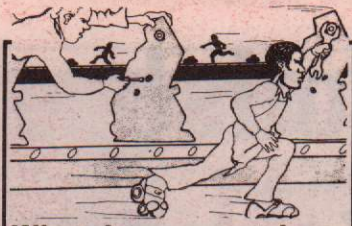


Milka Tyszkiewicz  
on Poland's  
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production means page 7

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financial scandals  
pages 8 and 9



# SOCIALIST

Behind Major's  
hypocrisy, it's  
sexism as usual

ORGANISER

Unite the left!



# Women need a revolution!

"There's a social revolution, and I want to be at the head of it", declared John Major at the launch of "Opportunity 2000". He says he will advance women's employment prospects, encourag-

ing companies to employ — and promote — more women. It's the Tories' latest wheeze to cut back Labour's lead in the polls. It is utter hypocrisy. Working-class women need a real social revolution, not bland grey phrases from the Tories.

Some women do make it further up the career ladder into top-level management. Between 1971 and 1981, women increased their share of managers' jobs from 18% to 25%. But this is all only a by-product of ordinary women's struggles.

And for working-class women, it will change nothing. Four-fifths of Britain's part-time workers are women, and they are denied rights such as sick leave, holidays, maternity leave and pay. "Opportunity 2000" doesn't seek to redress this.

An EC directive, calling for full-time rights and benefits for part-time workers, was vetoed by the Tory government.

Turn to page 2

# Polish elections create danger of right-wing upsurge

**Milka Tyszkiewicz from the Polish Socialist Political Centre in Wroclaw reports on the Polish election results**

The social democratic Democratic Union of Mazowiecki and Kuron headed the poll with the former Communists in second place.

Third was Catholic Action, next was the Peasant Party (a former Stalinist stooge party) and fifth was Lech Walesa's Centre Alliance.

The old communists received nearly the same vote as the Democratic Union, who got 12%.

These results mean that the formation of any kind of government will be extremely

complicated. President Lech Walesa has consequently emerged stronger from these election results.

The Democratic Union is trying to negotiate with other parties from the former Solidarity camp.

On the right, Jaroslaw Kaczynski said yesterday on television that he will form an extra-parliamentary government together with Catholic Action. This spells a great danger for democracy.

Democratic Union have said that they will only organise a government with former Solidarity organisations.

The big score for the social democrats is good in one sense: at least people still have some faith in a party which says it is leftist.

There are now two possible developments:

Firstly, the Democratic Union may be able to form a government together with the

Congress of Liberals and probably the Centre Alliance, and maybe one of the peasant parties. This means they will have to agree with the Centre Alliance a programme of "de-communisation".

The second possibility is that the Democratic Union will fail to agree a deal with the Centre Alliance, and the right may be able to mobilise a mass movement around the demand for "de-communisation". This movement would also be opposed to parliamentary democracy. I am talking about the possibility of a mass fascist movement.

We can even see fascist ideas gaining a foothold inside the Solidarity camp.

The title of the regional Solidarity newspaper here is to be changed to (in English) "Directly from the Fridge" — a title taken from a 1930s Polish newspaper known as "Falange" ("Fascist"). The

latest issue of this newspaper includes an article praising Mussolini.

The Socialist Political Centre took part in the elections as part of the Labour Solidarity slate led by Karel Modzelewski. Nationally, this ticket got 2.4%.

We are not sure how many seats this will give Labour Solidarity — probably between 4 and 9. We are also not sure yet if any member of the Socialist Political Centre has been elected.

The electoral tactics of Labour Solidarity during the pre-election period was to target those who began activity during martial law and before, and who still take a left stance.

But the low vote for Labour Solidarity shows that there is no big leftist wing emerging from Solidarity.

The position of Labour Solidarity is now very awkward. I think the right

will try to use Labour Solidarity against the Social Democrats. They wish to discredit the Social Democrats and pressurise them to move right.

Labour Solidarity is not actually a party, but a collection of regional clubs, independent of each other. Locally, in Wroclaw, we in the Socialist Political Centre, have very good relations with the Social Democrats.

In the election, people voted for parties perceived to be radical — right or left.

In fact, the Social Democrats are not far left, but the government's propaganda has been saying that the Democratic Union is an extremist left-wing party. By doing this, the government actually helped the Social Democrats to increase their vote.

On the right, Catholic Action and the Confederation of Independent Poland (KPN) did very well.

## Chauvinists take the lead in Yugoslav war

By Steven Holt

It now looks as if the war in Croatia will continue for weeks or months with no prospect of a negotiated settlement. Various EEC-sponsored ceasefires have held only very briefly.

The current position seems that the pro-Serb forces have all the territory that is easy to grab and are now besieging key towns in Slavonia and Dalmatia. The press has been particularly concerned about damage to the ancient coastal town of Dubrovnik (of course they weren't worried about the destruction of many far older cities and archaeological sites in Iraq during the Gulf War).

The forces involved are now acting in their own interests rather than following orders from the Croat and Serb leaders, Tudjman and Milosevic. The Federal Army now acts independently of Milosevic and the far-right Serb Chetniks deliberately sabotage ceasefires.

Within Croatia, people increasingly look to the Hos militia of the fascist Party of the Right, rather than Tudjman's militia, the Croat National Guard, which is seen as ineffectual.

In Serbia and Montenegro, most people support the war against Croatia, believing the Croats to be Ustashe [fascists] — but it is the Serbian military action that has caused the growth of fascism in Croatia. The Croats in the mainly Serb area around Knin (now declared independent) have been brutally expelled, and in Slavonia, tens of thousands of Croats and Hungarians have been

expelled by the Federal Army and the Chetniks.

Milosevic's Stalinist Socialist Party in Serbia is under increasing pressure: on the one hand, from people fed up with the war and resisting conscription, and on the other, from the far-right Chetniks (whose leader, Seselj, now wants Serbia to declare war on Hungary) and Draskovic's Serbian Renewal Party (which initially opposed the war, but is now more nationalist than Milosevic).

Tension remains high in other parts of Yugoslavia. Bosnia-Herzegovina may be close to civil war between the Muslim (44%), Croat (16%) and Serb (32%) populations following the declaration of independence by the southeastern, mainly Serb, Herzegovina. Extreme repression continues in the Muslim Sanjak in northwest Serbia and in Kosovo and Vojvodina, areas now annexed by Serbia.

## Support Socialist Organiser

"Socialist Organiser is aiming to raise £10,000 to buy new equipment.

This week we raised £156.50 in donations from readers who want to help us expand. This brings our total raised so far to £2,651.67.

Why not help us reach our target?

Make a donation by sending a cheque or postal order, made out to "Socialist Organiser", to: Socialist Organiser Fund, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

### The lie machine



Even the Daily Express — long an ultra-nationalist campaigner against Britain joining the European Community — did not support Norman Tebbit editorially.

What do you call an Australian with an IQ of 150? Sydney

The Sun reported Tebbit's diatribe minimally. Editorially, it denounced "the French, sinking into Socialist chaos" and "the Germans, grappling with an ugly rebirth of fascism" — but backed Major. It also found space for a special "feature" of anti-Australian jokes.

Kilroy on Monday Standing in opposition to Britain's best interests Baker must confront the warders' union Kilroy was here

The Express, Monday: ex-Labour MP Robert Kilroy-Silk calls on the Tories to smash the prison warders' union "by the privatisation of prisons if necessary". The Daily Star, Tuesday: Kilroy-Silk reveals that after six months hard labour on his chat-show, he "has to" spend the rest of the year on holiday in Spain...

DAILY STAR PHIL'S BIG TV FIGHT SHAM News? Stories about TV shows rank much higher for the Daily Star.

2500 people demonstrated outside Germany's Constitutional Court on 19 October, demanding the abolition of West Germany's restrictive abortion law (Paragraph 218) and the extension of the liberal East German law. The two laws are running in parallel in West and East for now, but a new all-German law is due to be formulated. The DGB, the German TUC, is backing the campaign for abortion rights: above is some of its publicity. The slogan: "My head belongs to me."



## Kinnockites make a shambles of NUS

By Steve Mitchell (NUS VP FEUD)

Last Friday, 25 October, President Stephen Twigg closed down a meeting of the National Executive of the National Union of Students over an hour early, in order to stop the Executive discussing Israel/Palestine, and most likely supporting the Palestinian people.

Twigg's motivation came from his own personal pro-Israel position and pressure from the Union of Jewish Students, which is one of the groups whose votes on the Executive keeps control for the Kinnockite Labour Students (NOLS) faction to which Twigg belongs.

Earlier in the meeting, NOLS had denied that they were behind attempts by Sheffield University Student Union to disaffiliate from South Yorkshire Area NUS. However, the evidence was clear: NOLS had set about smashing up an NUS Area organisation because they don't like the political leadership!

NOLS escaped condemnation by the Executive because they were supported by the UJS and the Liberal Democrats.

The only other issue discussed at the meeting was a censure on Stephen Twigg for refusing to support lesbian and gay students at Manchester Polytechnic who were campaigning against their student union president's ban on distribution of a "safe-sex" pamphlet in the Pink Guide to Manchester and Salford because it was "obscene". Twigg, NUS's first out gay

president, decided it was better not to offend the Poly president.

The Executive adopted the position proposed by Left Unity supporters — that the banning was wrong and student unions should break the law in order to distribute materials to save lives — but it did not censure Twigg because the SWP refused to vote for a "bureaucratic move" like a censure!

## Women need revolution

From front page

Major is refusing to sign the EC Charter, which includes that very demand.

Nor is there anything in "Opportunity 2000" about freeing women to get waged jobs by providing adequate childcare. Britain's provision of childcare is the worst in Europe: only 2% of under-2's are provided for; and 54% of 3-5 year olds, compared to 95% in France. Working mothers are at the bottom of the priority list for such childcare.

Britain still has the largest pay gap in Western Europe, women earning on average 77% of comparable male workers' wages. That's almost 10% lower than any other Western European country.

What will "Opportunity 2000" do to rectify this? Nothing. There's no proposal to implement the EC's "decency threshold" of £3.25

The whole National Executive meeting was a shambles. NOLS cannot be trusted to run NUS. Left Unity consistently puts forward the best ideas for a campaigning union.

NUS Winter conference in December will be a perfect opportunity to show our dissatisfaction with NOLS, as a by-election will be held for a place on the Executive.

per hour. Currently, 80% of Britain's part-time workers earn less than this.

So, no minimum wage: it might lead to higher unemployment, claim the Tories — and then where will women's "opportunity" to progress at work be?

And no, the Tories aren't about to increase child benefit. Or abolish the rule which says that single mothers have to name the father of their child or risk losing benefit.

It's just another con. The Tories aren't interested in women's equality. Profits is what interests them.

The only way women are going to get a better deal is by organising ourselves, within the labour movement, to fight for our own demands, based on our real needs, to change a society that rests on our own inequality, and to fight for one that will allow us genuine liberation as working class women.

# What Labour should say about Europe

The Tories face possibly their worst split yet over Europe — and Labour's leaders have nothing to say about it.

On Sunday 27th, Norman Tebbit denounced in advance John Major's evident willingness to compromise with other European Community governments at the Maastricht summit in December.

"A single currency", he said, "would... tear the heart out of the British Parliament... It would reduce Britain to the rank of a local authority controlled from Brussels on orders from Germany".

He called for a referendum on the project of a single European currency, and made clear that he would break Tory discipline on the issue. "I would have alongside me people of other parties. A very large number of people in the streets share my feeling of unease".

According to the *Financial Times*, "Close political allies of Mrs Thatcher said Mr Tebbit's views echoed her own. They expected the former prime minister to set out her opposition in the pre-Maastricht debate" [in parliament].

With the Tories already bobbing, weaving, and backtracking over the Health Service, this split over Europe could cripple them only months before there has to be a General Election. The other European Community governments have offered Major a let-out clause, with the

Dutch plan to let Britain opt out of moves to a single European currency until next June, but there is a strict limit to how much they will adjust European schedules to suit John Major's election timetable.

But Neil Kinnock's only response was a lame jibe about the Tories deciding policy on Europe by party interests rather than national interests. The newspapers reporting Tebbit's speech had no newsworthy comment from Labour to report.

Ian Aitken, writing in the *Guardian* on Monday 28th, pinpointed the probable reason for the Labour leaders' silence.

"Shadow ministers have seen the [Labour] party's 'more Euro than thou' position on European union as a vote winner rather than a vote loser.

"But that was on the basis of Mrs Thatcher's shrill approach... If Mr Major were to abandon the kicking and screaming, the most unpopular part of the Thatcher style, while quietly insisting that there would be no signatures on dotted lines if full European union was the objective, Labour's Euro-enthusiasm might not prove so attractive".

In short, Kinnock and his team, having abandoned Labour's anti-European policy of the 1970s and early '80s because they thought it would lose votes, are now worried about seeming too pro-European in case that loses votes too! Everything in mealy-mouthed moderation!

This pathetic crawling round by Labour could even enable Major to turn the Euro-furore into a triumph for the Government. He gets a compromise from the other European governments which distances him from the project of a federal Europe while keeping him in the game of European integration. Armed with that compromise, he poses as the tough but realistic statesman against, on one side, the strident flag-waving Thatcherites — who, on this, have very little support in the British capitalist class, and not a lot among the British public in general — and, on the other, Labour's "Euro-enthusiasts".

If he cannot bring off that

pose, then, on present form, it will be any problems from the Labour side that stop him.

Labour should stop chasing round after what Neil Kinnock's advisers guess may be electorally popular, and work out a proper policy.

European monetary and economic union is a stage in the process of European capitalism outgrowing its old, obsolete framework of nation-states and becoming an international system. Socialists cannot support the process, since we oppose and distrust the capitalist governments which shape it. But we are for a united Europe, even under capitalism, as a better arena for class struggle than competing nation-states.

Tebbit and Thatcher may wish to "defend the pound". They have plenty of pounds to defend. We have no interest in such nonsense.

**"International coordination and unity of the European labour movements should be our response to the international coordination of capital".**

*International coordination and unity of the European labour movements* should be our response to the international coordination of capital.

Trade unions and working-class political parties across Europe should be campaigning for common objectives, like a 35 hour work week. We should fight for a levelling-up of workers' rights and conditions across Europe — German pensions, French family allowances, Italian nursery provision, Danish unemployment benefit, the best existing trade union rights.

To the bureaucracy and waste of the EC machinery, we should counterpose a campaign for *Europe-wide democracy* — in the first place for democratic control by the European parliament over all EC affairs.

Yet most of the left is no better than Kinnock on Europe. Almost all the



French public sector workers staged a 24 hour general strike and demonstrated in Paris (above) and other cities last Thursday, 24 October. The British labour movement should be linking up with such actions, and developing Europe-wide labour campaigns, rather than playing around with its own versions of Norman Tebbit's anti-European bigotry.

left behaved shamefully during the big controversies over Britain entering the European Community, in the early 1970s. Despite different intentions and different rhetoric, what it proposed was in substance no different to what Tebbit argues now: *keep Britain out*.

Of course, when the left agitated about the spectre of Britain being ruled from Brussels, it spoke of the EC blocking nationalisations; Tebbit worries about the EC imposing "socialist" regulations. The nationalist essence of the message is the same — stop the "foreigners" meddling.

That the left, including papers like *Socialist Worker*, *Militant*, and so on, got caught up in that nationalist agitation, must have contributed to the terrible failure of steel workers, dockers, and other groups, to organise any *cross-Europe* response to the devastating Europe-wide offensives from their bosses.

In recent years, the left has let its agitation to "get Britain out", now plainly ridiculous, slide into an embarrassed silence. Now, when the Tories could tear themselves apart on the issue, most of the left has as little to say as Kinnock. It is time to break the silence, reassess the issue, and start working on links with European trade unionists and socialists.

"The emancipation of the working class is also the emancipation of all human beings without distinction of sex or race."  
Karl Marx

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After the Brooke talks collapse, new initiative for troops out

# Just-about-alright-Jack

I have just discovered that Jack Adams was once Midlands Counties Amateur Boxing Champion.

If I'd known that when we both earned our crusts bolting bits and pieces onto Austin Allegros, I'd have been considerably less cheeky towards him.

We can expect to read more revelations about him from now on, because he's been elected Deputy General Secretary of the TGWU. Fortunately for him, Adams has led a blameless private life and is not being altogether disingenuous when he describes himself as "singularly uninteresting".

Of course, the press has seized upon the fact that Adams is a long-standing member of the Communist Party in order to portray him as some sort of dangerous red. Michael Howard is squealing about how, "just as the peoples of Eastern Europe have rejected Communism, a Communist is elected to the second most powerful position in Britain's largest trade union".

