

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Unite the left!

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THE GREAT

TORY



WELFARE

ROBBERY

THE OLD, THE SICK and the vulnerable young are targeted in the Tories latest, craziest, public spending cuts.

This Monday 8 February Treasury Minister, Michael Portillo announced that the Tories are looking for parts of the Welfare State from which the government can "withdraw altogether".

Proposals up for discussion immediately included:

- Cuts in all benefit levels.
- Introduction of compulsory private insurance for unemployment.
- 'Incentives' ie one-off payments, for people to get out of the state pension scheme.
- More means testing
- The introduction of tolls for motorway travel as the first step towards introducing direct charges for a whole range of public services: street cleaning, street lights, refuse collection — you name it.

These proposals will be backed up by the continued extension of the market into the NHS, the systematic undermining of education and the wholesale "contracting out" of the bulk of public services to private profiteers.

Continued on page 2

The poisoned well



Do Ron Ron

When a rich vein is petering out the one in the rock gets scarcer and thinner in its quality. Production falls off. And so, the tabloids, filled for so long with high grade Royal scandal, this week are reduced to scratching around for nuggets in the debris. Major Ron Ferguson, whose main achievement is Princess Fergie, hit the front pages. He has been having an affair. Who broke the news? Why, the woman herself, "Glamorous Polo Girl, Leslie Player", who has written a book about it and sold parts of it to the News of the World. She expects to net well over £100,000 for her endeavours. Not bad for really low-grade scandal.

Smith's speech to the party Labour's leaders abandon revenge

LABOUR leader John Smith's speech last Sunday has been called a "historic turn for Labour" by some of the Tory press. It is not clear why. The most weighty thing Smith said was that argu-

ments about nationalisation and privatisation were now "irrelevant". We need new policies for a "New Age" he said. But Labour leaders from Gaitskell through to nogsuts Neil Kinnock have been saying such things for

30 years. Now, it is a way for Smith to signal that he and his friends accept all that the capitalists have done during the decade of the great plunder of public resources, and formally abandon any idea of revenge.

That is what excites the Tories and why the capitalists praise Smith's dull, little 4th carbon copy of a "revisionist" speech. It is a ridiculous speech. The British capitalist system that puts 4 million on the dole is a sick system and

a rotten one and it needs to be changed root and branch. Smith has built up an impressive reputation as Labour's Silent Leader. It is when he speaks that you realise just how golden Mr Smith's silence is.

How do we get a "responsible" press?

Last week the *New Statesman* and *Society* was forced to grovel in front of John Major. Major threatened to ruin the small-circulation magazine for discussing his private life. At the same time the *Sun* mocked the Queen's threat of legal action. The *Sun* has been able to pay hundreds of thousands of pounds in legal awards. The *Sun* will not go bust. In fact, a legal dispute with the Queen will boost sales. Here Clive Soley MP discusses his Responsibility and Freedom of the Press Bill with *Socialist Organiser*.

Privacy Bill — unless it went alongside a Freedom of Information Bill or a Press Freedom Bill — because it would tend to protect the rich and powerful. I would not object to the right of reply, in principle, however: it is somewhat more difficult. I extend the issue from fact to opinion. We could see endless battles between newspapers and readers. The right of reply would be difficult to legislate for. The Bill is currently in Committee stage after its second reading. It is opposed by the government. However, there is a chance it could be passed as there are a number of Tory MPs who are so angry with the press — for their own reasons — that they want some sort of regulatory body. I propose the setting up of an Independent Press Authority with one statutory duty: to enforce the correction of inaccuracies.

THE PROBLEM with the British Press is that it is over regulated, and in the wrong way. We have the libel laws, the contempt of court laws, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (which allows the confiscation of, for instance, photographs) the Prevention of Terrorism Act. These laws restrict journalistic freedom. I do not propose pre-publication censorship. The majority of people who have written to me, complain about press accuracy. This is the issue which my Responsibility and Freedom of the Press Bill deals with. I want to see inaccuracies corrected. The Bill does not deal with privacy. I would not support a

I am not opposed to the idea of a directly elected body, but there is no way it could be passed in the current climate. I propose that the body is appointed by the Home Secretary or National Heritage Secretary. This has worked tolerably well for the BBC and other organisations. Certainly, they are better than the press. The final issue to be addressed is the question of ownership. We need to limit the ownership of the press and break up the monopolies.



Women Against Pit Closures
At least 10,000 turned out last Saturday on the Women Against Pit Closures march through London. The banners of trade unions, trades councils, Labour Parties and left wing organisations were carried from Embankment to Hyde Park. Photo: John Harris

"Stick together and fight together"

Susan Wilson from Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures explained why they have formed a camp outside the threatened pit.
How long have you been here?
We started on 18 January, so this is our third week. We intend to stay here until all 31 pits stay open.
We are on a rota system. There could be two of us, or twelve of us.
We are miners' wives, daughters and grandmothers and from the support groups who have joined Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures.
WAPC started up in 1984 during the miners' strike. We had soup kitchens going. The name — WAPC — stayed, but we do not just fight for pits. We fight for health, for education, for communities. WAPC is just our name — we get involved with all community issues.
What support have you had?
We have had local MPs and councillors down signing our book. John Evans has been down. Public support is great. All the motorists give us a hoot as they pass.
What effect would it have if Parkside closed down?
It is not just the pit, but jobs involved with the pit. For every

miner's job there are two other jobs that will go outside the pit. It could be engineering, belts, whatever.
Moral is sky high here. We have just come back from Leyland, marching with the workers from Leyland-DAF, who were delighted to see our delegation. It is not just about pit closures, its about any closures. We have petitions here about the local youth service, the post office as well as our own.

In 1984, with my husband and my father and my brothers I was involved in the soup kitchens. We coped well. We got together as a band of women and it snowballed — we provided decent meals to women, their husbands and their families. We stuck together like we should be doing now — stick together and fight together.
Susan was talking to Paula Langley and Alan Johnson.

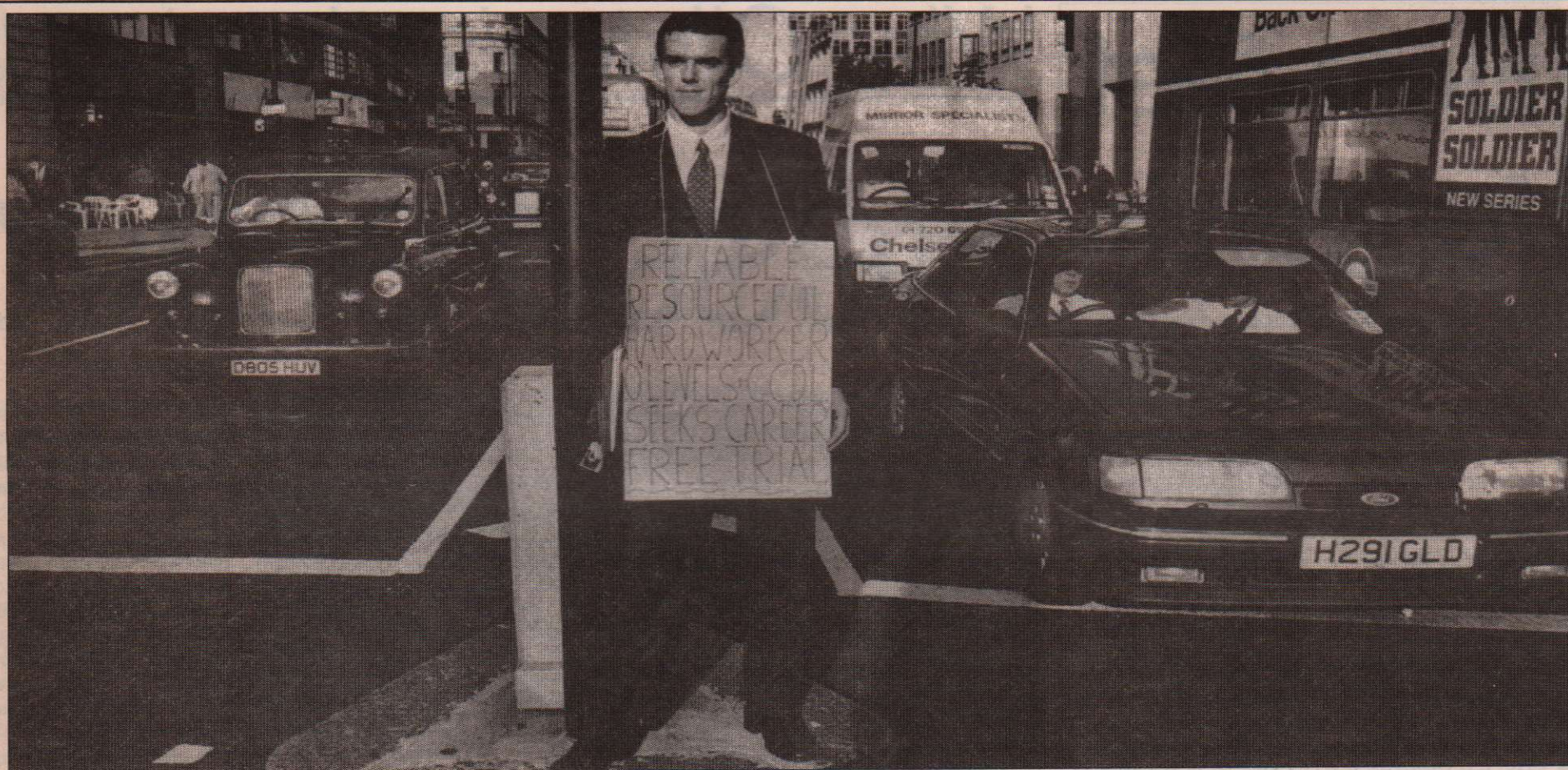
Owen's peace plan is no answer

By Steven Holt
After his dismal showing in the last ten years in British politics, we might have expected David Owen to slink off to some corner and be forgotten. Far from it. Owen is now following in the footsteps of his former boss James Callaghan — another failed politician who tried to become an "international statesman" — by becoming involved in attempts to work out a way to stop the fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
The essence of the plan being pushed by Owen is to divide the war-torn region into areas on the basis of which ethnic/religious group is a majority in each area. One problem with this is that Owen's plan only gives the Muslims two small areas — thus giving recognition to the areas controlled by the Serbs and Croats, from which the Muslims have been expelled.
Apart from getting Owen lots of publicity, his plan has had few effects. The first is that the Bosnian Muslims are increasingly fed up with the idea of negotiating peace (and under such a negotiated settlement who could blame them?), and have started effective guerilla warfare in Serb-occupied areas.
The second is that a further wave of expulsions of Muslims from two Serb-controlled areas has occurred, with the local Serb militia leaders claiming that the peace plan authorises this.

Tory swindlers

From front page
The Tories are deadly serious. Their aim now is the final destruction of all the main welfare state reforms that have been won by the working class movement over the last century.
These proposals — which amount to throwing a large part of the population back into 19th century conditions of poverty and insecurity — show as clearly as anything possibly could that the Tories and the class they represent have no answers to the profound economic and social crisis that their diseased and decaying capitalist system has produced.
No answers, that is, other than to drive down the living standards in the most literal sense of the word — of the vast majority of the population.
This social barbarism is to be dressed up by the Tories in the language of "choice" and of "empowering" the citizen. It is a language that even papers like *The Independent* appear to be able to see though somewhat more clearly than do Labour's leaders.
For instance that paper recently reported the case of "a sick child who languished on a Trust hospital's waiting list for months — until one day her father offered the asking fee of

£8,500 and hey presto, his daughter had her operation in a matter of days; a private operation but performed in the same Trust hospital where she recovered in a public ward alongside NHS patients. This demonstrates a truism that in a market economy, the mechanism that provides the power to choose is money."
A truism John Smith should be repeating day in and day out. The leaders of the labour and trade union movement should launch a massive crusade against the Tories public spending plans.
We need meetings, demonstrations and parliamentary disruption.
And the message of that campaign should be this:
This Tory government is engaged in a massive exercise in swindle. Working class people whose work and sweat is the living source of every penny in the Exchequer are to be denied basic public services.
Meanwhile, what's left of the state sector is being fattened up for the profiteers table or simply asset-stripped.
The only thing the Tories want to set free is capital, millions of individuals face the prison of poverty, ignorance and ill health now and in old age. *Labour must fight!*



The reality of unemployment is not one of "dole scroungers". The daily humiliation and harrassment of the unemployed is a disgrace

Unemployment: Tory liars have no answers

THE TEMPTATION is simply to laugh at John Major's "keynote" speech to the Carlton Club last week. As his government blunders — apparently rudderless — from one fiasco to another, this was Major's attempt at what George Bush called "The Vision Thing". Major's "Vision Thing" consisted of an incoherent and self-contradictory ramble through the traditional prejudices of the Tory backwoods. Incredibly, he attempted to blame "socialism" for the unprecedented rise in crime during 14 years of Tory rule.

He asked the Labour Party to "explain the difference between the inner cities and the more peaceful and prosperous suburbs, towns and villages" — and then admitted that crime was a problem "in our countryside too".

Dickens, Trollope and "Good old Winnie the Pooh" were invoked as the embodiment of British traditions around which we must rally to face down the socialist menace. The National Health Service, British Rail and local democracy were not mentioned in this particular context. The "corner baker's shop" was conjured up as the embodiment of capitalist fair dealing — this in the age of Sainsbury and Tesco!

Yes, it was laughable and pathetic. Even the Tory press was not particularly impressed. But on one point we need to take Major's ramblings seriously: "I increasingly wonder whether paying unemployment benefit, without offering or requiring any activity in return, serves unemployed people or society well".

The Tory press, for whom supposed "dole scroungers" have

long been a favourite target, seized on this section of Major's speech with relish and satisfaction. The term "Workfare" entered common parlance overnight. Two important questions now present themselves. Firstly, what is "Workfare"? And secondly, is Major serious about introducing it?

