

Soviet crack down



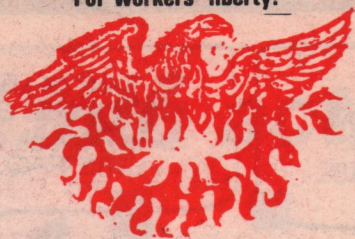
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Ken Loach's Hidden Agenda



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For workers' liberty!

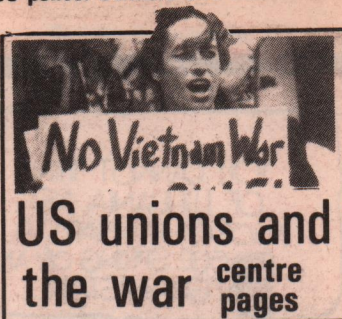


For socialist renewal!

Thatcher's new model socialists



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ORGANISER

The main enemy is at home

Don't let them bring in conscription!

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Resist this war!

By Eric Heffer MP

This war is led by the United States of America. Despite the United Nations resolutions, the whole international community is not involved.

It is a war for oil! A war to maintain American and British hegemony in the Middle East.

The war must be resisted!

I feel very sad for the ordinary soldiers, and airmen — both American, British, French, and all the others — who are out there now. They are just pawns in a game.

They are pawns in the hands of imperialists who are trying to reverse history, to turn the hands of the clock back 30 or 40 years.

Socialists can not, and will not, support the regime of Saddam Hussein. It is an exceptionally vile regime.

But we are totally opposed to the slaughter and destruction of millions of ordinary innocent people in Iraq, Kuwait and elsewhere in the Middle East.

And therefore the entire labour movement should organise to resist this imperialist war in every possible way.

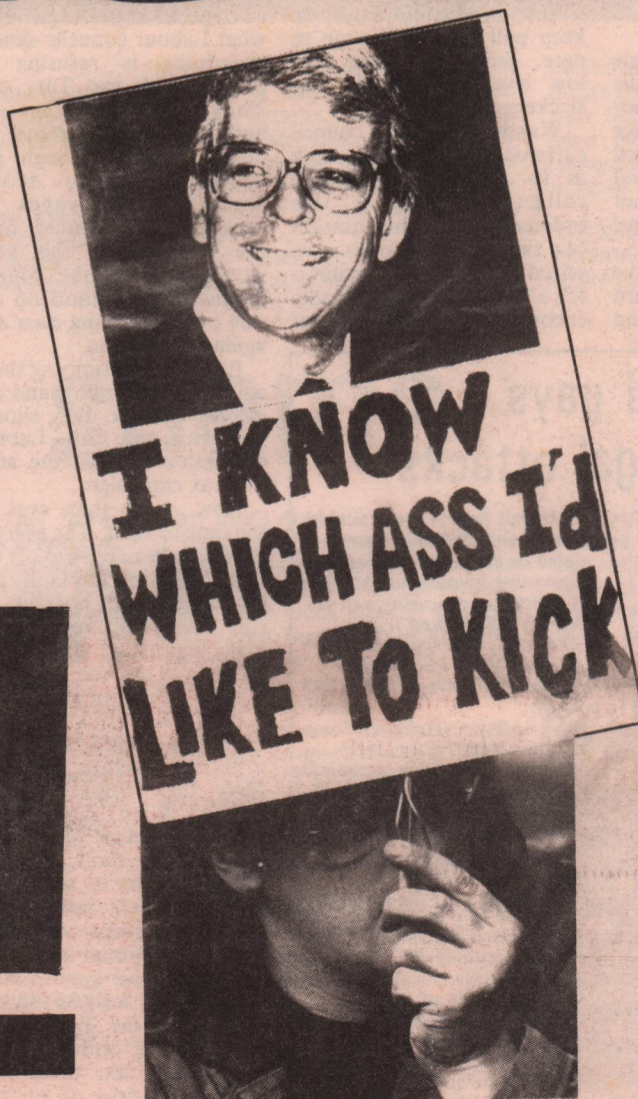
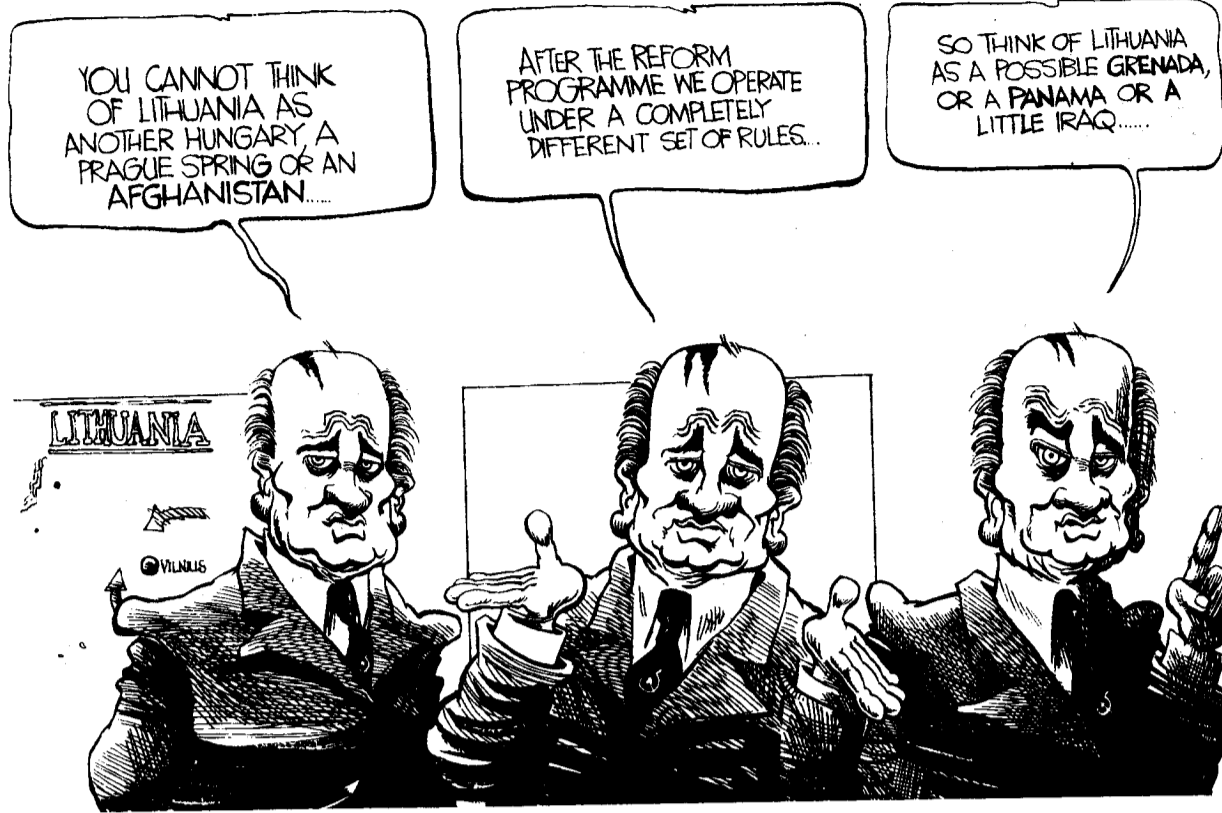


Photo: Paul Herrman (Profile)

Troops out of the Gulf! Iraq out of Kuwait!



Hands off the Baltic states!

By Mark Osborn

The authoritarian crackdown has begun in the USSR. Faced with ever-multiplying chaos and steady progress towards a final break from the USSR by various republics, the Kremlin has cracked down. 14 people died in Lithuania last week, some crushed under the tracks of USSR tanks, as the USSR started to bludgeon the Baltic Republics back into line. President Gorbachev says he did not initiate the crackdown, but he never-

theless defends it. He is now talking of putting an end to the new-born freedom of the press in the USSR! The evidence is that there is mass support in the USSR for a crackdown. Chaos and looming famine and, perhaps, a prospect of large-scale civil war, are not alternatives to the old system that most USSR citizens would choose. Perestroika has failed, and the citizens know it. Socialists in Britain should denounce the crackdown and defend the victims of the new authoritarianism.

Poll tax goes deeper into chaos

By Cate Murphy

No more money for the poll tax. That's the message Michael Heseltine is expected to deliver this week.

A measly £300 million extra in transitional relief is all he has managed to wring out of the Treasury — hardly the radical reforms the arch-enemy of the poll tax promised!

Tory MPs in marginal seats are dismayed: with bills averaging £400 this year, they fear they will pay the price not just in the May council elections, but the next general election too. Abolition is not likely this side of a general election, says Heseltine.

But the Tories have different priorities. Extra money for poll tax relief, and

social services, have fallen victim to the need for huge sums to underwrite the bloody war in the Gulf. Some Tory MPs are even demanding that money be diverted into reducing petrol tax, to stop huge price rises during a Gulf war!

Councils are sinking further into chaos over the tax. A recent report by the Local Government Information Unit reveals that it cost £130 million just to keep poll tax registers up to date. Since December, the low level of payment has slackened off further.

Wandsworth Tory council suffered a setback this week in its attempts to enforce collection, when it was ordered to pay compensation to a family whose goods were seized unlawfully by bailiffs. It's a judgement that can only encourage the non-payment

campaign, and cause councils even bigger headaches.

More and more council trade unionists are taking action, which will surely escalate as councils set cuts budgets for 1991.

In the face of this opposition, what is Labour doing? Pressing ahead with court cases, and seizure of goods, to enforce payment.

In the fact of the continued — indeed, growing — levels of opposition to the poll tax, what Labour councils should be doing is refusing to comply with the Tory tax. They should refuse to authorise bailiffs, refuse to hound people through the courts, refuse to deduct arrears from wages or benefits. They would have the support of the non-payers, and of the council unions if they stood on the side of the working class and against the Tories.

Instead of victimising those councillors who do stand out against the tax, they should be instructing all Labour councillors to join the anti-poll tax campaign.

Now, more than ever, is the time to fight. The poll tax may have been pushed off the front pages by the Gulf, but the anger, and hostility, is still there. By refusing to make significant concessions on the poll tax, the Tories are digging their own grave.

Neil Kinnock should campaign around his call for a general election, to really force the Tories onto the ropes. With opposition mounting against the war for oil in the Gulf, Labour should step up its attacks on this government, not back off in the interests of some mythical 'national unity'.

The unity we want to see is the Labour leaders uniting with those the Tories have impoverished through their unjust poll tax; those who will pay the price of any war in the Gulf — the working class. We must fight against Labour's capitulation to the Tories in our local parties, and force them to back us in our fight against the real enemy — the Tories.

Lesbians and gays fight new legal attacks

Lesbians and gay men — armed with scrubbing brushes, mops and buckets — organised a protest to "scrub the walls of Parliament clean of homophobia and prejudice" on Thursday 17 January at noon.

The protest is against Clause 25 of the Criminal Justice Bill and Paragraph 16 of the guidelines to the 1989 Children's Act.

Clause 25 increases the penalties for consenting homosexual behaviour — "soliciting", "procuring", and "indecenty". Para 16 outlaws the fostering of children by lesbians and gay men.