Now, anyone with any sense knows that membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain, these days, represents about as much of a threat to the capitalist system as membership of the Fabian Society. In all probability, Michael Howard understands this. But still, the "communist" tag makes for a good scare-story and you can't really blame the Tories for making the most of it.

If the Adams victory is used against Labour in the run-up to the General Election, then the main blame will be with Kinnock and the Labour front-bench: it was them who persuaded the hapless Jack Dromey to stand against Adams, thus turning the contest into an unofficial test of Kinnock's influence over the T&G. Tactically, the Kinnockites would have done much better to have given Adams a clear run and laughed off his CP membership by pointing out that "Marxism Today" long ago gave up all talk of the "class struggle" and that sort of nonsense. This line would have had the incidental advantage of actually being true (it is one of those little ironies that the "Kinnockite" Dromey is much more of a Stalinist than the "Communist" Adams).

So why did the Labour leadership come to hand the Tories such a propaganda coup on a plate? The only explanation is that Kinnock and his advisers believed the T&G Broad Left (which backed Adams) was no match for their influence and prestige.

Happily, T&G members have shown that they won't be led by the nose — either by the Labour leadership or by the "commentators" like the *Mirror's* Joe Haines, who ran a vicious, McCarthyite campaign against Adams.

There were plenty of reasons for left-wingers in the T&G (and, come to that, right-wingers who value the union's integrity) to oppose Dromey. But is there any reason, apart from lesser-evilism, to celebrate the Adams victory?

In terms of formal politics, the answer is no. But personal integrity also plays a part in these matters. Adams has a respectable record as a rank-and-file shop steward in the motor industry. He took over as Convenor of BL Longbridge (replacing Derek Robinson) at a time when that particular post was widely regarded as a one-way ticket to the dole queue. Adams is an old-fashioned "union man" rather than a Labour politician-manqué.

So, for now, I'm celebrating the Adams victory. Quite soon, I may be accusing him of all sorts of rotten sell-outs — just like I used to fifteen years ago. But this time, I'll be at a safe distance.

## INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

# What next in the

## What we think

After the collapse of the British Government's latest initiative in Ireland — the Brooke talks — the Troops Out movement in Britain has started a new campaign for British withdrawal from Ireland.

On these pages, we print statements from Tony Benn MP and from Irish nationalist politician, Bernadette McAliskey on the launch of the campaign. We review last week's Channel Four programme backing the campaign.

73 percent of people in Britain, according to a recent opinion poll, think that British troops have made things worse in Northern Ireland, or at best made no difference. They are right. The troops *should* be withdrawn.

On the face of it, the "Troops Out" campaign is knocking at an open door. For twenty years now — since September 1971 — opinion polls in Britain have almost always shown a majority, between 50% and 64% in favour of "Troops Out".

British capitalism gets no imperialist super-profits from Northern Ireland; on the contrary, it suffers a drain of maybe £2 billion per year. It has no military or strategic interest in holding on to Northern Ireland; on the contrary, British withdrawal would certainly ease the way for bringing Ireland into NATO and into European Community military co-operation.

Britain has no vital ties to the Northern Ireland Protestant politicians; it does much better business with the leaders of the South and of the Catholic middle class in the North.

Yet "Troops Out" campaigns, for many years now, have had no impact. Their demonstrations are tiny, their meetings sparse, their profile in the labour movement marginal. Unfortunately, the new "Troops Out" initiative is likely to go the same way. Its motivators have failed to tackle — indeed, *have made a political point of honour of refusing to recognise* — the realities which make the door to "Troops Out" not open at all, but barred with heavy bolts which will take much work to break.

A sizeable minority of the people of Ireland, and the compact majority in the North-East, will fight to the death against being made part of a united Ireland under a Catholic majority. They are heavily armed and capable of fighting.

Britain is both a bully in Ireland, and the ally of a sizeable chunk of the Irish people. British troops out without a political settlement between the two communities in Ireland would mean not a united Ireland, nor any solution that would freely be chosen by a majority of either

community, but bloody civil war and repartition.

Those are the realities. There is less excuse than ever for denying them. The proof before our eyes of the explosive power of nationalism and communalism in Yugoslavia and in the Soviet Union destroys the claims that the Northern Protestants' sense of their own identity, and their will to fight for it, would simply fade away into "realistic" acceptance of Dublin rule. And it condemns as naive nonsense the argument that the Catholic Irish, since they have been an oppressed people, cannot possibly become oppressors.

Yet the "Troops Out" Movement pamphlet launching their new campaign dismisses all reference to the conflict between the communities in Ireland preferring to portray it as something "lovingly fostered by British politicians and their friends in the media and cherished equally by their upper-class allies in Belfast and Dublin".

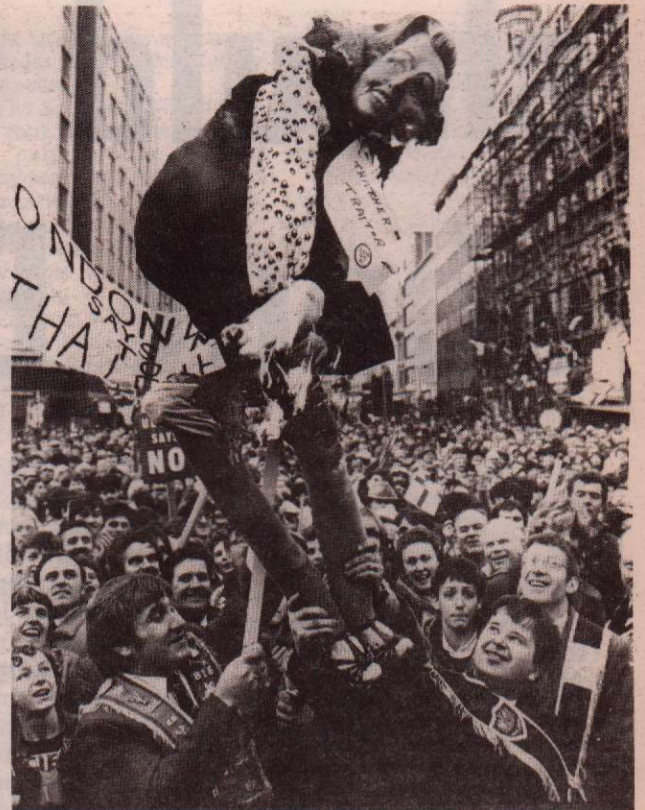
When they have to give some explanation for the fact that the impasse remains in Northern Ireland, "Troops Out" campaigners resort to fantastic theories about the troops being there to ensure "imperialist control" over Ireland, or to suppress a dangerous social-revolutionary potential about to erupt from Catholic-Irish nationalism.

This blinds "Troops Out" campaigners to the real nature of the mass "Troops Out" feeling in Britain, which is overwhelmingly passive, cynical and chauvinistic. It gives them no levers to create anything more positive. It leaves them at best appearing not to care about the prospect of all-out civil war and repartition in Ireland, at worst appearing to relish it.

To contribute anything positive, "Troops Out" agitation must be linked with arguments which could equip a united working-class force in Ireland to promote a democratic settlement there.

The framework for that settlement must be a united Ireland. The partition of 1921 was unjust and botched. The Northern Ireland unit it created is unviable. The Catholic minority will never accept being trapped as a minority in a Protestant-dominated state; the Protestants will never cease to fear that Catholic minority as a trojan horse for the all-Ireland Catholic majority.

But the only possible united Ireland is one giving Ireland's national minority, the Protestants, as many guarantees as are compatible with the rights of the Irish majority. That means a federal Ireland, with regional autonomy for the Protestant-majority area of the island, and confederal links between that Ireland and Britain.



The Protestants will fight to the death against being made part of a united Ireland under a Catholic majority. The picture shows their protest against the Anglo-Irish treaty

## From 1969 to 1991

The Brooke talks were the latest in a long string of British Government initiatives for Northern Ireland, all of which have collapsed similarly.

Before 1969, Northern Ireland was run by a Belfast government with little interference from London as a "Protestant state for a Protestant people". The one-third Catholic minority was oppressed and discriminated against.

In the 1960s, Britain improved its relations with Southern Ireland, and started putting pressure on Belfast for reform. In the atmosphere of the late 1960s — coloured by the American civil rights movement, the campaigns against the Vietnam war, and the revolutionary events of 1968 — the few feeble gestures at reform from above elicited a mass movement from below of the Northern Ireland Catholics.

Northern Ireland's Protestant state forces, and many of its Protestant people, reacted violently and fearfully. Belfast lurched towards full-scale pogroms and civil war, and in August 1969, the British Army was sent on to the streets.

The British Government thought that the Army would "hold the ring" for a while and enable the Government to proceed with reform from above. In the event, the Army has been "holding the ring" for 22 years now, with no end in sight, and there has been little reform.

Briefly, in January-May 1974, Britain managed to create a Catholic-Protestant "power-sharing" government in Nor-

thern Ireland, but it was brought down by a Protestant general strike. The Army has held down the rebellious Catholics and stopped full-scale civil war, but only at the price of continuing the oppression the Catholics suffered, and worsening the bitterness and fear of the two communities in Northern Ireland.

The Catholics are strong enough to block any return to the old Protestant state in Northern Ireland; the Protestants are strong enough to block a united Ireland; there is impasse.

In November 1985, Britain and Southern Ireland concluded the "Anglo-Irish Agreement", giving the southern government a formal right to consultation in the government of Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Protestants protested vehemently and actively, but were unable to destroy the Agreement because it had been made without and did not depend on their consent or agreement.

Britain hoped to use the 'Anglo-Irish Agreement as a framework which would force the Protestant politicians to negotiate a new power-sharing government in Northern Ireland, as the only way of getting themselves back somewhere near governmental power and counteracting the influence given to Dublin by the Agreement.

That was what the Brooke talks were about. Britain failed this time around. It will try again.

And in the meantime, the Army brutality and the harassment of the Catholic community will continue.



Jack Adams, former Midlands Counties Boxing Champion, now Deputy General Secretary of the TGWU

More on Ireland

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IRELAND: The Socialist Answer



A Workers' Ireland pamphlet.

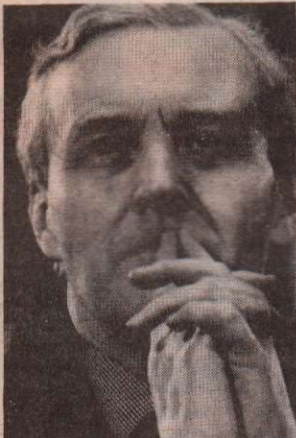
# North of Ireland?



"Troops Out" should be linked to agitation to promote a democratic settlement

**Tony Benn: "The solution is Irish self-determination"**

## British policy in Ireland has failed



Tony Benn

The various policies of British governments on Ireland have failed. Partition, strip searching, plastic bullets, and "supergrass" trials have all failed.

The whole world is having peace conferences — but there will be no conference for Northern Ireland. All the people get is a continued British presence.

The whole world seems to be in favour of "troops out": Russians out of Afghanistan and Eastern Europe; Serbs out of Croatia. But when it comes to British troops in Ireland there is a double standard.

Foreign intervention is not the way to deal with minority questions.

In Britain there is a ban on Sinn Fein speakers and the media's coverage of Irish events is subject to tight censorship.

The proposal for "troops out" and for self-determination for the Irish people has been recently backed by a MORI poll of British people.

I have proposed British withdrawal to the Commons — in 1983, in 1987 and in May 1991 in my Commonwealth of Britain Bill.

We should demand that the bloodshed be stopped.

We have always been told that the current level of bloodshed is necessary in order to prevent a wider level of bloodshed. This is an old imperialist excuse: "We are in Ireland to keep the peace".

It is not the real reason. In fact, in the past, Winston Churchill offered De Valera Irish unity if Ireland came into World War 2 on Britain's side.

The fact is that the imperialists were in Ireland to occupy, ravage and partition. Now they are there to con-

trol.

The partition of Ireland was forced by the bullet. The British gerrymandered a border. The solution is Irish self-determination, but this cannot take place until the British withdraw. There must be an Irish solution to the current situation, not a British solution.

The relations between Protestants and Catholics inside a future united Ireland are for the Irish people to decide — not for us. In fact, there is already a Protestant com-

munity in the Republic. No-one has suggested that their rights have been tampered with.

Will there be a bloodbath after British withdrawal? But there is a bloodbath already. After the British leave the loyalists and nationalists — or Protestants and Catholics — have got to learn to live together.

Tony Benn was speaking at a press conference organised by the Troops Out Movement in London on 24 October.

**Bernadette McAliskey: "Push Kinnock to withdraw"**

## Troops out and a new Ireland

A number of issues are running in our favour at the moment.

Firstly the media — for good reasons or bad — is increasing the profile of Ireland. The mind of the British public is being focused on Ireland.

Second: a MORI opinion poll shows that a significant number of people — about 20% of the electorate — would make withdrawal of troops a factor in the way they vote.

We need to find that 20%. We need to make these people felt by a future government.

Thirdly: for the first time in a long while it seems as though Labour may be the next government. Neil Kinnock will be Prime Minister.

Now, Neil Kinnock has no principles. Those who push hardest get change out of Neil Kinnock.

A majority of the British people want British troops withdrawn from Ireland dur-

ing the lifetime of the next government. Kinnock needs votes and "troops out" is an issue with which to get votes.

Neil Kinnock should begin to get letters from rank and file members of the labour movement and from union branches. We have from now until the election to make Labour nervous.

What does John Hume say about troop withdrawal? He says that if you take the troops out there will be a bloodbath. At no time has this "bloodbath" meant anything but an attack from the Unionist community. But these attacks are backed by the troops. If the troops were not there these attacks would not have the facility of British military intelligence and safe conduct after an attack.

The Unionists would say: what will happen to us? They would be scared.

All the roles would be reversed and they would worry that we would come after them.

The IRA and other

Republicans have all said this will not happen, because we know what it is like to have your house burnt down. We would not impose it on others.

We would sit down and talk to the Unionists.

What sort of Ireland are we talking about? The Free State will have to go. We will have a new constitutional conference and a new constitution. There must be no special place for religion in the state.

What will we do with the one million people who wish to be British? That is no problem for us. The British can issue Ian Paisley with a passport. They can be British and live in Ireland. We must have a constitution which means these people will not be discriminated against.

But I won't be British. I will be dead before I will be British.

Bernadette McAliskey was speaking at a Troops Out Movement public meeting on 25 October.

### Channel Four's "Pack Up Your Troubles"

A missed chance to argue the case

Duncan Chapple reviews last week's Channel Four TV feature on Ireland.

This was a rare chance to use TV to put the case for British withdrawal from Ireland.

What's more, the interviews and commentary were done by Geoff Bell, a supporter of the Trotskyist fortnightly *Socialist Outlook*.

Sadly, however, the programme went little further than the stock-in-trade of "Daily Mirror republicanism" and conventional Catholic Irish nationalism.

Bell set the programme up as a three-way confrontation of views. First there was the policy of Labour and Conservative leaderships — clearly shown as identical; then the views of US Senator Joseph Kennedy, of Seamus Mallon MP from the mainly Catholic Social Democratic and Labour Party in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland, and of relatives of dead soldiers; and, finally, the results of a MORI poll of 2,000 people in Britain carried out for the programme.

Bell presented us with Labour and Conservative leaders quite united and complacent over Ireland. Tory Peter Brooke said how "helpful it is that it is not a party political issue". Labour spokesperson Kevin MacNamara tearfully praised Thatcher's "brave efforts in solving the crisis through the Anglo-Irish agreement."

Neil Kinnock blathered: "if we could reunify Ireland in 50 years or make that border irrelevant, I'd be a happy man".

Aided by Labour's leaders, the Tories have done nothing to bring peace closer. Indeed, through repression, discrimination and the ongoing war, these capitalist politicians have wrecked life in the Six Counties, which has the worst poverty rates in Western Europe.

*Pack Up The Troubles* also showed that much of the responsibility for deepening the divisions in the Six Counties lies with Britain. Tory MPs Peter Brooke, Michael Mates and Humphrey Atkins smugly refused to criticise the way that the Tories backed up the Unionist thugs who created the basis for the partition of Ireland in 1921. The old Anglo-Irish Protestant landlord class was then still a power, linking the British Tories with the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland.

The 1921 partition was an undemocratic settlement, followed by 70 years of discrimination against the Catholic community in the Northern state.