"The 'corner baker's shop' was conjured up as the embodiment of capitalist fair dealing — this in the age of Sainsbury and Tesco!"

Quite simply, "Workfare" means that in order to qualify for benefit payments an unemployed person has to participate in some form of work or training.

Fully-fledged Workfare programmes presently operate in just two countries in the world — America and Sweden. Even in these two countries, the scope of Workfare is very limited.

In the US only a handful of states operate the system: most Workfare schemes are very small. However, Bill Clinton is a leading advocate of Workfare, and every state is now required by law to begin a Workfare programme.

"Model" Workfare programmes in California, Philadelphia and Clinton's Arkansas are only a limited success. In California, for instance, only half those required to attend actually turn up. And only half of those who complete the programme find work — and, then, with pay so low that nine

out of ten remain on welfare. The Swedish version of 'Workfare' is a very long way from Major's musings. People get genuine training as part of an overall social democratic 'active labour market' policy. Unemployment is still at only 5.5%. Benefit levels, of course are much higher than in the UK.

But is Major serious about Workfare? Probably not.

All the indications are that Major's vague talk of "requiring activity in return" for unemployment benefit was a kite-flying exercise intended to appeal to the retired colonels, *Telegraph* readers and other assorted reactionaries assembled to hear him at the Carlton Club. Next day, Major's officials were busy hauling in the kite: it was stressed that there was no intention to introduce a mandatory, compulsory scheme of Workfare. Indeed, it was said, the Prime Minister had not even used the term in his speech.

There is good reason to believe the denials: Employment Secretary Gillian Shepherd and ministers Patrick McLaughlin and Michael Forsyth have all gone to investigate Workfare with initial enthusiasm — only to come back convinced that this is not a runner.

Michael Forsyth (a self-confessed Tory right winger) visited America "with an open mind" to examine Workfare schemes and concluded: "I did not find a single example of a compulsory scheme that was fully successful... You have to realise that if you were to guarantee a job organised by the state, then this would be a huge undertaking. It would be an enormous programme, and very expensive."

And there's the rub: the idea of introducing a national scheme of supervised public works for 3 million unemployed would be simply too expensive for this government to entertain.

But that does not mean that Major's words were just meaningless rhetoric: routine harassment and ideological "policing" of the unemployed — underlined by the carefully nurtured "dole scroungers" mythology — has always gone down well with the Tory rank and file. Major's speech is a clear indication that this sort of harassment will be stepped up in future.

"The Tory press, for whom supposed dole scroungers have long been a favourite target, seized on this section of Major's speech."

Already, compulsory Restart interviews after 6 months of unemployment (and thereafter, every 3 months) are used to pressurise claimants into going onto cheap labour schemes like ET and Employment Action, or other low paid work. After 2 years of Unemployment the "Options" course is, in effect, compulsory (those refusing it have benefit reduced by 40%). From April so-called "Jobplan Workshops" will be compulsory for those who have been unemployed for one year: those who refuse will lose all their benefit for at least one week. All this is in addition to the routine requirement for unemployed

people to show that they are "actively seeking work".

The daily humiliation and harassment of the unemployed is a national disgrace — and one that the labour movement has so far failed to address. The 3 million unemployed (actually 4 million by pre-1979 measurements, before the Tories began to fiddle the figures) are all potential allies of the labour movement. However, few unions have made any effort to recruit them, and quite a few unions bar them from membership by rule. However, it can be done.

In the mid-1980s the TGWU on Merseyside launched a vigorous campaign against Employment Training and succeeded in recruiting hundreds of unemployed activists. Sadly, that exemplary campaign was not built upon, even within the T&G, and most unemployed people — quite understandably — regard unions as irrelevant to their needs.

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"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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Best feet forward

Recent surveys of trade union density (like the Department of Employment's Labour Force Survey — covered at perhaps tedious length in this column) all point to one central fact: public sector workers are now the main bastion of trade unionism in Britain. And a series of recent strikes and days of action by council workers show that their organisation is not just "dense" — it's also relatively active and militant.

All this is in marked contrast to the days (as recent as the late 1960s) when NALGO's rule book made no provision for shop stewards and the union's initials were widely held to stand for Not A Lot Going On.

During the 1970s, local authority trade unionists in general — and NALGO members in particular — got their act together. This was in large measure due to the tendency of post-'68 lefties and ex-student activists to drift into white collar council jobs. The positive side of this process was the transformation of NALGO into a relatively well organised and often quite radical union. The negative side was that a model of rank and file organisation began to emerge that was not always appropriate.

In the early/mid '80s, some left wing NALGO activists could still conduct themselves as though they were the Works Committee of a car factory.

At Longbridge, Cowley, Ellesmere Port or Dagenham, a ten-minute "downer" would bring management grovelling to the union office. An all-out strike was a major national crisis.

Unfortunately, the same results do not follow from action by housing clerks, librarians or social workers. Well, not since Kinnock's "dented shield" speech and massive cuts by 'progressive Labour councils' anyway.

Quite apart from the self-evident fact that most (though not all, of course) local authority workers do not have the industrial/economic muscle of industrial workers, there is the fact that the employer is a somewhat different animal.

Ford management, faced with merely the threat of industrial action, was prepared to break the Labour government's "Social Contract" and the Tories' "norms" of the early '80s. Labour councils do not have the same leeway in the face of central government's capping powers.

In other words, local authority trade unionism cannot live by workplace militancy alone: a political strategy (and, in particular, an orientation towards the Labour Party) is essential. As Leon Trotsky put it, you need to walk on two feet. So far, the standard approach to this problem can be summarised as (1) The Dirty Sectional Deal; (2) "Let's Manage the Cuts Together"; (3) Say "No Compulsory Redundancies" and hope enough people take voluntary redundancy. Obviously, none of these is adequate.

Faced with the current level of cuts, plus the pay freeze, I would recommend that NALGO activists put their best feet forward, leading with the industrial one, and execute the following routine:

- Step 1: Grab the employer by the goolies, and cut off their source of revenue from the poll tax or whatever;
- Step 2: Demand national action, not just a localised long-haul;
- Step 3: Get UNISON properly affiliated as a whole to the Labour Party;
- Step 4: Demand that Labour councils fight the Tories. If they don't do that, use the union's block vote to replace them with councillors who will.

INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

Why Clintonisation spells Resurrection

CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR PARTY DEMOCRACY

By Vladimir Derer, Vera Derer and Danny Nichol

THE "holy alliance" ranging from *The Guardian* and Labour's public relations experts to the misnamed soft Left is once more on the march. Not satisfied with having bankrupted the Labour Party ideologically, politically and financially, they're again raising the flag of "modernisation". Under the Kinnock regime the "modernisers" promised electoral success provided that the Party dropped its traditional commitments to socialism and trade union rights. Non-nuclear policy and party democracy also had to go. After the long period of Tory government the modernisers sold this fiction as a winning formula to a demoralised party.

After the election, apart from occasional lip-service to the "achievements" of the "new model party", the modernisers kept quiet. Clinton's victory gave them new strength. Bottles of unsold Kinnock wine are being re-labelled Chateau Clinton.

Our modernisers are highly selective in their choice of which Clinton policies Labour should adopt. They ignore his stand on women's right to choose which helped him win the support of 60% of women voters. They never mention that Clinton won on a minority vote (43%) as this would cut across our "democrats'" enthusiasm for PR.

The old enemy

THE MODERNISERS are oblivious to the fundamental differences in the political traditions of the two countries and parties. They ignore the fact that Clinton, despite his less direct links with the unions, isn't as shy on trade union rights as Labour's "Policy Review" — witness his proposed new law against scab labour. The modernisers' dislike of Labour's trade union links is long ingrained. Mislead-



The 'modernisers'

ingly they identify them as one of Labour's main electoral liabilities.

The modernisers persuaded 1989 Conference to deprive trade union branches affiliated to CLPs of their vote in leadership elections. In 1990 they excluded them from taking part in CLPs' elections for the NEC Constituency Section. In 1991, with the general election

"The Kinnock regime has reduced members' involvement. Attendance at branch and General Committee meetings has dropped so that many are now inqorate."

imminent, they pushed through Conference an omnibus NEC document which rejected the existing method of selecting parliamentary candidates.

Following Labour's defeat in 1992, even some of the moaadernisers' most ardent trade union supporters had second thoughts. The leadership's huge concessions to the Tories had not produced a Labour victory. It became clearer to the unions that the main result of Labour's so-called modernisation would be the separation of the political wing of the party from its trade union base and, ultimately, Labour's destruction as a political force.

At the NEC's June meeting the modernisers didn't get their way. Their proposals to limit the fran-

chise in parliamentary selections to individual members were not agreed. Instead the NEC opted for the usual escape route — setting up a "Review Group" to look at all aspects of the Party/Trade Union relationships.

Conference versus the NEC

THE 1992 Conference reversed its previous decision and carried a resolution (Composite 9) affirming its support for "representation of trade union branches, co-operative parties and other affiliated organisations at every stage in the selection of parliamentary candidates by constituency labour parties". It instructed the Review Group "to concentrate its efforts on how to strengthen the traditional links between Labour's industrial and political wings at all levels of the party".

Last November the Review Group produced a preliminary report. It was made available to the Party leader but denied to NEC members not involved in its preparation.

However, it was 'leaked' to some of the press — a continuation of the practice adopted during the Kinnock regime. This is not a good omen.

The Review Group's report pays lip-service to Composite 9 but in fact ignores it. Composite 9, carried against NEC advice, states explicitly that the participation of affiliates (unions, co-ops etc.) is to be retained at every stage in parliamentary selections. The report is a compromise between the "modernisers" who seek to eliminate the unions' role in policy making and those who wish to retain it.

The report proclaims "One Person — One Vote" as the central democratic principles which informs its recommendations." These principles can be applied to individual party members, though in practice to make it work is difficult and time-consuming. Its application to affiliated membership, however, presents insuperable obstacles.

The report claims that individual members "enable democracy to flourish... in the branch and constituency life of the party, from debating policy to maintaining the organisational integrity of the party..." This is a very rosy picture of what has happened.

The Kinnock regime has reduced members' involvement. Attendance at branch and General Committee meetings has dropped so that many are now inqorate. Those who proclaim "One Member — One Vote" as a democratic innovation, ignore the fact that individual members always had the opportunity to vote. It was thought important, however, that they should attend meetings at which decisions are made only after discussion.

The introduction of postal balloting has reduced members' incentive to attend meetings and participate actively. A substantial proportion of those who now vote in internal Labour Party elections make up their minds on the basis of information given to them by mass media which are hostile to Labour and to the Labour left in particular.

This is what the "modernisers" intended: to stifle internal party democracy, to strengthen the position of the party's parliamentary establishment, and to reduce accountability of Labour MPs to the rank and file.

Madcap schemes

1992 CONFERENCE forced the "modernisers" to pretend to compromise on the exclusion of unions from parliamentary selections. Currently they have devised an unworkable scheme for union participation as a stepping-stone to achieving their original aim — the exclusion of the unions.

disaster

of the bankrupts

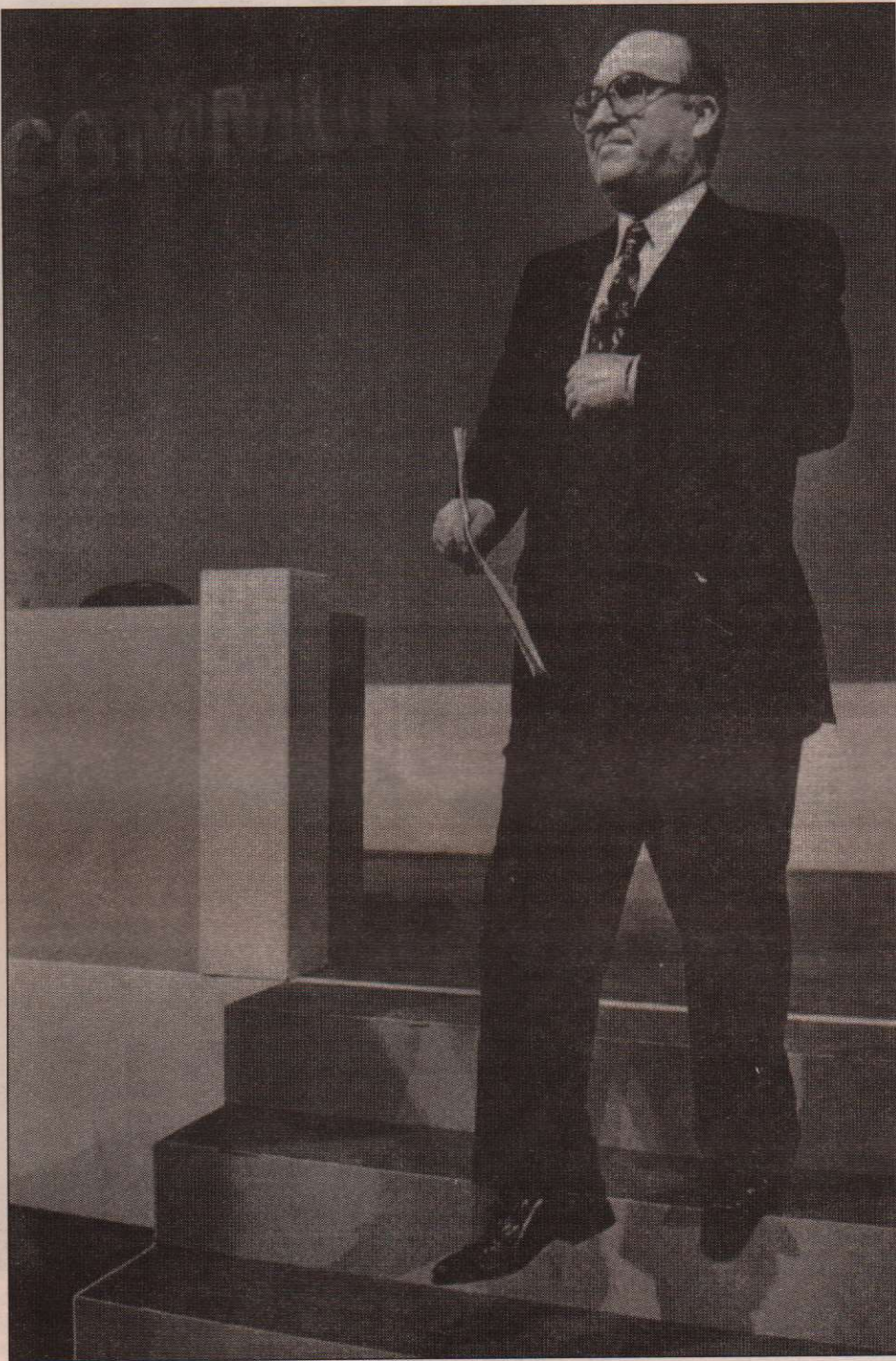
They propose to replace present union involvement based on elected bodies by an as-yet non-existent list of Labour's trade union supporters. The listed trade unionists would have a direct vote in the selection of parliamentary candidates.