The protest was organised by the direct action group *OutRage*. Spokesperson Keith Alcorn said: "This legislation is the biggest attack on lesbian and gay rights for more than 30 years. We are protesting against the homophobia of the Conservative Government, which is intensifying institutional discrimination against lesbians and gay men". In 1988 (the latest year for

which full figures are available), more than 2,500 men were convicted or cautioned for the three consenting homosexual offences of soliciting, procuring and indecency (the highest level of convictions and cautions since the mid-1950s, when male homosexuality was still totally illegal).

According to Home Office Minister John Patten, these men are dangerous sex criminals whom the courts should be empowered to punish with harsher sentences to "protect the public from serious harm". This means that if Clause 25 becomes law, at least 2,500 men a year will face higher fines and longer prison sentences for consenting, victimless homosexual behaviour.

Paragraph 16 of the Children's Act guidelines issued by the Department of Health states that "the chosen way of life for some adults may mean that they would not be able to provide a suitable environment for the care and nurture of a child."

No one has a 'right' to be a foster parent. 'Equal rights' and 'gay rights' policies have no place in fostering services.



Bina Kumari

Bina Kumari (left) has suffered blatant racism from white neighbours, the police and the housing department. They have collaborated to force Bina from her home. While Bina has still to face charges in court, those who attacked her have not been brought to trial.

The local housing officer ignored her complaints of racial harassment and at the same time, he himself submitted her to harassment threats and abuse — even accusing her of running 'a brothel'!

For further information contact Bina Kumari Defence Campaign, c/o Birmingham Racial Attacks Monitoring Unit, 339 Dudley Road, Winson Green, Birmingham, or phone 021 454 9500. Photo: Mark Salman

Appeal for help

From Taunton Deane Anti-Poll-Tax Union

During the disturbing events of 20 October (the so-called riot outside Brixton prison) one member of our union, Bas Barsby, was arrested.

His crimes, as far as we can work out, were attacking a riot policeman's truncheon with the back of his head and swearing at a riot policeman. On 4 January he was found guilty on the basis of the lies told by the policeman involved, and fined £500. Costs and expenses make up a total of nearly £1000.

We are busy with fund-raising events, but if your local group could spare a donation it would be a great help. Please send donations to Kim Griffiths, 229 Cheddron Road, Taunton, Somerset.

Busting the bailiffs

By Ian Greaves

As we begin the new year our campaign enters a new phase with local authorities queuing up to unleash their bailiffs — the councils' preferred method of enforcement.

What has become clear to date is that so far as possible the bailiffs utterly ignore the law. They are using the same well-tried illegal practices that they used on rates defaulters.

They have carried out valuations of people's goods by peering through their windows, or just by guesswork, and delivered notices claiming 'walking possession'. They have resorted to lies and subterfuge in order to attempt to gain entry. They have threatened to break in when they have had no authority to do so. They have introduced themselves in all manner of guises, even as social workers, in order to get their feet over the threshold.

The laws governing bailiffs are essentially the same as those traditionally reserved for vampires. Though they

can enter a property through an open window, if it is merely unfastened they cannot open it. If a door is unlocked, they can open it, though not physically break it open.

However, this applies only to the 'outer door' of the premises. Courts have refused to accept that any other door in a property, and in particular those of rooms occupied by tenants or lodgers in larger premises, are

immune from being broken down. Generally speaking, however, provided that all entrance doors are locked and windows closed, the occupier can lawfully refuse to allow the bailiffs to enter the property.

In many areas local campaigns have readily met the challenge of seeing off the bailiffs. Let's continue to follow that lead.

From an article in *Yorkshire 3D*.

Fight Liverpool expulsions

By Stan Crooke

The threat of expulsion hangs over 37 members of the Labour Party in Liverpool, and of suspension over three of the six Constituency Labour Parties in the city.

District Labour Party, the Women's Council, and 29 Labour councillors are already suspended.

The 37 members are named in a trumped-up 'dossier' and have been referred to the National Constitutional Committee, some with a recommendation for expulsion, some with a recommendation for further investigation.

This latest bout of expellomania comes at a time

when the controlling Labour Group (minus its 29 suspended members) on Liverpool City Council continues to run riot, pursuing policies somewhere between those of Milton Friedman and Monty Python.

25,000 summons for unpaid rates for 1989/90 have just been sent out, including to people who are long since dead and to people who are owed rates repayments because of council miscalculations. As a contribution towards the festive spirit, the council also sent out 100 summons for non-payment of the poll tax just before Christmas.

The Labour Group also decided just before Christmas to increase the price of school meals despite the fact that the council is currently more or less in line with the budget adopted for the current financial year.

On the streets and into action!

Resist this war!

The labour movement must resist this war! We here set out our views simply and plainly, point by point.

- The US allied military build-up in the Gulf is imperialist, motivated by a drive for control of oil and for regional power.

US-allied troops out of the Gulf!

- Iraq is a sub-imperialist power, motivated by its invasion of Kuwait by a drive for plunder and for regional power. It is also a brutal totalitarian regime.

We oppose Iraqi sub-imperialism just as we oppose US and British imperialism. Iraq out of Kuwait!

- The US-allied military effort aims not only at forcing Iraq out of Kuwait but also at establishing US domination in the area — permanent US military bases and the reduction of Iraq to semi-colonial status.

None of the misdeeds of the Iraqi regime undo the right to self-determination of the peoples of Iraq.

We support Iraq's right to defend itself against conquest.

- Supporting the national rights of Iraq does not mean in any way supporting the Iraqi regime.

We are for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein: we support the Kurds in their struggle for national liberation, war or no war.

- Israel may be attacked.

We support Israel's right to defend itself.

- We do not support Israel subjugating Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza (or driving them out).

We support the intifada, even if the Palestinians are allied with Iraq.

- The chief campaigning slogan on which an anti-war campaign can be built is Troops out of the Gulf! "No war!"

It is empty words unless it means Troops out.

- We build the Campaign Against War in the Gulf (affiliations, meetings, speakers, petitioning, pickets of army recruiting offices...)

We support demonstrations etc called by the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf.

- In the advent of a long war and mass conscription being introduced we advocate mass defiance.

Our general Marxist view on mass conscription is that socialists go with the masses who are conscripted, they don't opt out. But in this war there could be mass defiance of the call up on a scale where we could make conscription unworkable. We should try to.

The traditional Marxist position would become operational for us



100,000 took to the streets last weekend (Photo: John Harris)

after the bourgeoisie had succeeded in 'normalising' conscription.

We could first respond to moves to reintroduce conscription with calls on working-class and other youth to defy the call-up and burn the 'draft card'.

- Support for Iraq's national rights against US conquest does not mean support for all Iraq's military

actions in war.

We condemn, we do not support, Iraqi-organised or Iraqi-linked guerrilla attacks on civilian targets in the West or in Israel.

- We oppose use of chemical weapons by Iraq; we oppose the use of nuclear weapons by Israel.

- We are against economic sanc-

tions. Either they are a mere token gesture, or they are a preparation for war. Serious sanctions mean an economic blockade. An economic blockade means military force to stop trade. It also means hitting the Iraqi regime by starving the Iraqi people.

(The difference with sanctions against South Africa is (a) those

sanctions are a gesture; no-one thinks they are a preliminary to war with South Africa; (b) there is a mass movement in South Africa demanding sanctions against South Africa).

- We oppose the rounding-up — internment or deportation — of Iraqi civilians in Britain.

Kinnock's shame

On the eve of war, Labour leader Neil Kinnock spoke in the House of Commons fervently for war — more fervently and much more eloquently, indeed, that did Tory prime minister John Major!

Kinnock ended his speech with a plea that sanctions be given more time. But that was in the nature of a humble plea to his masters, Bush and Major, to whose war, whenever they chose to launch it, he had spent most of the speech dedicating himself.

Whatever they did, whenever they did it, Neil Kinnock would be with them.

A considerable number of American Congressmen, Democrats and Republicans alike, have been more critical, more principled, and more humane in their attitude to George Bush's war than has the leader of the British Labour Party!

The difference is that the US Congressmen are serious self-determining bourgeois politicians, and Neil Kinnock has sold his soul and all pretence at political independence to Mrs Thatcher and her successors.

For Kinnock and his team, nothing — not even this murderous and unnecessary war — is more terrible than the prospect that some hesitation on his part will set the Tory press hounds baying at Labour's heels, accusing them of pacifism and lack of patriotism.

So Kinnock and his friends cannot afford to do even the *minimum* job of a *bourgeois* opposition, free from immediate government responsibility: to indulge in calm reflection and probing criticism.

They don't dare.

Even the long-time Labour right-winger Dennis Healey and the former Tory prime minister Edward Heath have made a better showing in this crisis than has Neil Kinnock, the one-time left-winger who is now giving a new meaning to the term "Shadow" Cabinet.

In a ludicrous speech a while back, Neil Kinnock tearfully told us that he would be willing to die for his country. Right now he is helping the Tories and Bush condemn a lot

of people — British, US and Iraqi soldiers, together with men, women and children in Iraq and Kuwait — to death, because he thinks that is the best way, or the only way to secure votes for his party.

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Model Motion

Pass this resolution through your Labour Party or trade union branch

This...

1. Opposes the threat of war in the Gulf.
2. Believes that Bush and Major are prepared to fight a major war which will kill tens of thousands for oil profits and to protect Western oil reserves.
3. Believes that the British-UN forces should be withdrawn from the Gulf.

4. Believes that those Labour MPs who have taken a stand against the war should be supported and that the Labour leadership should follow their example.

This...resolves

1. To write to the Labour Party NEC to urge the Labour Party to campaign against the threat of a Gulf war.
2. To affiliate to the Campaign Against War in the Gulf, and invite a CAWG speaker to our next meeting.
3. To support all initiatives opposed to the threat of war.
4. To organise local public meetings on the Gulf war.
5. To build the anti-war 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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Resist this war!

The Palestinians, Israel and the war

By John O'Mahony

In the House of Commons debate on the Gulf war, Prime Minister John Major had it pointed out to him that the exiled Emir of Kuwait had said he did not object if Kuwait was levelled to the ground provided he got it back.

Major's answer, in so far as there was one, was to say that there were big principles involved (and too bad for the people in Kuwait). It was the spirit of the US general who said of a Vietnamese city that he had to destroy it in order to save it. They say there is a war to liberate Kuwait — but in fact the people living in Kuwait are likely to be among its chief victims.

So are the Palestinian Arabs. The Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza have been under Israeli occupation for over 23 years. Their intifada has gone on for four years.

Militarily, they have little chance against Israel. Israel ignores pro-Palestinian UN resolutions, and its backers, in the first place the US, allow it to.

So most Palestinians support Iraq and Saddam Hussein. They may choose to step up their intifada

now to help Iraq.

If Israel is attacked, they will be caught in the middle. They may face an opportunistic drive by the Israeli government, or freelance Israeli chauvinists, to drive them, or some of them, out of the West Bank.

Socialists must defend the Palestinians. But that is only part of the picture. Israel too is under threat. If he is able to, Saddam Hussein will attack Israel in the hope of thereby dividing his Arab allies from Bush. Israel has the right to defend itself; and Israel, of course, has the military might to hit back.