The poll commissioned for the programme shows a high level in Britain of support for withdrawal and of concern over Britain's role. 55% are concerned at Britain's human rights record — and so we should be, since the UK has been taken to the European Court of Human Rights more often, and found guilty more times, than any other state. 65% agree that British politicians are not doing enough about Ireland. 47% think there is no difference between

the parties on Ireland, and only 20% think there is a difference.

But the programme chose to present its positive ideas through the figure of US Senator Joe Kennedy. Presented through the programme as the voice of reason, he justified talks with Sinn Fein because "you don't have to deal with them if you beat them, but I can't see that Britain will beat them, so you have to talk."

Britain has proved unable to beat the Protestant militants, too. Much more fundamentally, talks — and a democratic settlement — are needed between the different factions and communities in Ireland. Without such a settlement, self-determination for the Irish people as a whole is just words. But Kennedy — presented uncritically by Bell — poses the issues in the fashion of the bourgeois Irish-American politician he is: realistic dealings between Britain and an Ireland supposed to be essentially all Catholic and "green".

What about the fact that Ireland is not all Catholic and "green" — that it has a large compact minority (the majority in Northern Ireland) which is bitterly opposed to a "green" Catholic Ireland? The programme tried to define that Protestant (or Anglo-Scots-Ulster) minority out of the picture.

To argue that a British withdrawal does not risk a bloodbath, Bell quoted a strange set of supporters. The IRA were quoted as promising a ceasefire if there was withdrawal. But what about the 40,000 armed members of the 97% Protestant UDR? Bell assumed that they would be disarmed prior to withdrawal!

Cambridge Professor Bob Rowthorne informed us that the paramilitaries would "disappear completely". Ian Paisley was quoted as being for a referendum on withdrawal — as if that suggested that he would peacefully accept losing!

It all added up to a wildly unbelievable set of frail predictions. The troops have played no progressive role in Ireland, and most British people see that. 37% see no difference, and 36% think things are worse, in the Six Counties because of the troops.

But there are also two Irish communities with paramilitary forces. At the moment they are fighting a war for reasons that will not leave on the same boat as the British troops, even if those reasons arrived on those boats, which they didn't.

Bell showed through his poll that 23% of British people are for immediate withdrawal and that most people are for withdrawal within a four year period. But he only evaded the basic fact that makes that mass mood in Britain no more than a passive, chauvinistic feeling of being "fed up" with Ireland, and which makes most Irish people more sceptical about withdrawal: that unless the two Irish communities can make a political settlement with guarantees for democratic rights, then peace cannot follow withdrawal.

# Maxwell, Mossad and Mirrorgate



"It's all about diversification, John"

## Stalinists with a nose for business

### GRAFFITI

Diversification always helps a company survive. And so it was to be with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Particularly reliant as it was on a monopoly of political power in the USSR, the CPSU hedged by investing in some more long-term options.

Allegations are just coming to light that 120 tonnes of gold were sold in Switzerland in 1990 alone, and \$12 billion of money laundered into foreign investments and accounts.

A Party document of August 1990 states: "(The) final aim is 'commercialisation' of Party property and creation of the structures of 'unseen' Party economy. A very limited number of people will be allowed to participate in this project. They will be appointed by the General Secretary (Gorbachev) and his deputy (Ivashko)".

While Ian Vallance, Chair of BT, took a pay rise of £50,000 to £500,000 (likely to be supplemented by a bonus of £25,000), those of us at the other end of the pay scale have been doing less well.

There have been only 83 prosecutions of companies found paying less than the legally enforced Wages Council minimum rates. Despite the fact that the Wages Inspectorate has only 71 inspectors covering 300,000 workplaces, some 100,000 have been found paying below the legal minimum.

And the punishment? A maximum fine of £800.

Apparently, the Polish ruling class and would-be entrepreneurs are getting the hang of this free market business.

They look west and see BCCI, Polly Peck and Blue Arrow. Now Poland has a whole series of scandals of its own:

Art-B, a banking scandal of mind-boggling proportions; Fozz, the foreign debt agency, and its currency scandal; and the alcohol tax swindle, Schnappsgate.

This week's reactionary of the week goes to Barbara Amiel, writing in the *Sunday Times*.

Barbara even outdoes the British judiciary for her subject is the Law Lords' ruling that rape can occur within marriage.

To set the tone, she starts: "If the husband in an active marriage takes the wife's car without her permission, it would

be nonsense to charge him with theft".

But Barbara is warming up: "Solomon himself would have difficulty determining the point of withheld consent between two active sexual partners... Juries will be faced with husbands and wives who had lovely sexual intercourse on Monday, an OK time on Tuesday, but on Wednesday the husband raped the wife".

What was behind the Lords' decision then? Fortunately for a democracy about to be subverted, Barbara has uncovered the conspiracy:

"What the spirit of our times is after is the creation of a matriarchy...women in our society long ago achieved the true liberal condition of equality, but this was not seen as a reason for feminism to disband. Feminists simply substituted the illiberal goal of statistical 'parity' for equality".

So there you have it: the Law Lords are agents of radical feminist conspiracy. Being old conservatives in wigs is just a cover to help them bring about a matriarchal society where men and women not only have the vote but earn the same.

The conspiracy now uncovered, we can all sleep in peace — or at least men can.

The Tories might be losing the political battle over the Health Service, but they still have the little-democratic-Englander versus centralist-bureaucratic-European card to play.

Not only are those foreign types trying to tell us exactly what field railway lines can go through, but now they are attempting to tell us what adverters we can watch.

Not only have great British institutions like the Hamlet cigar commercial already disappeared from our screens, but now the Milky Bar kid, the Gold Blend couple and British Telecom's Beattie, are all under threat.

We are told that this is because the EC is "unrepresentative", while of course, Britain is well-known for its full democratic consultation over any advert being made, or any railway line being built for that matter.

Short of a Christmas present for that person you really hate?

Well, coming to your local recording store there is a new recording of "A Lincoln Portrait", the words of Abraham Lincoln set to music by Aaron Copland.

And whose dulcet tones will read the Gettysburg Address? None other than Margaret Thatcher.

The chances of it rocketing up the charts are understood to be limited...

Writs are flying to and fro and the dreaded words "sub judice" have been uttered, so we must be careful. But whatever the final outcome of the "Mirrorgate" affair, certain facts are now clear:

(1) *Daily Mirror* Foreign Editor Nicholas Davies has a long-standing association with self-styled former Mossad agent and occasional arms dealer, Ari Ben-Menashe.

(2) For some unaccountable reason, Davies allowed Ben-Menashe to use his London address for mail in the mid-1980s.

(3) Davies was lying when he denied ever having visited the USA in 1985: in fact, he visited Ohio and met arms dealers there in that year, while ostensibly working on a story about the Amish community.

(4) Davies contacted arms dealer John Knight in London in 1985 and attempted to buy rifle spares, mortar guns, mines and jet fuel. Knight understood that the final destination of the consignment was the Israeli-backed South Lebanese Army.

(5) In 1983 Ben-Menashe



By Jim Denham

and Davies set up a London office for a company called Ora Ltd, using Davies' home address in Streatham and, later, the Elephant and Castle. Ora had contacts with Iranians wanting arms shipments. Davies' direct line at the *Mirror* was also used to discuss arms deals with Iranians and others.

(6) After vigorously defending Davies in the early part of last week, *Mirror* editor Richard Stott sent him home on Friday. On Saturday he announced an "internal inquiry" into the Ohio visit, and on Monday he sacked Davies.

The allegations concerning Davies and his boss, Robert Maxwell, first saw the light of day in a book

— *The Samson Option: Israel, America and the Bomb* — by the Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh. Much of Hersh's information comes from Ben-Menashe who claims to have been an intelligence advisor to the Israeli premier Yitzhak Shamir. Ben-Menashe is also well-known to journalists as a con-man.

"It is a matter of record that within hours of the *Sunday Mirror* appearing, Vanunu had disappeared"

Hersh was well aware of Ben-Menashe's dubious reputation and placed no credence in him until he (Ben-Menashe) had been "totally taken apart" by lawyers from Faber and Faber (Hersh's publisher) and his information corroborated by other sources.

One of Ben-Menashe's claims is that Mordechai Vanunu, the Israeli who revealed Israel's secret atomic weapons programme to the *Sunday Times* in 1986, was captured by Mossad as a direct result of information passed to them by Davies,

with the approval of Maxwell. Vanunu is now in Israel, serving 18 years in solitary confinement.

The precise details of the allegations concerning Maxwell, Davies and Vanunu are now *sub judice*. But it is a matter of record that in 1986 the *Sunday Mirror* published a photo of Vanunu, together with a story denouncing him as a "conman" and accusing him of being involved in "a hoax, even something more sinister — a plot to discredit Israel".

Within hours of this story appearing, Vanunu had disappeared from the hotel where the *Sunday Times* had put him for safe-keeping. A few weeks later he turned up in the hands of the Israeli authorities.

It now seems likely that the *Mirror* will attempt to portray Davies as a maverick figure who abused his position at the paper in order to pursue a Walter Mit-tish double-life. This may be true.

But Cap'n Bob Maxwell's repeated boasts of a "close relationship" with Yitzhak Shamir and the present Israeli regime makes speculation about his personal involvement inevitable.

## Why we want more public child-care

### WOMEN'S EYE

By Lilian Thomson

Only 3% of children under five in London have places in publicly-funded child-care.

The Tories, apparently, think it is not important to increase that figure. But over the last five months, since my daughter was born, I have been finding out what the figures mean day-to-day for working mothers.

My local authority, unlike many others, does have a few day-care centres which take babies as well as older children. But the average person's chance of a place in them is nil. So I had to look for a child-minder.

Child-minders are "free enterprise", but local authorities are at least supposed to check and register them.

Soon after my daughter was born, I phoned the Council to ask about child-minders. I did not want a child-minder just yet, but it seemed worthwhile to find out how the land lies. I had approached nurseries seeking a place for my daughter when she was two, or two-and-a-half, and they had told me that really I should have put her name on the waiting list before she was born.

The Council told me to ask my Neighbourhood Office

about child-minders. I phoned the Neighbourhood Office.

No, they said, they didn't have a list of child-minders. The post of Under-Fives worker at the Office had been vacant for some time, so no child-minders had been registered. I should phone back in a few months time, and maybe then they would have an Under-Fives worker.

I left the matter there for a while. After getting part-time work, I found a child-minder (unregistered, of course) through a newsagents window

"Mine is not a Tory local authority, ideologically committed to having the cold winds of the free market whistle around babies' ears. It is a Labour authority, supposedly left-wing... with feminist pretensions"

ad, but I was not happy with her. Since my work was at home — so could be done, at a pinch, without any child-minding help — and I was moving house soon, I soldiered on.

After moving house, I phoned my new

neighbourhood office. They told me, mysteriously, that they had a list of child-minders, but that they were not giving it out. They had no Under-Fives worker, and they referred me to the Council's central Education Department office.

After being passed from one to another of a series of puzzled workers in the Education Department, I contacted someone there who undertook to sort out the neighbourhood office on my behalf. She phoned back promptly. This neighbourhood office would soon have an Under-Fives worker, and she told me how to contact the worker.

Probably I had brought the wrath of a manager down on some hapless worker in the neighbourhood office, someone demoralised and wearied by the way that successive cuts have reduced their work to desultory patching-up of ever-increasing social problems.

It took about half a dozen attempts to contact the Under-Fives worker. Time and again I was told "try phoning back in 15 minutes", or "try again at such-and-such a time".

No-one seemed to consider that it might be inconvenient or impossible for me to phone back at another set time. (Requests for the Under-Fives worker to ring me produced no result). And what if I had not had a phone? I suppose I would have had to visit the Neighbourhood Office a dozen times on foot, with a trip to the Education Department in between.

Finally, I made contact. The mystery about the list

was uncovered. Because it was so long since that office had had an Under-Fives worker, the list was out-of-date; the new Under-Fives worker was going to check up on all the minders on the list before re-issuing it.

Now I am waiting to see if the new Under-Fives worker can produce a list with a suitable minder.

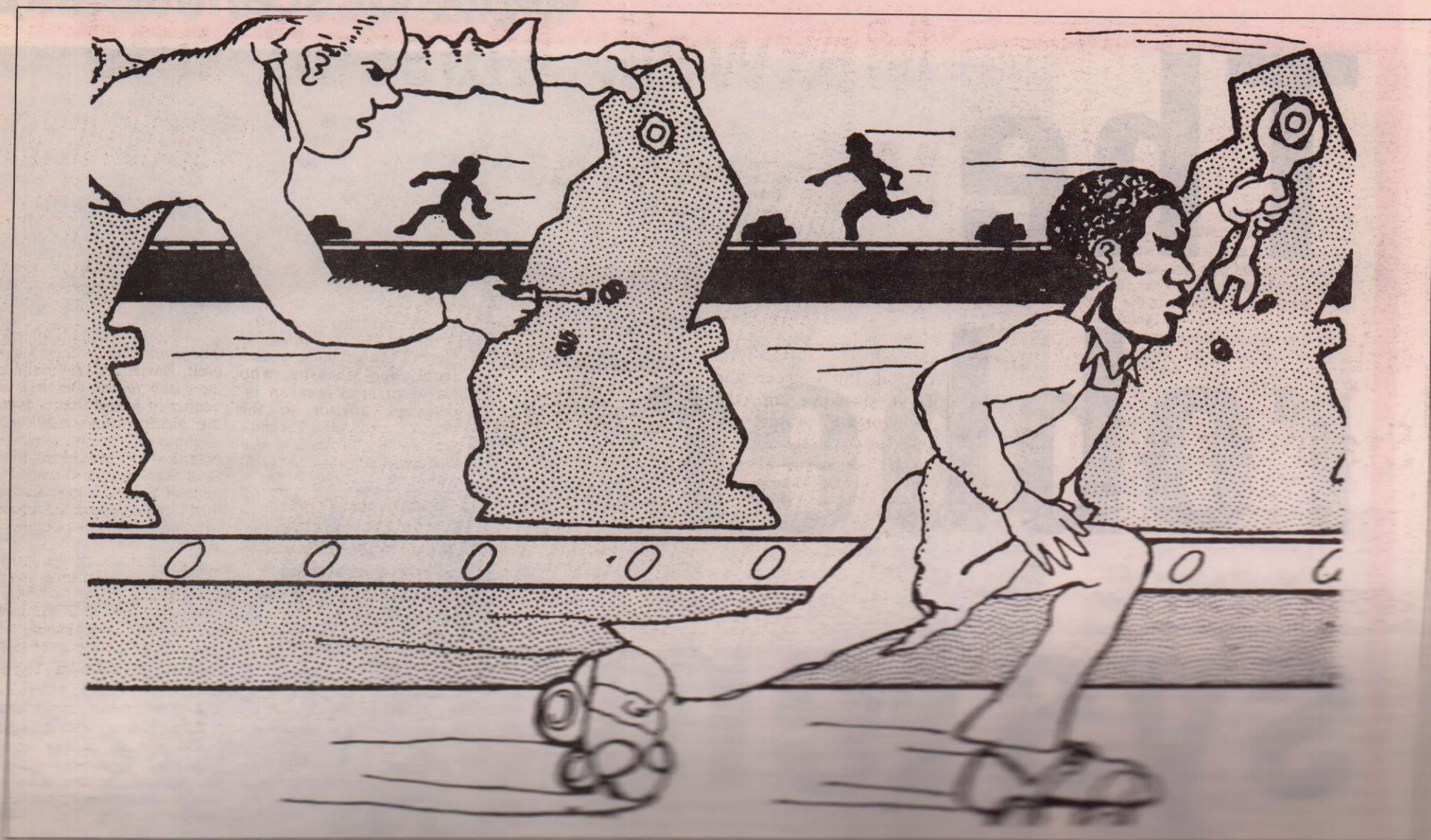
This is not "cuts", or not officially, anyway. The Under-Fives worker posts had not been cut. They were just part of the vast bulge of unfilled vacancies which local authorities have developed to make ends meet.

And mine is not a Tory local authority, ideologically committed to having the cold winds of the free market whistle round babies' ears. It is a Labour authority, supposedly left-wing, with (or so it tells me) much better child care provision than the average. It has a women's committee, a nicely-printed women's newsletter, and a lot of feminist pretensions.

John Major says that it is unnecessary to put any more public resources into child care, since Britain already has more mothers in waged work than other Western European countries with better childcare provision.

That makes sense from his point of view. Why waste money which could go to tax cuts for the rich, when working-class women will find some way to manage anyhow?

Only it makes life a much harder struggle for working mothers. And it makes life harder and less safe for our children, pushed into makeshift care or left with unregistered child-minders.



