over democracy at the annual meeting of the union's council worker branches this week. They only managed to beat off a grass-roots revolt to "tie their hands" on recommending national pay settlements by 256,000 to 194,000 votes.

Last year the first the members heard of a "victory on pay" that got them half the full claim (and sold out the low paid) was in the papers. Their chance to vote on it came two months later when the campaign was dead.

Patsy Boulton from Bristol NALGO insisted: "The purpose is to make sure that it never happens again. It is to set out guidelines so that next time we go out to pursue a

pay claim we can say to our members that we are going to back it all the way — and that we mean it.

"And that the only people who are going to opt to settle for less would be the members themselves ... it's about trusting the members enough to make their own decisions and letting them know that if they do go out after a fair deal, then the National Committee will be there with them."

That debate could be the start of building a real Broad Left movement that puts the members of the union and their concerns first.

The motion for accountability was opposed — viciously and vigorously — by the clique around the Morning Star, who wheeled out their best speakers to oppose it.

Most of the organised left ignored the debate too. Militant ignored it completely. The SWP believed that the right's grip was so strong that arguing for democracy was naive. They were wildly wrong.

## Fighting 'new realism'

By Nik Barstow

'New Realism' is still riding high in the town hall workers' union NALGO. Calls to refuse to negotiate cuts packages with councils, to fight privatisation and for industrial action to save jobs were defeated at the start of this year's NALGO Conference.

But the stampede to join hands

with Labour councils making cuts was headed off. Delegates from council branches insisted that there must be a special recall meeting before any changes to the union's strategy to fight cuts.

Platform speakers declared that the "simplistic strategy of no cuts is dead". So Council trade unionists who want to fight the cuts have to do it on the ground. But we have to fight to make the unions accountable, too, if we are to have a chance of winning.

## P&O strike

# Back Dover picket!

Seafarers this week occupied NUS offices in Glasgow to keep out the men sent by the court to take control.

Despite the climbdown by the National Union of Seamen, the seafarers' fight continues. In Dover sacked strikers continue to picket the P&O. There have been strikes in

support of the NUS by seafarers in Belgium and France.

The tragedy is that the seafarers remain without enough support in Britain to make the difference. The TUC is not doing its job and the NUS leaders are now doing their best to satisfy the courts — so far in vain.

Support the Dover picket!

# Socialist STUDENT

## Rank and file anger on health pay

By Paul Woolley

At the Health Group meeting of the NALGO conference we tried to get answers from the National Health Committee (NHC) about its six-week secret talks in a Working Group with management.

The aim was supposedly to get a deal on 'restructuring', bringing up low paid grades to a higher scale. But the Tories won't foot the bill for 'restructuring'. And the NHC never consulted branches on the 6-week talks, which meant a 6-week suspension of the pay campaign.

An emergency motion from North West and North Wales District called for a campaign to kick out the 5%/£6.25 per week offer and for a day of action before the next pay talk. Members aren't straining at the leash, but they will respond to real leadership and a national campaign.

The motion was carried — narrowly on a card vote. This could be the start of a real campaign over pay.

## No way, Baker!

By Liz Millward

The Tories want to smash the National Union of Students.

They want to make membership of NUS, voluntary. And they want to give Local Education Authorities and University Senates control over Student Unions' money.

Voluntary membership sounds democratic. But it will mean:

- \* Student Unions spending the first term recruiting students before they are able to start any other work.
- \* Democracy dependant on payment of Student Union fees.
- \* No security for Student Union staff.
- \* No guarantees to clubs or societies about money or facilities.
- \* SUs unable to truly represent all students to college authorities — meaning student representation will be under threat.
- \* Women and minority groups will lose Student Union resources.

\* The end of NUS as an effective national voice of students.

Control over spending will mean severe attacks on political and cultural clubs, such as Lesbian and Gay Socs, Labour Clubs, Women's Groups etc. But the Rugby Club, the Real Ale and Rock Soc, the Tennis Club and so on will also have much stricter limitations placed on their activities.