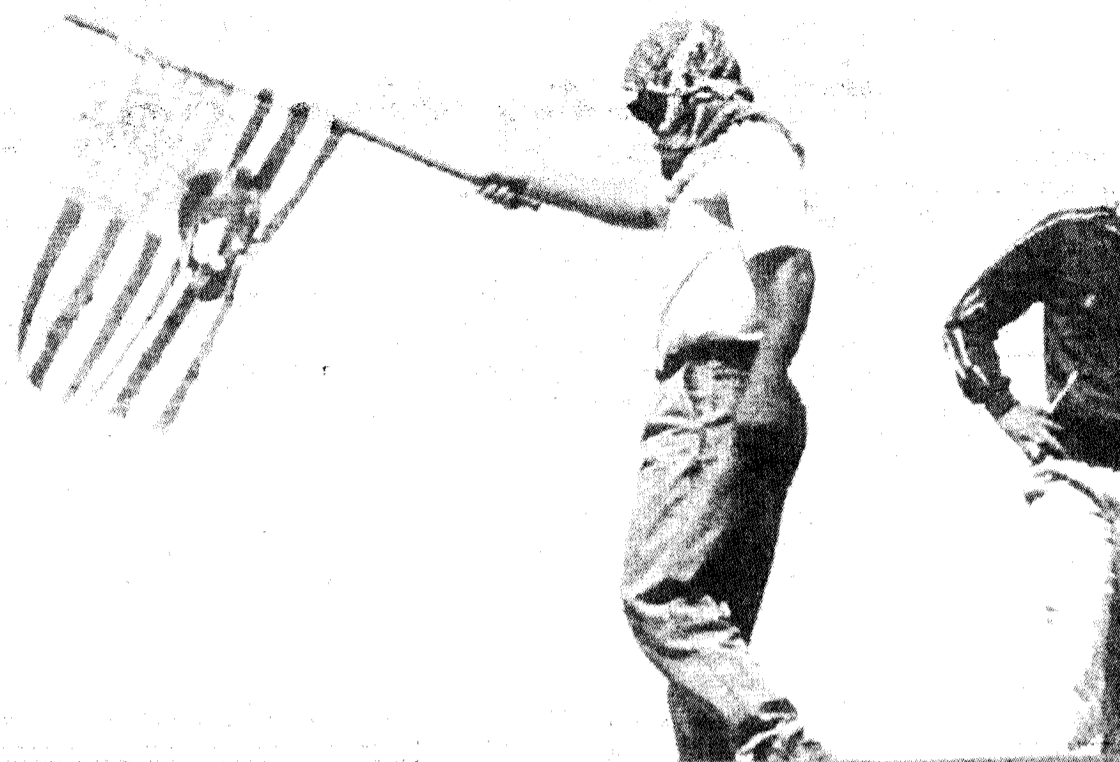
Israel, too, has every motive to encourage the hiving off of Bush's Arab allies, because if the alliance survives the war then there will be immense pressure on Israel to get out of the West Bank and Gaza. Israel has been shown to be not the necessary ally of the West in the region, but a liability.

This jigsaw of conflict does not lend itself to easy or glib sloganising. But it clarifies certain things.

It shows up for nonsense the long-time common leftist view that Israel (and not the Arab bourgeoisies) was essential to the West's influence over and sometimes domination of the Arabs.

The Palestinian Arabs' alliance with Saddam Hussein, based on their understandable hope that he will smash Israel for them, shows up for utopian daydreaming the idea that the solution to the Arab-Jewish conflict lies not in two states for the two peoples — Israel and an independent Palestinian-Arab state — but in a single "secular democratic state" which welds them together in a common and equal citizenship.

Socialists have to keep all the sides of this picture in mind. Supporting Israel's right to exist, we must defend the Palestinian Arabs and support their intifada. Supporting the Palestinians' drive for their own independent state in the West Bank and Gaza, and understanding why it is that they come to be militants in Saddam Hussein's cause, we must continue to reject the demonisation of Israel.



Palestinians burn the Stars and Stripes

Organise the anti-war minority!

After lively sales on the big demonstration last Saturday, 12th, anti-war meetings, demonstrations and vigils are a major focus for *Socialist Organiser* sales this week.

All the big-business press, with the mealy-mouthed semi-exception of the *Guardian*, is backing a blitzkrieg against Iraq. Despite this pro-war barrage, opinion polls show that a very large minority is against war, and a significant minority for 'troops out!' *Socialist Organiser* is one of the few newspapers giving a voice to that large minority — and the only one with the clear-cut call for 'Troops out of the Gulf! Iraq out of Kuwait!' It's vital to get out on the streets, get our message across, and get the anti-war minority organised so that it can build itself into a majority.

Write in and tell us about sales organised in your area! SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

By the time you read this, the casualties in the Gulf may already be in the tens or

hundreds of thousands.

Socialist Organiser has argued for 'Troops Out of the Gulf! Iraq out of Kuwait!' It is the only socialist newspaper in Britain to do so. It has promoted — and SO supporters have been central to building — the Campaign Against War in the Gulf, the only labour-movement-oriented campaign for troops out of the Gulf. *Socialist Organiser* has an urgent and irreplaceable job to do on the Gulf crisis.

Even apart from the Gulf crisis, *Socialist Organiser* has urgent and irreplaceable work to do in 1991. The revolt against the poll tax, the Tories' decision to ditch Thatcher, the limited but unmistakable revival of industrial struggle, all show the confidence and spirit of the working class beginning to revive from the depression caused by mass unemployment and the miners' defeat in 1985. A new economic downturn has started, which could well turn into a full-scale crash.

In this situation we are appealing for funds. We have set a target of £25,000. We are asking for contributors to our '200 Club'; for

donations; for fund-raising activities, jumble sales, raffles, socials, and so on. Donations to, and '200 Club' forms from, SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Subscribe to Socialist Organiser
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£13 for six months;
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Name

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Overseas rates (for a year): Europe £30, US \$90, Australia A\$120.
Giro account number: 367 9624.

Conference Students Against War in the Gulf

Wednesday 23 January
12.00-5.00

Sheffield Poly Students Union, Pond St, Sheffield
Many speakers • Creche & wheelchair access

2 delegates per organisation — £3 (grant), £1 (no grant)

Organised by South Yorkshire Area NUS. Contact Steph Ward, c/o Sheffield University Student Union, Western Bank, Sheffield

Socialists and war: untangling the issues

THE POLITICAL FRONT

Patrick Murphy



War poses real problems for socialists. Once started it will dominate society; in a serious conflict most working-class people are centrally involved, either through conscription or family connections, and there is usually pressure to give support to the least nasty or most democratic side.

In all these circumstances war cannot be ignored in favour of normal business; it comes to dominate our thoughts too. We cannot abstain where most of our class are, by force, involved, and finally we have to decide whether there is any case for taking sides.

War, as Clausewitz famously said, is the continuation of politics by other means. This

is a useful starting point for socialists because it reminds us that our basic ideas don't suddenly become irrelevant. War occurs when the huge conflicts in a society, or between societies, can no longer be resolved by, or mediated through, the normal political institutions. It is, however, a continuation of those conflicts not a new conflict. Imperialist wars have occurred when new powers scramble for a share of world markets in response to the needs of their growing economies (Germany 1890-1914) or when old empires are collapsing and their territory is up for grabs (19th century Turkey).

Wars of national liberation were a major feature of the mid-20th century. In the colonies native capitalism started to ourgrow, and could no longer simply be continued by, foreign control. The interests of socialists here was clear, to support fully the right to independence and self-government. If the class controlling any society through the state is challenged to such an extent that it can no longer continue to rule peacefully the conflict will often explode into civil war. Here the working class is a major actor, defending its own interests, always on the side of increased democracy, freedom, modernity and ultimately its own rule.

A war between capitalist powers, where the basic cause is a scramble to gain new, or protect old, territory can never be justified and is always to be opposed. The question for socialists has always been, how? In the First World War revolutionary socialists advanced the idea of defeatism, they worked for the defeat of their ruling class in war with the aim of exploiting the results of this defeat to overthrow them, the sense of the policy flows from the identity of socialism as an internationalist movement, which does not develop policy on such an issue which applies only to one country.

The fact, for example, that Lenin was for the defeat of Russia in 1914 in no way meant that he was for the victory of Germany. The communist policy in Germany was for the defeat of their government also. They agitated, as much as they could in the circumstances, they gave focus to public discontent and they spread their ideas in the army where most of their class had been conscripted and there was widespread discontent. The success of this strategy was decisive in the victory of the Bolsheviks in 1917, the collapse of most Western socialists into support for war tragically decided the muted and impotent shape of working-class politics in those countries after the war.

Indeed, the failure of other European par-

ties to turn the huge discontent and revolutionary events even after the war into victory was the key factor in isolating the Soviet Union and creating the conditions which led to the rise of Stalinism. Just as for the rulers of society, so too for socialists the stakes in war are extremely high. History allows no reruns.

'Turn the war into a civil war' was the slogan which summed up revolutionary defeatism and it captures the positive and universal nature of the strategy. It is a policy which regards the results of the wars between powers as wholly secondary to the continuing need to overthrow capitalism and replace it with a rational way of governing society.

Defeatism is a policy which 'defies all logic' to liberal commentators and reforming socialists. For them, the existing political powers and institutions are fixed and basically unchangeable. You simply cannot, in their view, be for the defeat of Britain unless you support Galtieri (1982) or Saddam (1991). For us, on the other hand, the issues at stake in the conflicts between capitalist rulers are important only in so far as they affect the ability of the working class of all countries to organise, become self-conscious, overthrow their rulers and govern for themselves. Those are issues worth fighting for.

Resist this war!

Don't let them bring in conscription

A statement by members of the National Union of Students

Defy the call up!

Iraq has a great battle-hardened army of about a million men.

Many of them fought in the eight year Iran-Iraq war, which ended two years ago.

That army can inflict very great casualties on the American, British and Allied forces if it comes to close combat in Kuwait.

Military experts believe that the vast US-British superiority in the air will count for little at that stage. That is what the Iraqi government is counting on.

Casualties on both sides will be massive in a war which could drag on for many months.

That is why conscription is a threat that looms over the youth of Britain and America now.

There is an additional reason why it is possible they will try to bring

back conscription.

After a war the West will probably try to maintain military garrisons in the region. Why?

The war will most likely stimulate a powerful current of Arab nationalism against the imperialist and 'infidel' invaders. The governments now allied to Britain and America may be overthrown by Arab nationalists or Muslim fundamentalists, or both.

The Iraqi state is an artificial entity with a number of conflicting peoples. If it is crippled, then moves by Syria, Turkey and Iran to carve it up in their own interests are a certainty. This will mean prolonged regional instability.

Unless the West is to abandon the interests — oil! — for which this

war is, at root, being fought, then it will have to try to garrison the region, or parts of it.

And there will be resistance, perhaps on a mass scale — perhaps even on a 'Vietnam' scale.

This is the likely result of what has already been done. If the US and Britain now go on to bomb Iraq — Like Cambodia before it — into the stone age, then Arab nationalism and Muslim fundamentalism will be stoked white hot.

US and British soldiers will be needed to continue and develop the present policies, the policies that have led to war, in the new conditions.

The threat of conscription is a real possibility.