# The flipside of capitalist success

Japan is the model of capitalist success. Even Labour Party leaders, these days, cite it as a model. Yet there is another side to Japan's increases in production and profits. As Ben Watanabe, a Japanese trade unionist, reports, it is summed up by a new word in the Japanese language — "karoshi". This article is abridged from the US socialist monthly *Against the Current*.

Just as "kaizen" (improvement) and "kamban system" are central words in Japanese management, "karoshi" — meaning "sudden death due to overwork" — is another central emerging social phenomenon that is the other side of the coin.

"Karoshi" may occur on the production line or in office work. Factory automation is promoted simultaneously with office automation — with everything running "just in time" — and accordingly the expansion and intensification of work is decided at the complete will of the capitalists.

The cumulative effects, then, of

continued physical and mental strain on workers exposed to hyper-intensive work and long working hours result in the deterioration of their health and, in the worst cases, the sudden death called "karoshi".

According to a survey conducted by Karoshi Dial 110 — a citizen's volunteer group — some 1,500 cases of alleged karoshi had been reported by victims' colleagues and families as of June 1990.

Karoshi cases brought to court by victims' families are increasing annually. But the courts have found employers liable and awarded damages in less than 5% of the suits.

According to the findings of a survey conducted by the Ministry of

**"67.3% of workers felt physically exhausted; 72.7% complained of mental strain."**

Labour in November 1987, 82.9% of respondents (15,000 workers at 800 workplaces nationwide) complained that they were suffering from symptoms likely to cause sudden death (karoshi); 67.3% felt physically exhausted; 72.7% complained of mental strain.

As long as Japanese management is widely accepted by industry all over the world, karoshi will happen everywhere rather than being specifically Japanese. Reportedly, a

production worker on Toyota's assembly line is required to make twenty motions every eighteen seconds — a total of 20,600 motions in a working day. This kind of inhuman work environment has been spreading from the production line to offices and to every workplace.

The typical work day of a Japanese salaried worker could be described as follows: he gets out of bed at 5.30am and then leaves home for his office at 6.30 while his children are still asleep. The average commuting time for workers who are living in the suburbs of Tokyo is one hour and twenty minutes.

In theory, such a worker is supposed to work from 9.00am to 5.00pm. But in practice, when he arrives at his office at 8.00am, he usually finds that more than half of his colleagues have already started work without instructions from their managers.

At 5.00pm — when the day's official duties are done — hardly any workers leave the office to go back home. Most do overtime every day until after 8.00pm and sometimes as late as 10.00. Once or twice a week, a typical salaried employee arrives home after midnight. Thus he is not able to have supper with his family, except on holidays.

Increasingly, many of his colleagues stay once or twice a week at cheap "business hotels" near the office, in preparation for the next day's work.

The taking of paid holidays has been markedly declining: in 1980 only 61.2% of allowed paid

holidays were used, and in 1988 the rate declined to 50%. This inadequate use of paid holidays can be attributed to the fact that although the workload is increasing, there are no corresponding increases in staff. Monthly working hour statistics

**"An inhuman work environment has been spreading from the production line to offices and other workplaces."**

published by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) indicate that monthly overtime work per worker is less than thirty hours. But in reality they do almost 100 hours overtime per month — approximately one hour in the morning and four hours in the evening of every working day.

Why this extreme discrepancy? It is because workers do not request payment for all their overtime work, and because employers — if they respect the Labour Standards Law and their own companies' work rules — could not permit total payment for it.

Workers believe that if they request payment for all their overtime work, their managers will glare at them and not recommend them for promotion. Most employers notify their employees not to ask for more than thirty hours of paid overtime work per month, and one rarely

hears of trade unions that have filed complaints concerning these notifications.

Thus there are more than 70 "phantom" or unpaid monthly overtime hours per worker which never appear in the statistics.

Then what about the work hours of factory workers? In most cases the factory workers have to work twenty to twenty-three hours overtime per month.

Unlike salaried workers, factory workers are in most cases fully paid for their overtime work. Their annual working hours, including overtime work, exceed 2,200 hours. In 1988 factory workers took 65% of their paid holidays.

A brief international comparison: according to the 1988 statistics of the Labour Standards Bureau of the Ministry of Labour, the average number of work hours for all industries in Japan was 2,168 hours (including 244 hours of overtime), Britain's 1,947 (177 overtime hours) and West Germany's 1,642 (83 overtime hours).

Japan's working hours were the longest, not even taking into consideration the "phantom" overtime work. In the face of these excessive working hours, even Rengo (the dominant national union federation) has begun to ask for shorter working hours as its priority agenda, reversing its past tacit acceptance of longer hours.

Decisive action by workers against the greed of capital — as exemplified in Japanese management — can save us from this dehumanisation.

# The robber system

Martin Thomas looks at the lesson of the recent flood of big financial scandals.

Fair exchange, supposedly, is no robbery. On that axiom rests the justification of the capitalist free market economy.

In the free market, so the argument runs, you get what you give. Somewhere you will find a buyer willing to pay you the full value of your services — but, unless you have exceptional luck, no more.

For at least three reasons the argument is a lie. In reality employers do not reckon wages by trying to calculate the extra production due to an extra worker. They pay as little as they can get away with. Women workers get less than

men for similar work. Workers doing hard, essential jobs are paid much less than "consultants" and "directors" who are no use at all.

More fundamentally, the wages paid to workers *cannot* add up to as much as the value they produce, or else there would be no profits.

Free-market economists try to explain profits as a sort of "wage" for the services contributed by capital. Their argument rests on the fiction that a millionaire, by converting his fortune into buildings, equipment, and so on, instead of spending it all by eating a hundred thousand dinners that same day, creates a new value in the same way that labour does, and deserves a "reward for abstinence".

The exchange between employers and workers may be *legally* free and equal, but *economically and socially* it is wage-slavery and exploitation.

And, thirdly, fair exchange rests on the fiction that both buyer and seller have full information about the goods and services, and about the alternatives.

The fiction is not too oppressive when applied to the buying and selling of potatoes or soap. It is ludicrous when applied to the weightier dealings of the financial markets. And in modern Western capitalism, the way to get very rich, quickly, is not to exploit workers directly. That is painstaking, slow work.

The quick road to riches is to get an advantage, through superior information or skill, in the markets where shares and bonds and currencies (all relying for their value, *ultimately*, on production) are bought and sold. In those markets, hundreds of millions of pounds, representing wealth created by workers over many years, can be scooped up by a smart operator in minutes.

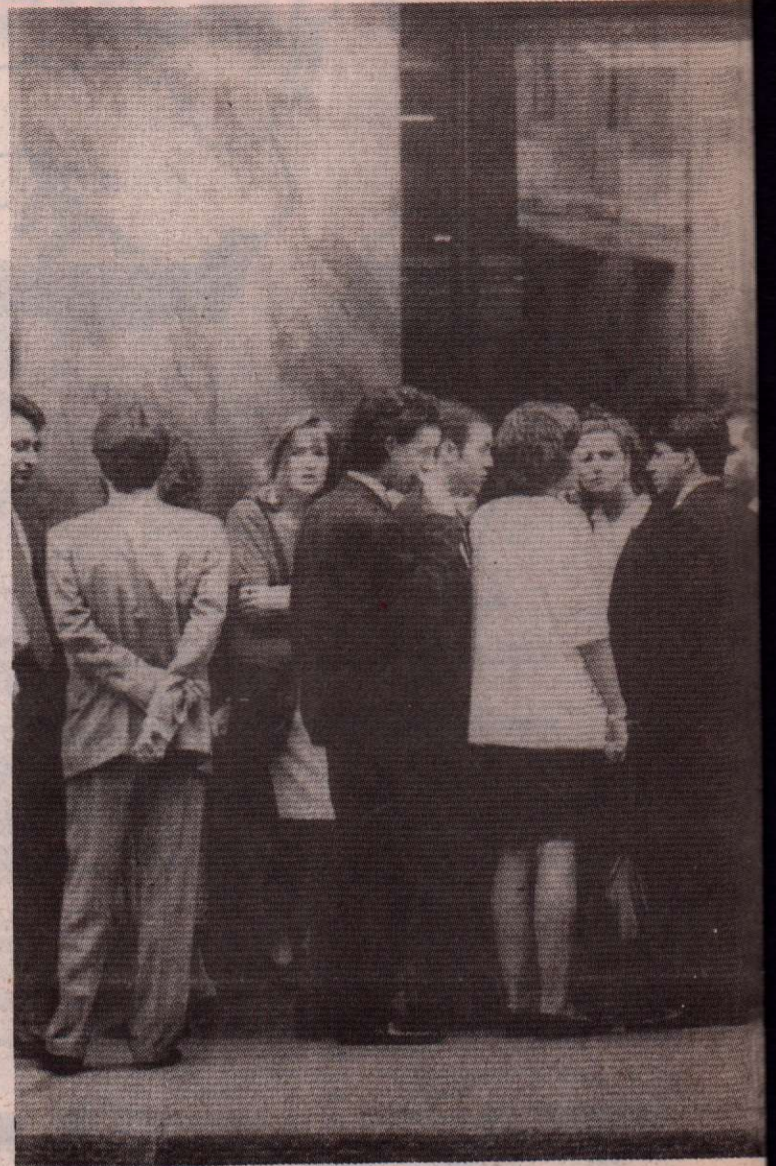
Their everyday business is hardly more than a legalised form of swindling. It is only logical that in the 1980s, a rip-roaring decade for them, more and more of them edged over into illegal swindles.

The first big scandal of the 1980s was the PCW affair, in 1982, in which two men stole £40 million from the Lloyds insurance market. Typically, they got off almost scot free. There was no legal action. They moved to America and set up business successfully there.

The Kemp Mitchell affair, a bit later (the fraud was done in 1983, and the fraudsters banned from the Stock Exchange in November 1986), illustrated the same rule. Two men in a New York brokers pocketed at least \$264,000 by putting bogus prices on bond deals done with a London broker.

When they were found out, the London broker paid back the \$264,000 (a minimum estimate of the amount swindled, so it probably still left a tidy profit) and recruited the swindlers to work for it. By 1986 the London broker had gone bust. One of the swindlers commented: "It is one big joke, and out of the way as far as I am concerned."

The people for whom the swindlers were not just "one big



July 1991: BCCI workers, their wages impounded in frozen accounts, gather to protest. Many of the foremost swindlers of the 1990s got off scot free

joke" were the workers on whose backs these profits were made, and whose jobs were cut when firms went bust or were sliced up following takeover deals.

**"'Junk bonds' made possible the 'leveraged buy-outs', in which many big US corporations were bought by relatively small-time spivs"**

In the Johnson Matthey Bank case (September 1984), the bank went bust after being found to have handed out cheap loans in return for bribes. It was discreetly taken over by the Bank of England.

The big flood of scandals dates from November 1986, when Ivan Boesky, "king of the arbs" on Wall Street, was arrested. Boesky made his billions as an arbitrageur (or "arb"), someone who looks for two dealers offering slightly different prices and makes a profit on the difference. He was caught for "insider dealing", the illegal use of confidential information (about forthcoming takeover bids, for example, which would raise share prices) to steal an advantage.

Boesky did not go scot free. He paid a big fine and did a short spell in jail. But he came out still a rich man.

To reduce his punishment, Boesky "sang", giving the authorities information about other people who had manipulated the markets. Three big exposures followed quickly.

In the same month, November 1986, Geoffrey Collier, a boss at Morgan Grenfell bank in London, was caught "insider dealing". He came out with a fine of £25,000 (small change compared to the £300,000 salary he had been getting) and no time in jail.

In December the British government started an investigation into the way Guinness had taken over Distillers in summer 1986. By April 1987, Guinness boss Ernest Saunders was in court, together with Gerald Ronson of the Heron group and others. They were charged with artificially boosting the Guinness share price by sham share dealings, which they did in order to make more attractive their offer to buy Distillers shares with Guinness shares.

Boesky also gave the information which set the investigators on the trail of Michael Milken, the "junk bond" billionaire.

"Junk bonds" are financial bits of paper which enable speculators to borrow vast amounts of money without having solid assets as security, by offering high interest rates. They made possible the "leveraged buy-outs", in which many big US corporations were bought by relatively small-time spivs, using junk-bond money, and then chopped up and trimmed down to yield maximum short-term profits.

They are a tool for coining short-term profits at the expense of the long term — for the first thing that happens to every bought-out business is that research and development, training, long-term investment, and jobs, are cut. The added attraction is that a lot of the short-term profits spill out into fat fees for lawyers, bankers, consultants and financiers. Michael Milken took \$550 million in a single year for fixing junk bond deals.

Since Milken effectively controlled a large chunk of the junk bond market single-handed, and controlled the information on which buyers and sellers depended, he had vast openings for manipulation. He took them. After four years of investigation, in April 1990 he finally broke down in tears and confessed in court to financial fraud. He is still appealing against his sentence, a fine of \$500 million and ten years in jail.

THE LONDON				INTERNATIONAL							
STERLING				DEUTSCHE MARK				SWISS FRA			
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International foreign exchange deals increased over the 1980s to \$200 billion a day



## Exposes nature of capitalism



Only one big scandal developed directly from the great stock market crash in October 1987 (though maybe the crash gave a boost to investigations that would otherwise have marked time. That was the County Nat West affair, which came to court this year.

County Nat West, the merchant bank offshoot of National Westminster, was managing a sale of shares for the employment agency Blue Arrow, designed to raise cash for it to take over another agency, Manpower. The crash intervened, and few shares sold. County Nat West bosses arranged take-overs in order to keep up appearances and stop Blue Arrow's share price crashing.

The Polly Peck scandal, which broke in October 1990, also centred round manoeuvres to pump up the price of shares. Polly Peck boss Asil Nadir pushed the price of shares in his fruit and electronics company up from half a penny in 1980 to 450p in early 1990. It was the most successful company of the 1980s on the London Stock Exchange.

Big profits were announced, big dividends were paid out, the share prices kept rising, and so people kept buying the shares, and some 60 banks kept lending money to Nadir. In fact the announced profits were higher than could possibly be made from Nadir's fairly modest trade in fruit from northern Cyprus. But as long as the elaborate confidence trick kept going, and the spiral of credit kept going upwards, Nadir was rich.

In October 1990 the banks finally got alarmed and put Polly Peck into administration. Criminal charges are now being laid against Nadir.

The BCCI (Bank of Credit and Commerce International) scandal in July 1991 was also based on confidence trickery. Starting off with money levered out of Gulf oil sheikhs, the bank, founded by Pakistani financier Agha Hasan Abedi, fiddled its accounts to show ever-increasing assets and ever-increasing profits.

Those ever-increasing figures for assets and profits allowed it to get more deposits, open more branches — and make more big pay-outs to its bosses. It also gained from being prepared to do dodgy business which other banks were more wary of, for customers ranging from Panama's drug-dealing General Noriega to Abu Nidal and the CIA.

The Salomons scandal, in August 1991, which resulted in the downfall of Wall Street's most powerful investment banker, John Gutfreund, was more like the Milken case. Gutfreund had used his commanding position in the US Treasury Bond market to manipulate information and siphon off extra profits.

The biggest so far of the financial scandals in Japan is rather like the Guinness, County Nat West, and BCCI cases — companies fiddling information in order to boost their own credit. In summer 1991 Nomura Securities, the world's biggest stockbrokers, and Japan's other big stockbroking companies, admitted to compensating favoured clients for their losses on share deals. They had done that in order to keep the prestige developed from those clients and thus to win other, paying, clients.

A few top bosses discreetly resigned, and the new boss of Nomura, Yukio Aida, commented piously: "Too much of our energy was centred on pursuing profits. We were so successful that we became arrogant."

By far the biggest of the swindles of the 1980s — and indeed of all time — was, however, the United States "Savings and Loans" fiasco. At the end of the 1980s, most of the US's "savings and loans" businesses (the American equivalents of British building societies) went bust. The savings deposited with those "S&Ls" were guaranteed by the US federal government, and estimates of the cost to the American taxpayer of sorting out the mess are now running above \$500 billion, or around \$2000 for every child,

woman and man in the US.

That swindle was essentially another confidence trick. It became possible when, in the early 1980s, Ronald Reagan's government loosened government controls on the S&L business. S&Ls could now offer higher and higher rates of interest.

Their income from people who had borrowed for mortgages for their homes was nowhere near enough to pay those high rates of interest to lenders. But that did not matter as long as the S&L bosses could keep a spiral of credit turning.