Levy-paying trade unionists could simply register as Labour Party supporters. Registration alone would be accepted as proof of Labour Party membership. No payment other than the political levy payment would be required. Nothing like the £18 currently paid by individual members. This would be a temptation for Tory and LibDem supporters to register as Labour supporters to rig Labour's internal elections. It may also tempt less committed members to drop their individual membership, and be a disincentive to join the Party.

If the traditional British level of participation in politics is anything to go by, relatively few Labour voters would be prepared to register. This might eventually turn out to have a disastrous effect on the unions' contribution to Labour's funds. What is to take the place of the affiliation fees currently paid by the trade unions?

Conference — the next target?

ANOTHER "reform" floated in the Review Group's preliminary report would affect the structure of Conference itself. What's mooted is a further reduction of the TU vote to 50% or less. The CLPs' share now stands at 30%. It is proposed to give the remaining 20% to a "third force" — guess who — Labour MPs. The Labour establishment is clearly not satisfied with the dominant role the Par-



Smith's smug silence is a disgrace when there are 4 million on the dole

liamentary Labour Party already has. It wants to reinforce this by importing the PLP into what was hitherto the forum for Labour's rank and file — Conference.

New steps towards whittling down union influence are indicated by the proposals to "reform" the Electoral College for the leadership. Two proposals are being considered by the Review Group. One would cut the union vote in the

college by 6.6% so that votes would be divided equally between PLP, CLPs and the TUs. The other proposal, however, would eliminate the unions altogether: MPs and CLPs would be given 50% each.

The modernisers have a final solution for the union problem. They have dreamt up a constitutional vacuum allegedly rising from 1991 Conference's decision to reject the method of parliamentary selection

used during the last parliament — the so-called local electoral college. The Rule Book gives the NEC a free hand to decide on an alternative method of selection for one year only. Any proposed changes should have been ratified by 1992 Conference. The NEC's inability to agree an alternative method means that the old rules should still stand. Walworth Road dealt with the problem by simply omitting the old rules from

the 1991/2 Rule Book. Robin Cook, one of the Party's modernisers, after singing the praises of the proposal for a trade union supporters' register is quite realistic about its prospects: "there is no way that such a register would be up and running for the next round of Parliamentary selections, which must be done by one member one vote" (*Tribune*, 8.1.93).

Must be done? Even when the Rules don't provide for it, and the NEC has no constitutional right to decree it?

When the electoral college for parliamentary candidates was introduced supporters of OMOV argued it would prove unworkable and so was just a transitional stage to "pure" OMOV, i.e. exclusion of unions from the final selection. 1992 Conference rejected pure OMOV. The modernisers are intent on

"The Party shouldn't be conned by the mirage of modernisation. Its real purpose is not the final heave to bring down the Tories but the final heave to get rid of party democracy and union involvement."

introducing OMOV through the back door by deceiving the Party into believing there are now no rules governing parliamentary selection. When the electoral college was introduced they just speculated that it would be unworkable — but they gave it a try. In fact, despite some drawbacks, it proved vi-

able. Now they have come up with a "compromise" system so shambolic, that they don't need to wait before decreeing it inoperable. Instead of reverting to the electoral college, as the constitution would oblige them to do, they want to introduce OMOV on the pretext that there's no time to establish any alternative. Should they succeed, they calculate, their "modern" OMOV — the replacement of voting after internal party debate by postal ballot — will be here to stay.

Union link and party democracy go together

The Party shouldn't be conned by the mirage of modernisation. Its real purpose is not the final heave to bring down the Tories but the final heave to get rid of both party democracy and union involvement. Thus, Labour MPs' accountability to the rank and file is inseparable from TU input into the Party. At this year's union and regional conferences, and at 1993 Party Conference, these issues must be presented jointly. Labour's future as the representative of the working class depends on its rejection of the Review Group's proposals.

From the latest CLPD bulletin



We should reject Clinton's example

Unemployment: Tory liars have no answers

From page 3

This situation must be changed urgently. Full scale Workfare may not be on the agenda at the moment. But the unemployed remain an invaluable "reserve army of labour" for the Tories

— a potential source of cheap substitute workers in the public sector and an ever-present downward drag on wages and conditions throughout industry.

Far from championing the cause of the unemployed, the Labour Party and the TUC have themselves opened the door

to Workfare. Prominent Labour Party figures like David Blunkett and Frank Field openly support Workfare. The TUC's present campaign for "Jobs and Recovery" calls for a "national programme of training for the unemployed," without specifying that such a

programme must be voluntary and pay the rate for the job.

It is almost certainly the case that there are more enthusiasts for Workfare amongst the Labour Party and trades unions bureaucracy than within the Tory Party leadership at the moment.

The labour movement must change course and start fighting for the unemployed. Our demands must be:

- * No to Workfare — or any cheap labour scheme.
- * For voluntary, quality training that pays trade union rates for the job.

* For recruitment of the unemployed into TUC unions, with full rights and entitlements.

* Oppose all redundancies and closures.

* Employed and unemployed unite and fight for full employment!

GRAFFITI

Tory cuts

GRAFFITI

The bad news: the Tories are making another round of cuts. Many compulsory redundancies are predicted. Failing business confidence has to be rebuilt. Huge deficits on spending are blamed.

The good news: this time it is the Conservative Party itself which is being cut. The party of good house-keeping and prudent economic management appears to have run up debts of £19 million. Hard-nosed business supporters are reluctant to contribute cash to what they are beginning to see as a badly run loss making outfit.

So Tory Chairman, Norman Fowler, is pushing through 61 job cuts in the Conservative machine, of which 42 will be compulsory redundancies. When you see this month's unemployment figures, allow yourself half a smile for the 61 who deserve to be there.

One man who has a bit of money and largesse left to lavish on the Tories is Michael Green, boss of the new London TV franchise holder, Carlton TV. Carlton has avoided the pressure to move down market to capture a larger audience share — by starting at the bottom. It seems that Michael Green takes a similar approach to his business conduct.

During the last tax year when the most sensitive negotiations for the ITV franchises were going, on Green's private company, Tangent Industries, donated £15,000 to Tory Party funds.

Green is currently bidding to take over ITV's news service, ITN.

As ever, Peter Mandelson MP, Labour's ex-communications director, now aspiring media personality, missed the point. "It is entirely unacceptable...", he said, that Green, "...should align himself with the Tories". Eh? Mandelson is surprised that a card carrying member of the ruling class should be aligned with the Tories? That says a lot about this man's understanding of politics. Mandelson's conclusion? "I hope he will declare immediately that all such political donations by himself will cease", Mandelson said, with such breath-taking audacity and radicalism that he had to sit down for several minutes afterwards with a bottle of fortified mineral water.

The Labour Party has its own, although smaller, financial crisis. Ideas canvassed this week for solving it are: one, moving to smaller offices near-

er to Westminster; two, stop paying the £350,000 per year rent on the existing headquarters at Walworth Rd — not as bad as it sounds since the building is owned by a consortium of unions.

Labour strategists are unable to reach a decision, but devoted archivists are searching high and low for a precedent from Bill Clinton's past that will enable the Party to decide the correct course of action.

Alan B'Stard, TV's fictional, corrupt, over-sexed, manipulative Tory MP could be escaping from the small screen into real life. B'Stard represented the seat of Hartemprice, which was actually abolished in 1983.

Now the Boundary Commission are resurrecting the seat, certain to be Tory. Former MPs Chris Patten, Francis Maude and Michael Fallon have all expressed interest in being a B'Stard.

A local candidate for the job, Robert Goodwill, spilt the beans about the esteem in which B'Stard is held in the Conservative circles, "Most people I know in the Tory Party have a certain admiration for old Alan. He is my hero in a way."

Good signs that the Child Support Act will be administered with the delicacy and tact for which the DSS are renowned. The Act, which comes into force this April, requires women claiming benefit to co-operate with the DSS in tracking down fathers, to claim maintenance payment. This is then deducted from benefits.

At the moment it is legal for women to withhold information — but a dossier has been produced documenting 30 cases where women have been illegally threatened with, or have actually had, their benefit cut.

The Act gives dispensation to women whose partners have acted violently towards them. So it's hard to explain why Tower Hamlets DSS last month ignored appeals from a mother of two not to pursue her husband. She had already won an injunction against him and he had been fined £400 for violence against her.



Micheal Green is a Tory, shock!

The cook, the nurse, the wife and the mother

WOMEN'S EYE



By Jean Lane

THE WORK carried out by housewives with dependent children has been costed in a survey carried out by Legal and General. The results are not altogether surprising. By having a wife carry out the housework for free, householders save £18,000 a year. 1,000 married women with dependent children took part in the investigation and the number of hours spent as nanny, cook, cleaner, laundress, shopper, dishwasher, driver, gardener and seamstress were costed according to the going rates for these jobs.

When added up, the average housewife works 70.7 hours per week and should be earning £348.75 i.e. more than a train driver [£339] or plumber [£315], and, if with a child under one year of age, should be on a par with a production manager [£454] or a teacher [£436]. The survey doesn't mention all the other things that housewives do which would bump her wages up to well over 18 grand: child psychologist [as well as that of the adult variety], sick nurse, trained negotiator, not to mention fount of knowledge on all questions of life from "Mum, where do you go to when you die?" to "How does a combustion engine work?". The fact that she is on permanent stand-by must account for a bit more over the basic.

The survey is useful, though. Not least because it shows who is doing the work, let alone how much it could cost. The excuse for women doing all the housework used to be that the man went out to work, brought the money home, didn't have time to do housework as well, and, anyway, the wife's at home all day, it's only right that she should do it. But the figures show that women who go out to work are still doing the housework. Those with part time jobs average 59 hours at home, and those working full time, i.e. 40 hours, out of



We need to fight the ideology of a woman's role in the home. Women should have more choices and equal access to work

the home are still doing an average 49 hours in the home.

So why shouldn't we demand that this work is paid for? Well, I think it should be. I

"As much of what is called house-work as possible should be freely or cheaply available as social services, staffed with highly paid workers who can fight for equal pay, for a shorter working week, for health and safety regulation"...

also think it should be carried out under better conditions. For instance, child nursing and education should be done by trained staff, in the well equipped, pleasant surroundings of nurseries where health

and safety legislation applies, and which are free, and easily accessible to the users.

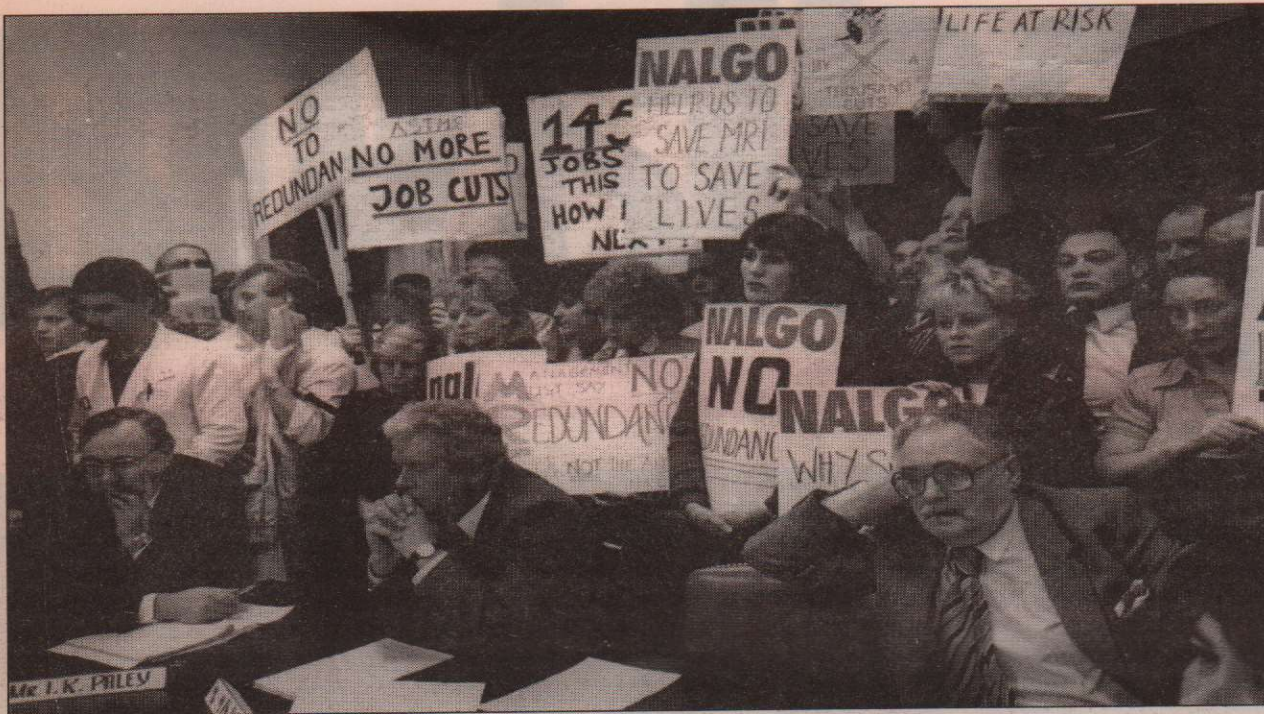
I think there should be public laundries on every high street and housing estate, cheap to use and staffed by people with good working conditions, so that a quality service can be provided for the working class families that need it. Community restaurants could provide good, wholesome, easily affordable meals for the working family, staffed and regulated with skill, and with care, in conditions where children cannot pull pots of boiling water over themselves while the overstretched and harrassed cook is looking the other way, and where the worker cannot get beaten up for not getting the dinner on the table in time by the boss.