We call on all students and work-

ing class youth to resist conscription. Refuse to be conscripted! Act according to the slogan raised in the US during the Vietnam war — 'Hell no, we won't go!'

Socialists have argued in the past that where conscription exists, the socialist should not try to opt out individually but go through the experience with his peers, arguing within the army against militarism, and for socialism.

That policy still applies where conscription has been made the norm in a given situation. It does not apply when, as now, a society which has not had conscription for 30 years may be faced with an attempt to reimpose it.

If we lose the battle to stop conscription then the norm would be for socialists to go with their peers.

We haven't lost yet. Right now students should begin to organise to stop the government bringing in conscription. They should declare that they will not be conscripted.

Hell no — don't go!

- Emma Colyer, NUS National Secretary
- Janine Booth, NUS Women's Officer
- Janine Mitchell, VP FEUD
- Mark Sandell, NUS NEC
- Steph Ward, SYANUS Convenor
- Jeni Bailey, NUS London
- Habda Rashid, FENC
- Gill Cram, FENC
- Kevin Sexton, PSHENC
- Mike Fenwick, WYANUS Convenor
- Elaine Jones, Kent Area NUS Convenor
- Nick Lowles, Campaigns Officer, Sheffield University
- Allison Roche, Women's Officer, Sheffield University
- Mark Lickley, Newcastle Poly General Secretary
- Alice Sharp, Tyne Tees Area NUS Convenor
- Ian Doran, NYANUS Convenor
- Richard Love, MANUS Convenor
- Nick Denton, VP Sheffield Poly

The first casualty

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham

During the First World War, just six war correspondents were allowed onto the Western Front.

They deliberately suppressed all news of the mass slaughter in the trenches, with the result that the British public knew nothing about the appalling human cost of the war until it was all over.

This had nothing to do with protecting the safety of 'our' troops or keeping military secrets from 'the enemy': it was all about maintaining pro-war sentiment at home. The six correspondents were all offered knighthoods for their services to jingoism.

If the Ministry of Defence have their war, something very similar will take place during the war in the Gulf. All correspondents must be accredited by the MoD; they are herded into 'media response teams' under the control of military commanders; all stories and pictures are pooled. The idea is to give the media 'something' and thus prevent accusations of censorship and the risk of uncontrolled independent reporting; it also ensures that all information is filtered at source.

Even Telegraph editor-in-chief Max Hastings, who makes no secret of his belief that the duty of the media is to 'come on side' at times of war, says that 'if we followed the [MoD] guidelines

literally, the papers would just be full of blank spaces."

Of course, the 'guidelines' are misnamed: they are instructions and any correspondent who defies them will be sent packing before you can say 'Sir Peter de la Billière'. Not that there is much danger of any serious attempts to circumvent the 'guidelines': the British press is already solidly 'on side', with even mildly critical commentary limited to a few individual contributors in the *Guardian*, *Independent* and *Mirror*.

The *Sun* and *Star* are competing to outdo each other in crude nationalism (the *Sun* presently leads on points, with a front-page union jack poster to display in your window to show support for Our Boys). The *Mail*, *Express*, *Telegraph* and *Times* are not far behind, though their approach tends more towards the true, Kiplingesque, definition of jingoism: "We don't want to fight/but by jingo if we do..."

And facts are already being distorted, quite apart from the MoD 'guidelines': the whole of the press endorsed the official police figure of 40,000 on last Saturday's anti-war demonstration in London, either ignoring or ridiculing the organisers' much more realistic estimate of 250,000.

As in World War One, the real point behind all the flag-waving, the 'getting on side' and the MoD 'guidelines' is not to boost the morale of 'our boys' in the Gulf (they are not allowed to receive the *Sun* or *Star* because of the topless pin-ups) or even to prevent sensitive information reaching 'the enemy': the real purpose is to whip up pro-war sentiment amongst a British public that, according to all the polls, is in fact divided more or less down the middle on the issue. As always, in war, truth is the first casualty.



Watch out for lies!

America lost the Vietnam war not in the living rooms of America, but in the living rooms of America, into which on uncensored television pumped images of the butchery and carnage the Americans were inflicting on the Vietnamese.

The anti-war movement in the US was a powerful force on the Vietnamese side in the war.

That's what the military analysts think, anyway. The Tory government wants to make sure nothing like that happens in the war. The press is being controlled; TV reporters in the war zone

are to be restricted, and things are so organised — they hope! — that the reporters will serve the war aims of the governments rather than their proper journalistic function: to bring

a true account of events to the readers and viewers.

That's why even less credence than usual can be placed in newspaper and TV reports — and none at all in official reports. When they

tell us that there are no British casualties — as they do after the first day of war, for example — then don't believe them.

As the saying goes: in war, truth is the first casualty.

It's a double standard

WHETTON'S WEEK

A miner's diary

A double standard attitude has been used by President Bush

and the American administration who were responsible for invading Grenada and Panama.

Bush himself was head of CIA and was personally responsible for paying thousands of dollars to Noriega. Now he talks about ridding the world of a dictator!

The UN has passed resolutions on Israeli troops leaving the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but why don't we give Iraq the same sort of time that we are giving to the Israelis? Because there are no

massive oil stocks in the West Bank or Gaza.

The denial that this war is about oil rings very hollow.

In the press we are going to see headlines of the screaming, 'go get 'em boys, kick ass' kind. It may well be that if the war drags on the anti-war movement will grow and people start realising that thousands of people are going to die in horrifying circumstances.

Once the bodies start arriving back home the anti-war movement will grow.

GRAFFITI

Who bears the brunt?

GRAFFITI

Word is in Washington, according to the *Economist* magazine, that the US will turn to conscription if the Gulf war lasts longer than a month.

It is now a notorious fact that conscription during the Vietnam war hauled in working-class, and especially black, youth, while better-off youth like today's Vice-President Dan Quayle could evade it.

The 'economic conscription' which recruits the present volunteer forces is not much less discriminatory. The US army is 28 per cent black (the population at large, only 12 per cent), and only 3 per cent of the armed forces come from the wealthiest 15 per cent of families.

A couple of weeks ago the Bank of New England was the 21st biggest bank in the US, apparently strong and prosperous.

Now the US federal government is having to sink \$2.3 billion into bailing it out. Meanwhile, the state Governor in Rhode Island has shut down 45 banks there as unsound. Nearly 400 banks have collapsed over the last two years in the US, and financial experts there are now worried that some very big ones could collapse in coming months.

Only one bank in the country, JP Morgan, still has an AAA credit rating from Standard and Poor, and the average S&P credit rating for US industrial corporations is now BB, or 'speculative'.

Part of US capitalism' skyscraper of credit has already collapsed, with the mass bankruptcy of 'Savings and Loans' businesses (America's equivalent of building societies).

Since that collapse, experts have been trying to figure out the cost of the government bail-out

operation. Estimates started at about \$150 billion, and have been spiralling as more costs are taken into account. A new estimate, not universally accepted but not a maverick guess either, is \$1,400 billion — or \$7,000 for every child, woman and man in the country.

A British employer is planning to copy the Japanese car company practice of sending supervisors or managers to check at the homes of workers who phone in sick.

And who is it? Islington's Labour council, which eight years ago was flying the Red Flag and displaying Lenin's bust outside the council chamber.

According to leaked minutes reported in the *Islington Chronicle*, a council official remonstrated that workers who were not at home when visited might be at the doctor's surgery. Stuff and nonsense, said 'socialist' council leader Margaret Hodge. "If a member of staff was capable of visiting a doctor's surgery, then they were capable of attending work."

Ms Hodge says her comments have been taken 'out of context'. A macabre context is supplied by the death on 15 January of a shopworker injured in the Cannon Street train crash who insisted on going to work despite her wounds but then collapsed.

Wallasey's Tory MP Lynda Chalker is hoping that Party HQ will step in and impose a 'moderate' candidate on the constituency.

"In the last election," reported the *Guardian* on 16 January, "her majority was slashed from 6,708 to 279 and hers is now one of the most marginal seats in the country..."

"The Labour Party has not yet selected a candidate for Wallasey, but local opinion suggests Chalker could find it hard to defeat Duffy [Lol Duffy, Labour's candidate in 1987, and a left-winger] if he stood again. A more moderate candidate would help her cause..."

So much for the left losing votes for Labour.

Greek school occupations continue:

Did the police dress as anarchists?

From a correspondent in Greece

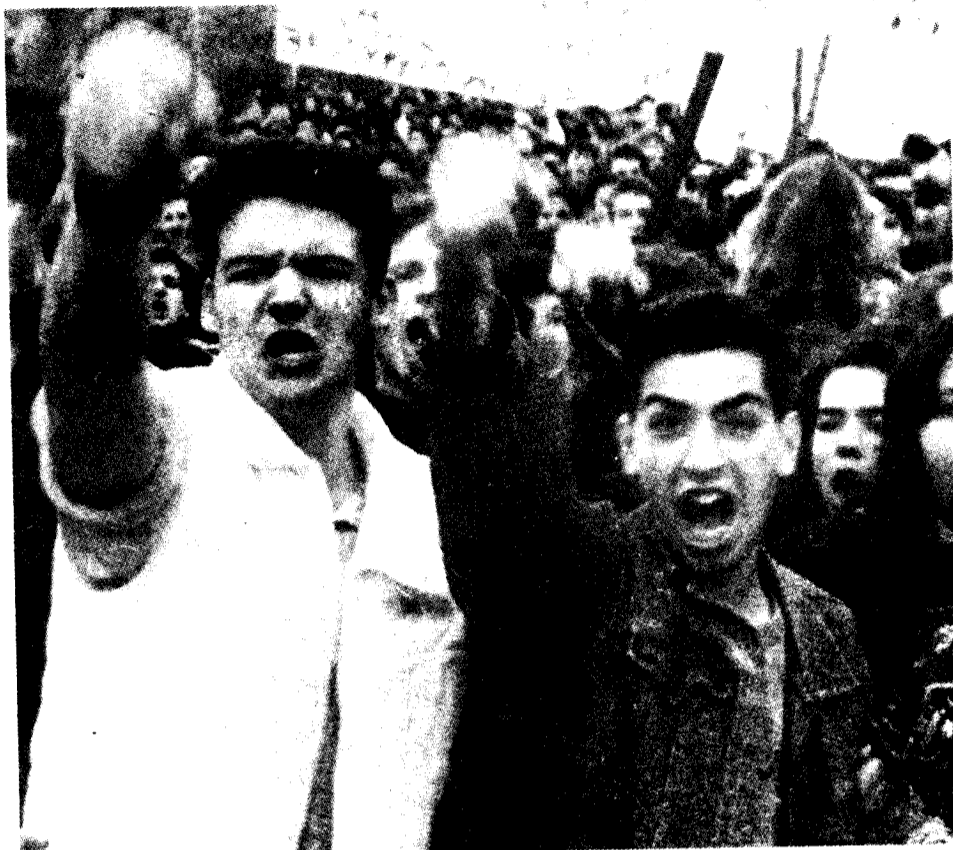
The wave of occupations by secondary school students throughout Greece provoked a major crisis last week with the murder of a school teacher in Patras and the deaths of four people at the end of a school students' demonstration in Athens.