They pulled in millions in deposits, not just from small savers, and put them into speculative property development, which was then booming in the US. On the way they siphoned off large amounts for their own salaries, bonuses, expenses, and bribes.

Once the property market slumped, the whole scam came crashing down. The US federal government is now the unwilling owner of hundreds of abandoned or half-finished shopping malls, hotels, tourist resorts and so on, while most of the bosses and going unpunished.

The Leona Helmsley trial in summer 1989 likewise signalled the eagerness of the rich to raid the public purse. Helmsley, a hotel owner and property developer, was caught for tax evasion, and one of her former housekeepers told the court about Helmsley's maxim, a parallel to Ivan Boesky's "Greed is good": "We don't pay taxes. The little people pay taxes."

The Midland Bank's affairs in the 1930s have not yet become a spectacular scandal, but quite possibly they would have done if the bank were not so stacked out with top Establishment figures. Lord Armstrong, former head of the British civil service, and Kit McMahon, former deputy chair of the Bank of England, were among its bosses.

Midland was nearly ruined by buying the American bank Crocker in 1981. The deal, concluded in

panic by the Midland, effectively gave the sharp-witted Crocker licence to raid the Midland's credit as much as they liked for dubious property developments. In 1986 the Midland bailed out by selling Crocker at a huge loss to another US bank, Wells Fargo.

Meanwhile, from 1974 through to 1990, Midland had a Defence Equipment Finance Department inside its International Trade Service subsidiary working secretly and in close collaboration with MI5. Top Midland bosses claimed that they did not even know the department existed, although in 1983 its losses wiped out one-fifth of Midland's total profits.

The *Financial Times* has documented at least one major fraud involving Midland International Trade Services, where trade credits were organised for £50 million of exports from Turkey which did not exist.



Michael Milken, once the most powerful American financier since JP Morgan, leaves a New York court after pleading guilty to fraud

The main thread running through the major scandals, however, is the pumping-up, siphoning-off, and manipulation of credit, all of which flourished in an era when credit was lavish and booming.

They are not blemishes and sores which grew on capitalism because of bad times. They are the product of good times for capitalism.

The 1980s were a good time for capitalism. The working class was mostly quiet, in most of the big capitalist countries; the Stalinist alternative to capitalism was crumbling. Economies were given a boost by a technological revolution, the spread of relatively cheap and small-scale computer technology.

**"The real scandal is this: capitalism at its most triumphant and booming means homelessness, misery, poverty, and starvation for millions, and a frenzy of multi-million-dollar swindling for a few thousands".**

The long process, developing since World War 2, of internationalisation of capital, lurched forward with the abolition of most controls by nation states on international flows of finance. The channels by which big businesses could get credit became much bigger, more varied, and more international.

International bank lending rose from \$127 billion in 1983 to \$624 billion in 1986. International bond issues grew from \$44 billion in 1981 to \$220 billion in 1986. International share issues expanded from \$0.2 billion in 1984 to \$17.7 billion in 1987. Foreign exchange dealing swelled to maybe \$200 billion a day in 1987.

This was capitalism with its best foot forward, capitalism showing what it could do with a clear field and a following wind.

The real scandal is this: capitalism at its most triumphant and booming means homelessness, misery, poverty, and starvation for millions, and a frenzy of multi-million-dollar swindling for a few thousands.

## Truth, lies and polemic

## Rivers of rubbish

## AGAINST THE TIDE

By Sean Matgamna



**B**iblical scholars have, I understand, a terrible time of it working out what some of the long-vanished early Christian groups believed.

They have to rely on such chance survivals as the "Dead Sea Scrolls". Most of the rich history of the competing Christian groups is lost: the victorious Catholic Christians, entwined with the Roman and later states from the early 4th century onwards, suppressed their opponents and left little trace of them and their beliefs except factional slanders and lies. Mostly we don't know what they believed.

If all the files of *Socialist Organiser* were to be destroyed and future historians of British socialism had to rely on the comments of our "socialist" critics, they would face a similarly hopeless task establishing what *Socialist Organiser* believed in.

Examples of grotesque misrepresentation are legion. Some are products of emotion blended with incomprehension. For instance, on issues of national or communal conflict, like those in Northern Ireland and in Israel/Palestine, we base ourselves on the Marxist idea of consistent democracy, and take as our model the application of that idea by the Bolshevik party in the vicious cauldron of ethnic and national conflict in which they operated (and which is now bubbling furiously again: anybody on the left still capable of thinking about Ireland should look at the Catholic-Protestant conflict through the prism of events in Yugoslavia).

We reject the demonisation of Israeli Jews and Northern Ireland Protestants; we say there is right on both sides and that no national or ethnic group forfeits its right to exist because it is, for now, an oppressor or a would-be oppressor; we advocate mutual accommodation and a common struggle of the working class in the conflict-ridden peoples, based on support for the oppressed and mutual guarantees against fear of future oppression. Thus we propose a federal Ireland with local autonomy, and two states for the two peoples in Israel/Palestine.

Ignorant of the ideas of historical Marxism on questions like this; delirious with vicarious "Third Worldist" national and communal chauvinism distilled from sympathy with those presently oppressed; religious in denying that such peoples can ever be chauvinistic, the sectarian left denounce us as supporters of the oppressors, as "pro-imperialist", or as people who lack the moral fibre to withstand the pressure of... the Labour Party!

Thus the SWP, not just in offhand heated exchanges but in an official document written by junior guru Alex Callinicos, accuses us of supporting the Israeli state's terror in the West Bank and Gaza! They seem unable to comprehend what we are on about. Some of the incomprehension, no doubt, is our fault; but communication is a two-way enterprise.

**O**r take the Falklands war. We opposed that war. But we did not, like the "anti-imperialist" left (and much of the Labour left), support Argentina; nor did we dismiss the claimed rights to self-determination of the British population of the Falkland Islands, 400 miles from Argentina.

Since the Falklanders oppressed no-one, the islands were not a British base for oppressing anyone, and the British had been there 150 years, long before the modern Argentinian state existed, we saw no reason to back the claim to the islands of Argentina, which was then in the grip of the fascist self-aggrandising junta who invaded the islands.

But we were, by any standards, against Thatcher's war of prestige and nostalgic gunboat imperialism. Throughout the war

we carried on *SO's* masthead a variant of Karl Liebknecht's and Rosa Luxemburg's slogan in World War I: "The enemy is at home". But ask any sectarian today, and you'll hear that *SO* did not oppose the Falklands (sorry, "Malvinas") war.

Then again: *SO*, which tries to be an open paper, carried an article by the then MP Reg Race advocating economic instead of military sanctions against Argentina. The same issue of *SO* opposed that idea editorially — on page one. Nevertheless the sectarians say: "*SO* called for economic sanctions". And so on.

All that sort of thing — and there is a vast bulk of it — is compounded from incomprehension mixed with malice and hysteria. And then there is the outright lying and falsification.

**O**ne of the worst examples is a pamphlet put out in 1970, and kept in circulation for over a decade, by the SLL/WRP. It alleged that *Workers' Fight* (a grouping in which some of us now involved with *SO* were then active) supported the deployment of the British army in Northern Ireland.

It had a picture of British soldiers searching a man in Northern Ireland with his hands in the air, and the caption seemed to blame us, and me personally, for it! In fact *Workers' Fight* opposed the deployment of the troops in 1969 (though who was right and who was wrong in the debates of that time, and to what extent, is a complex question). When the SWP (then called IS) supported the deployment of troops, the *Workers' Fight* grouping inside IS organised an opposition to that policy, and, after a heated campaign, forced them to reverse it.

I co-authored a pamphlet which helped change people's minds and went round the country speaking and debating on it; I moved the resolution at the IS National Committee in May 1970 which reversed the policy. Before that I had happened to be a member of the council which, between August and October 1969, ran Catholic Derry behind barricades to keep out the British Army. When the people now in John Hume's SDLP moved that we remove the barricades and let the British Army in peacefully, the local leaders of the left backed the motion — they felt we were in a complete impasse — and I moved the defeated motion of opposition to letting the British Army take over "Free Derry". My amendment rejected the right of the committee to liquidate "Free Derry", and proposed that the issue be put to a mass

*"Examples of grotesque misrepresentation are legion. Some are products of emotion blended with incomprehension. And then there is outright lying."*

meeting of the people who lived there.

Later, the *Workers' Fight* group became the only British left group to have its headquarters raided by armed police in connection with Ireland (in September 1973: the WRP "college" was raided by police in 1975, after a member had complained about ill-treatment there).

But still, we, and myself in particular, were branded as supporters of the British Army in Northern Ireland in 1969, and we had a direct responsibility for what the British state was doing in Northern Ireland! Or so the WRP said.

Everyone knows the Healy WRP were liars. But so is the IS/SWP. In the mid-'70s SWPer David Widgery edited a Penguin book on *The Left in Britain*, consisting almost entirely of old IS/SWP articles. In it he defined *WF* as a group which "proposed the repartition of Ireland". It was a lie.

It might be argued that some of the things we said then might — if X happened that way, and then Y this way — have led to a repartitioned Ireland. We did not advocate that, we did not want it, and nothing we proposed was meant by us to



Matgamna's group, together with all the opportunists and revisionists, supported the intervention of British troops in N Ireland precisely on the terms of the division of the working class in N Ireland.

An example of unscrupulous polemic: this picture and caption — from the Healyite pamphlet *Who are the International Socialists?*, written by Cliff Slaughter — accused the *Workers' Fight* group of supporting British troops in Ireland, and even of direct responsibility for the troops' harassment of Northern Ireland Catholics. Yet in fact *Workers' Fight* had argued vehemently against any support for the troops.

achieve that. Yet the story still circulates.

**O**r take this more recent example: during the Walton by-election, an article in *Socialist Organiser* rejected *Militant's* claim to be the political heirs of Eric Heffer.

"Rivers of blood" separated Heffer, the consistent anti-Stalinist, from *Militant*, wrote Anne Field. *Militant* "regards the now-collapsing Stalinist states as workers' states and even supported the Soviet Union's bloody occupation of Afghanistan." (Emphasis added; and there are examples other than Afghanistan of *Militant's* enthusiasm for Stalinism, though none so terrible).

At least two publications have denounced *Socialist Organiser* for equating adherence to the theory that the Stalinist states are "degenerated or deformed workers' states", per se, with sharing responsibility for the Stalinist "rivers of blood"!

A broadsheet entitled "Revolutionary Internationalist League" (R.I.L.), given out at Labour Party conference put the anti-*Socialist Organiser* canard like this: *Socialist Organiser* said "rivers of blood" lay between Eric Heffer and *Militant* because "they regard the East European states as deformed workers' states". Full stop! That would indeed be strange — and indeed very cur-like — since we ourselves were "workers' statist" when we took the opposite view to that of *Militant* on Russia's "Vietnam War" in Afghanistan!

R.I.L. is on the extreme idiocy wing of kitsch Trotskyism (the same publication called on the — mainly Kinnockite — conference delegates to "disrupt" conference and force a way in for Nellist and Fields!)

The lie seems to have originated in "Workers' Press", published by one of the saner splinters from Gerry Healy's WRP. There the sentence from Anne Field appeared in full quotes, but with a full stop after "workers' states" and the example of Afghanistan simply lopped off, with no indication of a cut.

The author of the "Workers' Press" effort was a certain Charlie Pottins, who used to lend his name — and his status as a Jew and a member of the all-too-tolerant Jewish Socialists' Group (JSG) — to some of the foulest anti-*Socialist Organiser* polemics produced against us by the Healy WRP. Themselves subsidised by Arab governments — Iraq, Libya — and paid by them to spy on Arab dissidents and prominent Jews here, they used to have crazy articles accusing us of being in a "Zionist conspiracy" with Reagan and Thatcher!

(The episode, in passing, demonstrates with wonderful irony the advantages of principled Leninist politics over everything else on the left. The JSG is a rather strange and loose political group, organised round an ill-defined Jewishness rather than precise

political ideas. Here, their a-political solidarity with Pottins meant that they allowed themselves to be used as camouflage for Healy's WRP, who were the paid agents of various Arab governments, agents whose brief included the task of spying on prominent Jews in Britain. A blinkered a-political self-definition as "Jewish" led these Jewish socialists into an unwanted — but, for the Healyites, very useful — association with mercenary anti-semites, who were nothing less than potential pogromists. The JSG may not recognise Leninist politics, but Leninist politics recognises the JSG!)

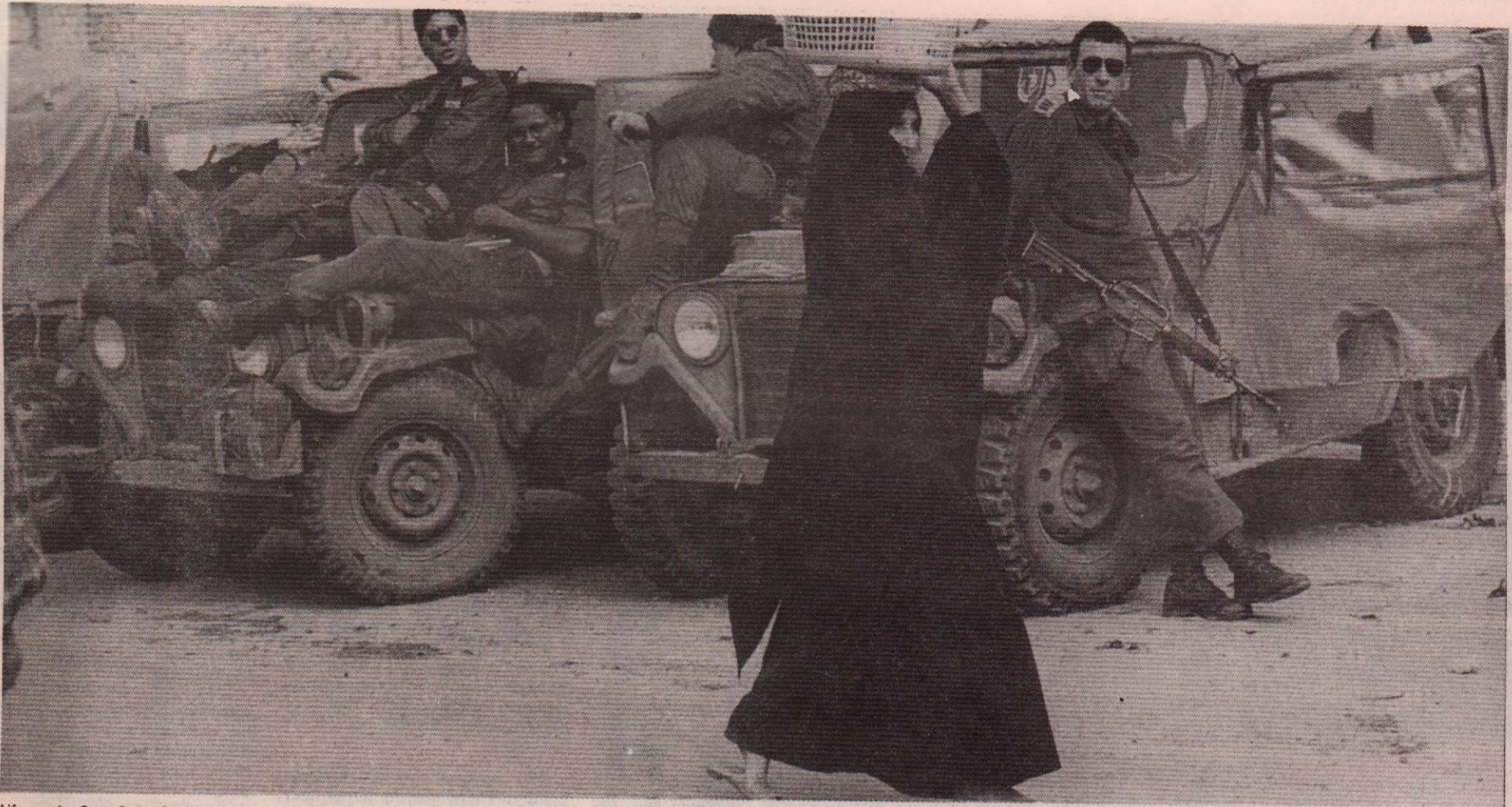
*"A 'Trotskyist' archipelago, with little dialogue between the different atolls..."*

"Workers' Press" is sectarian and disoriented, but it has made strenuous efforts in the last 6 years to slough off the lying practices of Healy. So why this misrepresentation of *Socialist Organiser*? What purpose is served? Maybe they need to send Charlie Pottins back to the de-Healyisation centre, and preferably for life!