As much of what is called housework as possible should be freely or cheaply available as social services, staffed with highly paid workers who can fight for equal pay, for a shorter working week, for health and safety regulation, for pensions, holidays, sick pay and for the right to provide a public service that they

could be proud of. In this way, hundreds of thousands of women stuck at home working under terrible, archaic and unsafe conditions at the moment could be freed to end their isolation, to look for work, to get economic independence from their husbands and to broaden their cultural and leisure experience. Those who choose not to, or are unable to take advantage of such facilities should be free to make that choice and a proper benefits system for maternity, sickness, disability, child support, etc. should be available to enable those people to live decent lives.

Of course all this presupposes getting rid of the Tory government, and fighting for one which puts social welfare and quality of life before greasing the palms of friends in big business. It also means fighting the ideology of a woman's role being in the home, or anywhere other than she chooses as a human being, with equal access to work, play, travel, expand, educate herself — an ideology unfortunately not just held by Tories.

Jim Denham is on holiday this week. His "Press Gang" column will be back in the next issue of Socialist Organiser



Cuts are affecting *all* local government workers. What is needed is a national response

Fighting the cuts and the pay freeze

Two NALGO members from South Yorkshire look at the issues facing their union's Local Government Conference which meets this week

Since January last year an estimated 129,000, mainly part-time, jobs have been lost in local councils. Another 100,000 face redundancy in the next two years.

If the Tories manage to implement their plans for local government, we will be heading for redundancies on a massive scale and the wholesale destruction of key council services.

Up and down the country the reports are the same: Birmingham City Council has announced its intent to make £35-40 million cuts, and one thousand jobs are threatened. In Humberside the figure is nearer £43 million with huge

job losses. Lambeth have announced a £31 million budget deficit and have outlined 1,000 job losses. In Sheffield, after workers took a three day pay cut in the form of unpaid leave to "help the council out", the employer has unsurprisingly come back for more. Workers are facing the threat of a 5% pay cut or 1,300 compulsory redundancies. Avon Council is threatening 400 job losses, as is Cornwall. Coventry City Council has proposed

a phased cuts programme: 550 job losses to achieve a £6.8 million cut this year followed by £13 million next year and £17 million the following year. Harlow council workers have been told that, to balance the books, the Council considers a 47% reduction in staff appropriate.

This situation is being repeated in councils across the country. Such a national attack needs a national response.

Why we need national action

The NALGO Local Government Group Meeting on 11 February must agree on a national ballot for action against cuts and the 1.5% pay limit. This meeting is crucial because it could be the only chance of forcing the

NALGO leadership into campaigning for national strike action before it is too late.

The local government APT&C pay settlement is long after many other public sector workers' — by the time the APT&C date is up the pay

limit will have either been broken or the confidence of the rank and file will have been dashed by sectional defeats.

The pay limit will only be broken through national joint union action co-ordinated by the leadership of all the public sector unions. This is especially vital because the membership will only overcome fear of job losses, and have the courage to take action if it is clear that there is a strong possibility of winning. Breaking the pay limit will only be easy if the Tories are faced by all 5.8 million public sector workers taking united industrial action simultaneously.

We must put the maximum pressure on the leadership to work for united industrial action across the whole public sector, in addition to building unity between all sections of the public sector on the ground.

Local government is at a major crossroads in terms of cuts — we either:

a. succeed in winning national action, which by its very nature will automatically take on an overtly political dynamic of direct opposition to central Government's underfunding of local government; or:

b. further local and section disputes against individual

employers will take place, and go down, one by one, until the "bottom line" of no compulsory redundancies has been breached everywhere.

There is no reason why we should be pessimistic at this stage — there is generally a serious underestimation of the strength and impact that local government workers taking national action would have.

The Tories are nowhere near as assured about their general strategy as they were under Thatcher — it is very likely that if they were met with the uproar they have faced over pit closures, from workers and service users, over the chronic underfunding of local services, we would be in the fabulous position of forcing the Tories to do a U-turn.

The RMT, NUM and NACODS are running joint ballots for action against job losses in their respective industries for 5 March, which will give the NECs of those unions the mandate to call one day strikes in March and early April. NALGO should be balloting to take national action on the same days as the rail and mineworkers — we are going to need the utmost unity in the face of the enemy to have any hope of winning.

Manual and white collar unions must unite

The unions must all join together to launch a national campaign in defence of public services. This campaign should respond to the ideological lies of the Tories and their privatisation offensive by positively advocating the collective and democratic provision of public services. The creation of UNISON from NALGO, NUPE and CoHSE should be used to forge unity in action between blue and white collar workers. The confidence of members to resist cuts would be hugely boosted if it was clear that the national leadership of all the unions were intent on taking a stand and defending services, jobs and conditions of employment. If this does not happen the already virulent sectionalism

will become rampant — in Sheffield, officials from manual and craft and teaching unions are (according to the APT&C officials) saying that they have had enough cuts and that it is the turn of the NALGO and APEX members.

There is a growing tendency for the unions just to take a stand against compulsory redundancies, half-heartedly defend conditions of employment and not speak out against the destruction of services. This must be stopped — jobs are services! It is absolutely essential that service users are united with the workers in fighting for decent, democratic provision of properly funded local services. Divisions only help the Tories.

French anti-racists unite 30,000 march against racism

LETTER FROM PARIS

By Stanley C Raptis

Led off by a banner depicting National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen hanging from a gallows, 30,000 people marched through Paris last Saturday (February 6). The demonstration, "Against Racism and for Equal Rights", had been called by the five main immigrant and anti-racist organisations in France, and was sponsored by a further 140 organisations.

These sponsoring organisations ranged from the PS (roughly the French equivalent of the Labour Party) and the CGT (the trade union federation linked to the French Communist Party) through women's and ecological movements to the French equivalent of the "Woodcraft Folk". But not all sponsoring bodies made a serious attempt at mobilising for the demonstration: the PS and "Generation Ecology" (one of the two French Green parties) were both notable by their absence rather than their numbers.

The demonstration was predominantly one of young people, painted faces and rap music.

The background to the demonstration is a rising level of racial intolerance in France, a tightening-up of immigration controls, and an increasing number of acts of racial violence.

The National Front remains a real threat. A third of the population backs its policies on immigration. But it has declined in recent years. Its press is stagnant and in many areas it lacks any organisation on the ground.

Its "new" enemy is "mondialisme", an updated version of the traditional, Jewish-Masonic conspiracy theory, according to which "occult powers" and the Jewish lobby in New York plot with the Brussels bureaucracy to destroy French nationhood.

Hence National Front opposition to Maastricht.

Although National Front members have a consistent record of violence and of promoting racist politics, it is the PS government itself which has implemented racist policies in recent years.

Abandoning earlier promises to extend the franchise to immigrants, the PS government has tightened up immigration controls in general and conditions for granting asylum in particular.

Illegal immigrants have been ruthlessly tracked down, and a "fast track" procedure introduced for their expulsion. PS ministers have openly boasted that 85% of requests for asylum are rejected.

"According to the latest opinion polls, the overtly right-wing parties will win three quarters of the seats in Parliament in the elections to be held in March."

By scapegoating immigrants, rather than challenging the power of capital, the PS government has strengthened the racist political agenda and also sown the seeds of its own defeat.

According to the latest opinion polls, the overtly right-wing parties will win three quarters of the seats in Parliament in the elections to be held in March. They will carry on where the PS government left off.

Last Saturday's demonstration was smaller than expected — its organisers had hoped for up to 100,000. It also reflected the limited implantation of the anti-racist movement amongst sections of the white working class, a key constituency for the National Front.

Clearly, therefore, the success of the demonstration should not be judged by the number of participants in it, but by the extent to which it helps build the anti-racist and anti-fascist movement in the months ahead.

Yugoslavia

In this her second article on the collapse of Yugoslavia, the Croatian Marxist Branka Magas gives an account of old discussions amongst Marxists on the "South Slav question" and outlines her view of the issues posed to the left by the continuing civil war.

WHEN Marx and Engels, in 1848, condemned the movements for national emancipation among the Slavs in the Habsburg Monarchy, reducing their aspirations to a manifestation of reactionary nationalism on the part of peoples "without history", they were motivated mainly by fear of the spread of Russian (Slav) influence, since they saw Russia as the bastion of conservative reaction in Europe. This attitude, of course, was quite wrong, as they were subsequently to admit.

The Communist Party of Yugoslavia emerged in 1919 in response to the revolutionary mood which the First World War had created in Central and Eastern Europe: a mood whose most powerful expression was the October Revolution. The Party began with a negative attitude towards the national question, despite the fact that this was the most burning issue in the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later renamed Yugoslavia).

Very soon, however, the party split into two opposing camps. One camp, made up mainly of Slovene, Croat and Serb Communists from the erstwhile Habsburg lands, confronted another, formed mainly by Communists from Serbia. The first believed that the national question was a revolutionary question: ie that it could not be solved through the institutions of Royalist Yugoslavia or by the Yugoslav bourgeoisie. The supporters of the other camp argued that the preoccupation with the national issue was a nationalist and bourgeois deviation and that the working class was

interested only in strictly class issues (the right to strike, labour legislation etc). Their position was that the national question could be solved by altering the existing constitution.

If one looks at this debate, which erupted in the 1920s, one can see that the issues raised then remained controversial throughout Yugoslavia's existence. Slovene and Croat Communists believed that Yugoslavia as created in 1918, in which the rights of non-Serb nationalities were either minimal or did not exist at all, prevented the non-Serb nations from completing their bourgeois revolutions, which involved the creation of national states. In their view, the Communist Party should, therefore, work for a federalisation of Yugoslavia on the national basis.

Serbian Communists, in particular the Party's Belgrade branch, feared that this would give too much power to the better-off western regions, and that the Slovene and Croat bourgeoisies would as a result be in a position to exploit Serb workers in Serbia. Serbian domination of the Yugoslav state, in other words, was seen as compensating for Serbia's relative economic backwardness.

The debate ended with the Communist Party endorsing the federal principle, partly because it understood that Yugoslavia had no future without a comprehensive settlement of the national domain. They could not have done better since Lenin's understanding of the national question is without parallel in this century. After the Party came to power in 1945, introduction of the federal system was accompanied by a commitment to even out the economic prospects of its different component parts. We have already discussed how and why this failed.

Socialists should accept the members of the former Yugoslav federation — the six republics (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia) and two provinces (Vojvodina and Kosovo) — as its natural heirs, and should support their right to decide their future without outside coercion. This means supporting their right to independence; condemning the expansion of any one republic at the expense of others; opposing the alteration of borders by force; and, of course, defending national minority rights within all the successor states.

Clearly, these are general political principles with universal application and not a matter of taking sides with one nationality against another — with Croats against Serbs, Moslems against Croats, etc. The war in former Yugoslavia is in any case, not an ethnic war, but a war of territorial expansion,

waged in the first instance by Serbia against Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Serbia has done a terrible thing to the Serb population in Croatia by drawing part of it into its war against Croatia. Croatia has been their home for centuries. Before the war they were very well integrated into its life, albeit without any special provisions for this. Today, however, they find themselves in a new situation and Croatia must create new instruments to ensure their equality.

Socialists should oppose Serbia's aggression against Croatia, and, at the same time, defend the right of the Serb population in Croatia to have everything it needs for its development. There is no contradiction between the two.

The idea that you can solve the Serb problem in Croatia by amputating large chunks of Croatian territory is wrong. The Serb population in Croatia is a dispersed



Bosian graves

population: ie it lives throughout the whole of Croatia, not compactly in a given part of it. The solution for minorities which are dispersed differs necessarily from that applicable to minorities living in a well-defined ethnically homogeneous arena, eg the Albanians in Kosovo.

In those areas of Croatia where Serbs constitute a majority, local autonomy is obviously desirable, provided its form is not injurious to Croatia as a whole. Croatia has

"Serbia has done a terrible thing to the Serb population in Croatia by drawing part of it into its war against Croatia. Croatia has been their home for centuries"

agreed to two municipalities where Serbs are in a majority, Knin and Clina, having a special status. According to the Croatian constitution, the Serbs also have the right to a certain number of representatives in the Croatian parliament. I hope that this formula will work, but I must say that the war has created extreme distrust between Croats and Serbs. No

provision will work unless there is good will on both sides.

It is likely, however, that as a result of this war the number of Serbs in Croatia will be drastically reduced, to a level at which it will become rather difficult for them to sustain themselves as a separate national group. This fact will only enhance Croatia's responsibility in regard to its Serb citizens. We must remember that the Second World War in former Yugoslavia was also terrible, yet in the end people lived together, inter-married and sent their children to the same schools. There is no reason to believe that this will not happen after this war too, however hopeless things may look at present.

It will now in the form of question and answer discuss the issues which confront the left as a result of the break down of the Yugoslav state.

Do you think advocacy of a south-Slav confederation is still viable?

NO, YUGOSLAVIA is finished. We can and should advocate cooperation between its successor states — economic cooperation, cooperation on the question of national minorities, and cooperation to prevent this area becoming once again the playground of big powers. But any plans for the future depend on this war ending in a just peace.