The occupations, which had declined in number during the Christmas holidays, were rekindled at mass meetings of school students on Monday 7 January. The teachers staged a 3-hour stoppage to allow school students to meet and vote. A majority of schools voted to continue or restart their occupations.

The government ordered teachers to start keeping a record of the absences from lessons. Students who missed 50 lessons would have to repeat the school year. The teachers' union instructed its members not to implement this measure.

On Tuesday night in Patras, the chair of the local New Democracy youth group, Kalamokas, who is also a local councillor in the town, led a group of hooded men in an attack on an occupied school. At the time, the local branch of the teachers' union was meeting. The teachers received a phone call about the attack and a number of them hurried to the school. One of the teachers, Nikos Temboneras, was hit on the head with an iron bar. He was clinically dead on arrival at hospital and died the next day.

On Wednesday all teachers throughout Greece struck in protest at the murder. The Education Minister resigned and Prime Minister Mitsotakis announced the



Greek students on the march

withdrawal of the government's education proposals, offering to discuss from square one with the school students, students, teachers and other interested parties.

On Thursday afternoon 80,000 school students, students and trade unionists marched through the centre of Athens to protest at the murder of Temboneras while in towns up and down the country the largest demonstrations in living memory took place.

The Athens march passed off peacefully, but according to the non-party daily paper *Eleftherotypia* while school students were sitting in Omonia Square in the centre of Athens listening to

messages of support from loudspeakers, the riot police began firing tear gas at the demonstrators.

Shortly afterwards a group of hooded youths made their appearance and started fighting the police. The police fired barrage after barrage of tear gas and CS gas at demonstrators and during the battle a department store was set on fire. According to *Eleftherotypia*, eyewitnesses insist that the fire was started by a tear gas cannister fired by the police.

Eleftherotypia claims that firefighters were unable to approach the fire because the riot police continued firing tear gas into the square.

The government blames 'anarchists for the fire.

Firefighters who spoke to the press, supporting the version of events printed in *Eleftherotypia* have been threatened with disciplinary action.

The riot police made no attempt to arrest the 'anarchists' claiming afterwards that it had not been possible, although after a huge second demonstration on Friday which was also followed by rioting, the police made many arrests.

Eleftherotypia is convinced that the confrontation in Athens was staged by the secret service and the riot police. The 'anarchists' were seen approaching the demonstration from side roads where police vehicles were parked.

Safe sex and liberation

WOMEN'S EYE



By Liz Millward

In modern feminism, lifestyle is queen. It's okay to be rich and have a job aboard a gravy train, as long as you never betray prejudice and stick up for lesbian mothers every now and then. I hate the whole lifestyle biz, but the time has come to stick up for lesbian mothers again. Just when you

thought it might be safe to introduce the kids to your lover, the Tories have introduced new regulations on fostering which push lesbians and gay men's relationships with children back into the closet.

The regulations single out lesbians and gay men as unsuitable foster parents, despite masses of evidence that all yes all lesbians and gay men began life through the union of a heterosexual couple. This overwhelming fact should be enough to convince even the Tories that sexuality cannot be taught, only maybe suppressed.

The Tories current thinking on sex and sexuality leans heavily towards suppression, particularly suppression of information. Like everything else sex education has been privatised, taken out of the public domain to be policed by parents. Quite apart from the fact that many children will now be missing out on

the facts of life because their parents are too embarrassed or inhibited by ideas of 'morality' to tell the kids, we are at the beginning of an epidemic which may kill us all.

AIDS cannot be suppressed along with information about sex. Even if people only have sex to produce children, the disease will spread. If we also want to have sex for pleasure we have to have information. Specifically women must have information.

It is too late for many sexually-active women to change their attitude to sex, not at least without a struggle. Many of us, whatever we say, think sex should be spontaneous, happening because we are overcome with passion, and not something to be coldbloodedly thought about, discussed and planned for with our partners. Such women will use condoms and explore safer sex because we are afraid, not because it is automatic, or seems

'natural'.

Young women and girls can be taught now, that sex involves all these things. Today's teachers and school nurses could begin a revolution in sexual behaviour which will not only save lives, but will save unwanted pregnancy and create a generation of women who are comfortable with and responsible for their own sexuality.

AIDS should be the spur for this change. Instead it is the excuse for more suppression, more pathetic 'morality' lectures and more misery. The lifestyle politicians have got it wrong. Their daughters may not die of AIDS but a lot of other people will. Isolated individuals, however 'influential' they may feel, cannot liberate anyone except themselves (and only then if they've got plenty of money). The working class can liberate the whole of humanity. That liberation will also be the liberation of our sexuality and it is long overdue.



Black soldiers pay the price for the rich

Resist this war!



Miners and their supporters demand bread and peace

"The government has used the danger of the Gulf war as an excuse for banning the strikes, but workers have ignored the bans and made 'No to war' one of their main slogans."

Turkish workers fight poverty and war

The Turkish government is one of the biggest supporters of US policy in the Middle East. There are many US bases in Turkey and all the US nuclear weapons in the Middle East are stored there. The Turkish government is enthusiastically pro-war. Turkish workers, however, are fighting back and demanding 'No To War'

80,000 miners, miners' wives and supporters are marching the 150 miles from Zonguldak, a mining area on the Black Sea coast of Turkey, to Ankara, the capital.

On 6 January they were stopped by barricades and tanks set up by troops and police after getting a third of the way to Ankara. Already 326 miners have been arrested.

The 48,000 miners in Zonguldak struck on 1 December in the biggest all-out industrial action in Turkey since the military coup in 1980. There have been daily massive demonstrations in Zonguldak.

NUM pledges solidarity with Turkish miners

On behalf of 55,000 British miners we declare our support and solidarity with the Turkish miners on strike in the city of Zonguldak.

In 1984/85, British miners were on strike to defend our jobs, pits and mining communities against the same kind of policies now being pursued by the Turkish govern-

International solidarity committee formed

6,000 women took to the streets. Shops in Zonguldak were closed for two days in solidarity and parents did not send their children to school for three days to show their support. The Government is threatening pit closures and has brought tens of thousands of soldiers and police to the region from other provinces.

120,000 engineering workers have now also gone on strike, and on 3 January 1991, 1.5 million workers went on a one-day General Strike. The Turkish Government has used the danger of the Gulf War as an excuse for banning the strikes, but workers have ignored the bans and made 'No To War' one of their main slogans. Miners are now intending to march on Ankara.

Halil Elibasi, a miner at the Kozlu pit, said: "I have worked here for 18 years. I earn 400,000 lira (£70 a month). When I went to register two of my children for school, I found that the school books for one of them would cost 120,000 lira. The school books for two of my children will cost me half my monthly wage. What are we supposed to eat this winter?"

In Turkey the official rate of inflation is 55%, the true rate is pro-

bably closer to 80%. An average worker has to work half an hour to earn the price of a loaf of bread, 7 hours to earn the price of a kilo of meat and 800 hours to earn the price of a refrigerator! Since the military coup in 1980, the share of wages in the national income has fallen from 43% to 17.4%.

These new workers' actions represent an important new beginning of the workers' movement in Turkey after the defeats imposed by the military coup in 1980. The miners are saying "a victory for us will be a victory for all". The miners need money and solidarity to keep up their struggle. A committee has been set up in London to build solidarity between British workers and striking miners in Turkey and to strike money to support their struggle.

Will your trade union branch, shop stewards committee or other trade union body sponsor this committee? Can you pass the following resolution:

"This trade union branch/shop stewards committee supports the strike of the miners in Turkey for a decent living wage, in defence of their jobs and for the right to strike and political freedom. We agree to sponsor the Solidarity Committee with The Striking Miners — Turkey, and to donate £xx, to hold regular workplace collections and to invite a speaker from the Solidarity Committee."

Send copies of the resolution to the Solidarity Committee at the address below, and to the Union, Genel Maden Is, Sendikasi, Zonguldak, Turkey. If you have access to a fax machine the number is 010 90 381 366 35.

Solidarity Committee with Striking Miners — Turkey, c/o Trade Union Support Unit, Liberty Hall, 489 Kingsland Road, London E8 4AU. Phone: 071 241 0943.

Solidarity strike in Britain

Historic day ruined by police attacks on striking Turkish and Kurdish workers

On 3 January 1991 in Hackney police officers from Stoke Newington Police Station and the Bow Territorial Support Group (TSG) were involved in a brutal attack on striking Turkish and Kurdish workers from the local clothing factories.

Over 60 people were arrested and three had very serious charges of riot placed against them.

The police's intervention in the industrial dispute was aimed at frightening people from taking part in future activities and deflecting attention away from the main event of the day: namely that 2,500 workers in Hackney, including Turkish, Kurdish, Asian, English and Afro-Caribbean workers, had taken international solidarity action with the millions on strike in Turkey on the same day.

Factories in Shacklewell Lane, Somerford Grove, Victorian Grove, Tyssen St, Tudor Grove and Arcola St were virtually empty as workers refused to cross picket lines. This was a historic day as it is thought to be the largest international solidarity strike action in Britain since the 1950s.

The day was therefore one of celebration and people were very happy. The events were clearly too much for Stoke Newington Police who responded in violent fashion. At 1.15pm, four vans were driven at speeds of over 70mph to the Halkevi community centre on Stoke Newington High St, and officers jumped from the vehicles to race into a crowd of around 120. Five people were grabbed and when friends tried to stop their arrests, around 20 police officers drew their truncheons and bated people to the ground, arresting them as they fell. One woman meanwhile went

to St Barts hospital with a broken leg.

At 2pm a crowd of 150 went to protest outside Stoke Newington police station and when in protest 30 sat down, on the other side of the road to the station, the police paramilitaries of the Bow TSG rushed across the road and violently arrested dozens of people. Others fled, but were pursued by the police in all directions. Many people were arrested with the police paying special attention to those with cameras, and one young Kurdish man was roughly tackled to the ground, beaten, and his camera taken away.

62 people were arrested with four being taken by the police to Homerton hospital. Access to the casualty department was denied by police at the entrance. At 6.30pm over 300 people, mainly Turkish and Kurdish, returned to Stoke Newington police station and remained outside singing and dancing until their friends were released. 29 people have been charged with a serious public order offence.

This was the second time in 10 months that the police have intervened in an industrial dispute in Hackney involving Turkish and Kurdish workers. In February 1990 Bow TSG attacked strikers at Bacton Fashions in Somerford Grove. Four people were arrested and charged with riot and actual bodily harm on police officers. The four were all found not guilty at Snaresbrook Crown Court in November 1990 and they are now suing the police for wrongful arrest and injuries they received whilst in police custody.

The police attacks have strengthened people's determination to support the strike in Turkey. A support committee has been set up with Turkish, Kurdish and English groups and individuals participating. For further details contact Mark or John on 071 249 8086 or 071 249 6930.

Resist this war!

US trade union the anti-war m

By Tom Rigby

Immediately after Bush's decision to commence 'Operation Desert Shield', Lane Kirkland, the leader of the AFL-CIO (the US TUC) offered the whole-hearted support of his federation to the war effort.

He talked of US trade unionists "swinging into action behind the military movement to the Persian Gulf."

Now, after nearly six months of military build-up and under pressure from the growing anti-war movement, the leaders of nine

major US trade unions, representing some 6 million workers, have come out against the White House line.