This great bog of myths, half-truths, and lies, cynical or hysterical, of which I have surveyed a few patches here, testifies to the ideological decay of the left.

It presupposes a world of closed groups, the "Trotskyist" archipelago, with little dialogue or exchange of information between the inhabitants of the different atolls, and little desire or demand for it — a demand, on the contrary, for myths and lies and the sustaining half-truth, and a keen eagerness to believe stories that the people of the neighbouring island go around with their heads under their arms because their ears are three feet long. It testifies to a political world way below the standards of truth and objectivity of even the serious bourgeois newspapers. It presupposes a mental world where people don't want to know, or — and this is the point, I think — cannot afford to let themselves know if they are to sustain their commitment and their conviction. They cannot afford to let themselves think.

It is a world in which the citizens have lost the battle on the ideological front against bourgeois society, and have retreated into private political worlds of their own, hidden behind protective barriers of myths, lies and special pleading to protect them from the often painful choices of the real world. A healthy revolutionary socialist movement would engage critically and creatively with that real world, going out to take on the ideological battle rather than sheltering behind lies, myths, and demonisation of those who refuse to put their own eyes out.



Life on the Gaza Strip. Continuing harassment and discrimination for Palestinians

Adam Keller on what's behind the Madrid peace conference

# The biggest split yet between the US and Israel

In the evening of 26 October an enormous crowd gathered at Tel-Aviv's Municipality Square demonstrating for peace. People continued streaming out of buses which arrived from all over the country.

Careful experts estimated that there were at least 80,000 people.

One speaker read a letter from Abie Nathan, written in his prison cell. Accompanied by wild applause she added: "Haim Herzog, President of the State of Israel! I call upon you to use your authority and pardon Abie Nathan on the very day of the Madrid conference. It is an abomination to continue imprisoning Abie Nathan for his meeting with Yasser Arafat, while the government itself enters into negotiations with the Palestinians".

The convening of the Madrid conference is the result of six months' strenuous diplomatic effort by American Secretary of State James Baker.

The most decisive stage took place in early September in Washington DC when President Bush took on — and defeated in a head-on collision — the powerful Jewish lobby and its following on Capitol Hill.

Bush's intervention prevented the approval of \$10 billion in housing loan guarantees to Israel. The discussion of the guarantees is put off until January or February 1992.

It now seems likely that, even then, a condition will be attached to the guarantees strictly limiting — if not altogether forbidding — Israeli settlement activity in the Occupied Territories. Moreover, it is quite possible that similar conditions will be attached to the regular American

aid to Israel, \$3 billion a year — hitherto, the least controversial item on the congressional agenda.

Already a senate committee failed to approve a request for an additional \$200 million in military aid to Israel.

Bush's displeasure with the Shamir government was displayed in other ways as well, such as loud protests when Israeli planes carried out aerial reconnaissance of Western Iraq (and in the process, violated the airspace of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia!)

Former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban — a man usually not given to superlatives concluded "This is the worst crisis ever in Israeli-American relations".

President Bush's confrontation with Shamir may have provided PLO Chairman Yasser

Arafat with the decisive argument needed in order to obtain in the Palestine National Council and other PLO bodies an overwhelming majority in favour of Palestinian participation in the American-brokered conference. That decision required the Palestinian leadership to swallow several bitter pills.

The American conditions excluded the PLO from any official role in the conference; restricted the Palestinian participation to half of a joint delegation with Jordan; and excluded East Jerusalem Palestinians as well as Palestinians from the diaspora from being delegates.

In fact, the PLO had to accept all of the procedural preconditions posed by the Shamir government.

However, while complying with the letter of these conditions, the Palestinians managed, to a major extent, to circumvent them. Little doubt was left that all the decisions on the Palestinian side are being taken by the PLO and that Palestinian negotiators Feisal Hussein and Hanan Ashrawi were acting under Arafat's authorisation and instructions.

Thus Yitzhak Shamir, heading the most right wing, nationalist government in Israeli history, finds himself compelled to do what all his predecessors avoided — engage in negotiations with what is, to all intents and purposes, a PLO delegation. His denials that this is so only add to the confusion and disarray in the government circles and among Likud supporters.

In 1977, the opening of official Israeli-Egyptian peace negotiations was preceded by secret talks in Morocco, where the basic principle — Israeli withdrawal from Sinai in return for Israeli-Egyptian peace — was agreed upon, even before President Sadat set foot in Jerusalem.

There are no indications that the

present Madrid Conference is being preceded by such a prior understanding; on the contrary, it seems that Shamir is likely to make all possible efforts to sabotage the conference from the outset.

Shamir's government vehemently proclaims its intention to hold on to the whole of the Occupied Territories and — in token of this — to continue constructing settlements and changing the demographic balance in the territories subject to negotiations.

Unless resolved, the settlement issue in itself can cause a break up of the talks within days of their opening. And should Shamir be somehow made to accept a settlement freeze (in return for a lifting of the Arab trade boycott on Israel?), numerous other pitfalls wait ahead.

The task of pushing the conference forward would fall, in the first place, to the Americans. It is they who brought it into being, despite the formal pretence of equal American-Soviet co-sponsorship.

As the inhabitants of Panama and Iraq can testify, George Bush is no apostle of peace. He is a cool and calculating politician, whose assessment of the American national interest would seem for the time being to coincide with some of the aims of the Israeli peace movement.

Whatever, the politicians and diplomats get up to, it is up to us — the peace-seekers in Israel and elsewhere — to maintain and increase our pressure and our struggle.

Abridged from 'The Other Israel'.

Our series on the left and Labour's youth movement in the early 1960s will be continued next week

## Two states is the only feasible solution

From back page

What about the settlers on the West Bank and Gaza? We have to calculate the numbers at a quarter of a million.

The usually-quoted figure of around 120,000 does not take account of the belt around East Jerusalem, of 130,000 settlers.

So the West Bank has one million Palestinians and a quarter of a million Israeli settlers.

I believe the Israeli settlers will have an attitude like the OAS, the Algerian pied-noirs [European settlers].

The OAS opted for deliberate provocation, hoping to encourage the French army back into Algeria.

Let's hope that Shamir will rise to

the level of an Israeli DeGaulle. Unfortunately, up until now, we have not seen an Israeli DeGaulle, nor even an Israeli DeKlerk.

What will Israel get in return for movement? They will get peace. They will be able to integrate into the area. They now have the choice: do they want to be in the West Bank or in the Middle East? We, the Palestinians, are the key to regional acceptance.

I have been for a two-states solution to the conflict since 1977. Today, Israelis and Palestinians are condemned to co-exist in the area. Perhaps each of us would prefer the Swedes for neighbours — but this is not possible.

I agree with the saying: since the marriage was unhappy, let us seek a decent divorce.

The Israelis should be aware that they have inflicted an historic injustice on the Palestinian people, although there have always been dissident voices. Up until now — as a collectivity — they have been totally insensitive to that wrong. In a way, we have become the Jews of the Israelis.

All our political proposals, from the time of the rebirth of the Palestinian movement in 1965, have aimed at politically integrating those who choose to be our enemies. We began by proposing a unitary democratic state with equal rights for all its components. That was rejected.

The two-states solution is the only one feasible now.

# More, better nukes now!

LES HEARN'S



SCIENCE COLUMN

What sort of people design the USA's nuclear weapons?

At worst, you might think of them as rabidly anti-red while at best(?) you might consider them mental mercenaries. In fact, according to a study of nuclear weapons

designers at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, California, they work on nuclear weapons because they genuinely believe that this makes the world a safer place.

Social anthropologist, Hugh Gusterson, writing in *New Scientist* last month, was at the LLL for three years, coinciding with the loss of the USSR as a major justification for the arms race. He talked to people who had designed warheads for nuclear missiles like MX and Cruise or had worked on the enhanced radiation ("neutron") bomb, which harms people rather than property.

Previous triumphs of the LLL include the H-bomb, brainchild of the lab's co-founder Edward Teller (said to be the inspiration for the character of Dr Strangelove), and warheads for Polaris missiles.

Gusterson found that his subjects really believed that their weapons had prevented the superpowers fighting a disastrous conventional war. Most did not expect their weapons ever to be used, and some said that there was no situation where they personally would order their use. They regarded their work as a stopgap measure to keep the peace until politicians could work out a better way.

As for the money motive, they were not poorly paid, but most could probably have got more with

private corporations.

Far from being conservatives and anti-communists, many were "liberals" (quite radical for America, apparently) who had opposed the Vietnam war, supported the civil rights movement, gave money to environmental causes and had voted against Reagan.

Gusterson's study coincided with the unilateral end of the Cold War by Gorbachev (whom many LLL staff supported). But instead of see-

**"Far from being conservatives, many nuclear weapon scientists were liberals, opposed to the Vietnam war, and anti-Reagan"**

ing the loss of the main enemy as a reason for scaling down their work, LLL scientists have argued strongly for its continuance. In particular, they have opposed any attempt to ban nuclear tests.

Some see the Soviet threat as still existing in the possibility that the old guard might retake power. Most however, recognise the need for massive arms reductions but see this as an argument for more weapons research. You see, if you reduce your stockpile to, say, a tenth of its current size, you would want it to consist of different types of

weapon.

A stockpile consisting of a few highly accurate missiles, each with many independently targetable warheads, could destroy many more targets but would be highly vulnerable to sneak attacks. In the terminology of LLL scientists, this would be a destabilising situation. They argue that a new arsenal of highly mobile, single warhead missiles would be needed.

A further justification for continued research was the threat of nuclear proliferation in the Third World, given new urgency by evidence from Iraq. One employee thought situations like the Middle East were ideal for the deployment of neutron bombs! Others were worried about the possibility of stray missiles heading for the USA from Iraq or perhaps from a "crazy Russian general". This was an argument to continue with the Strategic Defence Initiative work that LLL has also been carrying out for the last decade.

SDI research has a checkered history. There was the X-ray laser, powered by a nuclear bomb. Teller claimed that eventually one of these the size of a desk would be able to shoot down the entire Soviet land-based missile force. In 1985, it was revealed that the X-ray laser's capabilities had been exaggerated and misrepresented and \$60 million

were cut from its budget.

Also cancelled was the Free Electron Laser. This would have been ground-based, its laser blasts powered by a sizeable power station and directed against missiles by orbiting mirrors. One of its drawbacks was that its mirrors could have been disabled by a handful of high velocity sand from a Soviet satellite.

LLL now only has the "Brilliant Pebbles" (Smart Rocks) project. This works on the same principle as bouncing a brick on someone's head. A fast-moving heavy object slams into a missile and knocks its controls for six.

The "brilliant" bit comes from the ability of the projectile to adjust its path so as not to miss the missile. The success of the Patriot missile against the Scuds in the Gulf War has lent support to this work.

LLL is also working on "safer" warheads, ones that don't detonate by accident, a real problem with many current weapons. They are introducing Insensitive High Explosive, more difficult to set off, and controlling detonation.

Whatever happens, it seems nuclear weapons research will continue, even if we replace our vision of a white-coated psychopath by the denim-clad humanist that seems to frequent the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory.

## WHAT'S ON

### Thursday 31 October

"The Case for Socialist Feminism", Essex University SO meeting, 6.00. Speaker Cate Murphy

"Arabs, Jews and Socialism", Kent University SO meeting, 7.00. Speaker Paul McGarry

"Socialists and the Labour Party", Newcastle SO meeting, 7.30. Rosetti Studio, Leazes Lane. Speaker Gill Cramm

"Students and Revolution", Notts University SO meeting, 7.30. Speaker Janine Booth

### Friday 1 November

"Which road to socialism?", debate at Manchester University Labour Club, 1.00. Allison Roche (SO) and Derek Draper (Fabians)

"The family: a root of oppression?", Richmond College SO meeting, 1.00. Speaker Cathy Nugent

### Saturday 2 November

"Is socialism dead?" Conference organised by Stand Up for Real Socialism! 11.00-5.00, Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19. Details from Mark on 071 639 7965

### Monday 4 November

"Is socialism dead?", SO London

Forum. Debate between Roger Scruton and John O'Mahony (SO), 7.30, ULU, Malet St, London

"Ireland: what should socialists say?", Manchester SO meeting, 8.00, Bridge St Tavern. Speaker Pat Murphy

### Tuesday 5 November

"Fighting student debt", Left Unity meeting after Brighton student demonstration. Basement, Poly, Grand Parade site.

"Students and socialism", Teeside Poly SO meeting, 6.30. Speaker Dave Barter

"Fighting racism", SW London SO meeting, Lambeth Town Hall. Video at 7.00. Meeting starts at 7.30. Speakers Lee Jasper and Paul Ramsamoaj (SO)

### Wednesday 6 October

"The case for socialist feminism", Newcastle Poly SO meeting, 2.00. Speaker Allison Roche

"Students and socialism", Teeside Poly SO meeting, 6.30. Speaker Dave Barter

"Fighting racism", SW London SO meeting, Lambeth Town Hall. Video at 7.00. Meeting starts at 7.30. Speakers Lee Jasper and Paul Ramsamoaj (SO)

### Thursday 7 November

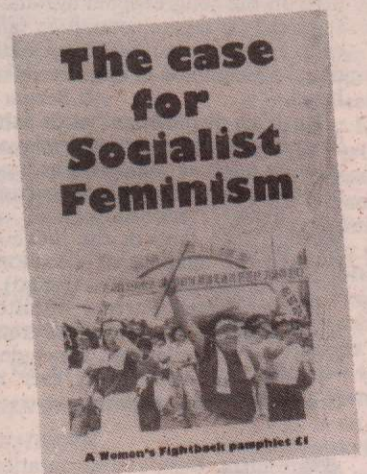
"Oppose the Whittington Hospital opt-out", Archway Central Hall, London N19, 7.00. Speakers Jeremy Corbyn MP and Chris Smith MP plus local unions

### Saturday 9 November

Teeside SO dayschool, 11.00-4.30, St Mary's Centre, Middlesbrough

# Pamphlets from Workers' Liberty and Socialist Organiser

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## Join the Alliance for Workers' Liberty!

The case for a socialist revolution to replace capitalism remains as strong as ever.

In the Third World, capitalism today means increasing poverty, misery and hunger, imposed in order to meet the interest payments demanded by international banks.

In the advanced capitalist countries unemployment is high and rising, and the welfare systems won by decades of working-class reform effort are everywhere under attack. In Eastern Europe and the USSR, the rush towards capitalism will turn millions into paupers.

Capitalism can inflict defeats on socialism and the working class. It can never abolish the working class, and so it can never abolish the class struggle

and the ideas of socialism.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty was set up in May this year. It declared then: *We need a crusade to clarify and restate the ideas of socialism, free from all taint of Stalinism, and to help the political reconstitution of the working class.*

That crusade is even more urgently needed now. The AWL is supporting the *Stand Up For Real Socialism* campaign launched by *Socialist Organiser*. It strives to tie together work in that campaign with daily activity in the trade unions and workplaces, in anti-poll-tax groups, in colleges, and on the streets; and to link all that activity with a drive to educate ourselves politically and organise a stable, cohesive, alert contingent of Marxists.

Contact the AWL c/o P O Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

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# Bleak picture, trite message

## Cinema

Cate Murphy reviews *Boyz n the Hood*

Moral America rose up in indignation when *Boyz n the Hood* was released.

They claimed it glorified and condoned the violence endemic in poorer — usually black — ghettos of inner-city America. Yes, there's a lot of violence, in both words and action, but the film doesn't condone it. In fact it carries a message that should gladden the hearts of Moral America.

The film chronicles the lives of three boys — brothers Ricky and Doughboy, and their friend Tre — growing up in South Central Los Angeles in the '80s.

Writer and director John Singleton himself grew up in this neighbourhood, and the film's strength lies in his accurate depiction of the hopelessness and aimlessness confronting black youth in today's Land of Opportunity.

Life in the ghettos is bleak. No education, no jobs, no future are available to the youth. They hang around every available street corner of the blighted neighbourhood.

The only break from monotony is to shoot — their mouths off at every passer-by (especially the women), crack in their veins, or the nearest person with a double-barrelled shotgun.

Violence is part of everyday life: you don't like what someone says, or the way they walk — kick shit out of them. Or if you have a gun in the boot of your car — kill them.

The film opens with the appalling statistic that one in 21 black males in Los Angeles will be murdered — by their own peers. Life is for dying.

And it's played out to the constant wail of police sirens, and the drone of police helicopters circling overhead.

What hope is there for the three boys to escape such degradation, misery and violence? It's here that the film falls down, for John Singleton has only trite answers.