As distinct from what we advocate, what is likely? Do you think war is likely to spread to Kosovo and Macedonia, and to draw in Greece and Turkey?

AS THINGS stand now, the spread of the war is very likely. There are those who say that it was impossible to prevent war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it must be prevented from engulfing Kosovo and other Balkan countries. They must ask themselves how this is to be achieved? Kosovo is already under Serbian occupation and, in any case, is treated by practically everybody as an integral part of Serbia. So what will the so-called international community do? Expel Serbia from Kosovo? How will it achieve this in Kosovo, when it has been unable to do so in Croatia or Bosnia-Herzegovina, both of which have been granted international recognition? The United Nations are now in nominal control of a large part of Croatian territory. Yet ethnic cleansing continues there, and the expelled population is not allowed to return home.

Some people on the left argue for massive Western military intervention to impose a political solution.

I THINK THE integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina is a precondition for peace in the Balkans, and so everybody, — and not

and the left



The Bosnian people have received terrible treatment from the Serbs

just the left — has an interest in this. Bosnia must survive within its borders. Bosnia must not become part of Greater Serbia or be partitioned between Serbia and Croatia. What is more, we have seen in Bosnia something close to a genocide of the Moslem people, and any effective way of stopping a genocide is welcome. To that extent I support outside military intervention provided it were with the permission — and in support — of the Bosnian government. The latter has not asked any deployment of ground troops, merely for air space to be closed to Serbian aircraft, for selective air strikes against Serbian heavy artillery besieging Bosnian cities, and above all for the arms embargo against Bosnia to be lifted. I support these demands, especially in regard to the lifting of the arms embargo. In any case, the main danger is not Western military intervention in favour of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but Western political intervention against it, as we can see today with the Vance-Owen plan.

solution. It would mean conciliating groups which they consider strong and paying no attention to groups which they think are weak enough to ignore. It might save some lives in the short term, but it won't bring any lasting solution. And once Western troops are there, who is going to get them out?

THE WEST is already intervening and in a way that is not offering even any short-term solution. It is not a question of asking the Western powers to find a solution, but of facilitating the implementation of the democratically expressed will of the Bosnian population to live together and in peace. In any case, we are talking not of saving a few lives, but of saving a whole country and with it the idea that people of different nationalities and religions can live together. We are talking of saving a whole civilisation: the Serbian army has been systematically destroying Croat and Muslim cultural artefacts in the areas under their occupation. After all, there have been other wars in which the Western bourgeoisie and the left have found themselves on the same side, most notably in the Second World War against fascism. The Yugoslav Communist-led resistance, for example, received considerable military support from Britain after 1943.

Did the left then have a common interest in helping Britain hold on

to its empire, which was what it was mainly fighting for?

NO OF COURSE NOT. But fascism was an issue where there was an objective alliance between liberal and socialist forces in Europe. I believe that action to stop the Serbian aggression which caused the war in former Yugoslavia was something the left in Britain could have demanded of its government. I am speaking of principled demands, of course. At an early stage, at the start of 1991, a prompt political intervention by the West would have stopped the war. Instead, by trying to shore up Yugoslavia even if it meant it turning into a Greater Serbia, the West encouraged Serbia to start the war.

Is it possible now to restore Bosnia? Wouldn't the attempt mean a Muslim counter-offensive driving through the Serbian-occupied territory, with terrible consequences for the Serbs?

IF YOU MEAN that the occupied areas would become a front-line, then this cannot be helped. Once must remember, of course, that many Bosnian Serbs are fighting in the Bosnian Army. Their number is likely to increase as the Bosnian government begins to establish its authority over the whole territory of the republic. The Serb-inhabited areas were the first to be occupied, and their population never had a chance to decide for themselves whether they wished to participate in a war that would destroy their republic. They themselves are being terrorised and wish the war to end. The Bosnian government has been trying to reach them, but this has been extremely difficult. Serbs are just as much part of Bosnia-Herzegovina as are Croats and Muslims. It is impossible to imagine a restoration of the republic without Serb participation.

But that reconciliation would require, as a precondition, some

political movement which united Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. It is hardly conceivable that a Muslim counter-offensive can win over even those Serbs who are horrified by what is happening and wish that things could go back to what they were before.

The only political movement which could have united the three national groups is one in defence of their country as a state based on national equality. The military side of the war will be effective only in combination with a political struggle for this kind of Bosnia. The Bosnian government, as we know, advocates precisely such a multinational, multi-confessional and democratic state. The desire for revenge among Muslims, who have been the main victim of this war, is understandable. Mindless revenge can be avoided only if war criminals are caught and punished.

What is important is that the Bosnians themselves be in a position to liberate their country, because only in that way will they be able to organise their future. For this to happen,

the Great Serbian project must be defeated. Peace in the whole area is conceivable only with the overthrow of the current regime in Serbia.

Serbian military successes in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina have weakened democratic opposition to Milosevic in Serbia. A few victories by the Bosnian forces, in particular the breaking of the siege of Sarajevo, would make a terrific impression in Belgrade. Any strengthening of the opposition to war in Serbia will, of course, enlarge the scope for the Serbs in the occupied parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina to get rid of people like Karadjic and Mladic. Even today in Banja Luka, which is the centre of the so-called Serb Krajina and which runs by an armed mafia, there remains a democratic opposition of a kind. These people must be helped.

The best way to help them is to support an integral, free and democratic Bosnia-Herzegovina, a state of Muslims, Serbs, Croats and all others who live in it, and are loyal to it.



Serbian soldiers stamp on the Croatian flag

But, on the record of the Western powers both in Yugoslavia recently and elsewhere over hundreds of years, what they will be concerned with is establishing stable conditions for trade and investment. That is not the same as a democratic

January 30 1933: Hitler becomes Chancellor

The rise of fasc

Sixty years ago, on January 30th 1933, Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. The strongest labour movement in Europe put up no active resistance and within six months had been smashed and driven underground. The path was open to the persecution and later annihilation of the Jews, to rearmament and to the expansion across Europe which led to the Second World War.

In retrospect this surrender without a fight seems incomprehensible and criminal. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) had nearly a million members and the Communist Party about 250,000. Between them they took 37% of the vote in the last democratic elections in December 1932 — compared with the Nazis 33%. Both the SPD, the KPD and the 4 million strong unions had their own paramilitary formations, and the SPD had supporters among the police force in Prussia. Yet the labour movement was divided and destroyed — both politically and physically.

These articles by Bruce Robinson will examine in detail how Hitler was able to come to power, what might have been done to prevent him and the immediate results of the Nazi victory on the labour movement. If retrospective wisdom seems easy, it should be emphasised that the Trotskyist movement, almost alone, warned of the consequences of the disastrous policies of the SPD and KPD, when there was still time.

HITLER'S RISE to power can only be understood as a consequence of the economic and political crisis of the Weimar Republic. The Republic was born out of the collapse of the monarchy in 1918, followed by the defeat of premature attempts at revolution by the Communist Party. The SPD had made an alliance with the old order — the army, landowners, state machine and industrialists — in order to defeat the 1919 revolution by a combination of armed force and concessions to the demands of the workers.

Once the revolutionary left had been defeated, the right turned on the Republic and it only survived through the general strike of 1920. Although the labour movement defeated the Kapp Putsch, the state machine, including the army and judiciary,

largely remained in the hands of forces who wished to overthrow Weimar and the Treaty of Versailles, smash the labour movement, and install an authoritarian government (possibly restoring the monarchy). These reactionary forces largely remained apart from the Nazis, but were eventually to summon Hitler to power.

"Hitler now had a real mass movement and a strong parliamentary bargaining position from which to deal with the old conservative leaders. The real threat of fascism was now apparent. Was the labour movement prepared to fight?"

The SPD, together with less significant liberal and catholic parties, were the main founders and defenders of the bourgeois Republic. Up to 1925 the Republic was in a state of constant social crisis as a result of economic collapse and the consequences of the Versailles Treaty. The Communist Party tried ineptly to use the crisis as a basis for a revolution in Germany.

At the same time, the fascists had also tried to overthrow Weimar. The failure of the fascist putsch of November 1923 in Munich led Hitler to the belief that he needed to exploit constitutional means to come to power. The opportunity for this was only to come when the relative economic prosperity of 1924-8 was destroyed by the Wall Street Crash of 1929.

The Great Depression hit Germany harder and faster than many European Countries. Now the state was threatened with bankruptcy, and unemployment soared. Since 1928, the government had consisted of the 'Grand Coalition' between the SPD and all bourgeois parties apart from the monarchist Nationalists (NVP). Tension between the SPD's promises of reforms to their rank and file and their need to preserve the coalition could no longer be sustained by March 1930. The SPD left the government after refusal to contemplate cuts in unemployment insurance, which the bourgeois parties required to balance the state budget.

There was a serious political crisis as now no government could command a majority in the Reichstag (Parliament). The Weimar constitution gave emergency powers to the President to appoint a Chancellor, who could rule by emergency decree without Parliamentary support. The President was Von Hindenburg, monarchist Field Marshall and a supporter of the large landowners and most reactionary sectors of capital. He was quite happy to go down this road, which could only be challenged by a majority vote of no confidence in the Reichstag. He appointed Heinrich Brüning, a member of the Catholic Centre Party, as Chancellor, with the goal of solving the economic crisis at the expense of the working class. Many of the circles around Hindenburg saw this as a temporary solution pending the overthrow of the Republic or some other authoritarian solution.

In July 1930 the Social Democrats could no longer accept Brüning's austerity measures and challenged him in the Reichstag. The President dissolved the Reichstag and new elections were set for September 14th. These elections were to mark the first turning point in the rise of the Nazis.

The Nazis were well prepared for the elections and used modern propaganda techniques. Their vote jumped from 2.6% to 18.3%. They won over 6 million votes and 107 seats in the Reichstag, becoming the second largest party. Their rise was largely at the expense of the traditional bourgeois parties and came also from people who hadn't voted before. The Nazi vote came from the sections of the population who faced economic ruin and hated the organised working class. They made particular headway amongst the lower middle class (particularly in the countryside), in small-scale industry and amongst the unemployed in the large cities. Their support came from what Trotsky called the social 'dust' of the petit-bourgeoisie and lumpen proletariat, crushed between the working class and bourgeoisie and looking for a movement which would radically improve their situation at the expense of organised labour.

The vote for the parties of the labour movement dropped very slightly, with a move taking place from the SPD to the KPD, indicating elements of a radicalisation on the left. The KPD leadership played this up as indicating that the revolution was coming close, ignoring the far greater gains made by the Nazis.

Hitler now had a real mass movement and a strong parliamentary bargaining position from which to deal with the old conservative leaders. The real threat of fascism was now apparent. Was the labour movement prepared to fight?

The Social Democrats had long been a constitutional reformist party, who saw their main role as defenders of the Weimar Constitution, not just against the right but also against the left (even in the company of the generals).

In the late '20s, SPD theoreticians justified their collaboration with bourgeois parties and the state by the idea that in Weimar Germany 'organised capitalism' existed where every intervention by the state in the economy or society was seen as a move towards socialism. The bourgeoisie was not able to use parliamentary democracy against the working class and the capitalist state therefore became an instrument for the extension of socialism.

Hilferding, the Finance Minister of the Grand Coalition and a leading SPD theoretician, expressed the view well in a speech to the SPD's 1927 conference:

"Organised capitalism thus means in effect the replacement of the capitalist principle of free competition by the socialist principle of planned production. This planned, deliberately managed form of economy is much more susceptible to the conscious influence of society, which means to the sole institution capable of the conscious, compulsory organisation of the whole society, the state."

In this context the state merely becomes a vehicle for the expansion of democracy, which becomes equivalent to socialism, even where the state is under the control of parties of industrialists opposed to the least extension of welfare benefits, and an army hostile to parliamentary institutions. He continues:

"But what if the rulers have no respect for democracy? ...the moment an attempt is made to destroy the basis of democracy every means will be used to preserve it... we know that there is no greater obstacle to the realisation of socialism than civil war and because our position is as socialists it is almost impossible if it is through civil war that the proletariat achieves political power."

While Hilferding made vague threats of SPD action to meet the right, this was hedged around with qualifications. This legalism and parliamentarianism was to disarm the SPD and unions in the face of the fascist threat as they allied themselves with ever more right-wing politicians to 'defend the republic'. The first move after the elections came in 1931 when the SPD decided to 'tolerate' Brüning's emergency rule as a 'lesser evil'. In the end in 1933 they were barely able to protest against Hitler's removal of Parliamentary power because it was done within the constitution.

"Given the depth of the social crisis and the paralysis of the social democracy, one might have expected the Communist Party to grow at the expense of social democracy as workers sought a revolutionary alternative."

This policy met with the growth of a left within the party, which was largely expelled in 1931. In October 1931 pressure from the rank and file led to the setting up of the 'Iron Front' between defence organisations of the SPD, unions and the Reichsbanner (an older republican paramilitary group). Despite the willingness of the younger sections of the SPD to fight, the Iron Front remained largely an organisation marched up and down by the leadership, who were never really prepared to use it.

Given the depth of the social crisis and the paralysis of the social democracy, one might have expected the Communist Party to grow at the expense of social democracy as workers sought a revolutionary alternative. Why it largely failed to do so and failed to stop Hitler coming to power must be explained in terms of its stalinisation and total subordination to the needs of the Soviet bureaucracy's foreign policy. By



To combat neo-Nazism it is essential that we learn the lessons of the past

ism in Germany

1929 (after great difficulties) all KPD leaders not totally reliable from Stalin's point of view had been replaced by yes-men, who would follow the line of the Communist International, even when it meant the destruction of their own organisation.

The line that they would follow was set down by the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern in September 1928. It stated that the period of capitalist stabilisation was at an end and the 'Third Period', in which revolutionary struggles were on the immediate agenda had begun. In this situation Social Democracy became the main enemy, 'social fascism' the most dangerous wing of fascism. As one Comintern resolution put it:

"...fascism becomes the dominant method of bourgeois rule. In countries where there are strong Social Democratic parties, fascism assumes the particular form of social-fascism, which to an ever increasing extent serves the bourgeoisie as an instrument for the paralysing of the masses in the struggle against the regime of fascist dictatorship."