They are demanding Bush give sanctions more time to work. We print their appeal below.

It is worth noting that the signatories include the leaders of the auto and oil workers' unions.

Nobody should underestimate the significance of this stand. It reflects the growing opposition to war amongst US workers. In a poll this week some 44% of US citizens believed that a Gulf war was not justified. We can expect this initial anti-war stand by the union leaders to become firmer and stronger as popular revulsion at the war grows once the fighting starts.

For the first time since the beginning of the Cold War,

mainstream US labour has come out firmly against the White House's foreign policy. The statement reflects the hard work done by anti-war activists amongst the ranks of US labour.

As Phil Kwik, a reporter on the US trade union paper *Labor Notes* put it: "Over the last few weeks we have seen an explosion in activity by union members on the ground to commit the organisations to an anti-war stand. I think the leaders have taken note of this."

We need exactly the same kind of concentrated campaign in the British trade union and labour movement. It's a crime that many people have allowed themselves to be blackmailed into silence by Kinnock and Kaufman's pro-war stance. Every opponent of this war should stand up and be counted.

Repeat of US labour's support for the Vietnam war unlikely

By Kim Moody

Thirty years ago, when the United States was slipping into a war in South-East Asia, the American labour movement and most of its leadership was nowhere to be seen. We paid a price for that. We're not going to do it again. We're going to be there with you."

That is what Ed Clark, an International vice-president of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, told an anti-war rally of over ten thousand people in Boston.

The December 1 demonstration was one of the first of a series called in opposition to the US military build-up in the Gulf. A national demonstration is scheduled for 26 January in Washington.

This new anti-war movement is no re-run of the early Vietnam war protests. It is not merely traditional peace organisations and students who are enlisting in this cause.

Actively involved this time have been Vietnam veterans, African-Americans and other minority organisations, parents of deployed soldiers, reservists in uniform, and a growing number of rank and file union members and officials.

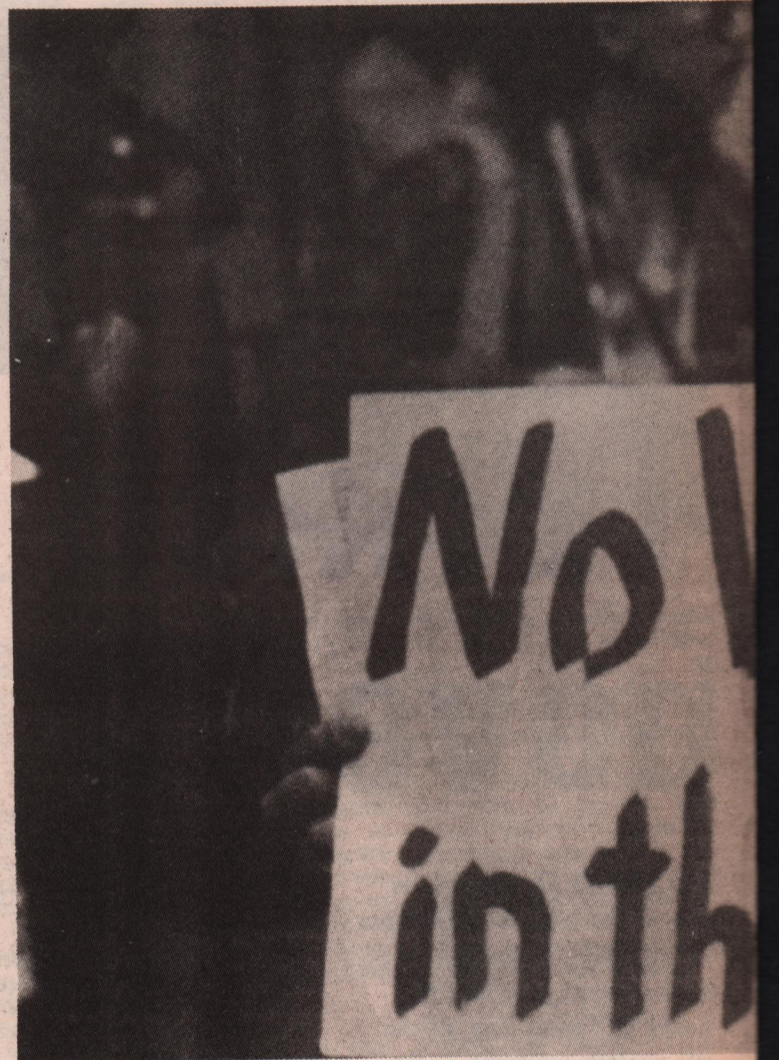
At a December 10 press conference, Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian

Leadership Conference, Coretta Scott King, and Cleveland Robinson, secretary-treasurer of UAW District 65, called for non-violent protests against war on Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday. That is January 15, the same day that the United Nations resolution sanctions the use of force against Iraq by the US and its allies.

Coretta Scott King pointed out that her husband was one of this century's great men of peace, and also an opponent of the war in Vietnam.

Jesse Jackson said that it is working class people, above all African-Americans, who are being sent to Saudi Arabia.

This theme was echoed by Bill Wilder, president of IUE Local 239, who sent a message to the Boston



The US anti-war movement is at a much higher level today than during the Vietnam war.

rally: "The same people who want us to fight a war in the Middle East are waging a war against working people here in this country. The sons and daughters of working people should not have to fight a rich man's war like we did in Vietnam."

Local 239 is on strike against ADT Alarms in Boston.

The national march on Washington planned for 26 January is being organised by an alliance of church, peace, veteran, student, and community organisations.

Labour endorsements for the action were still rare by mid-December. But the presence of unionists in local actions and coalitions has encouraged organisers to seek official labour backing.

Joelle Zola, a member of United Transportation Union Local 898, and an organiser of the Boston rally, said: "In that crowd, if you just looked at the Vietnam veterans who were there and people who came with other organisations, there were a lot of unionists. They weren't officially representing their union. What we want to do now is get the unions together as an organised force for January 26."

A similar effort was being planned in New York, where union officials at both the local and international levels were planning a meeting to discuss organising for the 26th.

The Washington Area Labour Committee on Central America and the Caribbean sponsored a forum on the Gulf crisis on December 13, as a first step in discussing what position labour should take.

In early December the California Federation of Labour, which represents two million union members, came out against the use of US troops in a Middle East war. The resolution called for a stage withdrawal of US forces and the immediate cessation of the troop build-up. The California Fed wants the United Nations to be involved in

Bush's war

Barry Finger reports from New York

As the grisly face of war draws near, opposition to the US military presence has grown dramatically throughout the country.

The American public consensus presently moderately pro-war, threatened with a rapid surge towards polarisation the likes of which took years to coalesce against the Vietnam war.

The looming Iraq confrontation can therefore be expected to escalate shortly on three fronts, a domestic support proves as unreliable as Bush's Mid-East coalition. Fully aware of this, Bush promises the American public a five-day war the ferocity of which he asserts will eclipse anything seen in South East Asia.

The latter, according to right-wing mythology, it should be

An open letter to Bush Let the sanctions work!

We write to you as Presidents of organisations representing proud and patriotic working people.

Because it is working Americans who constitute a high proportion of US military forces, reserves and potential draftees, our members and their spouses, sons and daughters are many among the Operation Desert Shield troops.

We are gravely concerned about the prospect of war in the Persian Gulf and the possibility of a permanent US military presence in the Middle East. We are also concerned that any military action and the resulting casualties will be borne largely by American troops.

We yield to no one in our

condemnation of Saddam Hussein's reckless invasion of Kuwait and join the world community in insisting on Iraq's immediate withdrawal. At the same time, we believe the economic sanctions — the strongest ever levied against a country in peacetime — must be given a chance to work. Because we support our troops, we emphatically oppose the initiation of offensive military action by the United States at this time.

We urge you to let the sanctions work to achieve the maximum pressure on Iraq before any further blood is shed in this conflict.

Morton Bahr, President
Communication Workers of America
Owen Bieber, President

United Auto Workers
William H Bywater, President
International Union of
Electronic Workers
Keith Geiger, President
National Education
Association
James R Herman, President
International Longshoremen
and Warehousemen's Union
George J Kourpias, President
International Association of
Machinists and Aerospace
Workers
Joseph M Misbrenner, President
Oil, Chemical and Atomic
Workers
Jack Sheinkmen, President
Amalgamated Clothing and
Textile Workers Union
John J Sweeney, President
Service Employees
International Union

As join movement



comparable stage of the Vietnam war.

talks between the US and Iraq and favours intensified economic sanctions.

The unanimous action by the Fed's Executive Council followed similar anti-war resolutions passed by Central Labour Councils in San Francisco, Santa Clara County, and Alameda County, and by California locals of the CWA, ILWU,

SEIU, and AFSCME.

As one New York labour activist involved in organising for the January 26 demonstration pointed out, it took years for those unions and high-level officials who opposed US policy in Vietnam and, more recently, Central America, to sign up with the anti-war forces.

That some labour organisations

have done so even before the shooting begins is an indication that working people have grave reservations about shedding lives in a war that the President of the United States can't explain, Congress hasn't voted for, and many suspect is over nothing more than control of oil.

From Labor Notes

drive triggers surging opposition

remembered, was hampered by a misplaced 'humanitarian self-restraint' despite the loss of two million Asian lives.

Beyond this the administration has tried to shore up a sturdy base of working class support by justifying its actions as 'preserving our way of life' and 'saving our jobs'. Because the all-volunteer army is overwhelmingly composed of working class youth in any case, it is felt that the natural ties of class solidarity will translate into a flex of support for the administration.

Failing this, it is hoped that the workers will be unable to assimilate the appeals of a largely privileged student and middle class opposition.

This assessment may yet prove overly optimistic. Today's working class, more battered by union busting, falling living standards and growing suspicions of the American political process, scarcely fits the same profile as that which is prepared to go all the way with

LBJ.

Symptomatic of this is the early endorsement and participation of numerous and major AFL-CIO Labour Councils, such as San Francisco's and locals of AFSCME, the TWU, and the hospital and healthcare workers, as well as the UP in anti-war activities, culminating in the 19-26 January marches on both Washington and San Francisco.

Equally striking is the early mobilisation of anti-war veterans and families of military personnel in opposition to the war drive.

Even as the deadline to war draws near, a virtual eruption of local, uncoordinated anti-war activity has swept the country. Last Sunday a four-hour national teach-in was broadcast by Pacifica Radio. On the heels of this, protests were staged on 15 January in Iowa, in Minnesota, San Francisco to Chicago. In Olympia, Washington, the state house was occupied and the UN headquarters in New York. A

model of the King birthday memorial drew 5,000 to 6,000 demonstrators while 3,000 students gathered spontaneously on the steps of Columbia University.

Throughout the day and evening non-violent vigils, prayer meetings, fasts and candlelight processions marked the solemnity of the occasion.

Unfortunately, unity of the anti-war movement forces has not been achieved, as is testified to by the parallel marches on Washington planned a week apart from one another. And, although the organisers of both share a common 'US Troops Out Now' perspective, only the sponsors of the 26 January demonstration also condemned the Iraqi invasion. Both demonstrations will nevertheless be assured of a massive and overlapping turn-out.

