

# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

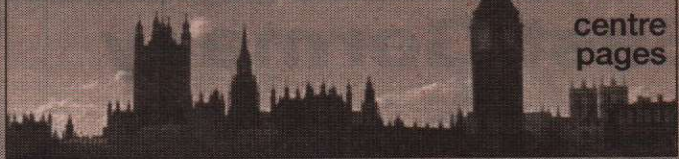
*Unite the left!*

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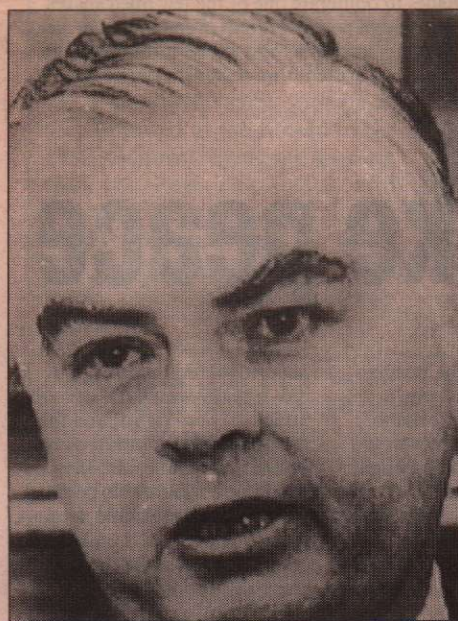
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## Labour: fight for a General Election

# PUT THE HEAT



# ON THE

**THE** TORIES' economic policy was wrecked by the Exchange Rate Mechanism crisis last September. Since then they have floundered.

Their political credit was wrecked by their plan to shut down the pits last October. It was the last outrageous insult which drove many people beyond weary resignation and into open fury against the Tories' miserable profits-first philosophy.

It is a lame duck government. It is beset by economic problems which it cannot answer.

The Tories are more deeply split over Europe than they have been over anything since, probably, the early years of this century. And there are strict limits to them dealing with the split by fudging and fiddling.

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# TORIES!





## Strikes in East Germany

**G**ERMANY'S giant engineering union, IG Metall, is balloting 75,000 more East German metal and electrical workers for strike action.

38,000 are already out, demanding that the bosses stick to an agreement for raising their wages towards western levels which the bosses have unilaterally scrapped.

Support has been very solid for this, the first major strike in East Germany after 60 years of Nazism and Stalinism, despite

the high unemployment in East Germany.

West German members of IG Metall are to hold demonstrations on Wednesday 12 May in support of workers in the east.

The action is important for reasons which go far beyond whatever wage rise the workers win. It is a practical demonstration to the workers of East Germany, subjected to sham "socialism" and "trade unionism" for so long, that real class solidarity corresponds to their interests.

## Man dies in Group 4 'care'

### INJUSTICE

Ernest Hogg, aged 38, died in hospital on Saturday 8 May after falling unconscious while under escort by the Group 4 security firm.

It is alleged that Hogg had drunk a large amount of alcohol and choked on his own vomit while being transported from Rotherham magistrates court to Wolds Prison in Humberside. Ernest Hogg had been charged with importing cocaine.

Group 4 are private profiteers — they were given a £9.5 million contract in April to run the Humberside and East Midlands prison escort service. During April eight prisoners escaped

from their 'care'.

Ernest Hogg's death is — at the very least — a terrible tragedy which should never have happened. The case conclusively proves that Group 4 are not fit to take charge of anyone unfortunate enough to be in jail!

But we should not defend the status quo against privatisation plans and get-rich-quick firms like Group 4. The current prison system is barbaric. For instance, the Wolds Prison that Ernest Hogg was returning to has been slated by the Prison Reform Trust as a place where violence and drug abuse are commonplace.

Hogg's family are reported as considering suing

# Stop the frame-ups!

Activists from many different campaigns against racist frame-ups and other police injustices came together last Wednesday, 5 May, to protest at the Home Office and Parliament. Photo: Chris Watson



## Unions plan stitch-up on Labour links

**I**T LOOKS LIKE the leader of the GMB, TGWU, MSF and NUPE are determined to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory in the battle to defend trade union representation in the Labour Party.

The decision of the conference of shopworkers union USDAW to oppose the total exclusion of local trade union branches from the selection of parliamentary candidates seemed to mark a decisive defeat for John Smith's plans to severely weaken party union links.

But now, a group of national trade union officials led by John Edmonds of the GMB is seeking to revive the proposal to set up a ridiculous, expensive and probably unworkable sys-

tem of individuals "registered sympathisers" thus undermining branch representation.

This Wednesday 12 May the leading officials of the four

unions will meet to discuss what to do. Trade union branches should be ready to flood their National Executives with motions of protest if the union

leaders attempt a stitch-up.

Contact the Keep the Link Campaign, 120 Northcote Road, London, E17.

## Surprise in Haringey

By Andy Wacey

**H**ARINGEY COUNCIL, which was once run by the Labour Party, has now been taken over by the Tories. Or it might as well have been, what with its latest surprise, which consists of turning one of the few spaces in the borough into a tower block.

Spouters' Corner is a small piece of open space just outside Turnpike Lane tube, which is very popular with local people and has been put to many uses, from mid-summer fairs to demos. (Mostly against the Council, which is probably why they want to get rid of it). Planning permis-

sion was granted in November 1992 for an open air market on the site, which was supported by the ward Labour Party, the ward councillors and local people.

Then, in early April 1993, after talking to senior council officer and no-one else, the council leadership decided to build an eight storey block of flats on the site! When we have hundreds of council homes which need renovation, the leadership decides to obliterate one of the few open spaces our borough possesses without even telling the local party or councillors. This shows just how far the council has drifted from socialist principles.

# Bosnia: only the peoples can make peace

By Chris Reynolds

**S**ERBIA'S PRESIDENT Slobodan Milosevic is probably not bluffing.

From a realistic Serb-imperialist point of view, it makes sense for him to try to force the Bosnian Serbs into accepting the Vance-Owen peace plan. The Serbs have already seized as much or more territory as they could realistically hope to hold for a "Greater Serbia", and they always had to calculate that some concessions would be necessary in the end in order to consolidate their hold on the bulk of their conquests.

Radovan Karadzic, the leader of the Bosnian Serbs, put it this way to the *Financial Times* last August: "We have a functioning government. We have everything. All we need now is a negotiated settlement..."

"We should all sit down and make peace, even give up some territory. We now control 70 per cent. But we only claim 64% as ours".

The clauses in the Vance-Owen plan which says that the Serb districts in Bosnia would be subject to a Bosnian federal government in Sarajevo, and could not be combined into a single Bosnian-Serb territory to be united with Serbia proper,

are only words on paper. Internationally-recognised Serb control of those districts, backed up by armed force on the ground, would be the hard reality, and Milosevic must be confident that he could build on that reality to create his "Greater Serbia".

The Croat districts could probably link up with a "Greater Croatia" in the same way. One result when it looked possible that the Vance-Owen plan could be agreed soon was that the Bosnian Croats launched an attack on the town of Mostar, assigned to a Croat district under Vance-Owen but inhabited mostly by Muslims.

Can Milosevic control the Bosnian Serbs? I do not know, and I do not know what the results will be if he cannot.

In 1992 Milosevic crushed Croatian Serb opposition to the UN plan for Croatia (a plan which put one-third of Croatia under nominal UN control but actual Serb control), by dissolving the Croatian Serb parliament and appointing a new one. The Bosnian Serbs, mobilised for longer and more numerous, are more difficult to control.

Whatever about that, US president Bill Clinton probably is bluffing. Maybe he will order some military action against

the Bosnian Serbs after their referendum on the Vance-Owen plan, on 15-16 May, but his threat of crisp, sharp, quick military action, with "very clear tactical objectives", and a defined "beginning, a middle, and an end", looks increasingly hollow.

The basic problem is this: the big powers do not like Milosevic's drive for a Greater Serbia. It disrupts trade and investment.

They would like the war to end as quickly as possible. But the overlapping of peoples in the area makes that very difficult. Only a comprehensive, consistent democratic settlement in the area could bring stable peace. The big powers probably could not arrange it even if they wanted to, and in any case are not very interested in democratic principles: when the London conference on ex-Yugoslavia last year raised the question of a statement of rights for minorities, the *Financial Times* reported that "France, Spain, Russia and Turkey, among others, are increasingly concerned that if a blueprint for ethnic minorities of the former Yugoslavia is agreed... those principles could eventually be applied to many other countries".

Thus in practice, despite any

number of threats and pious speeches, the big powers have followed a policy of letting the war spend itself and trying to tidy up the results. One word in a statement by British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd on 10 May says it all: "It must be made clear that the Serbs are not going to be allowed quietly to enjoy all the territory taken by force". The word "all" is crucial!

**T**HE BOSNIAN Muslims are pressing hard for big-power military intervention. Their right to do so cannot be denied - it is not as if they are acting as catspaws for some imperialist conquest of Serbia, for no big power wants the cost and trouble of such a conquest - but their illusions must be questioned. Any hopes that the big powers will defend oppressed minorities are utterly hollow.

Most of the options now under debate promise no better. US and NATO generals have not hesitated to go public with their opinion that Clinton's idea of bombing raids against the Bosnian Serbs will do no good. Their reported arguments make sense.

Bosnia's border with Serbia and Montenegro is too long to close by bombing. It is also populated: the bombs would

kill civilians. Since the Bosnian Serbs' war is, grotesquely, a sort of "people's war", bombing selected military sites would not stop it. The bombing might even worsen the war, by increasing Serb-chauvinist bitterness. It would probably presuppose withdrawal of the UN troops currently in Bosnia (for fear that the Serbs would retaliate for the bombing by attacking those troops), and thus the ending of whatever little aid and protection those troops provide.

Clinton, it seems, has proposed bombing because it looks like a quick, clean operation, as superior to ground operations as a crack of the whip is to hand-to-hand wrestling. Unfortunately for him, even the collapse of the USSR has not made a world which responds smartly to cracks of the whip from the Pentagon.

"Safe areas" for the Muslims make more sense. But the Muslims' leaders have wisely rejected them, because the proposal includes unilaterally disarming the Muslims - as in Srebrenica - in return for a vague, unreliable, and slight degree of UN protection.

As for massive Western intervention to impose a comprehensive political solution, as advocated, for example, by Tri-

bune: it will not happen; if it did, it really would include an attack on Serb rights; and the comprehensive solution would not be democratic, and thus would not bring stable peace.

Every socialist should support the lifting of the UN embargo on arms supplies for the beleaguered Muslims, who face annihilation as a nation. But it seems certain that Britain, France, and Russia would veto any such move on the UN Security Council.

Again, Douglas Hurd revealed their thinking. Arms supplies would create "a level killing field", he said. In other words, he prefers an uneven killing field, where the Muslims are killed or dispersed quicker and thus capitalist profit-making can get going again sooner.

Socialists cannot look to the big powers to bring peace to Bosnia or ex-Yugoslavia. Instead, we must do what we can to open doors to refugees and help them, and give our support to those groups in ex-Yugoslavia fighting against the chauvinist warlords and for renewed links between the peoples of the area.

Only the peoples of ex-Yugoslavia themselves can win peace, by uniting across national lines and throwing out all their tinpot imperialists.



**Miners betrayed by Labour and the TUC leaders**

# Put the heat on the Tories!

Continued from front page

**T**HEY HAVE TO take hard economic decisions. Either they make some effort, fairly soon, to get back into the Exchange Rate Mechanism, or they abandon any realistic prospect of moving towards a single European currency, which probably means settling for the second track in a two-speed Europe. Either/or: they cannot keep their options open very long.

Deprived of the huge North Sea Oil and privatisation windfalls which helped Thatcher, they are running a huge budget deficit, worse than anything the allegedly spendthrift Labour leadership would dare to do. They do not know how to deal with it. Such efforts as putting VAT on fuel bills only increase people's disgust with them, and rightly so.

The Tory Government is in deep trouble, and deeply unpopular. The Labour leaders' strategy is to coast along, be "statesmanlike", say nothing controversial or radical, and wait.

It is exactly the same strategy as they followed in the run-up to the 1992 General Election, hoping that the Poll Tax fiasco and Thatcher's deep unpopularity would toss victory into their laps.

As we found out in 1992, it is a stupid, irresponsible, and cowardly strategy.

Lame ducks can recover from their injuries. The Tory Party - backed by all the wealth and talent of the ruling class - has immense powers of recovery. It has the strength of the status quo, and the force of inertia, on its side.

Anger against the Tories which is not channelled into effective action can quickly turn into frustration and demoralised acceptance of the status quo.

The Labour and TUC leaders could not have handled the campaign against pit closures differently if they wanted to breed frustration and demoralisation.

Miners at several pits have now been bullied and browbeaten into accepting closure. The Coal Board bosses suddenly found cash for extra redundancy money, and gave workers ultimatums to accept closure immediately or forfeit the money and take their chances.

The bosses could do this - with no official labour movement protest, except from the leaders of the NUM - because the trade union and Labour leaders have deliberately and cynically abandoned the miners.

Last October's tremendous



Photo: John Harris

Labour and the TUC should have followed up last October's great marches against pit closures with a mass campaign. Instead they did nothing.

demonstrations against pit closures were not followed up. The TUC refused to organise a national day of action in solidarity with the miners.

The tremendous turnouts on 2 April, when the railworkers and the miners struck together, and on 16 April, when they were also joined by London busworkers, showed what could be done. But the Labour Party leaders - not content with organising no protest themselves - refused even to back the rail, bus, and pits action.

And then the railworkers' and busworkers' union leaders abandoned the miners. The rail union RMT shelved its programme of action and called another ballot of its members.

The Tories now face another battle where the odds should be heavily against them, but where the no-fight policy of the Labour and trade union leaders could save them.

They are set on "contracting out" and privatising large parts of the public services. If they get their way, up to a million public sector jobs could be cut - and

replaced by a smaller number of insecure, ill-paid jobs for private contractors, with worse pensions and other conditions. The main base of British trade unionism - which today, after the devastation in manufacturing and industries like the mines, is in public services - will be shattered.