"The united front can only be 'from below' — expecting Social Democratic workers to break from their leaders before unity in struggle was possible, rather than as a result of it."

In other words, fascism and social democracy were twins and no objective conflict of interest existed between them. 'Gradual fascistation' of bourgeois society was already taking place slowly. According to the KPD leader, Thälmann, under the rule of the Grand Coalition, "the rule of fascism has already been established in Germany".

The logic of this ultra-left policy was clear and followed with only a few tactical variations until long after Hitler had come to power. No alliances with the social democrats, even to defend labour movement organisations against fascism. Disruption of any united labour movement organisation, such as the unions, was justified even when it led to the isolation of the KPD in front organisations such as the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition (RGO). The united front can only be 'from below' — expecting Social Democratic workers to break from their leaders before unity in struggle was possible, rather than as a result of it. The KPD's propaganda consisted increasingly of bombast: mindless playing-up of immediate revolutionary possibilities resulting from limited successes and calls for revolutionary general strikes at a time when the class as a whole remained on the defensive and menaced by fascism. The denunciation of the Social Democrats as the main enemy led the KPD on occasion to collaboration with the Nazis, and competition with the Nazis led them to adopt nationalist phrases.

The United Left Opposition (VLO) — the German Trotskyists — had been attacking the policy of the 'Third Period' since their foundation in March 1930. The VLO emphasised that the policy of the KPD was actually a negative factor in the situation, and that "the weakness of the Communist movement was the strength of National Socialism". While Brüning's regime was a transition to



Nazi celebrations, February 1933, of Hitler's rise to power

dictatorship, there was still time to fight back by means of "the revolutionary united front against the regime of dictatorship, against fascism and war", through "extra-parliamentary action for the most basic day-to-day interests of the proletariat. The KPD's policy allowed the SPD the luxury of "an apparent opposition to the regime of dictatorship".

Following the elections, in September 1930, Trotsky himself, in exile in Turkey, turned his attention to Germany and the policy of the KPD. At this time the Trotskyists still saw themselves as a faction of the Communist International and sought to break the Communist Parties from their Stalinist leaderships. The pamphlet "The Turn in the Communist International and the situation in Germany" saw the situation in Germany as one basically favourable for the growth of a revolutionary party if its tactics were correct. In the context of the radical social crisis, the gains of the KPD at the elections were relatively small and overshadowed by the soaring support for the fascists:

"The gigantic growth of National Socialism is an expression of two factors: a deep social crisis, throwing the petit-bourgeois off balance and the lack of a revolutionary party that would today be regarded by the popular masses as the acknowledged revolutionary leaders. If the Communist Party is the party of revolutionary hope, then fascism, as a mass movement, is the party of counter-revolutionary despair... Fascism in Germany has become a real danger, as an acute expression of the helpless position of the bourgeois regime, the conservative role of the Social Democracy in this regime and the accumulated powerlessness of the Communist Party to abolish it. Whoever denies this is either blind or braggart."

Despite the claims of the KPD, the majority of Social Democratic workers had stayed with the SPD, although the SPD in power had played a "criminal and shameful role". Social Democratic workers were not blind but did not see an alternative given the politics and record of the KPD. "What has helped most of all to weld together the social democracy was the wrong policy of the Communist Party, which found its highest expression in the absurd policy of social fascism."

"At the crucial moment, the leaders of the Social Democracy will prefer the triumph of fascism to the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. But precisely the approach of such a choice creates exceptional difficulties for the Social Democratic leaders among their own workers."

Trotsky analysed the situation in Germany following Brüning's assumption of power as one where there was "no way out along the normal road of the bourgeois parliamentary regime... not a parliamentary crisis but a crisis of class rule". This created the conditions for a proletarian revolution if the policy of the revolutionary party was correct and enabled it to win the majority of the working class and drag along in its wake the petit-bourgeoisie who would otherwise be attracted to fascism.

The KPD's policy, on the other hand, amounted to issuing ultimatums to work-

ers whose trust they had not yet won — even among those who had voted for it. The situation demanded a defensive strategy which would both enable the defeat of fascism and allow the Communist Party to demonstrate in practice the superiority of the revolutionary road. The means to do this was the united front, no purely verbal proclamation of Social Democratic treachery and impending revolution.

"If the Communist Party, in spite of the exceptionally favourable circumstances, has proved powerless seriously to shake the structure of the Social Democracy with the aid of the formula of 'social fascism', then real fascism now threatens this structure... with the chemical formulas of explosives... There can be no doubt that, at the crucial moment, the leaders of the Social Democracy will prefer the triumph of fascism to the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. But precisely the approach of such a choice creates exceptional difficulties for the Social Democratic leaders among their own workers. The policy of the united front of the workers against fascism flows from this whole situation. It opens up tremendous possibilities for the Communist Party."

Trotsky summed up: "Assuming a defensive position means a policy of closing ranks with the majority of the German working class and forming a united front with the Social Democrats and non-party workers against the fascist threat. Denying this threat, belittling it, failing to take it seriously is the greatest crime that can be committed today against the proletarian revolution in Germany."

From 1930 to 1933 Trotsky and his followers were to proclaim this position with an increasing urgency. It was to be confirmed by events — in a wholly negative way.

How economic development interacts with politics and ideology

A letter from Frederick Engels to Conrad Schmidt, 27 Oct 1890

In the last years of his life, Frederick Engels had to devote a considerable amount of energy to defending the basic method of Marxism.

Many people, usually bourgeois intellectuals attracted by the power of the workers' movement, had started to reduce Marxism, or what was called "historical materialism", to a crude set of theoretical formulas.

They argued as if real history was simply the embodiment of this or that theoretical formula.

Engels was totally opposed to this method. He insisted that: "The materialist conception of history has many false friends these days to whom it serves as an excuse for not studying history".

It was vital, argued Engels, to study real history, to collect empirical data, to familiarise oneself with the facts. The movement of real history could not be deduced logically from this or that formula or category:

"In general the word 'materialistic' serves many of the younger writers in Germany as a mere phrase with which anything and everything is labelled without further study, that is, they stick on this label and then consider the question disposed of. But our conception of history is above all a guide to study... All history must be studied afresh, the conditions of existence of the different formations of society must be examined individually before the attempt is made to deduce from them the political, legal, aesthetic, philosophic religious etc. views corresponding to them".

In this letter to Conrad Schmidt, Engels attempts to answer the "Marxism by numbers school" by dealing with some concrete examples of the interaction of economic development, politics and ideology.

This week we print the second part of the letter which we began to serialise last week.

If you want to be a better fighter against capitalism study this series!

The reaction of the state power upon economic development can be of three kinds: it can run in the same direction, and then development is more rapid; it can oppose the line of development, in which case nowadays it will go to pieces in the long run in every great people; or it can prevent the economic development from proceeding along certain lines, and prescribe other lines. This case ultimately reduces itself to one of the two previous ones. But it is obvious that in cases two and three political power can do great damage to the economic development and cause a great squandering of energy and material.

Similarly with law. As soon as the new division of labour which creates professional lawyers becomes necessary, another new independent sphere is opened up which, for all its general dependence on production and trade, has also a special capacity for reacting upon these spheres. In a modern state, law must not only correspond to the general economic condition and be its expression, but must also be an internally coherent expression which does not, owing to inner contradictions, reduce itself to nought. And in order to achieve this, the faithful reflection of economic conditions suffers increasingly. All the more so the more rarely it happens that a code of law is the blunt, unmitigated, unadulterated expression of the domination of a class — this in itself would offend the "conception of right". Even in the *Code Napoleon* the pure, consistent conception of right held by the revolutionary bourgeoisie of 1792-96 is already adulterated in many ways, and, in so far as it is embodied there, has daily to undergo all sorts of attenuations owing to the rising power of the proletariat. This does not prevent the *Code Napoleon* from being the statute book which serves as the basis of



Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Revolution, understood the importance of political struggles and their effect on economic conditions

every new code of law in every part of the world. Thus to a great extent the course of the "development of right" consists only, first, in the attempt to do away with the contradictions arising from the direct translation of economic relations into legal principles, and to establish a harmonious system of law, and then in the repeated breaches made in this system by the influence and compulsion of further economic development, which involves it in further contradictions. (I am speaking here for the moment only of civil law).

The reflection of economic relations as legal principles is necessarily also a topsy-turvy one: it goes on without the person who is acting being conscious of it; the jurist imagines he is operating with *a priori* propositions, whereas they are really only economic reflexes; so everything is upside down. And it seems obvious to me that this inversion, which, so long as it remains unrecognised, forms what we call *ideological outlook*, reacts in its turn upon the economic basis and may, within certain limits, modify it. The basis of the right of inheritance — assuming that the stages reached in the development of the family are the same — is an economic one. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to prove, for instance, that the absolute liberty of the testator in England and the severe restrictions in every detail imposed upon him in France are due to economic causes alone. Both react back, however, on the economic sphere to a very considerable extent, because they influence the distribution of property.

As to the realms of ideology which soar still higher in the air — religion, philosophy, etc. — these have a prehistoric stock, found already in existence by and taken over in the historical period, of what we should today call bunk. These various false conceptions of nature, of man's own being, of spirits, magic forces, etc., have for the most part only a negative economic element as their basis; the low economic development of the prehistoric period is supplemented and also partially conditioned and even caused by the false conceptions of nature. And even though economic necessity was the main driving force of the progressive knowledge of nature and has become ever more so, it would surely be pedantic to try and find economic causes for all this primitive nonsense. The people who attend to this belong in their turn to special spheres in the division of labour and appear to themselves to be working in an independent field. And to the extent that they form an independent group within the social division of labour, their productions, including their errors, react upon the whole development of society, even on its economic development. But all the same they themselves are in turn under the dominating influence of economic development. In philosophy, for

instance, this can be most readily proved true for the bourgeois period. Hobbes was the first modern materialist (in the eighteenth century sense) but he was an absolutist in a period when absolute monarchy was at its height throughout Europe and in England entered the lists against the people. Locke, both in religion and politics, was the child of the class compromise of 1688. The English deists and their more consistent continuators, the French materialists, were the true philosophers of the bourgeoisie, the French even of the bourgeois revolution. The German philistine runs through German philosophy from Kant to Hegel, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. But as a definite sphere in the division of labour, the philosophy of every epoch presupposes certain definite thought material handed down to it by its predecessors, from which it takes its start. And that is why economically backward countries can still play first fiddle in philosophy: France in the eighteenth century as compared with England, on whose philosophy the French based themselves, and later Germany as compared with both. But in France as well as Germany philosophy and the general blossoming of literature at that time were the result of a rising economic development. I consider the ultimate supremacy of economic development established in these spheres too, but it comes to pass within the limitations imposed by the particular sphere itself: in philosophy, for instance, by the operation of economic influences (which again generally act only under political, etc., disguises) upon the existing philosophic material handed down by predecessors. Here economy creates nothing anew, but it determines the way in which the thought material found in existence is altered and further developed, and that too for the most part indirectly, for it is the political, legal and moral reflexes which exert the greatest direct influence on philosophy.

About religion I have said what was most necessary in the last section on Feuerbach.

If therefore Barth supposes that we deny any and every reaction of the political, etc., reflexes of the economic movement upon the movement itself, he is simply tilting at windmills. He has only got to look at Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*, which deals almost exclusively with the particular part played by political struggles and events, of course within their general dependence upon economic conditions. Or *Capital*, the section on the working day, for instance, where legislation, which is surely a political act, has such a trenchant effect. Or the section on the history of the bourgeoisie. (Chapter XXIV.) Or why do we fight for the political dictatorship of the proletariat if political power is economically impotent? Force (that is, state power) is also an economic power

But I have no time to criticise the book now. I must first get Volume III out and besides I think that Bernstein, for instance, could deal with it quite effectively.

What these gentlemen all lack is dialectics. They always see only here cause, there effect. That this is a hollow abstraction, that such metaphysical polar opposites exist in the real world only during crises, while the whole vast process goes on in the form of interaction — though of very unequal forces, the economic movement being by far the strongest, most primordial, most decisive — that here everything is relative and nothing absolute — this they never begin to see. As far as they are concerned Hegel never existed...

Glossary

Code Napoleon: Engels is talking here of the entire system of bourgeois law as represented by five codes (civil, civil procedure, commercial, criminal and criminal procedure) promulgated in the period 1804-10 under Napoleon Bonaparte. These codes were introduced into the western and south-western parts of Germany seized by Napoleonic France. They continued to operate in the Rhine Province after Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo.

The revolutionary bourgeoisie of 1792-96: the Jacobin regime adopted a new constitution in June 1793 which, while insisting on the bourgeois rights of property, proclaimed many of the principles of the modern parliamentary welfare state, universal male suffrage, the right to work or maintenance, public education for all.

A priori propositions: a general truth known before investigation.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679): believed that the natural state of humanity was one of competitive individualism: "Life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". A strong, central state power was therefore necessary to hold society together and limit this 'natural' state of competition.

Modern materialist: a materialist believes that the basic reality of existence is matter in motion. Thought is a function of matter. When Engels describes Hobbes as a 'modern materialist' in the eighteenth-century sense, he means that Hobbes had a *mechanical* view of reality in which separate, discreet elements react to each other like parts of a machine.

John Locke (1632-1704): saw the relationships between individuals and the state as taking the form of a mutual and voluntary contract. "The great and chief end of men uniting into commonwealths and putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property."

1688: the English Revolution of 1688 resulted in the expulsion of James II and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy with William of Orange at its head. This represented a compromise between the landed aristocracy and the big bourgeoisie.