• On Tuesday night a vigil by black Vietnam war veterans outside the UN, which was expected to attract about 50 to 100 people, grew to a demonstration of some 5,000.

International round-up Turkey: workers take to the streets against war

Anti-war sentiment is growing rapidly in Turkey. One Turkish activist described the situation to Socialist Organiser: "Yesterday [Sunday 13th] there was a completely illegal demonstration in Istanbul. Over 50,000 took to the streets chanting 'No to war!'.

"Last week in the town of Iskenderum, near the Syrian border, home of a giant steel complex, something like 40,000 workers took to the streets against war. "Workers know they have no interest in this war."

Anti-war actions in Israel

Adam Keller reports from Tel Aviv

On the afternoon of 14 January, pickets against the impending Gulf war took place in front of the American embassy in Tel Aviv, the American Navy Liaison Office in Haifa, and the American consulate in Jerusalem. The action was initiated by the

'Women and Peace' coalition, and joined by several other groups. Altogether, several hundred people took part.

Slogans included 'Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait - Israel must withdraw from the Occupied Territories', 'American forces out of the Gulf - now!', 'No to Israeli intervention in a Gulf war!'.

Italian workers strike against war

200,000 joined a march for peace in the Gulf in Rome on 12 January, and about 30,000 of them marched behind the banners of the left-wing group Democrazia Proletaria, calling Italian and US forces out of the Gulf.

On 15 January the three trade union federations - Socialist, Communist, and Christian - called a five minute strike for peace, which was widely followed.

In Italy's biggest industrial city, Milan, a group of left-wing trade

unionists called for a further strike for three hours on 16 January, and some tens of thousands of workers responded. 10,000 workers joined with 10,000 students in an anti-war demonstration; 40,000 students had marched the previous day, 15 January.

The anti-war movement in Italy had a slow start, with the country's main opposition party, the Communist Party, supporting the sending of Italian forces to the Gulf; but a minority in the CP is calling for troops out of the Gulf.

France

50,000 joined a march in Paris last Saturday, 12th, to demand troops out of the Gulf.

The biggest contingent was from the CGT, France's largest trade union federation, which is linked to the Communist Party.

The Green Party and the revolutionary left also sponsored the demonstration, and a particularly impressive contingent was organised by the Trotskyist group *Lutte Ouvrière*, chanting "War on war!"

Germany

In Bielefeld, Germany, school students struck on 16 January to protest against the Gulf war. And in Cologne, the public service workers' union OTV has called for a demonstration on 17 January. This is an unusual move for the generally conservative German unions.

There have been many demonstra-

tions of school students, and on 12 January a total of 250,000 people demonstrated in about 100 cities under the peace movement's slogan "No blood for oil!"

Anti-war initiatives have been formed in all major cities, often involving the Social-Democratic youth movement as well as smaller left groups.

Australia

5,000 demonstrated for peace in Sydney at midday on Wednesday 16 January, and a similar number in Melbourne.

There is a round-the-clock vigil at the US consulate in Sydney, and further demonstrations have been called for

the 26th.

Australia's Labor government has supported the US in the Gulf without even consulting Parliament, but a few unions - notably the Building Workers' Industrial Union - have sent their banners to the anti-war protests and a 'Labor Against War' meeting in Parramatta, west of Sydney, last weekend attracted 500.



Demonstration in Paris 'Money for social security not for war'

Thatcher's new model socialists

**AGAINST THE
TIDE**



Ruth Cockroft

John Cole, the BBC's political correspondent, said, after Margaret Thatcher's undignified end, that she was paying the price for having overwhelmed everybody in every way.

It is certainly true that Mrs Thatcher bestrode the political horizon like a colossus. Her style of leadership was highly authoritarian, even, if the rest of the Conservative Party cabinet is to be believed, autocratic.

Yet Mrs Thatcher's demise paradoxically illustrates the point that this reactionary and highly ideological lady championed a set of policies which were not her own alone; in order to maintain power and save the onward march we see, slithering out of the discarded Thatcherite shell, Thatcherism born anew.

Thatcherism with a dull grey face is still a brand of Conservative politics grappling with the deep, crippling contradictions of advanced capitalist society.

Having ditched Thatcher the Tories have succeeded in achieving a huge media trick. Change the personalities and there is a new acceptable brand of politics as part of the package. But the responsibility for the success of this mirage lies with the leadership of the Labour Party.

Neil Kinnock in his passivity handed Labour's lead in the opinion polls back to the Tories on a plate. Unable to offer a vision of a future government of the same radical proportions but a reformist rather than a reactionary character, the Labour Party appears inert and cumbersome.

So why are reformist politics in such a crisis? The Labour Party has been unable to seize the opportunity of an open factional squabble within the Tory Party, the shunning of responsibility for the poll tax, disarray, treachery, confusion and bitterness, and arise from these ashes as the government in waiting.

The answer lies in Neil Kinnock's battle to change the Labour Party into a model social democratic party. The Labour Party's sister organisations in Europe, particularly France and Spain, have demonstrated a style of government that is 'Thatcherite' within their own national boundaries.

All the same principles have been applied — restructuring the economy through privatisation, reducing public expenditure through wholesale cuts in education and health, and presiding over high levels of unemployment.

As in Thatcherite Britain much of the infrastructure of society is allowed to perish, lack of investment results in a poorly trained workforce, restructuring in huge levels of long-term unemployment, chaotic public services, poverty, homelessness and begging, whilst, as a matter of principle, there are hefty tax cuts for the rich.

The state's retreat from 'intervention' in society in terms of providing a minimum level of welfare is, on the other hand, backed up by law reinforcement programmes, greater policing and a corresponding loss of civil liberties. While the Thatcher government's penal record has been truly appalling by



**Those who do not remember the past are
condemned to relive it**

France Adoul: 'The Guard metes out punishment', Ravensbruck, 1944-45. In the Nazi murder camps some inmates

somehow managed to make a graphic record of their world. This ink drawing is taken from 'Art of the Holocaust', by Janet Blatter

and Sybil Milton, with a preface by Irving Howe

anyone's standards, Labour governments in Australia, Spain and France have used heavy policing tactics in dealing with labour movement unrest and demonstrations.

The state planning of the post-world war Keynesian consensus has been knocked out of economic life by the spirit of free enterprise and unregulated market controls. These Labour governments have adopted this ideology and manipulated their special relationship with working class organisations in order to impose austerity measures, wage restraint and flexible working conditions.

Kinnock knows that a future Labour government would have to handle the marriage between trade unions and the party especially carefully. It is said that Bob Hawke's Australian government is fearful of a British winter of discontent scenario and learned the lessons well.

Thatcher's project then has not been so much about the style of an individual leader or even about a dynamic Conservative Party leadership who have been brimming with new ideas, but about the wholesale restructuring of the world economy to deal

with recession and volatile markets. The bureaucracy of nationalised industry has proven itself wholly incapable of dealing with these needs, and Labour and Conservative governments the world over have adopted similar strategies as Mrs Thatcher.

Nor is there anything new in these policies. They are, quite simply, good old fashioned laissez faire of the free market, leaving the mythical hidden hand to deal with wealth distribution and social justice. Nationalisation or the monolithic planning of the Stalinist states is out of vogue, not only with the ruling class, but has also been rejected by the majority of the working class. Our real problem is that the politics used to replace these 'socialism from above' ideologies which stressed state power rather than working class democracy are the politics of capitalist restructuring as Kinnock in Britain, Hawke in Australia, Mitterand in France, Gonzalez in Spain, and now Walesa in Poland have all demonstrated.

And the verdict on these politics? If Mrs Thatcher was a colossus that has made her fall all the less graceful.

Mrs Thatcher's project has failed, her commitment to dismantling the welfare state has only partly been carried out, her promise to freeze out of political life the trade union movement has only partially been successful, her intensity about rebuilding the centrality of family life has proved to be socially unacceptable.

The verdict of the *Economist* magazine, a kind of theoretical journal for the bourgeoisie, puts the point like this: "Today, the economic gloom is almost tangible. Inflation above 10%, industrial output falling at an annual rate of 11.5% in the past three months, retail sales falling at 5.75%, unemployment starting to rise: until most of this is put right, talk of the 'Thatcherite miracle' will sound pretty foolish."

All the more foolish then that 'Thatcherism' actually represents a brand of Labour politics both in Britain and abroad. We have to stand, as a small minority, against this stream advocating the only real solution to the misery of recession, working class democratic control of the economy.



Inkatha supporters prepare to attack

South Africa: are negotiations irreversible?

The negotiations between the African National Congress and the government have fundamentally transformed the political landscape in South Africa. In the pages of *Socialist Organiser* we have advocated that the South African left approaches these negotiations not simply by denouncing them but by arguing for accountability to the mass movement. 'Negotiations yes, but who and how?' has been our approach. In particular we

We must say clearly: those who spread the belief that apartheid could be ended through 'peaceful negotiations' are responsible for having politically disarmed the mass movement.

People now expect serious change to come from top-level negotiations and not through their own mass struggles. Talk of peace left the people unprepared and defenceless in face of the most violent attacks ever made on the working class.

After the Pretoria Minute, when the ANC laid down its arms, we were told that a 'new terrain of struggle' had opened up. This would peacefully win the demand for a constituent assembly. The constituent assembly would write a new constitution putting an end to

believe it would be a big step forward if the giant trade union federation COSATU actually fought and campaigned for its policy of a directly elected constituent assembly to draw up the constitution.

Others on the left believe that little or nothing can come out of negotiations. This article, written by a member of the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA) argues precisely that.

apartheid.

Instead the new terrain turned out to be a fight for survival in the townships, a fight for arms and for self-defence. It still remains a fight to get rid of the Iron Fist and the curfews.

Apartheid will not die that easily. All through the violence the government insisted that negotiations were an irreversible process, that they were committed to peace. Today people are asking the negotiators: How come your 'Road to Peace' is littered with so many dead and wounded people?

Since 6 August the balance of forces has tipped decisively in favour of the government. The government has effectively broken out of its international isolation and now faces good prospects for an early end to sanctions. Having suc-

cessfully portrayed the frontal attack on the Reef working class as ANC vs Inkatha, the government has appeared internationally as the peacemaker who ended the violence.

The ANC made major concessions to get talks started with the government, but the government has been talking with at least two other 'negotiating forums'. The first consists of the National Party and the ANC/SACP, with seats reserved for the PAC and AZAPO. The second involves the NP, its partners in the tri-cameral parliament and the homeland leaders. The third forum involves the Nats and various church groups. As de Klerk always said: if he remained flexible enough he could accommodate everybody! Today he boasts, "we have progressed beyond all expectations".

These negotiating forums were set up under old laws which allowed the Nats to establish a National Council to negotiate a new constitution and to give advice on running the country. Only yesterday these types of structures would have faced a boycott.

Central to the 'talks' is government's plans to get the Congress Alliance to share the responsibility for pacifying the mass struggle. The Pretoria minute established mechanisms at local, regional and national levels to eliminate mass protest action and limit restlessness.

For this reason the government gave the Congress Alliance the phone numbers of over 100 senior police officers (although it obviously had no effect on the Reef or Natal violence!) and spread the 'rumour' that the ANC will have a role in formulating the next budget! This is the illusion of power — it's the 'dummy' for Congress to suck on. At the level of capital-to-labour the mechanism was best demonstrated by the recent deal made between COSATU/NACTU/SACCOLA and the government over the LRA.