**"Socialists need to get into the trade union branches and the Labour Party wards and organise."**

Much of this programme is very unpopular. Rail privatisation is a mess. According to weighty legal opinion, all the "contracting out" done since 1981 was illegal, because it broke an EC law saying that workers transferred from one employer to another should keep the same pay and conditions. The *Observer* on 9 May quoted a Government official: "Anyone who feels they suffered a detriment because the Government failed to implement the Acquired Rights Directive properly has the right to bring a legal challenge through the courts". That means that hundreds of thousands of workers could sue for damages. The newspaper reported that "former Local Government Minister Christopher Chope [a leading Thatcherite] said that the Government's market-testing of Civil Service depart-

ments was now pointless and should be abandoned".

An energetic, ruthless use of the courts by the trade unions, coupled with mass campaigning and industrial action, could now sink the whole contracting-out project.

But the union leaders are so cowed, so broken-spirited, so unwilling to believe in the possibility of doing anything decisive against the ruling class, that they have not even used the courts effectively. Why, after all, did they not nail the Tories on this legal issue years ago?

Now they will preach reliance on the courts as a way of avoiding action. But if there is no industrial action and no mass campaign, then the Government is sure to find some way round its legal problems. Remember what Margaret Thatcher said during the 1984-5 miners' strike: if the police wanted to go beyond their legal powers in trying to beat down the miners, then she would make new laws to give them the extra powers they wanted. On a crucial class-struggle issue like contracting-out, as on the miners' strike, the ruling class recognises no law higher than class interest.

Labour and the TUC should fight! Socialists need to get into the trade union branches and the Labour Party wards and organise.

We must demand that the leaders call action, and at the same time build rank-and-file groups and networks capable of challenging those leaders.

We are in a period of mass anger and bitterness against the Tories, and increasing willingness to take action - but with a leadership in the labour movement whose psychology and politics are frozen solid in the defeatist attitudes of the 1980s. That has to change, and it can only be changed by the activity of socialists in the labour movement.

**"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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## The Fire this time?

IT HAS TO be said that the union response to the government's 1.5% public sector pay limit has not, so far, been very impressive. The leadership of NALGO, for instance, has been making a lot of militant-sounding noises — but if you listen carefully you'll notice that all fine speeches contain a very handy cop-out clause along the lines of "...but of

course, we can't be expected to stand alone — there has to be a united fightback this time". True enough, of course. But we all know what those kind of words mean in practice.

In this situation, the role of the Fire Brigades Union could be crucial. Here is a union with the muscle to smash the pay norm and a track record to be taken very seriously: their only all-out national strike (in 1977-78) was a very militant, skillfully handled dispute that sounded the death-knell for the Callaghan government's Social Contract. Not only that, but the FBU General Secretary, Ken Cameron (not a man known for empty gestures) has been talking about an all-out strike as "inevitable".

The 1977-78 strike established a Fire Brigade pay formula that tied their pay to the "upper quartile" of male manual workers. Despite some recent signs of rank and file disenchantment with the formula, it has generally served the firefighters well over the last 14 years and Cameron and his executive don't intend to allow it to be taken away without a struggle (of course, it also has the added attraction of relieving the FBU leadership of the tiresome business of negotiating an annual pay rise).

An additional bone of contention is the fact that a number of Shire County Brigades have already been told that they can expect a pay freeze this year. Assuming that the government isn't stupid enough to attempt that with the Metropolitan Brigades (though you never know), this means the end of any national pay arrangement in the Fire Service.

When you think about it, the FBU is just about the only union that the Tories have not so far taken on and defeated. The pay formula is not all that is at stake: Cameron knows very well that if the government are allowed to succeed on pay, an attack on jobs and conditions of service will surely follow.

At the FBU national conference this week, the executive will propose going for a national ballot for strike action. There seems to be little doubt that this will be carried. A major confrontation could be on the way. But there are problems that FBU militants need to be thinking about and preparing for now.

Given the lack-lustre performance of the other public sector unions to date, the FBU may well find itself fighting alone: that's not, of course, to suggest that every effort shouldn't be made to link up with NALGO and the rest. But FBU activists should be under no illusions about the likelihood of other unions coming out alongside them.

As with the ambulance workers (and, come to that, the FBU itself in 1977-78) they are likely to be on their own. Skillful use of emergency cover, the cultivation of public support and a pro-active approach to the rank and file of other unions will be crucial.

But there is more immediate problems. Come November, the firefighter's "upper quartile" formula will probably only just exceed the 1.5% limit. Already, in traditionally militant areas, FBU members have been expressing doubts about whether a fight over the pay formula is really worth it. Cameron and the Executive may actually have misjudged the mood of the rank and file (assuming that their militant speeches are not just sabre-rattling).

If the ballot for a national strike is to be won, it is essential that the link is made between the question of the pay formula and all the other issues — the principle of national pay bargaining, jobs and conditions — that are, also at stake. So far that link has not been formally established.

In other words, a decision this week to go for a strike ballot will be only the start. Cameron needs to stoke up a fire down below.

### INSIDE THE UNIONS



By Sleeper

# Police provoke violence on anti-racist march



"It was clear to everyone that the police were protecting the fascists"

By Mark Osborn

ON SATURDAY 8 May 5,000 people marched in remembrance of Stephen Lawrence, murdered by racists in Greenwich, South East, London, nine days previously.

The march organised by the *Militant* front, Youth Against Racism in Europe, was largely made up of youth and students and was rightly described by the organisers as a show of strength against racism and fascism.

The demonstration took the anti-racists past the headquarters of the fascist

British National Party (BNP) in nearby Welling. The presence of the BNP office is widely considered to be a factor in the massive increase in racist attacks throughout the area.

As the march halted outside the BNP office, police in riot gear and some on horses waded into the crowd. It was clear to everyone that the fascists were being protected by the police.

The violence that followed was solely the result of police brutality and the intense anger at the continuing racism and presence of fascists. It is hardly surprising that people get angry

when they see a fourteen or fifteen year old black youth slapped in the face by white police who are dragging him towards a police van. It is disgraceful that Anti-Racist Alliance leader Marc Wadsworth should blame *Militant* for the violence.

17 people were hurt in the clashes and apparently six were arrested. They should all be released and charges dropped.

The march also highlighted two issues which the left has to solve. The first is *disunity*. There were only about a dozen SWP members on the demonstration, and they were only concerned to build the demon-

stration of *their* front organisation, the Anti-Nazi League, next Saturday. There should have been one large demonstration rather

*"The violence was the result of police brutality and intense anger at the continuing racism."*

than two smaller marches.

The second issue is the political split among the protesters — between socialists who are, more or less, in favour of a labour movement orientation and black and white unity in the face of the racists and fascists; and the many black people who look to their own communities first and foremost.

The pressure on the politics of the left is bizarrely highlighted by *Militant*. Their white members are (very crudely) for "Black and white, unite and fight" and their black members sell a paper, *Panther*, which is "building an independent black movement". *Panther* had a contingent on the march. The best of both worlds? No: something's got to give — it is not possible to square this up.

And while you watch *Militant* square the circle, remember this is the same organisation — and many of the same people, Sam Bond etc. — who were vociferously opposed to Labour Party Black Sections and who, in the mid-'80s, dubbed Liverpool Black Caucus "pimps and gangsters".

## Student left plans mass action to save unionism

By Kevin Sexton, NUS VP Welfare elect

STUDENT activists from across the country came to last weekend's AGM of the left wing in the National Union of Students, Left Unity.

Despite the wishful thinking of many, from the right-wing Labour leaders of NUS to the SWP, who all claim that Left Unity is dead, Left Unity remains the left opposition in the student movement.

The AGM reflected the growth of Left Unity and was focussed on organising mass action in the colleges.

We discussed Left

Unity's role in the "Save our Student Unions" campaign, set up to build action against the government's proposals to wreck student unions; and the NUS leaders' plans to gut unions of democracy and politics.

Workshops discussed organising occupations

and rent strikes, building women's groups, and building solidarity with workers. A new steering committee was elected.

It was a good day for the student left, and an ill omen for the Tories and those who want to accept much of their agenda — the NUS leadership.

**The Alliance for Workers' Liberty student dayschool on 8 May was a great success.**

**It included sessions on the 1917 Russian revolution, socialism and black nationalism, and the case for socialist feminism.**

**The high level of political discussion and debate was reflected in the large number of books and pamphlets sold during the school.**

**Two students joined the AWL at the event and several others agreed to begin discussions with local branches.**





Parents and children in occupation at Springdale nursery. Photo: Geoff Ward

## Islington nurseries occupation

# Take control to fight cuts!

By Belinda Weaver

**WORKERS AND** parents are occupying two nurseries in Islington, North London, 24 hours a day to stop the council from closing them.

The occupation started on Wednesday 5 May, when workers in Islington council's 10 nurseries struck for one day to protest against cuts and closures.

The occupation of Harvist and Springdale Under-Fives Education Centres is fully supported by the local NALGO and NUT branches.

The Labour-controlled council plans to cut £0.5 million by closing the two nurseries, and by reducing two of its other nurseries to under-3s only. It has promised places at other council nurseries for children from Springdale and Harvist; but parents may not get the nursery they want, nor one close to where they live.

The closures mean cuts in nursery places across the borough. Many staff will lose their jobs. Waiting lists for nursery places have been frozen. There will be less staff time for each child at the eight remaining nurseries.

Islington council has already closed two nurseries, Lloyd Baker Street and Canonbury. Sian Williams, the council's Assistant Director of Education, told parents at

Marquess UFEC last week that further cuts are likely next year — even more closures, possibly a scaling-down to a few “super-nurseries”, with the rest of the money going to (cheaper) nursery classes in schools.

*“If the council is short of money, why don't they fight for more cash, instead of taking it out on Islington children?”*

Parents and workers at Harvist and Springdale argue that nursery education should not be an optional extra, first in line for cuts whenever money is short. Under-fives are intensely curious and eager to learn. American research, recently quoted in the *Guardian*, shows that people with pre-school education are much less likely to commit crimes, and more likely to get good jobs when they grow up.

“The critical learning period is 0 to 5. Without nurseries, these children will miss out on learning social and moral skills,” says Sharon Whittington, who describes herself as “an angry parent” at Springdale.

The cuts are a false econ-

omy. For every pound they “save”, they will cost many more later, on crime, policing, social services, and undeveloped talents.

If the council is short of money, why don't they fight the Government for more cash, instead of taking it out on Islington children? In any case, the “saving” is minuscule — a mere one-quarter of one per cent of the overall budget, well within the budget's margin of error.

Debbie Whitfield, the chair of Islington NALGO, says: “Islington NALGO fully supports the action of our members in the nurseries. We are fighting both for jobs and to keep the under-fives education service. We ran a long campaign of strike action against the council

over compulsory redundancies last year and early this year, and won significant concessions. We plan to win here too.”

*“The cuts are a false economy. For every pound 'saved', they will cost many more later, in crime, social services, and undeveloped talents.”*

The council majority for closures was small — 19 for, 13 against. It should be possible to get the issue reopened.

Left-wing Labour coun-

cillor Liz Davies says: “The Labour Party should not be closing nurseries. The nurseries can be saved by occupying and making closures unworkable, and by putting pressure through the Labour Party. Campaigners should join the Labour Party and get wards to mandate councillors to reverse the closures”.

What you can do:

1. Send messages of support and donations to: Springdale UFEC, 15A Springdale Road, London N16, or Harvist UFEC, 100 Hornsey Road, London N4 [cheques payable to Islington NALGO].

2. Come to the Save our Nurseries rally, Thursday 13 May, 12.30, Education Offices, Laycock Street, London N1.

## Oppose Lib-Lab pacts!

By Colin Foster

**R**ECENTLY THE Alliance for Workers' Liberty debated with John McTernan, a Labour Party HQ official who was one of those responsible for running the 1992 General Election campaign.

The AWL argued for a fight by the labour movement against the Tories and for socialism. John McTernan, in reply, wanted the Labour Party to do just two things: scrap Clause Four, and arrange a pact with the Liberal Democrats.

“It no longer makes any sense”, he said, “to talk about an alternative to capitalism”.

McTernan and his co-thinkers will have new wind in their sails after last week's local government election results. As Ivor Crewe reported in the *Independent on Sunday*:

“Both Labour and the Liberal Democrats advanced furthest in their own areas of strength. Both parties were helped by the mysterious failure of the other to stand in certain Conservative marginals...”

“In the absence of an official pact, voters — and occasionally local parties — acted as if one existed”.

Crewe also explained why John Smith probably does not want an official pact. An official pact would cause trouble and probably scare off many Liberal voters. “The solution for both parties is to denounce pacts in public while condoning them in private.”

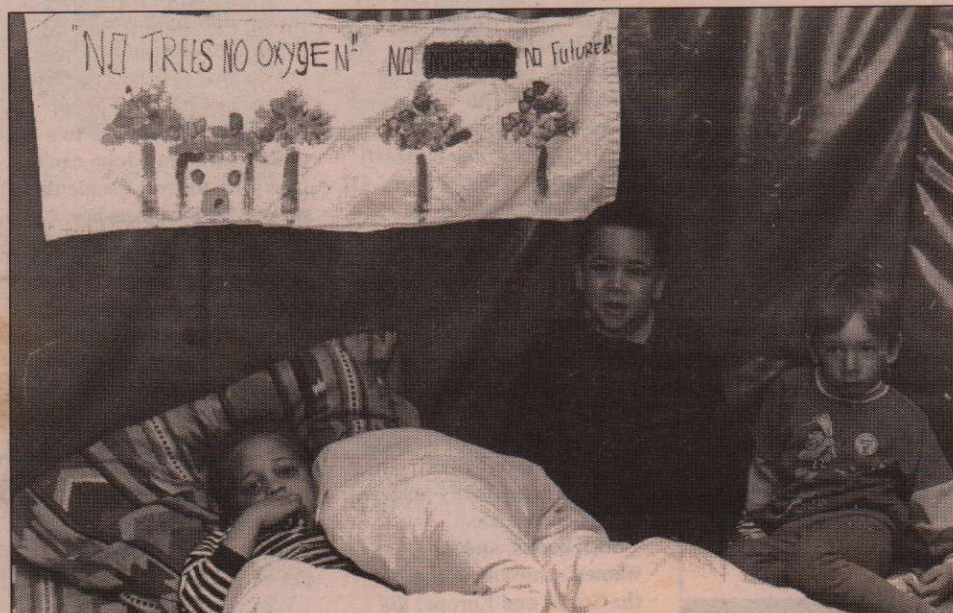
“They can nominate paper candidates in hopeless seats and encourage party workers to campaign in more favourable constituencies nearby...”