The Tory Government is investigating student unions. They want "information on the organisation and cost of student services within institutions, on the legal status of local unions and on the organisational and financial links between such unions and the NUS. Baker says "I am confident that institutions and others will wish to cooperate with this survey."

No way, Baker! Students shouldn't cooperate with this Tory investigation, which can only be used to justify attacks on student unionism.

## Teachers

# Reject these excuses!

By Liam Conway

On Saturday 18th a special conference of the National Union of Teachers meets to discuss union reorganisation, a process the leadership hopes will finally stifle all left opposition in the union. The leadership say changes are necessary because of the severe financial crisis facing the union.

This so-called crisis has already resulted in large cuts in union staff at national headquarters. Now the leadership want to limit the power of local associations where members can participate in decision making and increase the power of unelected union officials.

The ultimate aim of the current executive is to get rid of annual conference and replace it with a two yearly conference. In between times the executive itself would run the union.

In reality there is no financial crisis in the union. The leadership are manipulating statistics in order to hoodwink delegates to the special conference into abandoning basic union democracy. In fact many of the changes will involve increased costs rather than savings.

Take the new regional structure, which will give greater power to unelected officials. The old structure meant an annual salary bill of £840,000. The total under the new structure will be £1.48 million, an increase of over £600,000.

The 1986-7 annual conference cost only £167,000 and £30,000 of this was for travel and subsistence allowances for executive members and union officials.

But the executive would rather increase the number of highly-paid unelected officials than defend the basic democratic rights of the membership. It's worth noting a few of the other costs that the executive have not considered for the chop.

The General Secretary currently earns £42,000 a year, about four times the salary of the average classroom teacher. Last year well over £90,000 was spent on first class travel expenses for 37 executive members. The President of the union spent over £4,000 entertaining guests to dinner.

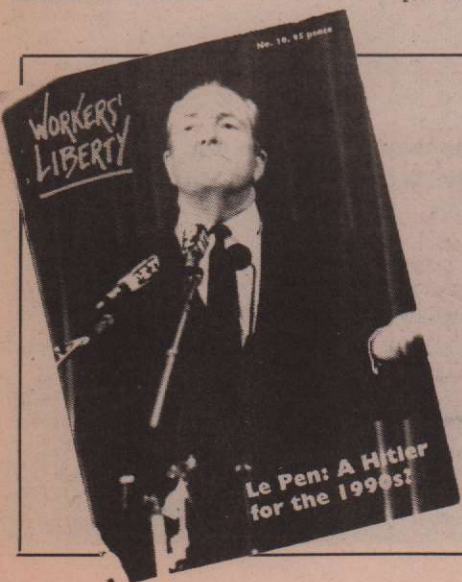
In reality the executive changes have nothing to do with finance. The changes are born out of fear. The fear that the executive is losing control of the union to the left. The fear that the membership are fed up with the sell-outs of recent years. The fear that their strategy of capitulating to the government is losing support at rank and file level. And the fear that the union leaders' quiet, comfortable life on union expenses might be coming to an end.

And the best way for the executive to stop this nightmare becoming a reality is to curtail democracy and close down the channels from the bottom to the top.

Unfortunately for the majority of NUT members, a quiet, comfortable life is not an option. In the near future they face massive cuts, a straitjacket curriculum, opting out and even possible redundancy.

And what protection for NUT activists when redundancies start? For us there is no choice. In the name of basic trade unionism delegates to the special conference must throw out the executive's proposals.

The latest issue of Workers' Liberty is now available. Features include analysis of the Gulf War, Fascism in France plus debate on Ireland. 95p plus 30p postage from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.





# Workers' Liberty

# 88



The 'Workers' Liberty 88' summer school will be held from Friday 1 July to Sunday 3 July in London.

It opens on Friday evening with a meeting on the Polish workers' movement Solidarnosc, with speakers including Zbigniew Kowalewski, an exiled leader of Solidarnosc's left wing.