Trying to grapple with why so many black youth turn to drugs, crime and violence, he offers the explanation that it's because black men run out on their families, and leave the raising of kids to the women, with no role models for the boys. "Any fool dick can make a baby, but only a real man can raise children", pontificates Furious, Tre's father, the conscience of the

film.

It's a point punched home several times, very crudely. Doughboy and Ricky's problem is that their mother raised them singlehandedly; and she's the sort of woman who slouches around the home in her dressing gown with hair in curlers all day. So you know they're going to turn out bad!

Tre's mother, on the other hand, gives him into the custody of his father at the age of 10, so he can learn to be a man, while she continues with her education, to move up and out of the ghetto. Tre's going to be good!

Singleton obviously doesn't think much of women. Very few of his female characters are graced with a name: they're "bitches", "whores", "hoochies", there to let the boys get their sexual experience, or to ruin their lives by making the boys fathers at the tender age of 15. Or to mess up bringing up their sons.

Tre's girlfriend, of course, is different, the outcast among the sassy, battle-toughened girls in the world of the gangs. She's a sweet Catholic girl who doesn't want a baby at 15, who wants to go to college — and move up and out of the ghetto. Tre's going to be very good.

Education is the other way out of the ghetto. Keeping out of trouble and studying hard lets you leave it all behind, according to Singleton.

Not a single comment about the way the American education system is stacked against you if you're poor and black. That it educates you for nothing but a life of hanging around, with no prospect of a job, or at best, a soul-destroying, monotonous, low paid job. It preaches about the American Dream, and then lets you know there's no room for black youth in that dream.

For Singleton, it's not the system, but individuals who are to blame for their own situation.

There's what is meant to be an edifying scene where Furious takes Tre and Ricky to a site in the neighbourhood sold to developers for gentrification. The way to stop it, he says, is by black people staying, keeping the neighbourhood black and cleaning it up.

The rent-a-crowd-of-aimless-youth who've strolled over menacingly, listen to this lecture and then ask how they can escape the drugs/crime spiral: "you've got to use your head, think of your future", says Furious.

What future? Astonishingly, they don't put a bullet in his head for this nauseating banality, but just lollop back to their corner!

They've obviously read the script and know Furious is needed for his



Tre (Cuba Gooding Jr.) and his father, Furious (Larry Fishburne) play out a morality tale for the '90s

most important moral diatribe: The Big Choice scene.

It's triggered by the murder of football-star Ricky. Why? Why not? He was just there when a gun needed unloading. Doughboy's all for hunting down the murderers and exacting revenge.

Tre's game too, until Furious has a word, tells his son that he's not brought him up to be "bad", and that once you start on a life of crime, you never stop. Tre backs out, ends up in college with girlfriend Brandi, and lives happily ever after.

Fatherless Doughboy gets his revenge, and ends up dead himself a

few days later.

And that's it. Rebuild the nuclear family in the ghettos, make your kids study, take the guns off them — and it'll all turn out fine.

Singleton captures the bleakness and despair of life in the ghettos vividly, but backs off from explaining why, and how, American capitalism has created and nurtured this way of life for black Americans. Nor does he offer the black youth any way out, any means of controlling their own destiny, of changing their world.

It's not a film to give Moral America any cause for concern. Or black youth any hope.

## The Invisible Man

### Theatre

Thomas Carlyle reviews *The Invisible Man*

**T**he *Invisible Man* has opened as a play at Theatre Royal, Stratford. I don't often go to the theatre, but even so I'd rate this play as well worth going to see.

Set in 1904, the story portrays a village plunged into chaos by a thieving, vengeful invisible man. As in the book (by HG Wells), the stranger garbed in bandages books a room in the village inn, and immediately controversy starts as to who he is, and where he has come from.

The villagers' thoughts, suspicions and fears are fuelled by a robbery at the vicarage. There were other unexplained happenings and assaults, creaking of doors and so on.

Your average ghost story is livened up by superb special effects — doors opening and closing, people

chasing after objects in motion. In the cleverest scene the unmasking of the stranger takes place and the bandages are removed — to reveal a body with no head, who then continues to smoke a cigarette.

HG Wells' original plot of a terrifying half-mad invisible maniac roaming the countryside attacking people and causing mayhem is contrasted with a comedy come pantomime style. If the invisible man were a scary character throughout the play, it would not have been so entertaining and appealing to both adults and children.

One joke, however, refers to black people as "fuzzy-wuzzies". Although this was a common term at that time, today it should at least have been countered by some argument, maybe through humour. This was a weakness and might have been insulting to black people attending the show.

Other jokes and ad-libbing amusingly attacked Conservatives and the police, and the heroine was a politically feminist suffragette — so why leave black jokes in?

Apart from that, the play was a real laugh, and in the tradition of Joan Littlewood, was entertainment through farce and music hall humour. It brought to live theatre an old story with brilliant optical illusions that held you spell-bound.

## Gene Roddenbury 1921-1991

### Obituary

By Garry Meyer

**G**ene Roddenbury was a pilot, a writer, a television and film producer, and creator of *Star Trek*.

Only three seasons of *Star Trek* were produced (1966-69). In the '80s four *Star Trek* films were made, and in the '90s *Star Trek: the Next Generation* came onto our TV screens.

The popularity of the series and films is not due to the amazing special effects, the bloody battles with alien life forms, the fantastic stunts, the laser fire flashing through the stars, or the kind of mass destruction that can be associated with much of the sci-fi genre such as *Robo-cop*, *Terminator* or *V*.

The essence of *Star Trek* and the reason for its massive cult following is due to its humour, sensitivity, morality and humanity, and its catchphrases, "Beam me up, Scotty", "Space: the final frontier", "I just can't get enough power Captain", and "It's life, Jim, but not as we know it."

*Star Trek* dealt with human things, even though it was a series about alien beings and worlds. Love, hate, life, death, guilt, greed, jealousy, pride — it dealt with these and many more from a wholly humanistic and optimistic point of view.

Gene Roddenbury set out to create a series that was optimistic about the human race, and its future, and he approached it from a truly humanistic outlook. I am sure that the name of Gene Roddenbury and his creation *Star Trek* will continue to "live long and prosper".

# No cash for children

Further to the article in *SO* 503 on child abuse, in Stafford, where the "pindown" scandal that hit the national headlines was centred, the new Children's Act cannot even be implemented due to a lack of cash.

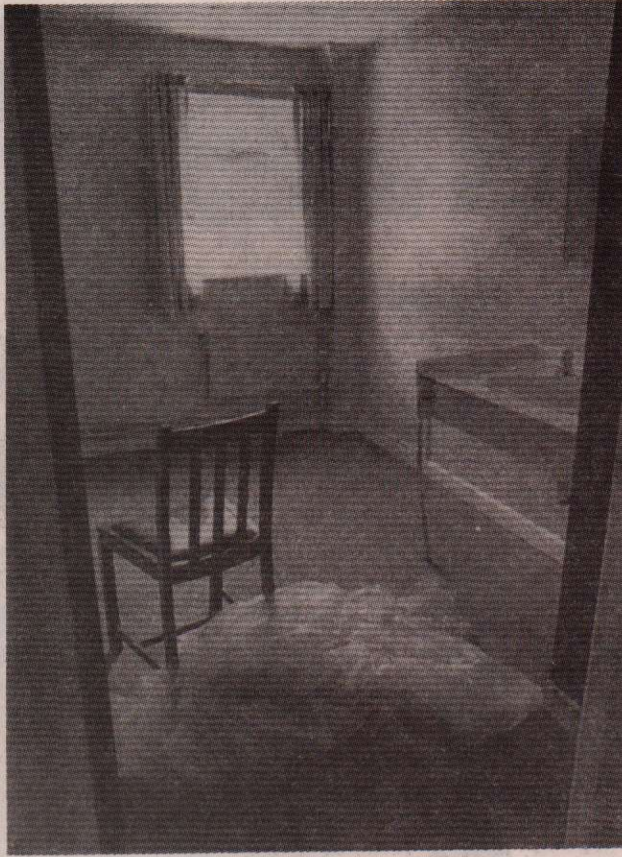
According to David Livingstone, the district manager of Stafford Social Services, the Act requires substantial extra spending, but not an extra penny has been forthcoming from the government. Money is needed to deal with existing problems, but Stafford is in desperate need of a family centre to "enable us to work with families rather than just step in when problems reach crisis point."

The new Act requires social workers to work more closely

with families in crisis, but Mr Livingstone says he is "concerned about how we meet the requirements of the Act. While we welcome its emphasis on working closely with parents, we have to ensure sufficient staff and resources. The government may say money for social services is included in local authority grants, but it is just not enough."

As *SO*'s article says, it has taken a major piece of legislation to put children's rights on the statute book, but this is far from enough. We need a government that is prepared to implement, in more than words, such vital social legislation as this, but most of all we need a society in which such things are unnecessary in the first place.

Steve Revins  
Stafford



A "pin-down" room where children in a local authority home in Stoke were jailed in solitary confinement when they fell foul of staff

## A socialist election pact?

With a General Election set for next spring, the left must address what may happen afterwards.

The Labour left, as a result of bad splits and organisational problems, now has no political strategy for gaining ground within the Labour Party.

Many in the Labour Party left see no new openings except to leave and join one of the minority parties — Greens, Socialist Party, Socialist Workers Party etc.

But in recent months even the socialists in the Green Party have had a hard battle to win policy via conference, and over the system of power within the party.

Left-wing MPs, such as Ken Livingstone, say that in time the left will win power from the right, but how long do the rank and file have to wait?

A conference for the left, organised by the Socialist Movement for October 1992

will be a test to see what options are ready after the General Election. After years of splitting, faction fighting and conference-bashing within the Labour Party, things must change for the better.

After the General Election, all socialists should make amends for past blunders between factions and groups.

The Socialist Workers Party might decide to 'build from below' and campaign politically for change via elections (local and general), after years in the wilderness.

I wonder if it is not possible to see only one socialist party candidate at elections in future and not more, which only complicates things for the general public.

An alliance of "Socialist Parties" is the only way for communists and socialists (and maybe greens) to gain power, votes and the support of the public, as an alternative to voting Labour in future.

Andrew Melville,  
Leicester

## Stop backing Labour and being sectarian!

I have read one issue of *SO* and would be interested to find out more about you. There are a couple of points which I disagree with you about, and I would like to hear your comments on these.

Firstly, your position seems to be very pro-Labour, and although you acknowledge that it is not a proper socialist party, you call it a working class party, and call on your supporters to campaign for Labour in the next general election.

I don't know how you can quote from Karl Marx and support this bourgeois organisation at the same time, and I view Labour as a greater setback to socialism than the Tories.

During Tory governments, workers are led to believe that a Labour government will solve all their problems. Disillusionment with Labour was one of the things which made the National Front so powerful in the late '70s.

Under Ted Heath's Tory government in the early '70s, there was great solidarity between trade unions. Under the following Labour government this was broken down and there was an increase in scabbing, as the workers mistakenly thought that it was their government.

The reason why Labour is such a setback is because the working class believes that it is their party, something which they can have no mistakes on about the Tories. Socialists should be recruiting

## What turned Wittgenstein left?

Martin Thomas's review of Ray Monk's book on the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (*SO* 504) was interesting, but I think it missed one of the most important factors in Wittgenstein's shift to the left, as Monk describes it.

As a village schoolteacher in Austria after World War I, Wittgenstein was harsh and violent with his pupils, especially the girls.

Eventually he had to flee the job after injuring a child. Many years later, in the 1930s, he evidently came to see how vile his behaviour had been, for he travelled from Cambridge

(where he was then lecturing) to return to the village where he had taught and apologise to the children and their parents.

The villagers were understandably unimpressed, but the experience must have been a watershed for Wittgenstein in shedding the authoritarian and conservative attitudes he grew up with.

Our attitudes to vulnerable, developing, small human beings — punitive, violent, possessive, competitive, or more generous and socially-minded — must correlate with our attitudes to human life generally. So it seems to have been with Wittgenstein, anyway.

Alan Gilbert  
Swansea

## Was Healy right?

Jack Cleary's article on Jon Trotskyism and Labour youth (*SO* 503) provides much material of interest.

I wonder, however, if he is correct to argue that Gerry Healy was right against the Cliffites on

Korea and the Grantites on the Labour left?

Surely such positions were part of Healy's wider politics which have been shown to have been corrupt. If Healy was right, was it not by accident?

Tom Wheeter  
London E17

from the Labour Party and trying to show the working class an alternative to it.

If people ask you who to vote for, they should be told not to vote for anyone and join an organisation on the left. What, in the long term, has decades of jumping between Labour and Tory governments done for the working class?

There have, of course, been improvements in the 91 years Labour has existed. But these are the concessions made by capital to the working class, which have been going on since the 1830s, even when there was no democracy at all for the majority, and certainly no Labour Party.

The second issue is sectarianism — which, unfortunately, you seem to be guilty

of. Naturally the SWP is chosen as it is one of the largest organisations on the left and it is less sectarian, meaning it won't respond to your criticisms with a counter-attack on you.

If you have any criticisms, why don't you just write to the SWP? I have also found something in your newspaper which can only be described as hypocrisy. On the front I see the slogan "Unite the left". Great, but how can you seriously expect to achieve this when you print a letter calling Tony Cliff of the SWP "a cynical, lying old creature"?

Constructive and comradely criticism is fine, but statements like these can only divide the left.

Jonathan Bowen  
Colchester

## How not to build a Broad Left

### EYE ON THE LEFT

By Tom Rigby

Preparations are now well advanced for the merger between NALGO, NUPE and CoHSE to form a giant new super-union for the public sector.

This union will be the largest TUC affiliate, and made up predominantly of low-paid workers. A very large slice of its membership will be women. It will have great potential.

If the new union mobilises its membership effectively, it can really do something to wipe out low pay, and thus not only help its own members but also give courage to the millions of low-paid part-time workers who are presently outside the trade union movement.

In this situation you would expect that the left would be doing everything it can to be well placed when the new union comes into existence. You would expect left-wingers to be putting forward serious proposals for really knitting the union together, focussing on issues like how to control the national

*"The merger between NALGO, NUPE and CoHSE will be the largest TUC affiliate... The left should be putting forward proposals for really knitting the new union together... But the biggest opposition grouping is busy making itself irrelevant."*

negotiators in such a huge body, or how to ensure real grass-roots unity by fighting for the harmonisation of terms and conditions between blue and white collar public sector workers.

That is what you would expect. And some people on the left are doing just that.

For example, Bury NALGO is to host a conference on 9 November entitled *Organising the Left for the New Union*. They have enlisted the support of some CoHSE and NUPE activists for the project, and it looks like it could go well.

But the biggest opposition grouping in any of the unions involved in the merger — the NALGO Broad Left — is busy making itself as irrelevant as possible.

Since the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) seized control of the Broad Left in a coup last year, they have provided a highly educative example of how not to build a broad rank-and-file trade union opposition.

At a Broad Left "conference" this spring, addressed by *Socialist Worker* editor (and NUJ member) Chris Harman on why socialists should leave the Labour Party, critical speakers from *SO* were prevented by the chair from having their say. SWPers explained that anybody wearing an "End the Ban" (by the Labour Party on *SO*) t-shirt was bound to make a sectarian speech! In other words, the SWP treated the Broad Left as their private property.

The latest Broad Left bulletin provides another sad example. There is no intelligent analysis of the merger, or the local government pay ballot defeat. Instead, we get a front-page lead on the defeated Moscow coup that could have come straight from *Socialist Worker*, and a reprint of the SWP's "Open Letter to Labour Party members" urging them to give up the fight in the political wing of the labour movement.

Where the bulletin does try to relate to the trade-union concerns of NALGO members, it gets hopelessly lost.

For example, the ballot defeat is explained as all the fault of the leadership. "Unfortunately the NALGO leadership failed to organise the action necessary to win".

But workers have voted for action in ballots run by equally bad union leaderships. Why did they vote against this time? A serious explanation would have to come to terms with several factors: the role of the national and local leaders, the general low level of trade union militancy, the recent defeats suffered by council workers in local battles, and the changed circumstances since the 1989 pay fight (i.e., the recession)...

**S**ocialist Worker is now pushing politics in the trade unions that are the exact opposite of what it was saying a few years ago.

In the early '80s, the heyday of the dreaded "downturn" theory, a whole series of "objective factors" — the slump, the strength of the officials, and the bureaucratisation of the top layers of the shop stewards' movement — were said to make a serious fight impossible.