All this shows that those on the Labour Left who insist that First Past The Post protects us from pacts, while Proportional Representation would force us into them, are wide of the mark. The argument against pacts with the Liberals must be won on its merits.

With Labour's leaders moving so far to the right, there may seem to be little difference between Labour and the Liberals. But during the 1984-5 miners' strike the Liberals and SDP attacked the Tories for being too soft on the miners! In areas like Tower Hamlets the Liberals are a channel for the racist vote.

And, crucially, Labour has structural links to the working-class movement which the Liberals do not have. As and when the trade union rank-and-file becomes more confident and assertive, it has clear channels in the Labour Party structure to make its voice heard and to push the Labour Party leaders in its direction.

If what Labour differs little from the Liberals, what Labour can become differs a great deal. The principle of independent Labour politics must be defended.



“Without nurseries, these children will miss out on learning”. Photo: Geoff Ward



GRAFFITI

# No condoms please... we're churches

GRAFFITI

IT'S GOOD TO see the old sectarianism breaking down in the US. For the first time, Protestant and Catholic churches have been working together in New York. Before anyone gets carried away with enthusiasm, the new-found unity is between the Protestant right of Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition and the equally right-wing Catholicism of Cardinal John O'Connor.

It has taken New York liberal education to bring the two wings together. The trouble started when the School Board and, particularly, one of its leading lights, Joseph Fernandez, started tackling the question of AIDS (condoms were to be distributed to any school student who requested them). Combined with the "children of the rainbow" curriculum, this has proved explosive. The rainbow curriculum is standard New York educational fare, emphasising the equality of cultures and non-judgemental teaching. The tricky innovation was that lesbians and gay men were included in the list of "cultural minorities" to be "studied and appreciated".

This mixture of condoms and positive images was too much for the various God squads, who launched a campaign to capture control of the School Boards.

The chances of it all ending happily with Rev. Pat Robertson and Cardinal John O'Connor staring into each other's eyes and walking off hand in hand into the sunset are pretty remote.

AS THE Western powers claimed to have foiled an Iraqi attempt on the life of George Bush, Saddam Hussein was celebrating his birthday in typical style. Hordes of young girls calling the genial smiling despot "Papa Saddam", a birthday cake the size of Wiltshire, and, to top it all, a golden chariot drawn by six white horses to bear the birthday boy away.

Obviously the West needs to hit back, but is hamstrung without so much as a decent assassination attempt against Saddam to its collective name, and little chance of one with the smart bombs still falling short of National Curriculum Keystage one in precision bombing.

Never fear, Bloomsbury Press are at hand with a new novel, *Shadow over Babylon*, a fictionalised account of the last days of the Gulf War with a much more palatable ending for the Alliance leaders, revolving

around a British sniper finishing off the Beast of Baghdad in his bunker.

The author is one David Mason, who has already netted nearly £1 million in advances and film rights. The book is currently available at £14.99 from all crap bookshops.

ENOUGH OF death and destruction, here is the good news. British Rail are to introduce new carriages on their Intercity routes, with all mod-cons, including sockets for you to plug in your personal stereo headphones. In the egalitarian class-free Nineties this service is available to all, be they high-powered business folk travelling first class, or typists on a day trip in the "cheap and cheerful" second class.

Each "class" receives listening deemed suitable to their station in life: the typists choose from Radio 4, Radio 1 and a selection of pop CDs, while the more cerebral first-class passengers, their minds expanded by a large number of business lunches, will have their choice of Radio 4, Radio 3 and a selection of classical CDs.

This is, of course, scandalous. What use have typists for Radio 4? What "second-class" people want is Richard Branson's Virgin AM. Once again an established company is pulling a dirty trick on the people's entrepreneur. Obviously, revenge for Branson's crusade to break the BR Intercity monopoly through his interests in the Stagecoach company, which is attempting to run trains from London to Scotland.

THE CIVIL servants at the Home Office had it all worked-out — the best person to be British representative on the Council of Europe's Committee Against Torture was Silvia Casale, an independent consultant specialising in improving prison conditions. She speaks four European languages, and has been a consistent defender of human rights to boot.

No way — Kenneth Clarke puts his foot down. This kind of job, lots of foreign travel, slap-up meals at public functions, and expense accounts, must be chosen by more scrupulous and democratic means. So Conservative Party Central Office is currently drawing up a shortlist of Tory loyalists for the job.

These people will certainly be up to the calibre of Britain's last representative on the committee, former Tory MP Stefan Terlezki, a strong supporter of both the death penalty and corporal punishment. Other committee members have made sure that he has not been allowed near any delicate investigations. It might have given him ideas.

# Eldorado, the turnip and Andrew Neil

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

NORMAN Lamont is finished. He will go this summer, probably at the end of July. How do I know this? Because of *Eldorado*, the turnip and Andrew Neil.

*Eldorado* first: the Chancellor's survival to date (despite the cries of anguish from the Tory heartlands, Black Wednesday and Threshergate) has closely paralleled the BBC's stubborn perseverance with its much-ridiculed soap. *Eldorado* was kept on the iron lung for as long as it was because to do otherwise would be just too humiliating — a capitulation to the baying pack. Hang in there, it will all come right in the end and *we'll show the bastards* became the party line — until Alan Yentob stepped in and pulled the plug.

Last week's drubbing at Newbury and in the counties may well prove to have been the Tory Party's equivalent of Alan Yentob's bow to the inevitable.

As for the turnip, this is the *Sun's* equivalent of the Black Spot in *Treasure Island*: a portent of doom that can never be lifted, although the precise timing of its lethal effect cannot be predicted. The *Sun* put Lamont's face on a turnip after Black Wednesday, having previously placed a similar curse upon Mr Graham Taylor. The England football manager will undoubtedly survive longer than the Chancellor.

If the *Sun* represents the spleen of the Murdoch empire, then the *Sunday Times* is its brain. Having laid off Lamont-baiting for a brief spell, the *ST* came back with a vengeance this week: "We have consistently called for Norman Lamont to go; he is despised in this country and dismissed in the City. His claim to have orchestrated recovery is preposterous. Yet Mr Major, either for misplaced loyalty, or inertia, or a subconscious desire to make sure that there is nobody next door who is after his own job, has stubbornly and stupidly kept on a Chancellor whose

appalling record and smug arrogance remain the government's biggest liability".

This diatribe (undoubtedly written by Andrew Neil himself) carries the unmistakable stamp of a Murdoch policy decision. Expect the *Times* and the *Sun* to follow suit. And note that dismissive reference to the "recovery"; *Eldorado* has been improving lately, as well.

POOR OLD PAUL

Foot may have lost his weekly platform in the *Mirror*, but far greater public recognition now beckons. He is to be portrayed in a forthcoming BBC drama (about the Carl Bridgewater case) by the well-known heart-throb Angus Deayton. Just to prove that even hard-bitten revolutionary socialists are not above a touch of personal vanity, I quote Paul's chum Ian Hislop: "Footie rang me up and was terrifically flattered because Angus is about 10 years the wrong age and he's seen all the TVs Mr Sex bit. I'll be interested to see if Angus can do this shambling paternalistic SWP investigative journalist".

THE SAINTLY Andreas Whittam Smith is, by all

accounts, not best pleased with the new book *Paper Dreams*, written by his former *Independent* colleague Steven Glover.

The book paints a less than flattering portrait of the Saintly One, implying that he is a sanctimonious, power-crazed hypocrite whose judgment is impaired by personal vendettas and paranoid obsessions. Total (and libellous) rubbish, of course.

Incidentally, following his unfortunate failure to take over (and close down) the *Observer*, Whittam Strobes has been further discomfited by the acrimonious resignation of the *Independent* group's chairman, Sir Ralph Dahrendorf. The distinguished economist wrote a resignation letter, accusing Strobes of having an "authoritarian management style".

Never mind, Carlo de Benedetti, one of Italy's most outstanding businessmen, has come to Strobes's aid, buying a 2.4% stake in the *Independent* and expressing interest in greater control.

Signor Benedetti's enthusiasm for the *Independent* has not been dampened by the fact that he presently faces a six year jail sentence for fraud.

# Their oppression and ours

WOMEN'S EYE

By Cathy Nugent

MANY PEOPLE must have switched onto the repeat showing of *The Men's Room* on TV this week in order to catch some of the advertised "raunchy sex". There wasn't much of that or anything else in this adaptation of the "feminist bestseller" by Ann Oakley.

Perhaps I have overdosed on feminist bestsellers but I thought this was one of the most banal, predictable, whinging, boring pieces of middle class piffle I have ever seen.

*The Men's Room* is clearly meant to be a follow up to *The Women's Room*, the book by Marilyn French that "changed women's lives" back in the 1960s and epitomised the experience of the women's movement in the United States. It was about a middle class woman, economically, emotionally and physically possessed by her husband, who finally achieves her independence.

Such books, and the women's movement (both in the States and Europe) did

change many women's lives, and not just middle class women's lives.

Ann Oakley's *Men's Room* is about what happened to the middle class woman twenty years later.

Charity has a nice job. She is a sociology lecturer at a London college, but she's in her 40s and still doing her thesis. Charity and her husband John live in Hampstead in a nice house.

They have four children. Charity finds it difficult to relate to her eldest son and his developing masculinity. John is good with the kids but he always leaves the discipline to Charity.

Charity and John go to a dinner party and John can't cope with the gay couple they meet. Charity meets her soon-to-be lover, a very creepy sociology lecturer. It is an extremely accurate picture of everyday life of the Hampstead *Guardian*-reading folk, I'm sure.

Call me an inverted snob if you like, but I can't work up anything but contempt for these people. So, Charity, you're bored with your life? Take your bloody lover and get on with it!

Why don't you try bringing

up your kids on Income Support for a while? That would be an interesting experience. Stop clogging up our air-waves with your angst!

Ann Oakley has written some pretty good books on women — factual, sociological, political, from a socialist-feminist perspective. But there are many women writers central to the women's movement in the '70s who, although they continue to write from a socialist-feminist perspective, who have explicitly rejected the revolutionary left and opted instead for the soft Labour left, or for loose, unfocussed and very often apolitical campaigns. Or at best have retreated into groupings like the Socialist Movement.

The most important statement of this shift — essentially a demoralisation with the prospect of socialist change and the Marxist left — was presented by Hilary Wainwright, Lynne Segal and Sheila Rowbotham in *Beyond the Fragments*.

Ann Oakley seems to me to be part of this layer of people. They tend to be singularly self-centred, middle class, armchair socialists. Certainly that is the attitude that

comes across in *The Men's Room*.

For Oakley the lesson of the women's movement is that although it helped to change women's lives for the better, there are still some things that need adjusting. We need more opportunities in our careers. Men need to be more thoroughly "right-on". Women still need to learn to assert themselves. That kind of thing: it is at the level of "we should all be happier".

But the real lesson of the women's movement is not that at all. The central failure of the women's movement was to not take up the concerns of working class women and black women, whose lives have not fundamentally improved. Poverty, unemployment, next to no childcare provision — that is the reality for the majority of women.

And the women's movement never took on board the need to transform society from top to bottom, the need for a working-class revolution. Consequently, although Oakley can tell it like it is for women like Charity, she cannot possibly imagine what it is like for the rest of us.



Bigots united



# Workers' Liberty '93...

...is three days of socialist debate from **Friday 2 to Sunday 4 July** at Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, Archway, North London, hosted by the **Alliance for Workers' Liberty**.

## FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- **What do we do about the police?** with *Clara Buckley* (Orville Blackwood Campaign) and *Joanne Rowe* (M25 campaign).
- *John O'Mahony* (editor of *Socialist Organiser*) discusses the **Legacy of Max Shachtman**.

### Debates:

- **Which way forward in the unions?** *Trudy Saunders* debates the Democratic Left.
- **Should we build a Leninist Party?**

### Course:

- A four-part introduction to **Marxist economics** with *Martin Thomas*.

### Black History:

- *Sab Sanghera* looks at the **Roots of modern British anti-Black racism**.
- *Dion D'Silva* examines the history of **Black workers and the British class struggle**.
- *Bruce Robinson* on **Music of Rebellion** (US jazz, soul and blues 1955-70).



The police are a force for strike breaking — here they fight the miners

## SATURDAY HIGHLIGHTS



- Former Black Panther and current leader of the Los Angeles Coalition Against Police Abuse, *Michael Zinzun*, speaks on **What we can learn from the Black Panthers and Los Angeles, One Year On**.
- *Winfried Wolf* from the German socialist paper *Sozialistische Zeitung* discusses the **Rise of the German Neo-Nazis and What are the prospects for German Capitalism?**
- Discussions on Human Nature, Crime, Films and Violence, The Press and Censorship ● *Anthony Arblaster* on Opera ● *Cathy Nugent* on the **History of Rioting** ● *Jeremy Corbyn MP* on the Labour Party ● *Peter Tatchell* and *Maria Exall* on **What can we learn from Queer Politics?**

- *John O'Mahony* on **The Revolutionary Paper**.

### Debates:

- *Tom Rigby* discusses **How we Guarantee Individual Rights**.

### International crisis:

- *Branka Magas* on **Yugoslavia** and *Don Filtzer* on **Russia**.

### Black History:

- *Gail Cameron* from *Socialist Organiser* editorial board on **Marcus Garvey and the Roots of American Black Nationalism**.



Yugoslav killing fields — what should socialists say?

## SUNDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- *Dion D'Silva* (author of the AWL pamphlet *Malcolm X*) looks at **Martin Luther King**.