Deists: a religious doctrine according to which God is prime cause of the universe. Though God is rational he does not intervene in nature or human life.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804): developed an unstable philosophical viewpoint: agnosticism. This view is halfway between materialism [see above] and idealism [the notion that ideas make up the basic reality and the material world is nothing more than the embodiment of some mind, ultimately the mind of God]. Kant argued that we cannot have knowledge of ultimate reality. All the objects that we experience are phenomena or appearances of things which underlie them. These things which are not in space and time, and therefore cannot be known by us, Kant called "things-in-themselves".

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831): great, classical German philosopher. Hegel was an objective idealist, that is he believed that everything that existed was an embodiment of a single, thinking spirit (God). Hegel believed that everything is in constant movement and that all things that exist will perish.

Barth: German, bourgeois philosopher, Professor at Leipzig, and author of polemical attack on his own straw doll construction of Marxism.

Metaphysical: is here used in the pejorative sense as meaning a static, fixed and unscientific idea. Metaphysics literally means "beyond science".

Damaged goods

Cinema

Joan Trevor reviews
Damage

Brain damage, more like. I've seen a few of Louis Malle's French films and quite liked them, though maybe French audiences found them more risible than we Anglophones who just had the sub-titles to go on. This film is laughable. Whole audiences titter throughout.

This has surprised some reviewers who have concluded that the film is too raunchy for even a modern, sophisticated audience to bear.

Right-minded reviewers have been ringing up psychologists and asking them what it means if an audience goes to see a film with lots of sex in it and ends up laughing at it. They say that it shows that the film has "gone too far". People's laughter is a safety valve. They laugh to cover their embarrassment and discomfort at seeing just too much full-frontal nudity and fornicating.

Balls. These psychologists have not seen *Damage* and I have. People laughed throughout this film because it was laughable.

"The sex was not convincing, it did not look so good that a Tory Minister would cheat on his wife with his son's fiancée for it."

The sex was neither funny nor embarrassing. I don't know if there is such a thing as an aesthetics of sex, but, in any case, two bony Tories tangling their limbs doesn't turn over a new leaf in my book. The important thing about the sex is that it was not convincing — it did not look so good that a Tory Minister (it had to be a Tory) would cheat on his wife with his son's fiancée for it. To the point where... well, that would be telling you the plot.

Some issues do arise from this film, but only to the extent that it reminds you of some of the hot questions in the news — should a Minister resign if he is caught having an extra-marital affair? Does the press have the right, in such cases, to hang around in cannibalistic beviés at his door? Is there too much sex in films?

The questions the film itself raised in my mind are: would a British Government Minister be recognised in the streets of Paris? Did all the people involved in this film have a mental aberration — or why else would they be bothered with it?

At the end of the film, the Minister (Jeremy Irons) has exiled himself to a humble Mediterranean dwelling — you know, the sort of place you or I would kill for. In a voice-over à la *Brideshead Revisited* he muses on his agony at seeing the woman he lost it all for "one more time, at an airport, changing planes. She was carrying a child". As if!

This whole film is "as if!" As if the ruling class throw off all their conventions for passion. As if they go as far as this man goes. As if we cared...



Minister (Jeremy Irons) comforts his wife (Miranda Richardson)

The value of acting up

Television

Cathy Nugent reviews
Arena

Last Friday's *Arena* profiled screenwriter, playwright and novelist Larry Kramer. It was an interesting portrayal of a man who, by his own admission, regards "words as weapons", and who does not separate his politics from his writing.

Kramer, who is HIV Positive, is known for his activism around AIDS. He was the co-founder of ACT-UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) in the States. He is also known for his most recent plays, (*A Normal Heart*, *A Destiny of Me*) which tell about the impact of AIDS in America, about the bureaucracy and incompetence of governments, and about the way medical institutions have responded to AIDS.

Kramer appeared as a very angry man, militant and single minded

about this issue. But, as is the way with all "single issue militants", he did not seem to have worked-out ideas about how best to fight prejudice in society, and government apathy. Be loud and objectionable, take "direct action" by way of sit-ins and sit-downs, and be generally bloody-minded — that is his whole policy.

This is only effective (although it certainly can be very effective) up to a point. The message, in the end, only reaches the converted or partially converted and those politicians who feel embarrassed. Nonetheless I found Kramer's determination and decision to devote his life to this cause very impressive.

"Kramer did not seem to have worked-out ideas about how best to fight prejudice in society, and government apathy."

Kramer is now being hailed as a "folk-hero" for the gay community in America. There is enormous irony in this accolade. Back in the 1970s Kramer published a novel, *Faggots*, which criticised (but did

not condemn) the hedonistic life-style of many gay men. Kramer argued that in the end a rampantly promiscuous sex life will not end the loneliness gay men are trying to chase away. A fair enough point you might think. But Kramer was castigated and ostracised by the gay community for making it — denounced as moralistic and "self-oppressive".

"Kramer argued that a rampantly promiscuous sex life will not end the loneliness gay men are trying to chase away."

Now, events have turned full circle. Kramer sees a deeper and much more tragic irony in the impact of AIDS on gay people. When asked whether he thought that all that rampant sex of the 1970s was in some way to blame for AIDS he replied: "Well, they're all dead. Just that, they are all dead".

I would not agree with parcelling off blame for AIDS on any of its victims. But this does not take away from the terrible sadness of what Kramer is saying.

No master!

Saith man to man, we've heard
and known
That we no longer master need
To live upon this earth, our
own,
In fair and manly dead;
The grief of slaves, long
passed away,
For us hath forged the chain,
'Till now each worker's patient
day
Builds up the House of Pain.

And we, shall we too crowd
and quail,
Ashamed, afraid of strife;
And, lest our lives untimely
fail,
Embrace the death in life?
Nay, cry aloud and have no
fear;
We few against the world;
Awake, arise, the hope we bear
Against the curse is hurled.

It grows, it grows, are we the
same,
The feeble band, the few?
Or what are these with eyes
afire,
And hands to deal and do?
This is the host that bears the
word,
No Master, High or Low!
A lightning flare, a shearing
sword,
A storm to overthrow.

William Morris

Periscope

Cutting Edge, Channel 4,
Monday 15 February,
9pm

The old cotton workers' song
says it all:

"Oh, dear me, the world is all
divided;

Those who work the hardest
are the least provided:

Shifting bobbins sheer and fine
They fairly make you work for
your ten and nine".

In a fair world, hard, drudging,
physically unpleasant, personally

unrewarding work would be better paid than soft, interesting, personally rewarding work.

In fact, of course, the opposite is true. The nastier, less interesting work is badly paid work. The good money goes to those who have the good jobs. It is regulated not by moral ideas of fairness and compensation but by the workings of bourgeois exchange value in a class-divided society.

Cutting Edge illustrates this paradox when, with a camera concealed in her hand bag, journalist Sima Ray goes undercover to investigate the treatment of Britain's lowest paid. She works as a shop assistant, barmaid, laundry worker, office cleaner.

ORGANISING

The Labour Party needs a campaigning youth section

"This conference is like a society where the Labour Party are the Government and NOLS are the police."

That was the reaction of one LPYS delegate to this year's small but promising Labour Youth Conference.

The Labour Party Youth Office had done all they could to keep the left out of the conference by ruling out delegates and blocking every single left motion. Yet, despite these efforts, the left made themselves felt.

Julie Mitchell, standing on a Labour Must Fight platform for the Labour NEC Youth Rep, won 40% of the votes cast, including 4 out of the only 5 votes cast by LPYS delegates.

The major issue at the conference was the future of Labour's youth sections.

Since the Labour leadership closed down the LPYS national structures in 1987, the LPYS has been in ruins. Youth membership of the Party is at an all-time low. Only 2% of Labour's membership are under 23. In this situation, even the Labour leadership recognises the need to attract youth.

The problem is that working class youth will want real political answers, and will fight the grey-suited, media-worshipping approach of Labour's leaders. History has shown that Labour's youth wing, if it grows, will be on the left of the Party.

The solution to this "problem" was presented to the conference by Larry Whitty — Labour's Witch Finder General.

He proposed a new youth structure based on local youth sections with flexible boundaries — all of which have to be approved by the central Labour Youth Office. The new structure removes the power of recognition of youth sections from local parties and gives it exclusively to the national Labour Youth Office.

It removes the right of youth sections to send delegates or motions to local Labour Parties.

Labour's leadership and

their NOLS (Labour Student) side-kicks plan to get youth into the Party where they will be expected to work in elections — but to deny youth any collective say in the Party!

This, like so many of the leadership's schemes, will fail. Young people facing the misery of Tory Britain want answers and action. They want a say in any party they work for.

Youth will not be attracted to a party that treats them as a leafletting crew but denies them a voice.

Even at last weekend's shrivelled Youth Conference of 80 delegates, a large minority backed the MSF youth delegation's motion for the new youth sections to have the right to send delegates and motions to local parties, and protection against the power of Labour HQ to close down youth sections at will.

"Young people facing the misery of Tory Britain want answers and action. They want a say in any party they work for."

A left caucus meeting also agreed to organise a national campaign to defend youth rights in the Party. The campaign will demand a national youth sections conference that elects a National Youth Committee, for the right of youth sections to send delegates and motions to local parties. It is worth noting that — the mainly middle class — NOLS have all of these rights already.

The Labour left should throw its whole weight behind this campaign. History shows that youth are not only the future of the Labour Party, but are also the future of the left. John Smith, Larry Whitty and their Labour Student side-kicks have every right to fear a growth in Labour's youth. Let's make their worst nightmares come true!

Build the Alliance for Workers' Liberty!

This weekend the national and local organisers of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty meet to discuss the techniques of organising.

Our growing organisation will use the weekend to concretise campaigning and group building plans.

The wave of bourgeois and democratic revolutions which spread across Eastern Europe at the end of 1989 smashed, once-and-for-all, the notion that these were socialist societies.

The destruction of this so-called "socialism" — despite everything — is a tremendous step forward. In Eastern Europe the working class have been freed to develop their own class organisations against the remnants of the bureaucracy and the incoming capitalists.

A side effect of the liberation of the East Europeans and the Russians is the liberation of real socialism from Stalinism.

The triumphant bourgeois backlash of the early '90s is subsiding as the reality of capitalist crisis and chaos is felt by millions east and west. The only socialists who have really suffered from the bosses' ideological offensive have been those with illusions in Stalinist "socialism".

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty (AWL), the bearer of libertarian socialism, welcomed the destruction of Stalinism without reservation, though we were grievously disappointed that the working class in the Stalinist states did not choose to fight for a democratic, socialist replacement for Stalinism.

We are now well placed to help the rebirth of a mass socialist movement. Although work in the Labour Party is limited by the relative power of an intolerant bureaucracy, and though strikes are relatively rare, there are still thousands of workers and youth interested in

socialist ideas.

As the AWL's conference perspectives stated:

"In the year ahead we must sharpen our propaganda work, boldly proclaiming the need for socialism, while we develop our trade union, student and youth fractions. We are a fighting propaganda group. That means we fight where we can, as struggles develop or can be ignited. It means we always make propaganda for our ideas, striving to build an organisation."

Despite the low level of working class struggle we can continue to recruit and grow — preparing for the inevitable revival of mass working class struggle.

"Our work in the period ahead must centre around the paper. Everything flows out of the paper and back to it. It is the tool of propaganda — combined with one-to-one contact and speeches at meetings — and the organiser of our work. It is the thing that ties us together in all

parts of our activity and the thing that makes us visible as a coherent body in the labour movement.

"We must return to the work of improving our branch organisation. We must increase our educational work, so that every comrade can be a capable and confident propagandist for socialism."

This is the central core of our organisation's tasks.

The AWL Organisers' School on Saturday 13-Sunday 14 February will discuss AWL organising techniques — from education for new members, to running campaigns to building our organisation.

Sell the paper! Write for more information about the AWL!

If you would like to sell Socialist Organiser write to: AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Alliance for Workers' Liberty public meetings

AWL

Marxist dayschool: Fight for Workers' Liberty!

Sat 20 February

Manchester Town Hall, 11.00-5.00.

Sessions include:

- Is Clinton the answer?
- The west and Iraq
- Marxists and the unions.

Details: 061-881 1377.

Thurs 11 February

"How to fight cuts and job losses"

Nottingham AWL meeting. 8pm, ICC, Mansfield Road.

"Yugoslavia — what socialists say" Leeds AWL meeting. 7.30, Adelphi pub.

Weds 17 February

"Should we sack the queen?" Sheffield University AWL meeting. 1pm, Octagon Centre.

"The life and ideas of Trotsky" Lancaster University AWL meeting. 2pm. Speaker: Paul McGarry.

Weds 24 February

"The police and the state — what socialists say"

AWL London Forum. 7.30pm, Basement, Lambeth Town Hall (Brixton tube).

Thurs 25 February

"Labour Must Fight" Leeds AWL meeting. 7.30pm, Adelphi pub.

Burnsall strikers

Fri 12 February

Benefit social: 7.30, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London. Tickets: £5/£2.

Labour Party

Sat 17 April

Socialist Campaign Group conference. 11.00-5.00 Sheffield Hallam University

Campaign Against the Child Support Act

Sat 20 February

National Conference. Kingsway College, Sidmouth Street, Kings Cross, London, 10.00-6.00. Details: 071-837 7509.

Lessons of the Islington Council workers strike

By an Islington NALGO member

THE ISLINGTON dispute, lasting eight long months with up to 1,100 members on strike, is over. An orderly return to work on the basis of concessions won over selection criteria for redundancy, including extended notice periods, greater chances of redeployment, grade protection and an ER/VR trawl throughout the Council. This was agreed at a branch meeting on 1 February.

All the threats and actions of the Council against strikers, including issuing strikers with 2nd class contracts during the dispute are to be withdrawn. It remains to be seen whether

local managers will try victimisations, but due to the increased strength of the union built up during the strike, they are unlikely to be successful.

Given NALGO's National Emergency Committee's thinly veiled position of pulling the plug on strike pay and the Council's blatant threat to sack all strikers, with the consequent drift of some back to work, this was the only option left to the branch. However as the Council had refused to even negotiate until November, under Margaret Hodge's leadership what we won in the end was more than many had ever expected.