For instance, in 1982, just six weeks before the biggest dispute in the history of the NHS and the public sector, the SWP wound up "their" rank and file paper *Hospital Worker* and the group round it. Their "downturn theory" told them that there was no point trying to organise the rank and file, so they didn't even try. Six months later, more workers took solidarity action to support the NHS workers than had struck to free the Pentonville Five dockers in July 1972, at the high point of the modern shop stewards' movement.

Now, less than ten years and many defeats later, nothing but the cowardice of the union leaders explains anything. *SW* has turned full circle.

The SWP looks more and more like Gerry Healy's crazy Workers' Revolutionary Party in the years just before it went completely mad. It has attempted to turn the NALGO Broad Left into an appendage of "the party" in just the same way as Healy ran the All Trades Unions Alliance as a satellite of the WRP.

That makes it all the more strange when *Socialist Worker* denounces the OILC's decision to form an Offshore Workers' Union by comparing it to the Communist Parties' ultra-left attempts to form breakaway "Red Unions" in the early 1930s.

But perhaps it is not so strange. After all, why bother with the trouble of building a whole new "Red Union" when you can have your own sectarian "Red" Broad Left with a lot less effort?

Against union-bashing in UBOs

# Strikes escalate

By Steve Battlemuch

Almost 70 Unemployment Benefit Offices are out on strike this week in support of the CPSA strikers in Bristol, Forest Hill and St Marylebone who have been on strike since April.

The dispute began with a directive from Employment Service management that all offices should go "open plan" and remove the security screens. After violent incidents occurred, management refused to put the screens back up and CPSA walked out.

At St Marylebone, the demand is only for an extra security guard to be employed, but still management won't budge!

It appears that management want to break CPSA in the Employment Service. We must fight them all the way. Management have given six months notice that they are to withdraw from the agreements laid down in the handbook.

As we go to press, a ballot is being held for a one-day strike across the Employment Service on Friday 1 November. The result will be close as some areas of the country don't feel threatened by "open plan".

If the ballot goes down, the strikers at Forest Hill, Bristol

and St Marylebone could be in trouble as our union's right-wing Executive will be looking for a way out of what they see as an "expensive" dispute.

The anti-union laws — and CPSA's deference to them — are also playing a part in this dispute. Members of the Department of Employment Section not employed by Employment Service Agency are *not* being balloted for the one-day strike.

In DSS Section, we are facing many of the same issues as our fellow-workers in DE, but even to suggest that we put out a circular making the links sends full-time officials into fits of panic as they reach for their law books.

Fortunately, most DSS

branches think differently and have arranged meetings for DE strikers to spread the message throughout DSS.

After seven months of action in DE, with no victory in sight, maybe only solidarity from DSS can take the dispute forward — unless the National Executive is going to continue the funding of the extra offices in DE, which it has done for the last two weeks.

One way or another, the momentum has to be kept up after the one-day strike.

**CPSA Broad Left Conference**  
Sat/Sun 9-10 November  
Winter Gardens, Blackpool  
More info from: Martin Jenkins,  
081-852 4740(h) or Mark  
Serwotka, 0742-507320(h)



## Conference called on London services

By Ed Hall, secretary of Lambeth NALGO and organiser of the "Crisis in London" campaign

The Crisis in London campaign was started by some of us who had been associated with the 'London Bridge' campaign, which came into being when rate-capping was enacted.

We felt that we must respond to the new situation. Public services have been devastated by successive governments and the spectre of public squalor is now a reality. Cuts and privatisation have destroyed jobs and services and removed from many people

any quality of life. Major democratic institutions — the Greater London Council, the Inner London Education Authority — have gone, and the public authorities have been politically neutralised.

But after ten years of this destruction of democratic rights, a spirit exists for rebuilding and working towards the services London needs.

**CRISIS IN LONDON CONFERENCE**  
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1 (nearest tube, Holborn)  
Saturday, 9th November  
10.30 - 5.30  
Credentials: £2.50 waged/50p unwaged  
Contact Ed Hall, 6a Acre Lane, SW2 5SG

## Anti-union witch-hunt in Manchester

A rehousing officer in one of Manchester's Neighbourhood Offices, has been suspended and may face the sack in an anti-union witch-hunt.

NALGO members in the Housing Department are meeting on Wednesday 30 October to consider strike action for his

reinstatement.

The rehousing officer has been suspended while management investigate the production and distribution of an anonymous leaflet criticising a senior rehousing officer. The senior rehousing officer had been involved in a dubious and suspect offer of a 2-bedroomed house to two friends who were moving up from London. Following no action from management on the

issue, an anonymous leaflet appeared highlighting the incident.

A management investigation team moved in and suspended the rehousing officer, who also happened to be a shop steward and NALGO activist.

Housing Department management are trying to establish a regime where criticism of managers is banned. This suspension follows the recent suspension of two NUPE

members and a series of disciplinary actions threatened against trade union activists over the last year.

Manchester NALGO Branch officials are calling for the suspension to be dropped and the worker to be reinstated. If management don't back off, and drop the sacking threat, NALGO is likely to sanction a ballot for official strike action across the Housing Department.

## "Trust status" means cuts

By Dale Street

Mersey Regional Ambulance Service was one of the new "trusts" announced recently by the Tories as they took another step forward in the privatisation of the NHS.

Ray Carrick, a NUPE shop steward in the ambulance service in Liverpool, explained what "trust status" for the local ambulance service will mean.

"Most of the new structure for the trust is in place already. A 'shadow' Trust Board was set up on 1 October, and this will take over full control on 1 April next year.

With the exception of the 'head of human resources', all the posts on this shadow board

have already been filled. We have visited areas where the ambulance service already has trust status — Northumberland, Lincolnshire and Norfolk — and spoken to staff there. The lessons are not very encouraging.

In Northumberland there is no trade union recognition at all, and different shift rotas have been introduced. There is a great deal of pressure on staff to accept new trust contracts and abandon the Whitley Council national contracts.

The new contracts are inferior. Although the top line rate of pay is higher, there is no extra pay for working bank holidays, no payment for disturbed meals, and a reduction in the amount of annual leave.

There is also no payment for 'casual overtime' — for example, when you are meant to finish at

five o'clock but don't get back from a call until half five.

In Lincolnshire all new entrants from 1 April this year, when the trust became operational, are being offered salaries 25% below Whitley Council rates of pay.

In Norfolk nothing has been altered.

Here on Merseyside the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, which covers both Merseyside and Cheshire, has been meeting regularly with management to try to iron out potential problems.

We believe that we have an agreement that trade union recognition will continue, though it may end up as a single union. And we already have an agreement for regular staff consultation procedures.

But the lessons for Merseyside from other areas are not very encouraging."

## Shipyard threatened with closure

By Gail Cameron

It is just over a year since Vickers' announcement that Cammell Lairds shipyard at Birkenhead will either be sold — if a buyer can be found — or closed by 1993.

Since then, 950 Lairds workers have lost their jobs, with only a token half-day strike in protest at Vickers' failure to find a buyer. Overtime is still being worked at the yard despite the redundancies. The shop stewards' committee has put its faith in a buyer being found by Vickers and the local MP. They have done nothing that would upset the company, or the coalition of

Labour right-winger Frank Field and the local Tory MPs.

They are hoping that the company and any potential buyers will do the decent thing, but the facts suggest a different fate unless the workers come up with their own plan of action.

Vickers have more to lose by keeping Lairds in business as a shipbuilder because of the threat to Vickers' main shipyard in Barrow, which is facing three thousand redundancies.

The Tories claim that they won't interfere in the market to subsidise Lairds, but they are prepared to interfere in the market when it comes to selling BT or Rover, or all the other asset-stripping.

Even if a buyer is found, what chance is there for the workforce with rationalisation. The Tories have made their position clear over the past 12 years: unemployment is a price worth paying to drive wages down and maximise profits.

If the Lairds workers appeal to the Tories' or Vickers' better nature, they are appealing to something that doesn't exist. Three to four million unemployed can tell the Lairds workers that compassion isn't high on the Tories' list.

Lairds workers need to take action to defend their jobs and

future generations' jobs by taking a long-term view for the survival of the yard.

They need to get a commitment from the Labour leadership that they will save the yard and the jobs if they win the General Election. They need to hang on to the assets that are left in the yard — which means the vessels — because they are the only negotiating tool they have.

They need to take up the call for an integrated shipping and shipbuilding policy. The Confed has had that as a policy for longer than most people can remember, but has done nothing about it. The risk to sailors' and passengers' lives through the use of decrepit old rust-buckets with unsafe crewing practices sailing under flags of convenience needs to be ended, and that can be done through joint efforts between shipbuilding, shipping and dock workers.

If Lairds workers keep waiting for someone else to save their jobs for them, then 1993 could see the end of the yard. There are no excuses for job losses and closure at Lairds. There is no excuse for Lairds workers or any others not to fight to retain those jobs.

It's hard to take the decision to fight, but it will be disastrous to take the decision not to.

## Why TUC courses are worthwhile

Reading Jim Denham's *Press Gang (SO 496)* on why working class people read the tabloids raises important issues for trade unionists.

Jim rightly points out that there are all sorts of reasons (escapism, sports coverage, entertainment, titillation). However, there are a couple of other crucial points that we need to be aware of.

Firstly, having worked all day — 10 or 12 hours in some cases — many workers don't have the time or energy to sit down and read in-depth articles. Secondly, over the years a great many have been beaten down and their confidence undermined, either by experiences from school or in the workplace.

From this position, management start off with a huge in-built advantage in their dealings with many union reps.

In this relationship stewards are made to feel inadequate, their confidence and ability to defend their members' interests is damaged, sometimes beyond repair. They either end up stepping down after a period, or struggling on and learning the



### STEWARDS CORNER

By Alan Fraser

hard way; in the meantime they suffer and, of course, so do the members.

If they step down, management deal with the next set of stewards even harder and from a stronger position. Weak stewards in most circumstances usually lead to disaffected members and thus a weakening of the union as a whole in the workplace.

Learning the hard way may, in the end, result in stewards being tempered and through

their own experiences develop into effective shop stewards. But there is no guarantee that this method keeps stewards involved. It is likely that this produces a high casualty rate.

Yes, struggle in the workplace is central, but in itself it can lead to a road to nowhere unless there is a clear understanding of the tasks that lie ahead. Developing that understanding doesn't happen overnight.

It takes time and sustained effort to develop good organisation, democratic structures and open meetings that give stewards and members space to work out, discuss and debate issues that affect them, not just on a daily basis in the workplace but also on wider issues.

For stewards to become effective also requires training and education. Despite those on the left who scoff at negotiations, negotiating skills are nevertheless necessary and need to be learnt. Taking up disciplinary and grievances cases, wage claims, health and safety, the use of the law, equal opportunities, holidays, sickness and lots more, are all issues that stewards must be take up, and

at some stage negotiate with management over. Of course, negotiation has to be backed up by membership support and involvement.

These are all bread and butter struggles, but central. Training and education can help facilitate stewards to develop understanding and build confidence. Those of us who have attended TUC shop stewards courses will probably remember them as being very positive and liberating, which in the main provided a sound platform for future development in our efforts to represent members and deal effectively with management.

So if you are a new or inexperienced steward, or have been one for some time, don't get intimidated, or feel that management know more, and therefore must be right. Get yourself on a trade union course. Don't let management grind you down!

Some unions run their own education programmes, so ask your branch secretary for details. The TUC run basic shop stewards' courses, so contact your branch secretary about them. Paid time off for stewards' training is a legal right.



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Chair, Offshore Industry Liaison Committee

# SOCIALIST

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Israel and the Palestinians

## Two states is the only feasible solution

Opening session: *Capitalism and the working class.* Speakers include a building worker militant, an oil worker from OILC, Joe Pinto (speaking on capitalism and poverty in India), and Gail Cameron from SO.



Gail Cameron will speak about the relationship between capitalism and the working class

Debates: *Is Socialism Dead?* John O'Mahony, editor of SO, debates Professor Kenneth Minogue of the London School of Economics. *Free market or socialist planning?* Martin Thomas debates Professor David Marsland of the West London Institute. *Can capitalism protect the environment?* Speaker: Patrick Murphy



Ruth Cockcroft discusses 'Socialism and Democracy'

Problems of socialism: *Did Marx and Lenin lead to Stalinism?* Discussion with Bill Lomax and a speaker from SO. *Is socialism democratic?* Speaker: Ruth Cockcroft *The poverty of anti-Stalinism.* Speaker: Bob Fine

There will be a creche, a bar, food and stalls. Tickets are £6 (waged), £4 (low waged and students), and £2 (unwaged).

### Come to the conference on 2 November!

# Stand up for real socialism!

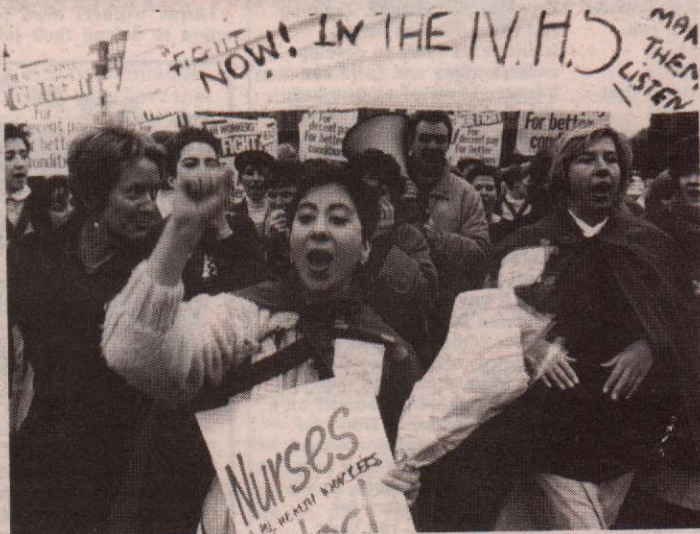
11.00-5.00

Caxton House, St John's Way, Archway, London N19 (nearest tube: Archway)

This conference is sponsored by *Socialist Organiser*. For more information phone Mark on 071 639 7965.

The capitalists are trying to do to socialism what Stalinism did for four decades — bury it under a mountain of lies and

misrepresentation. We say that Stalinism was the opposite of socialism! If you agree, join us in standing up to those who are again trying to bury socialism. Sign our declaration. Come to our conference. Join "Stand up for Real Socialism". For more details and to add your name to the "Stand up for Real Socialism" declaration, contact SUFRS, 56 Kevan House, Wyndham Road, London SE5



What prospect for working class struggles in the future?

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Afif Safiah, the chief representative of the PLO in London, spoke to *Socialist Organiser*

In spite of all the compromises, we shall feel confident that the talks in Madrid will produce at least a partial satisfaction of the legitimate Palestinian demands.

The Israeli leaders are still unaware of the changing realities of international politics. We are witnessing the beginning of American pressure on Israel.

The Israeli loan guarantees have been linked with a freeze on Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. The Israeli economy is now cornered. The Israelis need funds to settle the influx of immigrants. In a matter of months the absence of money will make itself felt.

Israel's importance in the US's global strategy has declined. Israel is no longer needed against Soviet expansionism.

Today we can put on the international agenda how to control Israeli expansionism.

The third reality — and this just a statement of fact, not preference, from me — is that the Arab system is now pro-Western. Israel, with its inflexibility, is destabilising a pro-Western region. The radical, nationalistic Arab world no longer exists. Israel today is a nuisance for the Americans.

Although Shamir heads a hawkish delegation, I think that the other participants at Madrid will tell him that he will not dictate events.

Shamir has relegated [David] Levy [the Israeli Foreign Minister] to the shelves. This will have serious domestic repercussions for Likud hegemony on Israeli politics. Levy represents an emerging sephardic political elite which has been aspiring to have its share of power.

By humiliating Levy, Shamir has offended his Moroccan voters [Levy is of Moroccan origin]. Those voters have been decisive to Likud's parliamentary majorities.

The concept now being used for the West Bank is "self-government" rather than "autonomy". This is better.

The Americans speak of an interim arrangement of Palestinian self-government: an authority which will have political and economic dimensions. During this transitional period, a gradual transfer of authority will pass from the Israeli occupying authorities to the Palestinian people.

During any transitional period, it is reasonable to expect the Israeli army to move out of the densely populated areas. This period could be much shorter than five years.

We would like an international presence to monitor this transition. The Israelis do not favour this.

Turn to page 11 for continuation and more on the Madrid conference

Demonstrate for the Palestinians!  
Saturday 7 December  
Assemble: 12.30, Embankment, London; Rally: 3.00, Hyde Park called by the Joint Committee for Palestine for the anniversary of the start of the Intifada