How to stop the misery of the troubles



### Debates:

- **Which way forward in Ireland?**
- **What should we say about Black Power?**

### Forum on Education:

- **Why is Education in crisis? and What sort of Education do School Students need?**

- *John O'Mahony* on the **Cliff-SWP tradition**.
- *Matt Cooper* on **Post-Modernism** ● *Mark Serwotka* on the **Unions and the Civil Service**.

### International:

- *Tom Rigby* on **South Africa**.

### Black History:

- *Gail Cameron* discusses **Answers for the Black Community in Britain**.



Black workers fight against racism and for workers' rights

**Workers' Liberty will be packed out. Be sure of getting in — get a programme now!**

[Programme gives entry to the event]

- **Before end June unwaged £7; low-waged/students £11; waged £16**
- **On the door unwaged £8; low-waged/students £12; waged £19**

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(Cheques/postal orders payable to "W.L. Publications") Send to: **WL '93, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.**

\* Delete as appropriate

## The RCP Getting the left a bad name

### IDIOT WATCH

By Dan Katz

**T**WO-HUNDRED and fifty people marched in London for peace in the Balkans on Sunday 9 May in a protest organised by the Coalition for Peace in Bosnia.

Although the Coalition was demanding United Nations' action to stop the atrocities, the marchers were expressing a straightforward, decent desire for *someone* to do *something* to stop the ethnic cleansing and the atrocities.

The AWL leaflet demanding "Arms for the Muslims" went down well and a number of copies of *Socialist Organiser* were sold. Plenty of people were discussing with us — that was until the Revolutionary Communist Party organised a provocation.

40 of their members stood in ranks, military fashion, behind two large banners in the middle of Trafalgar Square. After a while they started chanting "No Western solution", which had two effects: the press took photographs of them — they were a freaky curiosity; the crowd got angry with *all* people calling themselves socialists and stopped talking to *all* of us. After a while the RCP trooped off, taking a black coffin (role unclear) with them.

There is one question which concerns the psychology of anyone who is prepared to be lined up by a "left" organisation with a military fetish as an extra in a piece of weird performance art... Perhaps they *like* being bullied... Perhaps we should ask their parents. Anyway, more importantly, we should ask *who are the RCP?* Over Yugoslavia they act like Serb chauvinists. Why are they so off the wall on *every* issue?

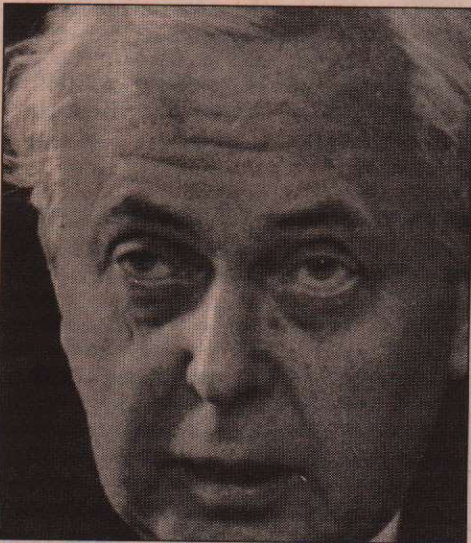


# Who rules Britain

Last week the Tory government, hard pressed in Parliament, threw overboard its pretences about parliamentary democracy. Parliament could vote through whatever it wanted about the Maastricht Treaty and the Social Chapter — so the Tories said, in effect — but the government would decide. They would ratify the Treaty and exclude the Social Chapter, come what may. Legally, they argue, the Queen (and therefore the government) decides on treaties, not parliament.

Is this business a quirk, a political freak? Or is it unusual only in being blatant, in the open, and being challenged (for their own reasons) by a powerful group of dissident Tories? Colin Foster looks at the realities of British democracy.

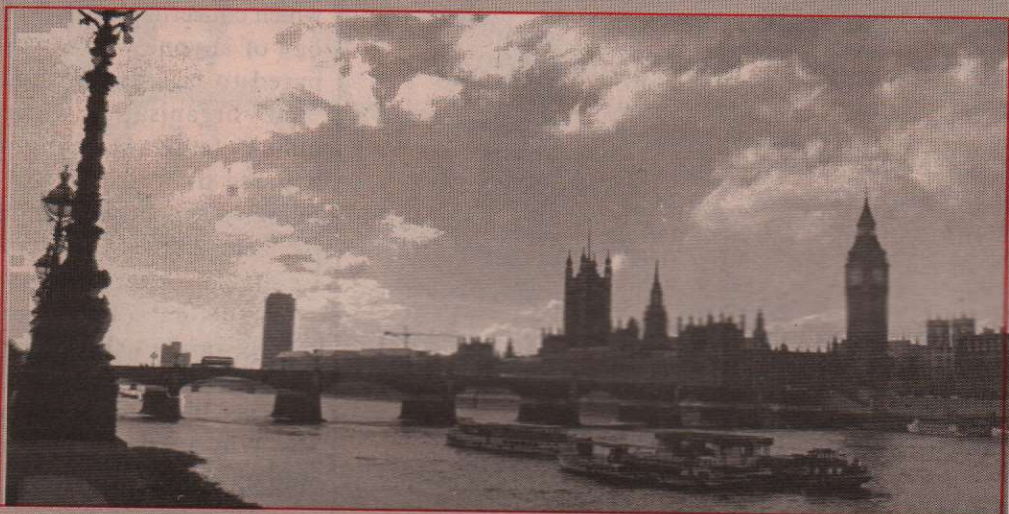
**I**N THE MACHINE THAT rules Britain, the elected Parliament is only a small part — and it is not the steering wheel, either! The permanent, unelected state machine — civil service hierarchy, armed forces, police, prisons, judges — takes many decisions and



Tony Benn:

## Facade and reality

● Despite all that is said about democracy and our traditional freedoms, the people of Britain have much less control over their destiny than they are led to believe... and a great deal less than they had a generation ago. In short, the powers which control our lives and our futures have become progressively more concentrated, more centralised, more internationalised, more secretive and less accountable. The democracy of which we boast is becoming a decorous facade



behind which those who have power exercise it for their own advantage and to the detriment of the public welfare...

● A hereditary House of Lords, topped up by the pliable recipients of prime ministerial patronage, still has great power to delay or obstruct the policies adopted by an elected House of Commons. It also has an unfettered veto, in law, to protect itself from abolition.

The Crown still retains an unfettered legal authority to dismiss an elected government, dissolve an elected House of Commons, and precipitate a general election at any time it chooses. To do so it need only call upon its prerogative powers as used by the Governor General of Australia when the Labour government of Gough Whitlam was dismissed...[in 1975]

● All cabinet ministers derive their executive authority, in its legal sense, not from election as leaders of the majority party in the Commons, but as members of her majesty's government, formed by the prime minister at the Crown's invitation... The courts and the armed forces swear allegiance to the Crown and not the elected government.

(From *Arguments for Democracy*)

does many things with no reference to parliament at all. And it has tremendous power to shape and guide governments, and thus parliaments.

Who ever voted for the police operation against the miners in 1984-85 and the long process of planning, going back at least twelve years to 1972?

Who ever elected the chief constables who directed this operation?

Who decides economic policies? Can you really believe that elected MPs have any influence to compare with the bosses of the Bank of England and the other top banks?

If you do, read what Harold Wilson writes about what happened in 1964 after he became the first Labour Prime Minister for 13 years.

"We had our most desperate meeting with the Governor of the Bank. Claiming that our failure to act in accordance with his advice had precipitated the crisis, he was now demanding all-round cuts in expenditure, regardless of social or even economic priorities, and fundamental changes in some of the Chancellor's economic announcements.

"Not for the first time, I said that we had now reached the situation where a newly elected government with a mandate from the people was being told, not so much by the Governor of the Bank of England but by international speculators, that the policies on which we had fought the election could not be implemented; that the government was to be forced into the adoption of Tory policies to which it was fundamentally opposed. The Governor confirmed that that was, in fact, the case.

"I asked him if this meant that it was impossible for any Government, whatever its party label, whatever its manifesto or the policies on which it fought an election, to continue, unless it immediately reverted to full-scale Tory policies. He had to admit that that was what his argument meant, because of the sheer compulsion of the economic dictation of those who exercised decisive economic power.

"I said that I was not prepared to accept it. There was nothing left for me to do but go back to the electorate for a mandate giving me full powers to handle the crisis.

"The Governor recognised my constitutional right to do this. Not unfairly, he warned me that if I did so — and the process would occupy some four weeks — the run on sterling would continue and indeed intensify; that our reserves, which had already fallen considerably, would have run out long before polling day. I told him that I recognised the force of his arguments."

[*The Labour Government 1964-70*, p 64-65]



Democracy? Whoever voted for the Poll Tax?

And who really controls the armed forces, the bottom-line guarantee of state power? Not Parliament.

The former Chief of the General Staff, Lord Carver, has publicly admitted in a debate with Pat Arrowsmith that the army officers had discussed a coup in February 1974.

"Fairly senior officers were ill-advised enough to make suggestions that perhaps, if things got terribly bad, the army would have to do something about it."

The top brass put a stop to it — but the "fairly senior officers" of 1974 are now probably "senior". Five months before the events Lord Carver referred to, the *Times* had commented on the military coup in Chile in this alarming fashion:

"Whether or not the armed forces were right to do what they have done, the circumstances were such that a reasonable military man could in good faith have thought it his constitutional duty to intervene."

[*Times*, 13 September 1973]

**T**HE STATE MACHINE is not a completely independent force. It rules in the interests of the capitalist class — the top five per cent or so who own and con-

trol industry, commerce and finance.

This is for three reasons.

\* The top ranks of the state machine are closely tied to the capitalist class personally.

Four judges out of five, for example, went to public schools. 90% of army officers of the rank of Lieutenant-General and above, and two thirds of civil servants of the rank of Under-Secretary or above, went to public schools.

Police chiefs are generally less upper crust in their backgrounds. But none of them could get where they are without being firm supporters of the present social system — or without becoming fairly well-off.

\* The bankers and bosses, having immense power directly through their economic position, are much better able to influence the state machine than any other group.

\* Even apart from the personal background of the top people, and the influence of big business on them — and these things vary from country to country — the state machine is a machine for administering, stabilising and reconciling society as it is.

Its most basic structures and rules of functioning tie it to the defence of private property and of the "good" — that is, profitable — functioning of the economy.

So the state is not neutral. It serves the ruling class. *How* it serves the ruling class — through what forms and procedures — varies.

A parliamentary democracy, with relatively free speech and independent trade unions, puts more checks and restraints on the ruling class than a military dictatorship, and allows better chances for fighting back. But the rul-



Who ever voted for the police operation against

"The state machine is not a completely independent force. It rules in the interests of the capitalist class — the top five per cent or so who own and control industry, commerce and finance. This is for three reasons. \* The top ranks of the state machine are closely tied to the capitalist class personally. Four judges out of five, for example, went to public schools. 90% of army officers of the rank of Lieutenant-General and above, and two thirds of civil servants of the rank of Under-Secretary or above, went to public schools. Police chiefs are generally less upper crust in their backgrounds. But none of them could get where they are without being firm supporters of the present social system — or without becoming fairly well-off. \* The bankers and bosses, having immense power directly through their economic position, are much better able to influence the state machine than any other group. \* Even apart from the personal background of the top people, and the influence of big business on them — and these things vary from country to country — the state machine is a machine for administering, stabilising and reconciling society as it is. Its most basic structures and rules of functioning tie it to the defence of private property and of the "good" — that is, profitable — functioning of the economy. So the state is not neutral. It serves the ruling class. How it serves the ruling class — through what forms and procedures — varies. A parliamentary democracy, with relatively free speech and independent trade unions, puts more checks and restraints on the ruling class than a military dictatorship, and allows better chances for fighting back. But the rul-



# in?



ing class still rules.

What is the ruling class? A hundred different definitions could be given of the 'top people', by different aspects of their privilege and power, but underlying all those aspects is their wealth.

The top 1 per cent own 18 per cent of all marketable wealth, more than 47 per cent of privately-held land and nearly 53 per cent of privately-held company shares. The top 5 per cent own 37 per cent of marketable wealth and about three-quarters of land and shares. The bottom 50 per cent own 7 per cent of marketable wealth.

These figures, however, understate the real inequalities between classes. The top 5% have not only more wealth than the bottom 75% but a different sort of wealth.

Machine is not independent in the interests of the ruling class."

with a wealth of £1 million. The ten people — the top 1% — own "only" 18% of the total wealth: but they own all of the sort of wealth that gives power and access to further wealth.

The top 5% monopolise the means of production.

The division between the bottom 75% and the top 5% is not just a division between those who live by selling their labour power, and those who live off their ownership of the means of production. It is a division between the worker and the boss.



the 1984-5 miners' strike?



## Timex: the facts

**T**HE TIMEX STRIKE IN DUNDEE is a crucial test in many different ways. It is a test of the trade union movement's will and ability to fight the bosses' new drive against trade unionism. (It is the biggest mass sacking of trade unionists since Rupert Murdoch shifted his newspapers to Wapping in 1986).

It is a test of the revival in the labour movement since the great protests against pit closures last October. The Tories are deeply discredited; the disgust and anger of millions needs to be translated into effective action.

It is a test of whether the labour movement can do anything effective to save jobs.

It is a test of solidarity.

These are the facts of the dispute — they speak for themselves:

January 29: After a 92% vote in favour of strike action Timex workers go on strike in opposition to management's plans for lay-offs. Management wants to select 150 workers to be laid off for up to six months, whereas the workers are prepared to accept lay-offs only on a rotating basis covering the entire workforce.

February 12: After agreement is reached on the issue of lay-offs management produces a new set of demands including cuts in rates of pay, a wage freeze, and cuts in pensions and other fringe benefits. Workers are told by management to accept the new conditions and return to work, or face the sack.

February 14: A mass meeting of the Timex strikers votes in favour of returning to work "under protest" at management's latest demands. The campaign against these demands is to be continued from within the workplace.

February 15: The Timex workforce turns up for work but finds itself locked out. Management says that it is "currently considering its position".