What is a significant victory though, is the strength of the union branch is greater now

than it has been in the last decade. The Council's agenda of smashing union organisation in Islington has completely failed, indeed their attempts at union-smashing have backfired badly. Far from being able to sail through next year's staffing arrangements and cuts packages, they are sure now to encounter massive and powerful opposition. Hopefully the NALGO action has also given hope and encouragement to the other Council unions; NUPE, ACTTS and the T&G — they need not just roll over and take whatever the Council throws at them.

It has become clear that many Labour Councillors in Islington (there are a few notable exceptions) — some of them the erstwhile darlings of the Labour left in the '70s and early '80s are

reverting to Neanderthal type — the "Sack the lost of them" species. Some Councillors blatantly lied to the local press about £50,000 golden handshakes, no dirty trick was left unturned in short.

Councillors also displayed a crass ignorance of what services their Council actually provides on the ground — prattling on about delivering quality services, a plainly ridiculous claim given the fact that they have been diligently implementing Tory budget cuts. The only quality injected in Islington services is provided by the dedication of the workforce — a workforce Councillors reward by attempting to impose ever more draconian staff codes which penalise staff for being sick or taking industrial action. They idolise the new profes-

sional managers who cast a rosy pink glow of smarm over the reality of under-funding, dangerous working conditions, stress and pass-the-buck management. They have scant regard for the low-paid staff who have worked for the Council since before many of the current batch of Councillors were out of nappies.

The strength of the strike in Islington was a shock to the Councillors and we need to build on heat now. Many lessons have been learned during the course of the fight. Not least the importance of links with the local rank and file Labour Party and the community. Sometimes this was organised in a haphazard way resulting in a distance being created between strikers and Labour Party members, which

Councillors were quick to exploit with half-truths, slanders and lies.

Joint pressure on the NALGO national leadership linking up with other branches on strike might have been greater. It is clear that the national leadership of the union have no useful strategy for fighting the massive cuts and redundancies on the way. Isolated, long, localised struggles like Islington's are no way forward — there has to be a national and central lead from the union to co-ordinated and unite all the fragmented struggles throughout the country.

Taken from the latest edition of Nalگو Action

Newham strike continues

Over 700 members of Newham NALGO are continuing their strike against the Labour Council's redeployment strategy, despite national NALGO's refusal to continue funding strike pay.

The strikers spirits remain high. There is great anger at their national union. Over one hundred strikers will lobby the NALGO recalled local government conference in Blackpool on Thursday 121 February.

Branch officers met Council

officers on Monday 8 February to discuss a possible back to work agreement. They were met with Council hostility.

A delegation of Newham strikers lobbied last Saturday's Labour Local Government Conference, held in Bournemouth. Strikers became furious when one local councillor said "it will be a pleasure to sack you".

The Newham workers meet on Friday to discuss their next move.

Sheffield NALGO:

Our pay? No way!

By a Sheffield NALGO member

Members of Sheffield NALGO have voted to be balloted for two days of action per week combined with selective action of key workers in response to the council's ultimatum of either an across the board pay cut of 5% or 120 compulsory redundancies in the next week to be followed by

a further 1400 between now and September.

The decision to fight is a great step forward for the branch — last year a 3 day pay cut, linked to 3 days extra holidays was accepted. Although an amendment calling for a campaign for escalation to all out indefinite action was lost, what was passed potentially lays the basis for the start of serious fight.

Manchester Housing ballot on strike

Manchester City Council are taking disciplinary action against over 100 Housing Department NALGO members for taking part in a one-day strike in support of two workers facing gross misconduct charges.

NALGO members in the

Housing Department have a general meeting on Wednesday 10 February to consider proposals for balloting on strike action to stop the disciplinaries against the suspended workers and, now, against the one-day strikers.

Serwotka for CPSA President!

ALLIANCE FOR Workers Liberty supporter and CPSA DHSS Section Executive member Mark Serwotka is standing for the position of President in his union.

Mark will be opposing the "moderate" incumbent Marion Chambers and maverick centre right/soft left independent Albert Astbury.

The reason Mark is standing is simple: the membership of CPSA deserve a chance to vote for a serious left candidate who will be proposing the kind of action that is necessary to defeat management's attacks.

While both Astbury and

Chambers will say they "oppose" Market Testing (contracting out of civil service jobs) neither of them will be arguing for coordinated national strike action to stop it. Or against the suicidal blundering "in-house bids" in which you cut your own throat by bidding down your own terms and conditions. It's the same as the issue of the pay freeze and the end of national bargaining. Astbury is against it but doesn't propose doing anything about it.

The bulk of the serious left in the union particularly the Socialist Caucus and many independent branch activists will be supporting Mark

although both the *Militant* and the SWP will be backing Astbury.

Militant appear to be completely lost and demoralised by recent electoral set back for their candidates and seem not to be preparing to merge into the soft left/Stalinist Broad Left '84 on the basis of the latter's policies.

The SWP are tail-ending *Militant*, hoping for a few crumbs from their table.

Meanwhile, back in the real world, as DSS management crack down over issues like name badges it's the branches and activists who will be supporting Mark who are in the frontline.

Hoover deal could boost French fascists

From back page

Hoover claims that the Dijon factory has been running at a loss for two years.

But the unions have pointed out that the plant's accounts show that the price paid for plastic (the main material used in manufacturing vacuum cleaners) has increased by 15%, whereas the price of plastic on the international market has remained unchanged.

The obvious implication is that Hoover took the decision to close down the Dijon factory, a long time ago, well before it opened negotiations with the compliant leadership of the AEEU.

Although the joint demonstrations by Hoover and Grundig workers in Brussels marched behind a banner proclaiming "for a Workers' Europe" the decision to close the Dijon factory has also provoked an element of nationalism.

Hoover is owned by an American-based multinational, whilst the British government has applauded Hoover's decision to switch production. Cruel words could even be heard about Scotland on the occasion of last Saturday's France-Scotland rugby match.

Writing in the current issue of

the French socialist paper *Rouge*, the well known author Gilles Perrault points to the danger of the deal struck by the AEEU playing into the hands of the far right in France.

"The sinister Hoover affair, which heralds the capitalism of tomorrow by returning to the capitalism of yesterday, can only enlarge the working class electorate of the demagogue Le Pen".

"Who would have believed that in 1993 European workers would go so far as to renounce the right to strike in order to merit the privilege of being exploited?"

Science, not science and anti-science

LES HEARN'S

SCIENCE COLUMN

NOT FOR THE first time, there is an atmosphere of hostility towards science. So-called "quality" newspapers give space to non-scientists to berate scientists for their audacity in trying to find out how nature works. Lewis Wolpert, Professor of Biology as Applied to Medicine at University College, London, has tried to put this in some sort of context in his recent book, *The Unnatural Nature of Science*.

Science, according to Wolpert and, probably, the person in the average street, defines our age. It has never been more successful and influential and yet in its heartland of the USA, about half the population does not

believe in the most well-established fact of evolution by natural selection. Here in the UK, a substantial number believes that the sun goes round the Earth — and of those that correctly believe the contrary, Wolpert doubts that one in 100,000 could give sound reasons for their belief. The truth of the matter is that science is difficult for humans to understand because it goes against their "common sense" way of thought.

This lack of understanding gives rise to mistrust and fear, exemplified by DH Lawrence's complaint that "Knowledge has killed the sun, making it a ball of gas with spots..." Some 200 years ago, Mary Shelley attributed to science the creation of Frankenstein's monster, usurping the prerogative of God. More recently, no less a person than Vaclav Havel could claim that "Modern science... abolishes as mere fiction the innermost

foundations of our natural world: it kills God and take his place on the vacant throne..." Echoes of this view were heard when astronomers reported evidence of ripples in space from shortly after the "Big Bang" features which could explain the development of galaxies (and hence indirectly of ourselves) without reference to supernatural intervention.

Wolpert believes it is important to understand why people find science so difficult. In justification, he quotes science fiction author and science populariser Isaac Asimov "A public that does not understand how science works can, all too easily, fall prey to those ignoramuses... who make fun of what they do not understand..."

He starts by looking at common-sense thinking, the source of many of the triumphs of the human species but, rather than a sort of instinctive science, its

antithesis. Against those historians and anthropologists who see technology as the physical evidence of scientific thought, Wolpert argues that very little understanding of nature is needed to create tools, machines, techniques. Though technology was developed in many human societies to a very high level, it was only in ancient Greece that scientific thought arose. It is as a result of this almost accidental occurrence that Western societies were able to rediscover, develop and eventually put it to increasing use in the 19th and 20th centuries.

As an example of the difference between the two modes of thought, Wolpert takes the laws of motion. In common sense, an object will only keep moving if a force keeps acting on it. This, after all, is our everyday experience. Such a view was held by Aristotle 2000 years later, Galileo reasoned that if a ball gathers speed when

rolling down a slope and loses speed when running up a slope then, once started rolling along a perfectly smooth horizontal slope, it should carry on for ever at the same speed.

The "natural state of a body is not rest (common sense) but motion in a straight line at constant speed (science). The apparent contradiction of this law (Newton's First!) is due to an invisible force called friction. Another example of the fallibility of common sense is the movement of the earth round the sun. It is blatantly obvious that the sun moves round the Earth, so much so that it became an article of faith, the questioning of which was a grave heresy. We must all be grateful that the Catholic Church has finally pardoned Galileo, though they still claim that their forerunners acted in "good faith" when they showed the old man the instruments of torture and

then kept him under house arrest for the rest of his life!

Wolpert claims that, whereas common sense thought fits in naturally with the way our brains have evolved, the world of science is a profoundly unfamiliar one. It is a world where everything is made of identical particles where a bomb dropped from an aeroplane hits the ground directly beneath its new position at the moment of impact, where, after a fair coin has come up "heads" ten times, it still has a 50% chance of coming up "heads" the next throw, where things do not "get" cold but lose heat, where it does not rain just because you have washed your car!

Next week, I will look at the difference between science and technology and why science excites hostility, though its successes are rarely refused.

* Faber and Faber £14.99

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Hoover deal could boost French fascists

By Stan Crooke

Jobs fight is an example to us all

SUPPORT THE

YARROWS

STRIKERS!

Jim Kearns reports from Glasgow

Workers at Yarrow Shipyards in Glasgow came out on indefinite strike from lunchtime last Friday. This strike, involving 1,300 workers is the first at Yarrow for eight years.

The central issue in the dispute with the bosses is pay. Yarrow have offered a lump sum payment of £300 for this year, with no rise consolidated into the weekly wage packet. Workers were due this rise last July. It has been under negotiation for the past eight months. A separate offer of £8 per week is on the table, effective from July this year.

Management have attached strings, even to this pathetic offer. These include:

- Abolition of Friday tea break
- Cuts in payments for sea trials
- Cuts in overtime payments

Full-time union officials and senior stewards had initially agreed to recommend acceptance of the deal. Stewards in the yard, however, reflecting the anger among the workers, had other ideas. When they met with the full-timers and senior stewards the initial decision to recommend acceptance was overturned.

The workforce voted overwhelmingly for strike action.

This reflects a significant change of mood among workers at Yarrows. Over the last few years redundancies, wage cuts and attacks on working conditions have been the order of the day.

There are similarities between Hoover and Yarrows. Over the past few years workers at Yarrows have been forced to accept many of the draconian

attacks on conditions recently accepted by Hoover workers. The bosses blamed hard times for their need to put the boot into the workforce, just as the Hoover bosses have done.

But Yarrow bosses cannot deceive the workers with that old yarn. The company have just won orders worth at least three years work.

The stand being taken by the workers at Yarrow is an example to all Scottish workers, especially in a week where so many have been threatened with job losses. Nestle have threatened closure of the Gray Dunn biscuit factory in Glasgow with the loss of 550 jobs and production, ironically in the light of

Hoover fiasco, being moved to Dijon in France.

Harper Collins, the publishing firm, have announced 256 job losses. Workers at Albion Motors, the Leyland DAF plant next door to Yarrows, are also threatened with the loss of their jobs.

Workers at Yarrow are giving a much-needed lead

to all Scottish workers, including those threatened with job losses and closures. To go down on bended knee, to accept the dictates of the bosses and capital is to court disaster.

To stand up and fight against the ravages of depression-torn capitalism is the way forward for all Scottish workers.



Leyland workers march against closure threat

Leyland DAF workers fight the threatened closure of their plant. This would mean the loss of 6,000 jobs. On 5 February a march was held in Leyland. Many stopped work to greet the march. Photo Paul Herrmann

Last Saturday (6 February) was "Open Day" at the Hoover factory in Dijon (France), threatened with closure as a result of Hoover's decision to switch production to its factory in Cambuslang near Glasgow.

Workers at the Dijon factory — 650 of whom, out of a workforce of 704, face the sack — opened up their workplace to 15,000 visitors, including delegations from other French factories threatened with closure as a result of their owners transferring production abroad.

Hoover announced the planned closure of the factory after signing a deal with the British AEEU covering the Cambuslang plant. This included a ban on strikes, pay-cuts and temporary contracts of employment.

When workers in Dijon learnt of the deal from an article in a Scottish newspaper, they immediately went out on strike. A demonstration in Dijon in support of their fight for jobs attracted 1,500 workers and their families.

A mass meeting of the Dijon workers a week last Wednesday (3 February) voted to end the strike, due to financial hardships being faced by the strikes, but to continue their fight for jobs.

The following day Hoover workers from Dijon and Grundig workers from Creutzwald (threatened with closure after Grundig decided to relocate in Austria) demonstrated outside of the offices of the European Commission in Brussels.

This was followed up two days later by the "Open Day" in Dijon. Trade unions in Dijon are now demanding that the plant's accounts be examined by an outside body of accountants on the grounds that Hoover has engaged in a form of "creative accountancy" in reverse.

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