On the Saturday and Sunday, the main themes will be:

**Party and class:** how should socialists organise so as best to help the development of working-class politics?

**The National Question:** what answer can we give to the national and communal conflicts that dominate politics in Ireland, in Palestine, in Sri Lanka and so many other places?

**Workers in the Eastern Bloc:** does Gorbachev offer a way forward? Can Solidarnosc provide a model for independent workers' movements in other countries of the Eastern Bloc?

There will also be a series of introductory workshops, explaining and discussing basic ideas of Marxism for people new to socialist politics.

Speakers will include: Bill Lomax, author of 'Hungary 1956'; Rajes Bala, on the Tamils in Sri Lanka; Martin Collins, editor of 'Labour & Ireland', who will be debating with John O'Mahony of Socialist Organiser; Zbigniew Kowalewski and Marko Bojcun, who will introduce a workshop on the Ukraine.

There will be a creche, socials in the evenings, and accommodation provided for people coming from outside London.

20 years ago, the revolutionary left had one of its greatest chances ever, when French workers staged the greatest general strike in history, the Vietnamese dealt smashing blows to US imperialism, and the workers of Czechoslovakia resisted Russian tanks. Tens and hundreds of thousands of young people were open to revolutionary Marxist ideas.

The biggest far-left groupings largely failed to organise and consolidate them. Chaotic and unstable politics, based on illusions, myths and prefabricated pictures of the world, helped disperse and demoralise many potential revolutionaries.

We cannot afford to miss too many other chances. The rise of Le Pen in France has given us due warning. The Marxist left has to sort itself — organisationally, but, as a precondition, politically. Workers' Liberty 88 will discuss the key issues on the Left to prepare for the battles to come.

The summer school is at Sir William Collins School, Charrington St, London NW1. The Friday evening meeting is at University College London Student Union, Gordon St, London WC1.

Tickets in advance: £9 waged, £5 unwaged, for the whole weekend, from Mark Osborn, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. Tickets bought at the door will be £1 extra.



Friday 1

July, 7.30 Rally at University College, London: Victory to Solidarnosc! Speakers: Zbigniew Kowalewski, Marek Garztecki, Simon Pottinger, and others. Followed by social.

Saturday 2

July, 10.30 Plenary: THE LEFT SINCE 1968. Speaker: John O'Mahony.

11.45 Lunch

12.45 **Party & Class:**  
Introduction  
John O'Mahony

**National Question:**  
Introduction  
Martin Thomas

**Eastern Bloc:**  
Can Gorbachev  
bring freedom?  
Tony Jain

**Introductory:**  
Why the working  
class?  
Tom Rigby

2.30 **The Wobblies**  
Alan Johnson

Europe's biggest  
oppressed nation:  
the Ukraine: Marko  
Bojcun and Zbigniew  
Kowalewski

Freud and Marxism  
George Davey Smith

Greens and socialism  
Les Hearn

4.15 **The Labour Left**  
John Bloxam

Debate on  
Ireland: John  
O'Mahony/Martin  
Collins

**Hungary 1956**  
Bill Lomax

Women's liberation  
Cate Murphy

5.45 Trade union caucuses

7.30 Social

Sunday

10.30 **Capitalism, socialism,  
and women's  
liberation**  
Lynn Ferguson

**The Tamils in Sri  
Lanka**  
Rajes Bala

**Hungary today**  
George Krasso and  
Gus Fagan

Reform and revolution  
Pat Murphy

12.00 Lunch: campaign caucuses.

1.30 **Marxists and trade  
unions:** Mick  
O'Sullivan

**Israel and Palestine**  
Clive Bradley

**Czechoslovakia today**  
Adam Novotny

Who are the  
Sandinistas?  
Peter Sandiford

2.45 **Workers in the Iranian  
revolution:** speaker  
from CARI

**Nationalism in South  
Africa:** Bob Fine

**Soviet anti-semitism**  
Stan Crooke

Our tradition  
Ruth Cockcroft

4.00 Final plenary