February 16: Timex workers again turn up at the factory and clash with the police, who refuse to allow them admission to the factory. Management announces it is delaying dismissal notices until the outcome of a mass meeting the following day.

February 17: Only four people vote in favour of accepting management's demands at a mass meeting of the workforce. All 343 hourly paid workers are sacked — including workers on maternity leave and the 17 scabs who worked through the strike begun on 29 January. Adverts for a new scab workforce appear in the local press. Timex convenor John Kydd and deputy convenor Willie Leslie appear in court to answer claims by Timex that they have breached an interim interdict granted earlier in the month which banned them from inciting or organising pickets of more than six people. The hearing is adjourned.

February 18: The first twelve scab recruits turn up for work. MSF members in supervisory grades cross the picket line, as they will continue to do so throughout the dispute. In a show of solidarity, and as part of the TUC's Day of Action, 300 trade unionists march past the factory. Plant manager Peter Hall declares that as far as he is concerned the dispute is over and he is now recruiting a new workforce.

February 19: In an interview with the *Financial Times* Hall admits that the AEEU is "technically correct" to say that the workers were prepared to return to work under protest but that he then sacked them. But, he continues, sacking the entire workforce was legally necessary in order to be able to impose new working conditions.

February 22: On the first Monday morning since the mass sackings over 250 trade unionists turn up at the factory to demonstrate their support for the Timex workers.

March 4: Four Timex workers are arrested after driving hired vans into the factory grounds and using them to block off the entrances. To gain access to the factory the scabs have to climb through a hole in a fence and then run across a football pitch. West Lothian District Council refuses to send a letter of support to the Timex workers on the grounds that spending 18p on a stamp would be illegal expenditure.

March 5: The four Timex workers arrested the previous day, including convenor John Kydd, appear in court and are released on bail, on condition that they do not go within a half a mile of the Timex factory.

March 8: On International Women's Day a delegation from Women Against Pit Closures turns up to support the picketing in solidarity with the Timex workers.

March 16: Timex applies to the Court of Session in Edinburgh for another interim interdict, this time one banning meetings being held in the area of the entrance to the factory. The hearing is adjourned for three days.

March 19: At the resumed hearing Timex fails to obtain a further interim interdict. In a separate hearing a Timex worker appears in court on a charge of breach of the peace. He is released on bail, on condition that he does not go within half a mile of the factory, nor approach anyone he knows or believes to be a scab.

March 20: Eight thousand people march through Dundee in a show of support for the Timex workers. John Kydd declares that if the dispute can only be won by breaking the law, then the law will have to be broken. He urges as many as possible of the demonstrators to turn up at the factory on the Monday morning (22 March).

March 22: 400 people turn up at the Timex picket line. The two buses carrying the scabs are delayed for two hours, and then require 20 minutes to get through the pickets. Fourteen pickets are arrested and another two in separate incidents in the afternoon.

March 23: The sixteen people arrested the previous day appear in court. All are released on bail, fourteen on condition that they do not enter Dundee at all, and two on condition that they do not go within a mile of the factory. AEEU NEC member Gavin Laird urges demonstrators not involved in the dispute to stay away from the picket lines.

March 24: Workers from the neighbouring NCR factory drive a convoy of cars around the Timex factory, hindering access to it by the scabs. Police intervene to stop the convoy — and thereby create a major traffic jam.

March 26: Scottish TUC General Secretary Campbell Christie calls on anyone turning up to

the picket lines at Timex not to breach union guidelines, not to break the law and not to block the road.

March 30: Over 400 people turn up to the picket lines. A coach from Glasgow carrying Timex supporters is stopped and searched twice by the police in order to delay its arrival. One picket is arrested. Timex management issues a statement congratulating the police: "We applaud the action of the police and the steps they have taken to prevent militant activists joining the picket lines".

April 5: Two days after Hall states that the factory will be kept open all week in order to meet commitments to customers, the factory is shut down for the day (a local public holiday). 300 demonstrators turn up, but no scabs.

April 12: A thousand people demonstrate outside of the factory as the scabs are bussed in. Three pickets are arrested. Ten thousand people march through Dundee at lunchtime in support of the Timex workers.

April 14: A mass meeting of Timex workers draws up plans to take Timex to an industrial tribunal: six sacked workers are to allege unfair dismissal as test cases. Union leaders at the mass meeting appeal to workers at the meeting not to allow management to tempt them back to work after the expiry of the 90 day redundancy notices.

April 19: The Scottish TUC Congress opens in Glasgow.

April 20: The STUC Congress passes a resolution pledging financial and moral support for the Timex workers. Two participants in the debate call for physical support as well. Jimmy Airlie announces a demonstration in Dundee on 15 May and promises to "flood" the city with trade unionists. STUC General Secretary Campbell Christie pledges that the Scottish trade union movement will not desert the Timex workers. Labour Party leader John Smith advances the daring demand that John Major should get ACAS to intervene and settle the dispute.

April 22: The AEEU conference passes a resolution to start a weekly collection amongst its members to support the Timex strikers. AEEU President Bill Jordan accepts an invitation from the Timex workers to join them on the picket line.

April 24: Timex US director John Dryfe calls for negotiations to be opened with AEEU national officials, as "more trust" can be placed in them than in the local Timex leaders. Timex in Dundee issues a statement saying that Dryfe's comments have been "misinterpreted".

April 28: Appearing before the Commons Employment Select Committee Hall refuses to open talks with the AEEU before the expiry of the 90 day redundancy notices. Hall admits to having threatened to derecognise the AEEU and to wanting to keep the legal right to pick and choose which workers to re-employ after expiry of the 90 day redundancy notices.

May 1: 2,000 people march through Dundee in support of the Timex workers. Timex deputy convenor Willie Leslie re-affirms the goals of the dispute: either all 343 sacked workers will be reinstated, or Timex will be driven out of business.



# Why Yugoslavia

Martin Thomas reviews *The Destruction of Yugoslavia*, by Branka Magas (Verso, £12.95)



**“**IN the case of Yugoslavia, failure to understand the reasons for its break-up is treated almost as a mark of intellectual respectability”, complains Branka Magas, a Croat socialist who lives in London.

“Ethnic wars”, ‘the Balkan cauldron’, ‘centuries of national intolerance’... are some of the stereotypes used to veil not only ignorance but lack of interest...”

But, Magas insists, if we drop our West-European arrogance and we recognise the reality of the different nations in ex-Yugoslavia — they are no more petty and ridiculous than Holland or Ireland — then we will see that the gist of the conflicts is a battle between a revived Serb imperialism and the self-defence of Yugoslavia’s other nations.

She traces the break-up back to 1981, when Belgrade imposed martial law in the Albanian-populated province of Kosovo. It was a “watershed”, a decisive break with Tito’s policy of bureaucratically-regulated equality for the nations in Yugoslavia.

Over the 1980s, as Yugoslavia wallowed in economic crisis and the ruling party (the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, LCY) lost its coherence, nationalism grew. It grew especially in Serbia, the strongest of the Yugoslav nations. It drew in most of the Serb intellectuals who had previously criticised the regime from a left-wing, democratic, and would-be Marxist angle.

In late 1987 Slobodan Milosevic won control of the Serbian CP, and started a campaign of mass nationalist demonstrations around the alleged persecution of the Serb minority in Kosovo. In reality the Albanian majority was being persecuted by Serb power.

Milosevic’s campaign broke up both the

LCY and the Yugoslav federal government. By defying the LCY’s call for him to stop the mass demonstrations, he wrecked its authority. By ousting the top people in Vojvodina, Kosovo and Montenegro, and replacing them with his stooges, he got control of four of the eight votes in the Federal Presidency, enough to neutralise it.

There were also mass strikes in 1988, as the economic crisis bit into working-class living standards. In an article from September 1988, reprinted in the book, Magas wrote: “The Federal Assembly has been visited by striking workers from Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia. But their slogans included no specifically Macedonian, Albanian, Serb, Moslem or Croat national demands. The workers instead denounced their political dispossession as a class...”

“The country’s republican and provincial leaderships have been trying to co-opt their workers by fanning at best a sense of national self-sufficiency and at worst an atmosphere of nationalist revanchism... The democratic movement must remain independent; it must hegemonise the national question... it must become all-Yugoslav or the rightist offensive will triumph”.

But the left, democratic opposition did not become all-Yugoslav. It remained confined mostly to Slovenia, and utterly without grip on events.

In February 1990, after revolutions had swept the rest of Eastern Europe, the LCY broke up into national parties. Elections followed in the various republics. In Slovenia and Croatia, right-wing nationalists won; in Serbia, Milosevic’s CP (renamed Socialist Party) kept control.

Serbia and the Yugoslav federal army (its officers 67% Serb or Montenegrin), prepared for war. “In Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia and partially also Slovenia, Territorial Defence forces were disarmed. In Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serb municipalities were armed. In both republics, but especially in Croatia, majority

Serb areas were encouraged to declare themselves independent from the central republican authorities.

“In the armed forces, unreliable officers holding important posts — especially those of Slovene or Croat origin — were retired and replaced by Serb officers... New corps, under the direct command of the Ministry of Defence, were installed in certain sensitive areas such as the Croatian city of Knin [the biggest Serb-majority town in Croatia]...”

“In the first half of 1991, several attempts were made to bring down the new government in Croatia and/or place the country as a whole under military rule”.

Open war began with invasions by the Serb/federal armed forces after Slovenia and Croatia declared independence in June 1991. Milosevic quickly gave up on Slovenia, but

conquered one-third of Croatia, driving out the Croat population. A ceasefire was fixed by the UN, but it amounts only to UN forces supervising Serb control in that conquered one-third of Croatia.

In October 1991, leaders of the Serb minority in Bosnia-Herzegovina had declared a “Serb Republic of Bosnia”. Open war broke out there after a referendum in March 1992 went for independence, and rages still.

Didn’t the Serb-populated areas in Croatia and Bosnia have the democratic right to secede to Serbia? Magas argues not. Given the overlapping and intermixing of peoples in the area, it is impossible to have tidy, homogeneous states. For every small enclave to be sovereign can only lead to the area becoming like Lebanon, a patchwork of petty warlord domains. The frontiers within Tito’s Yugoslav federation were about as fair as they could be.

Serbia claimed two districts especially in Croatia, eastern Slavonia (round Osijek and Vukovar) and the area round Knin. (In fact it conquered much larger areas).

Eastern Slavonia adjoins Serbia; but before the war Serbs were only a 14% minority there. They were also a minority in every one of the district’s nine municipalities.

The area round Knin had a Serb majority (69%). But it is a long way from Serbia; it was economically integrated into Croatia, and cutting it out from Croatia cripples communications between Zagreb and the coast. Ceding it to Serbia would create a worse minority problem than it could solve, since the Croat minority in the Knin area (22%) was much bigger than the Serb minority in the whole of Croatia (12%). Moreover, since only 27% of Croatia’s Serbs lived in the area round Knin, the problem of the Serb minority in Croatia could not be helped much by cession of that area.

Magas’s basic argument seems sound to me, but I am dubious about three points. First: her answer is self-determination for the eight units of the old Yugoslav federation: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Vojvodina, Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia. This seems to me not so much wrong as ill-focused and out-of-date.

If a businesslike international conference had been held in early 1990, say, to settle the consequences of the collapse of the LCY and thus of centralised authority in Yugoslavia, then Magas’s would have been

**“The job for socialists is not to produce good agendas for our rulers’ diplomacy, but to find a basis on which workers of the different nations can unite and lead their nations to reconciliation.”**

**“The gist of the conflicts is a battle between Serb imperialism and the self-defence of Yugoslavia’s other nations.”**



a good formula for its negotiations.

But no such conference was held. No such conference is likely to be held. In any case the main job for working-class socialists is not to produce good agendas for our rulers’ diplomacy, but to find a basis on which workers of the different nations in the area can unite and lead their nations to reconciliation.

That basis can only be consistent democracy, with full rights for all nations and minorities; opposition to all the chauvinist warlords; and a search for a new Balkan Federation.

What does “self-determination for Bosnia-Herzegovina” mean now? Bosnia-Herzegovina is still an internationally recognised state, a member of the UN, with a recognised government, and a history as a distinct territory longer than that of any other unit in the area. But its substance, the people, is sharply split into three.

“Ireland without her people means nothing to me”, wrote James Connolly. What does Bosnia-Herzegovina mean without her people? Surely the search for reconciliation between Serbs, Croats, and Muslims must now

be put within a broader framework than restoration of the status quo?

Second: rights for minorities are a vital part of that framework. Magas does call for “full rights to the national minorities”, but she stresses this much less than the maintenance of the old borders.

And her comments on Croatia’s policy are too mild: “the new administration showed itself frequently insensitive in its approach... [to Croatia’s Serbs]”.

According to Misha Glenny’s book *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, Croatia’s new regime after April 1990 adopted the red-and-white chequered shield — an old Croat emblem, but also one used by the Nazi-stooge Croat state in World War 2. It defined Croatia as a state of the Croats, and the Serbs therefore as an alien minority. It made the Latin-script version of Serbo-Croat the only



British and other UN troops (above) have not stopped the slaughter



# collapsed



It defies imagination that Yugoslavia could really have been socialist if it produces such horrors

official language, rejecting the Serbs' Cyrillic-script version (a move, writes Glenn, "as senseless as it was provocative", since almost all Croatia's Serbs spoke Croat variants of Serbo-Croat and used the Latin script). And it reversed the longstanding over-representation of Serbs in Croatia's police and bureaucracy by sacking Serbs.

True, Milosevic had started working for a Greater Serbia before any of that. Glenn is wrong, I think, to make Croat chauvinism *equally* as responsible for the war as Serb chauvinism. But "stupidly chauvinistic" would be a better description of Croatia's policy than "frequently insensitive".

Thirdly, I question Magas's description of Yugoslavia as "socialist", and of the LCY as representing "working-class sovereignty".

In a 1987 polemic, included in this book, against Serb nationalists who claimed that Serb repression in Kosovo was necessary because the Albanians were right-wing, Magas wrote: "It is astonishing to hear it so blandly asserted that a population overwhelmingly raised in socialist Yugoslavia... would — at the nod of King Zog II or Senator Robert Dole — embrace fascism".

Is it not more astonishing to imagine that the Yugoslav working class had built socialism for 45 years before 1990, and had a large and powerful party representing it, the LCY — and then, within months, thanks only to the machinations of a few bureaucrats, the LCY could *vanish completely*, its major remnant (Milosevic's "Socialist Party") could become (in Magas's words) "proto-fascist", and right-wing and pro-capitalist nationalism could triumph everywhere?

The descriptions of Yugoslavia as "socialist" and the LCY as representing the working class also fit ill with facts detailed by Magas.

Inequality of incomes in Yugoslavia was as bad as in the West. (The figures are from the 1980s, but inequality did not start then: Tito took the old royal palaces for himself immediately on gaining power). Inequality between the nations grew constantly: in

1947 Slovenia produced 3.3 times as much per head of population as Kosovo, and in 1988, 7.4 times as much.

The state was bureaucratic, with no free elections; if it ruled mostly by consent, it was a bureaucratically-controlled consent. The party had no free political life and was dominated by managers rather than workers. Yugoslavia's

famous "workers' self-management" was really "an instrument for exploiting the workers" (Magas's words).

In fact Tito's Yugoslavia was not socialist. The different national bureaucracies dominate because they were exploitative *ruling classes* — with a system of exploitation parallel, not superior, to Western capitalism — and because the working class had been suppressed for decades and denied the possibility of organising its own movement.

And this, I think, helps to explain one of the tragedies highlighted in Magas's book: that Yugoslavia's left intelligentsia, once so much more flourishing than any other in Eastern Europe, has faded so ignominiously. Its efforts were focused on loyal criticism of and advice to the LCY rather than building an independent workers' movement.

**"Yugoslavia's 'workers' self-management' was really an instrument for exploiting the workers."**

## From revolution to decay

**1945:** Tito's Stalinist party takes power, overthrowing the German occupation regime in Serbia and the Nazi-stooge state in Croatia and Bosnia.

**1948:** Stalin, resentful of Tito's independence, denounces him and attempts unsuccessfully to overthrow him.

**1950s and '60s:** Yugoslavia moves away from the strict Stalinist model, adopting a more liberal attitude to dissent and national rights, and ending detailed centralised economic planning. All this is, however, within the framework of a one-party state with monopoly control of the means of production.

**Early '70s:** New constitution gives the six republics and two provinces a lot of autonomy; simultaneously, however, "nationalists" are purged from the ruling party in an effort to ensure that it can hold Yugoslavia together.

**1980:** Tito dies. He is replaced by a eight-person Presidency (one from each republic or province) with a rotating chair.

**1980s:** Yugoslavia goes into deep economic crisis: chronic mass unemployment, high inflation, falling living standards, heavy foreign debt.

**1981:** Kosovo put under martial law.

**1986:** Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences

produces a "Memorandum" arguing that Yugoslav politics have long been dominated by an "anti-Serb conspiracy".

**Late 1987:** Milosevic wins control of Serbian CP.

**1988:** Strikes throughout Yugoslavia. Milosevic organises campaign of mass nationalist demonstrations in Serbia. Ousts local leaderships in Vojvodina and Montenegro and replaces them with his stooges.

**February/March 1989:** Milosevic wins control of Kosovo, suppressing a general strike there.

**February 1990:** The ruling party, the LCY, collapses. Multi-party elections in the various republics.

**August 1990:** Serb "autonomous regions" created in Croatia and Bosnia. Serbia and the federal army prepare for war.

**May 1991:** Federal presidency collapses.

**June 1991:** Slovenia and Croatia declare independence. Serbia and federal army attack Slovenia briefly, but withdraw quickly. Major war in Croatia.

**1992:** UN-sponsored ceasefire in Croatia leaves Serbs in control of one-third of the country. Bosnia-Herzegovina declares independence, and war breaks out there.

## Are strikes old fashioned?

Stan Crooke reviews *Unions: A New Direction*, a Democratic Left [ex-CP] pamphlet

**W**RITTEN BY GEORGE Bolton, President of the Scottish NUM and a prominent member of the "Democratic Left" (formerly the Communist Party), this booklet sums up the Democratic Left's strategy for the future of trade unionism.

Bolton argues that if they "tap into public opinion, trade unionists can force defeats and U-turns on this government".

Hence the decision of the Scottish NUM to organise a march from Glasgow to London by seven of its members, and to appeal for a five minute electricity switch-off during the evening of the march's arrival in London.

"Each element," Bolton explains, "had the prospect of gaining broad public support... Those demanding general strikes want to promote a big idea, but in reality, they have missed it. The big idea that has emerged is the power of public opinion."

It would have been squandered if the NUM had adopted "a narrow labour movement perspective of strikes and support demonstrations".

Examples of public support for the march cited by Bolton include, of course, the churches, as well as Tory-controlled councils, the House of Fraser (owners of Harrod's), and the police:

"The police contributed to the bucket collections. They were clearly under pressure from a growing crime wave that they could not control and were seeking a new involvement with society in an attempt to build a new trust... Each marcher received a commemorative plate from the Police Federation."

Having public opinion on your side is useful for workers in struggle. It was very useful for the miners last October. But that consideration alone cannot determine tactics. In any case, workers involved in "traditional" industrial disputes, such as the Timex workers in Dundee, often enjoy widespread public support. *Because they strike — that is, fight.*

Bolton's arguments against strike action take as their target an irrelevancy: the demand by the Socialist Workers' Party last October for a "General Strike Now". You can hardly blame Bolton for using the idiocies of the SWP as a scarecrow against the left, but of course, there is no logical connection between rejecting the SWP's vapid sloganising and accepting Bolton's arguments about the alleged power of public opinion.

The logic of Bolton's arguments about trade unions building broad alliances (even apparently with the police!) to influence public opinion is that the unions should end their links with the Labour Party.

After all, how can the unions hope to build alliances with Tories, Liberal Democrats and the Scottish Nationalist Party as long as they remain organisationally tied to the Labour Party?

But whereas other members of the Democratic Left, such as NCU National Executive member Terry Wilde, have argued explicitly for ending Labour-union links, Bolton merely hints at this in his booklet.

Only one proposal in Bolton's pamphlet has any merit: his suggestion that "time servers and bureaucrats" must be replaced with activists.

And what better time server and bureaucrat to start with than George Bolton himself?



# When capitalists fought the state

In this extract from his "Lecture on the State", Lenin describes the feudal state — the state of the landowning classes on the Middle Ages — and how it was overthrown by bourgeois revolutions like those in England in the 1640s and France in 1789-93. While capitalists today denounce the whole idea of revolution as either impossible or destructive, their own order of society is based on their revolutions.

**T**HE CHANGE IN THE form of exploitation transformed the slave-owning state into the feudal state. This was of immense importance. In slave-owning society the slave enjoyed no rights whatever and was not regarded as a human being; in feudal society the peasant was bound to the soil. The chief distinguishing feature of serfdom was that the peasants (and at that time the peasants constituted the majority; the urban population was still very small) were considered bound to the land — this is the very basis of "serfdom". The peasant might work a definite number of days for himself on the plot assigned to him by the landlord; on the other days the peasant serf worked for his lord. The essence of class society remained — society was based on class exploitation. Only the owners of the land could enjoy full rights; the peasants had no rights at all. In practice their condition differed very little from the condition of slaves in the slave-owning state. Nevertheless, a wider road was opened for their emancipation, for the emancipation of the peasants, since the peasant serf was not regarded as the direct property of the lord. He could work part of his time on his own plot, could, so to speak, belong to himself to some extent; and with the wider opportunities for the development of exchange and trade relations the feudal system steadily disintegrated and the scope of emancipation of the peasantry steadily widened. Feudal society was always more complex than slave society. There was a greater development of trade and industry, which even in those days led to capitalism. In the Middle Ages feudalism predominated. And here too the forms of state varied, here too we find both the monarchy and the republic, although the latter was much more weakly expressed. But always the feudal lord was regarded as the only ruler. The peasant serfs were deprived of absolutely all political rights.

Neither under slavery nor under the feudal system could a small minority of people dominate over the vast majority without coercion. History is full of the constant attempts of the oppressed classes to throw off oppression. The histo-



The remnants of feudalism

ry of slavery contains records of wars of emancipation from slavery which lasted for decades. Incidentally, the name "Spartacist" now adopted by the German Communists — the only German party which is really fighting against the yoke of capitalism — was adopted by them because Spartacus was one of the most prominent heroes of one of the greatest revolts of slaves, which took place about two thousand years ago. For many years the seemingly omnipotent Roman Empire, which rested entirely on slavery, experienced the shocks and blows of a widespread uprising of slaves who armed and united to form a vast army under the leadership of Spartacus. In the end they were defeated, captured and put to torture by the slave-owners. Such civil wars mark the whole history of the existence of class society. I have just mentioned an example of the greatest of these civil wars in the epoch of slavery. The whole epoch of feudalism is likewise marked by constant uprisings of the peasants. For example, in Germany in the Middle Ages the struggle between the two classes — the landlords and the serfs — assumed wide proportions and was transformed into a civil war of the peasants against the landowners. You are all familiar with similar examples of repeated uprisings of the peasants against the feudal landowners in Russia.

In order to maintain their rule and to preserve their power, the

feudal lords had to have an apparatus by which they could unite under their subjugation a vast number of people and subordinate them to certain laws and regulations; and all these laws fundamentally amounted to one thing — the maintenance of the power of the lords over the peasant serfs. And this was the feudal state, which in Russia, for example, or in quite backward Asiatic countries (where feudalism prevails to this day) differed in form — it was either a republic or a monarchy. When the

*"Capitalist society advanced against serfdom, under the slogan of liberty. But it was liberty for those who owned property."*

state was a monarchy, the rule of one person was recognised; when it was a republic, the participation of the elected representatives of landowning society was in one degree or another recognised — this was in feudal society. Feudal society represented a division of classes under which the vast majority — the peasant serfs — were completely subjected to an insignificant minority — the owners of the land.

The development of trade, the development of commodity exchange, led to the emergence of a new class — the capitalists. Capital took shape at the close of the Middle Ages when, after the discovery of America, world trade developed enormously, when the quantity of precious metals increased, when silver and gold became the medium of exchange, when money circulation made it possible for individuals to possess tremendous wealth. Silver and

gold were recognised as wealth all over the world. The economic power of the landowning class declined and the power of the new class — the representatives of capital — developed. The reconstruction of society was such that all citizens seemed to be equal, the old division into slave-owners and slaves disappeared, all were regarded as equal before the law irrespective of what capital each owned; whether he owned land as private property, or was a poor man who owned nothing but his labour-power — all were equal before the law. The law protects everybody equally; it protects the property of those who have it from attack by the masses who, possessing no property, possessing nothing but their labour-power, grow steadily impoverished and ruined and become converted into proletarians. Such is capitalist society.

[Capitalist] society advanced against serfdom, against the old feudal system, under the slogan of liberty. But it was liberty for those who owned property. And when feudalism was shattered, which occurred at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century — in Russia it occurred later than in other countries, in 1861 — the feudal state was then superseded by the capitalist state, which proclaims liberty for the whole people as its slogan, which declares that it expresses the will of the whole people and denies that it is a class state. And here there developed a struggle between the socialists, who are fighting for the liberty of the whole people, and the capitalist state — a struggle which has led to the creation of the Soviet Socialist Republic and which is spreading all over the world.

Alliance for Workers' Liberty meetings

**Thurs 13 May**

*"Ireland — the socialist solution"*

Manchester AWL meeting. 8.00, Unicorn pub. Speaker: Sean Matgamna.

*"Education in crisis"*

Leeds AWL meeting. 8.00, Adelphi pub.

**Weds 19 May**

*"Abortion rights — demand a woman's right to choose"*

Glasgow AWL meeting. 7.30, Partick Burgh Halls.

*"Socialists and the collapse of Yugoslavia"*

AWL London Forum with Martin Thomas and Branka Magas. 7.30, Lambeth Town Hall (Brixton tube).

**Thurs 20 May**

*"The socialist solution to crime"*

York University AWL meeting. 7.30, Goodricke College, G120.

*"How to fight the cuts"*

Islington AWL meeting. 7.30, Builder's Arms, 140 St Paul's Road, London N1. Speakers: Alice Sharp, an AWL teacher and an Islington NALGO member.

*Students and youth*

**Thurs 13 May**

*Lobby of Parliament Against Voluntary Membership*

12 noon. Organised by Save Our Student Unions.

*Fighting racism*

**Saturday 15 May**

*ANL march on BNP HQ*

Assemble: 10.30, St Nicholas Church Gardens, Plumstead High Street, London SE18.

*Nursery closures*

**Thurs 13 May**

*Stop Islington Council closing nurseries!*

Rally: 12.30, Education Office, Laycock Street, Islington.

*Women*

**Saturday 22 May**

*Women and the Public Sector day school*

Organised by Women for Socialism. 10.30-4.30, Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, Holborn, London.

*Unions*

**Saturday 22 May**

*TUC Conference "Organising for recovery"*

Congress House, London. Details from: 071-278 4430.

*Economics*

**Fri 9 - Sun 11 July**

*Conference of Socialist Economists*

Leeds University. Details: 0532-334465.



# Bureaucrats and stubborn losers

## Cinema

Belinda Weaver reviews  
*The Story of Qiu Ju*

**T**HE STORY OF QIU JU is a bit disappointing, coming as it does after last year's dramatic and visually splendid *Raise the Red Lantern* from the same director, Zhang Yimou.

*Qiu Ju* is an altogether quieter tale, set in a peasant community in northern China. It is the first of Zhang's four films to be set in the present, not the past. It is also the first to be approved by the Chinese authorities, who have banned his previous films.

Qiu Ju is a pregnant young woman who complains to the authorities when her husband, Qinglai, is assaulted by the village chief, Wang Shantang.

Qinglai had taunted Wang about his lack of a son. Wang, who, in violation of China's single child policy, has three daughters, retaliates by kicking Qinglai in the groin.

Qiu Ju's complaint to the village's Public Service Board Officer, Li, is taken seriously, but when she is unhappy with the compensation offered (money only, no apology), she takes her complaint higher up, first to the district, then to the city. When all these mediators hand down the same decision, she eventually goes to court, but there too the original decision is upheld.

No-one can see what Qiu Ju is grumbling about. Wang has agreed to pay the medical bills, and to reimburse Qinglai for lost wages.

Qiu Ju's is a moral stand. Rejecting the money as irrelevant, she wants Wang to admit he was wrong, and to apologise. Wang, however, refuses; he doesn't want to lose face.

The authorities back him up; no-one thinks Qiu Ju is reasonable. There is an implicit criticism of Chinese bureaucracy here; that it's



"It's the peripherals, the glimpses of life in China today, that hold one's interest"

concerned with material matters only, not with any larger issues of morality and accountability.

It's also dominated by men, who sympathise far more with Wang for having no male child than with Qinglai for his beating.

When Qiu Ju first reports the attack, Officer Li tries to blame Qinglai, and advises Qiu Ju to go home and do some self-criticism. She is not averse to that; but where is Wang's self-criticism? Far from exhibiting any shame or remorse, he flings Qiu Ju's money in the dirt. He wants her to grovel for it.

A stubborn woman's quest for justice should make interesting cinema, but it's the peripherals, the glimpses of life in China today, that

hold one's interest. In contrast, the central quest seems slow and wearisome. Battering down bureaucracy's doors may be something most people have to do, but the film's semi-documentary style puts us in the waiting room too.

Points are made undramatically. When Qiu Ju realises that all the PSB officials are simply rubber-stamping their colleagues' earlier decisions, she begins to doubt whether mediation can give her what she wants.

The law seems a better option. "This time, the right thing will be done," her lawyer assures her. "Don't worry. I do this every day."

Qiu Ju is sceptical. "People pay you to do this every day, and every

day, the right thing is done?"

If the film has sympathised all along with Qiu Ju, its sympathy seems to desert her in the final scene. Wang is arrested for assault, and though Qiu Ju is distraught — it's not what she wanted — the film implies it's her fault. She went too far. She should have accepted conventional wisdom. She should have buckled under.

It's the only false note in the film. Wang's assault is forgotten; it's as if he were imprisoned for spiting Qiu Ju.

Qiu Ju did go far; she went very far, but Qinglai really was wounded. There must be some sanction within society for violence, even if detention and punishment is not the answer.

Why not finish on Wang's getting more than he expected because he was too pigheaded to back down? The concentration on Qiu Ju's stubbornness seems like a sop to the authorities.

They're pleased with the film. They think it makes China look good. After all, Qiu Ju's village isn't poor; people help her out; she gets a full hearing.

Yet there's no democracy at all in Qiu Ju's world, and precious little protection for her from corrupt, grasping people in the towns and cities.

The fact that some people and some officials help Qiu Ju is irrelevant; they could just as easily treat her abominably. She is at their mercy. Everyone is at their mercy when people have no say in the running of their lives.

Qiu Ju stood up for her interests, and stood up against a lot of opposition. She still lost. Maybe that's what the Chinese authorities find so comforting about the film.

## Murder most unlikely

### Small screen

Richard Love takes a look at *Brookside's* latest drama

**T**HE PROBLEM WITH *Brookside* is that it is so badly written, acted and produced that even if it dealt well with a serious issue it would still fail to get a message across. And so it was with the drawn-out killing of a particularly nasty man last week.

He has been beating and sexually abusing his wife and eldest daughter for some years. She moved into a safe house on the Close. He found her, wormed his way back into the home with flattery and promises of being a reformed character, started abusing his wife again and then started to abuse both his daughters.

His eldest daughter and wife plotted to kill him, and after some very poor dramatics they finally succeeded.

The producers have attempted to highlight some important issues and tackle a few myths about domestic violence and sexual abuse. The viewer has no sympathy whatsoever with the abuser and is relieved to see him dead so that he can longer go on abusing the family.

The viewer is also left feeling that the authorities are rubbish at dealing with such situations, and that in the end the wife and daughter had no choice.

However the viewer is also left feeling 'what a load of rubbish, I don't believe this'.

For example, the eldest daughter has a coolness about the killing that makes Hannibal Lector look panicky. The first attempt to kill him with Paracetamol took far too much literary licence (have you tried grinding 100 tablets, putting them in a drink and not noticing it tastes a bit odd, and not throwing them straight back up either?) And why is it that the youngest daughter, who has just started being abused by her father, still has only uncomplicated feelings of love for him?

It is obviously impossible to know how people react under such circumstances but you can spot a mile off that *Brookside* has got it wrong.

No doubt the producers/writers will drag it on for several weeks. Knowing the lack of realism in *Brookside*, the wife and daughter may even get away with it, or will we have another courtroom drama?

In the end it doesn't matter, because we are all unconvinced. It is, after all, just another killing in that quiet suburban Merseyside close that has had only a handful of murders in the last few years.

## Blood on their hands

### Television

Rosalind Robson reviews *Panorama*

**S**MOKING CAUSES CANCER. "WELL," you might say, "don't hold the front page — we've known that for years!"

Yes, but did you know that the scientific evidence for the link between smoking and lung cancer has been available for as long as 40 years? It was first discovered by scientists working for the tobacco industry in USA — and as soon as it was discovered it was covered up.

Over the years many research projects have been funded by the industry in America, only to be immediately squashed or have the findings distorted. This is not surprising, because every single study has shown the link between smoking and some life-threatening disease.

The purpose of the studies has been to make the industry appear health conscious and, when the evidence becomes more widely known, then (as one confidential internal memo put it) to "create doubt about the health charge without actually denying it".

These facts have recently come to light because of major litigation against tobacco companies by cancer patients in the

USA and UK. They were the subject of Monday night's *Panorama* (10 May).

These days we rarely see people smoking on our TV or cinema screens except in "gritty true life" dramas and period pieces. Smoking is no longer very "acceptable".

Back in the early '60s, however, smoking was an everyday and accepted thing. Everyone on TV was lighting up and puffing away constantly.

If the dangers of smoking had been as widely known then as they are now, many people would not have taken it up or would have given up in time. The tobacco companies have blood on their hands!

It has been possible for many years to produce a safer cigarette which gives you the nicotine (which is what the smoker craves) without the other noxious substances. The tobacco companies have never marketed it. Why? Because if you advertise a "safer" cigarette, that means admitting other cigarettes are dangerous.

*Panorama's* main point was that the tobacco companies are liars. What *Panorama* didn't tell us was why the tobacco industry has been allowed to take a lead in medical and scientific research into the dangers of smoking. Why are tobacco companies allowed to carry on marketing dangerous substances to the public? Is it perhaps because these are very large and powerful corporations which provide millions of dollars and pounds in taxes and other income to the state?



# Ex-Yugoslavia: condemn all sides!

## LETTER

**A**FTER READING your article: "Bosnia: Arm the Muslims!" (SO560), I felt compelled to write.

You are indeed different, in many respects, from the rest of the left, the difference resting on your craven, naked capitulation to imperialism and abject abandonment of anything vaguely resembling Marxism (at least that gives you a sort of hideous honesty).

What else is a Marxist to make of your call to "arm the Muslims" à la Margaret Thatcher? This can only mean lining up with Western imperialism, as only they have the motives, means and resources to dish out AK-47's (so to speak). After all, it is not as if the working class of Britain is now the ruling class, has state power, is armed to the teeth and bulging with surplus weaponry.

Your 'justification', or

more accurately excuse, for this slogan, reaches new heights of idiocy and is based entirely upon rotten liberalism, not the scientific Marxist method.

Anyway, your 'logic' runs as follows: Yes, we recognise that, in essence, all sides are equally reactionary, or as you say rather flaccidly: "The Muslims are as bad as the Serbs, or the Serbs are as good as the Muslims". (In this respect alone you are an improvement on the WRP, which cretinously lays the blame on "Serbian fascists and Stalinists".)

However, the Serbs are "stronger than the Muslims," and "well armed". Therefore, socialists have to support their "right to self defence" (even though by your own admission, "it is not necessary to be a socialist or a friend of the working class in order to sympathise with the beleaguered Muslims"). Of course, this means arming the Muslims so that they can give "Serb imperialism" (!!) a run for its money.

Naturally, as you say with

alarming casualness, "If the Muslims were to gain a great military superiority over the Serbs, then quite probably they would take terrible revenge", but presumably that would be OK as far as Socialist Organiser is concerned because it is their "right", after all (and socialists always support "equal rights" don't they?)

Well, this is a sick joke, and the perfect recipe for the deeper imperialist intervention and increased ethnic slaughter, as you cheerfully admit. Your policy can be summarised as follows: The poor Muslims aren't in a position to slaughter large numbers yet, so let's give them the weaponry so that they can go ahead and do so!

Clearly, this is a monstrous position for any organisation which calls itself "socialist" to take and is the very antithesis of the Leninist position. Leninists are not concerned one iota with who is the "big" power and who is the "small" power, or with who attacked "first". This is infantile nonsense and

inevitably leads to a pro-imperialist stance (whatever the subjective 'good intentions' of the person who promotes this view).

The forerunners of *Socialist Organiser* employed exactly this logic to justify their support for the Entente powers during the first imperialist world war: Look, they said, poor old Belgium (which was quite happily indulging in genocidal slaughter in the Congo) is clearly a "small" power

which has been attacked by an aggressive "big" power; it is the task of socialists to support the imperialist Entente war effort, as it is a war in defence of the right of nations to "self-determination" (or as you would put it, "self defence") and to punish 'aggression'.

Leninists, as opposed to liberal/pacifists and anarchists, study each war individually and concretely in a scientific manner, in order to determine the class forces in

operation. If a war is progressive, like the Vietnam war, it is the historic duty of communists to unconditionally support the progressive, anti-imperialist forces. If the war is reactionary, as in the Gulf War or ex-Yugoslavia, it is obligatory to condemn all sides and fight for revolutionary defeatism ("the main enemy is at home," as the Bolshevik slogan said.) Anything else is a betrayal of socialism.

Eddie Ford London SW6.

*Editor's reply: Yes, the capitalists control arms production.*

*Are socialists then duty-bound not to be armed? Would Ford also demand that the Bosnian Muslims starve on principle to avoid being implicated with capitalist food industries?*

*This is what Lenin wrote about Belgium. "The German imperialists shamelessly violated the neutrality of Belgium... Let us suppose that all the states interested in the observation of international treaties declared war on Germany with the demand for the liberation and*

*indemnification of Belgium. In such a case, the sympathies of Socialists would, of course, be on the side of Germany's enemies.*

*"But the whole point is that the... entente is waging war not over Belgium" [but over the division of colonial and semi-colonial spoils].*

*The Marxist line on national conflicts has a lot to do with "big" and "small" powers: it is to stand up for the rights of the smaller, weaker, oppressed nations against the bigger, stronger, oppressing nations.*

*Where two peoples live next to each other, or overlap, then often the relations can change: oppressed can become oppressor. But that cannot justify abandoning the oppressed now. Ford tells the Muslims: no, the big powers are right to stop you getting weapons to defend yourselves against a drive to annihilate you as a community, because if you had weapons you might commit atrocities! Under the "revolutionary" and "communist" rhetoric, this comes down to liberal pacifist hand-wringing.*

## Help us grow!

**T**HE ALLIANCE for Workers' Liberty is putting resources into building links in Ireland. One of our organisers is currently in Ireland; other trips and meetings are planned.

We ask readers and members to help us build the circulation and influence of our ideal in Ireland by sending in donations to our current appeal.

We aim to raise £4,000 by our Workers' Liberty '93 event at the beginning of June. So far, after three weeks, our total stands at £998.80.

Thanks this week to East London AWL for £28.80 from a car boot sale, a reader in Bristol for a £25 donation and Nottingham AWL for £40.

The £4,000 will go to help our work in Ireland, and also buy new computer software to help us produce a better quality paper.

Send donations to AWL, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. (Cheques/POs to "WL Publications").

## AWL Summer Draw

**Our raffle tickets have gone out to members and supporters this week. The raffle will be drawn at Workers' Liberty '93, on Sunday 4 July.**

**First Prize: a weekend in Paris for two.**

**Second Prize: colour television.**

**Third Prize: case of wine.**

**Why not help us by selling tickets round your Labour Party, union or college? Details from Mark on 071-639 7965.**

## Support your paper!

**O**UR SALES drive weekend 1-2 May was an overall success, with most activists and sympathisers out on the streets selling *Socialist Organiser*. Old sales were revived and many new sales started.

Estate sales were particularly successful with anything from half a dozen to 16 papers being sold. Pub sales proved popular in some branches.

Activists in Lancaster, though relatively new to selling *Socialist Organiser*, sold 16 papers at the

University, 10 on an estate sale and 6 at a city centre sale.

We aim to increase the sales of *Socialist Organiser* over the coming months. We want activists and sympathisers to increase their sales, and readers to become sellers.

If you're interested in taking up the fight for socialism, why not take a few copies of *Socialist Organiser* to sell at your workplace, college or school? Phone Jill, our Sales Manager, on 071 639 7967.

## Let's hear it for Ivy and the Girls

By Jim Denham

**T**HAT wonderful film "This is Spinal Tap" long ago held up for ridicule the ludicrous macho pretensions of the rock music scene. It was a well-aimed lampoon, but one that could equally have been applied to the world of jazz and big bands.

Jazz musicians may not wear tight trousers or brandish their instruments as phallic symbols, but their culture is scarcely less sexist: instrumental prowess and musical knowledge are a male preserve, whilst women are either just decorative hangers-on or vocalists — and in either case their most important role is as potential sexual conquests.

We should, therefore, honour Ivy Benson and mourn her passing last week at the age of 79. For fifty years, "Ivy Benson and her All Girl Orchestra" was this country's only professional route into jazz and studio work for serious female instrumentalists. Almost every British

woman jazz player of any note — Betty Smith, Kathy Stobart, Linda Thompson and Annie Whitehead, to name the most obvious — started with the Ivy Benson band.

Ivy was born into a working class family in Leeds just before the First World War. She studied music and saved her wages from a factory job in order to buy a saxophone — a most un-ladylike ambition in those days. The Second World War and conscription meant that most of the established British dance bands/big bands collapsed and Ivy Benson (and her "International Sweethearts of Rhythm") seized the opportunity to step in. Ivy was determined that her band would equal, if not better, its male rivals.

After the war, she persevered, now facing not only the rivalry of the male dance bands, but also the rise of rock 'n' roll, skiffle, beat groups and every successive fad. Keeping an "all girl" big band on the road was no easy task: readers of the *Melody Maker* in the

1960s will remember the permanent weekly ads from Ivy Benson, pleading for female trumpeters, sax-players, trombonists, drummers, etc etc. For many young women a spell with Ivy Benson was a brief glimpse into a world that they enjoyed visiting but wouldn't want to live in. For a few, it was the gateway to a lifetime's career as professional musicians.

She was, by all accounts, a tough cookie. Boyfriends and lesbian relationships were outlawed with equal vigour (although that didn't stop male musicians describing the Benson band as a hot-bed of nymphomania and/or lesbianism). She also had to contend with active sabotage from the male musical "establishment" — some arrangers even put deliberate mistakes into the band's charts in order to humiliate them. Ivy Benson took it all and fought back the best way she knew how: by keeping her "girls" on the road and maintaining a top quality big band against all the odds.



# CPSA Conference: only fighting unity can beat the Moderates

By Trudy Saunders  
(editor, *Viewpoint*)

**T**HIS YEAR'S conference of the civil service union CPSA is meeting against the backdrop of Market Testing — the government's scheme for the mass contracting-out of public services to private profiteers. Tens of thousands of jobs are at risk.

Yet the ridiculously misnamed "Moderate" group who led the union refuses to do anything about it.

So this year's union election results must be a disappointment for the left. The Moderates retained control of the National Executive.

However, there were some

encouraging signs.

Mark Serwotka, the socialist candidate for President, polled over 40% of the vote won by the maverick centre-right "Unity" candidate Albert Astbury, who was backed by both Militant and the Morning Star, the two

big groups in the left of the CPSA bureaucracy.

Mark's vote is particularly significant when you reckon that the main left-wing victory — the election of Chris Baugh as Vice President — was entirely dependent on the extra support

he won from Mark's supporters. Of Baugh's nine and a half thousand votes, nearly one third came from the soft left careerists in the BL84 group.

It has now definitely been established that the Moderates can only be defeated on the basis of fighting policies, and that the coalition needed to beat them must involve the socialist left who comprise one-third of the opposition to the Moderates.

What is needed now is to build an open mass opposition movement in CPSA on the basis of an all-out fight to defeat Market Testing.

The first step towards that would be the calling of an open Left Unity conference.

Despite the "Moderate" election victory the Executive has got two bloody noses at conference. They were defeated on pay, with conference voting to start the 1994 campaign now and to defend national bargaining. They were also defeated on the issue of casuals.

## "CPSA presidential election results

Chambers ("Moderate"): 12,399  
Astbury (Maverick backed by BL and BL84): 7031  
Serwotka (Left): 2870  
Moffat (right wing of BL84): 2337  
Hilton ("Real Moderate"): 1470

**"We have established beyond all doubt that the socialist left is a vital part of opposition in this union. Our campaign has set the agenda. We have established that Market Testing is the issue in this union. My support — despite the witch hunts and slanders — shows this, as does the collapse of the Astbury campaign. We can now look forward to establishing left unity on a fighting basis."**

MARK SERWOTKA

# Scrap the Tory tests!

By a Doncaster NUT member

**T**HE RESULT OF the National Union of Teachers ballot for a boycott of SATs (the Tories' tests for 14 year olds) will be announced sometime during the coming week. The outcome is very likely to be a "yes" vote, as in the NAS/UWT and ATL.

The Tory press is hinting that, following last week's election defeats, the government may make tests voluntary this year, a minimal climbdown in an attempt to divide opposition.

Three central areas for activists to focus on are:

1. Campaigning alongside parents. The Tories' major claim over SATs is that they are "raising standards" and therefore sup-

ported by parents. Expensive pro-SATs publicity campaigns have been targeted at parents. Large numbers of parents withdrawing their kids from the tests, combined with teacher opposition, is clearly the most effective way to defeat them. Building on recent parent initiatives is central.

2. Building joint action. Hostility exists at national and often local level between NUT and NAS/UWT leaderships, but to ordinary teachers this is ludicrous. The SATs boycott is a great opportunity for united campaigning in schools. Some form of Joint Action Committees are the best way to strengthen the dispute and push from below for NUT/NAS/UWT unity. If victimisations occur, unity will be a crucial issue.

3. The left must put forward loudly and clearly our alternatives

to the SATs: teacher assessment for the benefit of pupils, not government dictated tests for the purposes of league tables and selection.

What seems most likely now is a move towards greatly simplified "pen and paper" tests. This is perfectly acceptable to the Tories, possibly what they intended all along. Basing teacher opposition to SATs purely on the issue of

workload pushes things in this direction. In fact, only the NUT has a position against SATs in principle, on educational grounds.

If the fight is to be about more than just tinkering with part of the mechanism through which state schools will be made to compete against one another in an "education market place" our aim has to be to get rid of them altogether.

## NCU: Vote Broad Left!

By a central London BT engineer

Telecom workers are under attack. Management want to push through seven-day working and flexible start times in the per-

sonal services division. But the union's NEC refuse to lead a fight and continue to hold secret negotiations. This leadership must be removed. Vote Broad Left!

# Forty years of the double helix (part 2)

## SCIENCE COLUMN

By Les Hearn

**B**Y THE late 1940s, it was known that DNA was intimately involved in the genetics of living things but the question was "how?". DNA is composed of rather boring sugar residues and phosphate groups, together with four types of base (things that react with acids). How could a complex set of instructions be contained in a molecule made of only six types of sub-unit? A clue to the nature of this involvement came with the discovery that the four DNA bases, adenine, guanine, thymine and cytosine (A, G, T and C) occurred in fixed ratios: A and T came in identical amounts, as did C and G.

Having gained his PhD, James Watson was sent, as part of his research into viruses that infect bacteria, to Europe to find out more about DNA. In Denmark, he attended a lecture by the X-ray crystallographer Lawrence Bragg. This technique, the only sure method

of finding the 3-dimensional structure of a molecule, was originally applied to small non-biological molecules. As the technique developed and the fiendishly involved calculations became easier with the development of computers, it could be applied to bigger biological molecules. Bragg's lecture was devoted to the discovery by Linus Pauling of the existence of helices within the structure of some proteins.

In 1952, Watson was in Cambridge, learning about X-ray crystallography. There he met Francis Crick, a physicist who was also fascinated with the structure of DNA.

Watson and Crick were lucky enough to have access to the excellent X-ray photographs of DNA crystals taken by Rosalind Franklin and Maurice Wilkins. The patterns on the photographs indicated the presence of a helical structure and suggested its dimensions. Franklin was unable to solve the problem satisfactorily and it was Watson and Crick with their models, inspired partly by Pauling's protein helix, who announced in 1953 that DNA was a double helix.

This structure, like a spiral ladder, was made up of sides of alternating phosphate and

sugar sub-units. The rungs were made up of the bases arranged in pairs: an A on one arm was joined by weak bonds to a T on the other and a G on one side was similarly joined to a C on the other.

This breakthrough did not just answer the question of the structure of DNA. It also showed how cell division could result in the inheritance of identical DNA molecules. The DNA would simply peel apart down the middle, like a zip, and matching strands would be added to each part. Now there were two copies, one for each new cell.

How could DNA code for the synthesis of proteins? The bases on one strand would be in a certain order and would be "read" as words corresponding to amino-acids. Soon, the code would be broken and be found to be 64 three-letter words. Each stood for an amino-acid, except for ones that signalled "beginning" or "end". How were the words read? When a gene was to be activated, its DNA strand separated and a message of very similar RNA made. This would be "translated" by special molecules in the cell into a protein.

Even the mechanism of evolution was laid bare as it was

seen that damage to the DNA or rare mistakes in copying it caused mutations which could spread if favourable in effect.

Other advances over the ensuing 40 years have led us to a stage where we are able to identify many of the genes responsible for genetic diseases and even to start trying to replace these with healthy copies. Genes for particular proteins can now be inserted into viruses, bacteria and many other living things. Industries based on producing particular proteins from their genes have turnovers in billions of pounds. Soon, techniques of inserting desirable genes into plants and animals (for disease or pest resistance, for example) will be commonplace. Despite essentially superstitious objections, these are no different in principle from the age-old methods of plant and animal breeding. And the Human Genome Project is sequencing the entire DNA of the human, something which would give us even greater knowledge of our makeup. No doubt, others would have soon found the structure of DNA if Watson and Crick had not got there first, but nevertheless their achievement is an outstanding one.

## Council workers confront pay freeze

By Tony Dale

**L**OCAL COUNCIL white collar workers have put in a £700 flat rate pay claim. This runs up against the Tories 1.5% pay freeze policy.

The employers will be responding to NALGO and other local government unions on 11 May.

All the indications are that the local councils will stick to the Tories 1.5% pay limit. By last year nearly a half of local government white collar workers were officially designated as low paid. And the pay freeze runs side by side with the threat to jobs posed by cuts and privatisation.

Any campaign against the pay freeze must also focus on the threat to jobs.

If NALGO is serious about winning £700, then strike action will be needed.

In 1989 a successful pay campaign was based on a rolling programme of six days' strike action. The memory of 1989 should be rekindled. A similar rolling programme is needed.

Selective indefinite action by "key" groups of workers is popular among sections of NALGO. But this strategy would be a mistake. It leaves the vast majority passive. Their only role will be to

cheer from the sidelines. Indefinite strikes by key groups are likely to be met by lockouts.

The union should start now to prepare the members for a ballot on a rolling programme of six days of national strikes.

## The industrial front

3,000 British Airways pilots are voting this week for strike action over threats to cut their pay. The ballot comes alongside action already being taken by cabin crew who held a one-day strike over the May Day bank holiday. The dispute arose because since BA took over Dan Air they have attempted to stop existing agreements. 18,000 ground staff and clerical workers are also balloting over contracting-out plans.

The TUC Black workers' conference has voted to ensure that its next gathering is based on delegations from Black workers only. This is a big step forward for Black self-organisation because at present delegations include white union full-timers.

NUPE workers at Charing Cross Hospital in west London are balloting for strike action against the threat of closure.

Bankworkers at Barclays have voted to reject management's 1.5% pay offer.



# SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

## Fight contracting-out Don't rely on the law!

By a CPSA member

LAST SATURDAY'S *Observer* (9 May) claimed that European law had more or less scuppered Market Testing in the public sector.

Christopher Chope, ex-Tory Minister and an arch right-winger, responsible for privatisation in the Department of Employment, was quoted as saying that Market Testing was dead.

In the CPSA civil service union, at least, the *Observer* article is being used to reassure members that European Law will save our jobs. Unfortunately it's not so easy.

Certainly European Law has considerably slowed down the pace of Market Testing in the Civil Service. A number of Market Testing exercises have been called off.

But the attacks on the public sector will not stop because of European Law. Many privatisations have been covered by the TUPE regulations, but that hasn't stopped the privatisations.

If the law prevents outside contractors from undercutting terms and conditions immediately, it still won't stop them doing so once the work has been transferred to the private sector.

Part of the Department of Employment was transferred to the private sector under the protection of TUPE. Within a year and a half, pay was cut by 15%, staffing by a half, and redundancy payments down to the legal minimum.

European Law won't stop job-cutting and wage-cutting in in-house bids. It won't stop senior management using the fear of unemployment to get staff to accept worse terms and conditions.

The government is determined to open up the public sector to exploitation by private contractors. The unwritten laws of capitalism are stronger than the written laws of the EC.

We should demand that our union leaders use the law as boldly as possible, but we must also mobilise the members to fight Market Testing privatisation. That is the only sure way to defend jobs, pay and conditions!

# It's time for Timex!

By Pat Reilly

**T**HIS WEEKEND the 12 week old Timex dispute comes to a head. On Saturday 15 May the Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC) and the AEEU have called a demonstration and on Monday 17, the 90 day deadline in the dispute, the Timex strike committee have called a mass picket which will be followed later in the day by a march and rally.

It is essential that both dates are supported but in particular, the Monday mass picket. The STUC and AEEU have not officially supported the Monday picket and have placed some pressure on the Timex shop stewards to play down picketing at the factory gate. There is also a danger that the AEEU will try to do a deal over the heads of the local union officials so it is very important to keep the pressure not only on Timex management but on the trade union leadership also.

It is obvious now that Peter Hall, Managing Director at Timex in Dundee, is waiting for the 90 days to expire before re-employing whoever he



Support is vital on the picket line

likes from the strikers, albeit on poorer terms and conditions. Willie Leslie, Deputy Convenor at Timex, stated on May Day that "no one will be going back to Timex after the 90 days" and the mood is still solid. When you compare this attitude with the compliant and knee crawling response of others in similar situations (Jimmy Airlie and Hoover), then the lessons are clear. When workers are faced with vicious and unscrupulous employers there is only one way to defend their wages and conditions — to stand up and fight! Timex workers have given us a lesson in how to defend trade union rights and conditions of service and it is a lesson that others should learn.

We need thousands of people to turn up both Saturday and Monday to show Peter Hall that we are not going anywhere until all strikers are reinstated and the trade union is recognised. The action this weekend is on part of an escalation of the dispute. Convenor John Kydd is in Norway enlisting the support of the Norwegian TUC And

the Support Group in Dundee have organised a consumer boycott of Timex products which is very successful.

The Timex workers have set the example in defence of workers' rights. No to sweetheart deals and negative trade unionism! Support the Timex strikers!

### Support the Timex strikers Demonstrate!

**Saturday 15 May:**

**Assemble Dundee Square  
11am**

**Monday 17 May:**

**Mass picket 7am**

**Demo assemble 11.45 Rosemount Street**

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**SOCIALIST** Inside this week  
**MALECOLM**  
 Behind the hype  
see page 19

**Buses, rail, pits, public sector**

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