In this light we can understand why all negotiators agree there is an 'urgent mutual task' to ensure that talks bring tangible results to the lives of ordinary people. Government gave the movement a three billion rand bone to chew on. Government knows that the ANC has to maintain some integrity in the eyes of its supporters. Increasingly Alliance officials are being involved in state structures to solve social problems — like the NECC over education, the joint technical committees over land, rents, and housing, etc.

It is not surprising that when the PAC and AZAPO were invited to join the talks they chose to refer the matter back to their membership. They have renewed their call for talks among liberation organisations before talks with the government proceed. The problem is how to enter negotiations and not appear as a sell-out!

Although no definite timetable for negotiations has been set, 'serious talks' are expected to get underway early in the new year. Before that happens many other manoeuvres will occur, especially

"The type of 'unifying' constitution that such a motley crowd of antagonistic class representatives will produce can never be in the class interests of the exploited workers."

around how to get the neo-fascist right wing to join the talks.

Thabo Mbeki and de Klerk both insist that the negotiations should involve everyone with a recognisable constituency. During negotiations, this would involve deep compromises being made by the NAC/SACP, by PAC and AZAPO, by COSATU and NACTU as well as the right wing, the bosses and the government.

The type of 'unifying' constitution that such a motley crowd of antagonistic class representatives will produce can never be in the class interests of the exploited workers and oppressed majority.

It is time for everyone to ask: is involvement in a negotiated settlement really irreversible?

Taken from *Vukani Basebenzi* (Arise Workers!)

Workers fight Stalinist takeover

By Tom Rigby

The South African trade union movement has been distinguished on an international level by its deep-going commitment to rank and file control, accountability and workers' democracy.

But now, as the Communist Party extends its control over that movement, a conflict is developing between the working class rank and file of the unions and some of the new leaders.

A new fledgling bureaucratic layer is emerging who are prepared to use quite drastic methods to seize control of the unions. Not surprisingly, this has provoked a rank and file revolt. The first organised movement to emerge is the 'Campaign for Democracy in FAWU', who object to the unconstitutional takeover by Communist Party supporters of the Cape Town branch of the Food Workers' Union, one of the oldest democratic trade unions in South Africa.

We reprint below an appeal from the campaign to all other workers in the giant, one million-strong trade union federation COSATU.

"Today it is happening in the Food and Allied Workers' Union. Tomorrow it will happen to you.

Comrades, we want you to know that the problem in FAWU is a problem of politics and this problem starts with the leadership:

- Who think that they are organisation and that they are more important than you, the ordinary member.

- That undermines workers' democracy by imposing decisions from above.

- That promotes the politics of threats, slander, violence, intimidation, expulsions, labels and political witch-hunts if you do not agree with everything they say and do. All these things are happening in FAWU today. All these things are killing our organisation and if we do nothing this problem of anti-democratic and Stalinist methods is going to get worse. Today it is happening in FAWU, tomorrow it will happen to you if we do not stop it now.

Comrades, everyone who believes in workers' democracy will agree with these proposals. FAWU leadership must now implement the COSATU agreement. That is why we are calling on all workers in COSATU to demand that the problems in FAWU be discussed and the COSATU agreement implemented.

We are calling on all COSATU members to discuss this pamphlet in your factory general meetings and union structures. We are calling on all workers under COSATU — make your voice heard in COSATU.

Defend COSATU's principles of workers' democracy! Build the campaign for democracy in FAWU! Workers — control your leaders!

These are our proposals:

1. General meetings at all factories where each side can put its case to FAWU members on two issues: (a) What is the problem in FAWU, and, (b) What is the way forward for solving the problem.

2. A constitutional BEC to discuss and decide on all charges, accusations, suspensions and expulsions, to be chaired by a neutral chairperson.

3. An AGM with a neutral chairperson to elect new office bearers for Cape Town Branch and decide a plan of action to take the Branch forward.

4. The adoption of a democratic code of conduct inside FAWU: respect for all comrades; right for majority decisions; no threats, violence or slanders; rights of minorities to hold and put forward their politics; constitutional election and accountability of all office bearers; respect for the constitution.

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Ken Loach's "Hidden Agenda"

Cinema

Reviewed by Sean Matgamna

Directed by Ken Loach and written by Jim Allen, *Hidden Agenda* is a major commercial film, made by people who would probably describe themselves as revolutionary socialists.

Such films are rare. *Hidden Agenda* deals critically with British rule in Northern Ireland. That too is very rare.

Loach is the leading British film-maker of the serious left. Allen has written some splendid TV plays about working-class struggle. The work of Loach and Allen deserves the respect of serious political review.

And, for me anyway — and I'd better say it plainly at the start — it deserves to be scrutinised suspiciously. For these are the people who gave us *Perdition*, a play which wrapped up in a nasty but silly melodrama the Stalinist label that the Zionist movement, and therefore, morally, Israel, shared direct responsibility for the Holocaust in which six million Jews died — a label concocted by the Jew-persecuting Russian Stalinist state to rationalise and disguise its anti-semitism.

Nor is it a matter of refusing to let go of old quarrels. Ireland — the setting of the film — and Israel involve the same basic question: the attitude socialists should take to national or communal groupings like the Israeli Jews or the Northern Ireland Protestants.

In national or communal conflicts such as those between Catholics and Protestants, or Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews, the alternatives are stark: either to recognise the right of both communities to exist, or else define one side as a bad people, nation, or community, undeserving of rights.

The genuine Marxist tradition is equally stark. It was expressed well by the Bolsheviks, operating in a world of snarled-up national conflicts such as are now being openly fought out again in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Lithuania, and Eastern Europe.

"In so far as national peace is in any way possible", they wrote in a 1913 resolution of the Bolsheviks' Central Committee, "in a capitalist society based on exploitation, profit-making and strife, it is attainable only under a consistently and thoroughly democratic republican form of government... the constitution of which contains a fundamental law that prohibits any privileges whatsoever to any one nation and any encroachment whatsoever upon the rights of a national minority."

This particularly calls for wide regional autonomy and fully democratic local self-government, with the boundaries of the self-governing and autonomous regions determined by the local inhabitants themselves on the basis of their economic and social conditions, national make-up of the population, etc."

The consequences of opting for the other approach, and picking the "good" side in such conflicts, are heavy. The "Marxists" cease to promote cross-community working-class unity, cease to seek a working-class solution, cease even to aspire to an independent working-class outlook, and opt for the soft "populist-socialist" version of the "good" nationalism instead. Central to the decay and disorientation of post-Trotsky "Trotskyism" is that again and again it has let such politics overwhelm it and "invest" it with alien ideas.

In fact, despite the publicity, *Hidden Agenda* is not centrally about Ireland, though it is set there and uses Northern Ireland as a source of drama, colour, violence, and the "thriller" atmosphere.

Nor is it about the Stalker affair. It is an ambitious attempt to weave the great mass of revelations and allegations which make up the John Stalker, Colin Wallace and Peter Wright affairs into a single story. If this were mining, it would be an open-cast operation!

Hidden Agenda operates on three levels. On the surface it is a pretty conventional sort of thriller, but in a political setting, and using political artefacts rather than riches or spy secrets.

Its real political centre and focus is an account of a conspiracy by state personnel and



Harris (Maurice Rooves) meets Ingrid (Frances McDormand)

right-wing Tories against the elected government of Britain in the 1970s. And threaded into it is an "exposition" of the "Irish-British question".

On the level of a story-line I thought it brought off the ambitious "amalgamation" of Stalker, Wallace and Wright pretty well, weaving a satisfying story. But as a film it is overstuffed and confusing.

There are at least two movies jostling within the skin given to this pantomime horse by the story line. The conflict between the logical British focus of the story and the actual Irish "body" of the movie makes the whole thing finally unsatisfying.

Politically, what we are left with is a "conspiracy-theory" story about "them", the powers-that-be, the secret state, of the type that became almost common in American films in the '70s and '80s. It is the 1940s thriller formula transposed, with the State itself as villain.

That is all right — indeed, any film that draws attention to the skulduggery of the secret services is to be welcomed — but it loses form and concentration because the foreground is almost wholly occupied by the film's "other" concern, Ireland.

The "exposure" aspect of the film does not go beyond liberal politics — the implied demand for democracy and accountability. As an account of what happened in Britain in the '70s and why... well — it's a "spy" story. For, though the exposure of what went on behind the scenes is very important, it wasn't Tory or secret service conspiracies, or the election of Mrs Thatcher as Tory leader, which shaped the defeats of the working class.

What happened in the class struggle was crucial: the disappointment of the working class with the Labour government put into power after a long series of big industrial struggles; the 1974-5 economic downturn; the credibility the trade union leaders regained with the rank and file in the struggles against anti-union laws in the early '70s, and the way it was used to back the Labour Government's Social Contract and to demobilise the workers' movement; and then the Tory victory in 1979 and the slump...

One striking thing about *Perdition* was a ludicrous generalised misapplication of Trotsky's "crisis of leadership" idea to the whole Jewish people. Here the people who made that misapplication and who are also the bards of industrial militancy seem to excise the working-class crisis of leadership in favour of vague conspiracy theories. As in Jimmy Allen's syndicalist phases, the political side is forgotten or downplayed — here in favour of conspiracy.

The third "level" of *Hidden Agenda* — Ireland — is up front all the time. It provides thrills, much rambling propaganda, stories, and even a "rebel" song, but it is a body without a head. (The head is the Tory conspiracy).

More than that, while geographically the film is very specific indeed — Belfast — in terms of history and politics it is timeless. It is Belfast, but, not, historically or politically,

Belfast now.

It opens on 12 July in Belfast, and you see exuberant Orange men and women drumming and stomping themselves into a frenzy. A visiting American mutters: "Unbelievable". As in the British TV ads, you are left in no doubt about what you should feel. But that's it: there is no explanation, although this film does not stint on wordy explanations.

And then there is nothing more about the Protestants, two-thirds of the population of the Six Counties. Nothing!

The thriller is played out as if against a background of an (imaginary) mass popular Irish rebellion against the British state and its local servants. You cannot know from the film how, if at all, the odd people beating drums relate to any of it; least of all can you know that their opposition to a united Ireland is the crux of the conflict. It might be Dublin in 1920 during the War of Independence: it is *not* Belfast in 1985 or 1991, despite the Belfast street scenes.

In this *Hidden Agenda* is quite Hollywood, in its bland fading-out of the real setting it puts itself in. Here, though, the motive isn't crass commercialism and thrill-making; here,

"Instead of class politics on Ireland, they give us a peculiarly old-fashioned and naive middle class Irish Catholic nationalism."

the realities are subordinated to the "message" and the politics.

The film treats the Six Counties Catholic struggle as all of an unbroken piece with the long Irish struggle for independence. Sometimes it is risible: the American gets in a car with a Republican who, at 5am, immediately goes into a little lecture. "Since 1169 — that's how long we've been fighting for our independence. Fire and sword and gun — we've had them all!" That's not Irish, that's stage-Irish, Jimmy!

And the IRA the film deals with is not the real IRA! That organisation is based on the Six Counties Catholics, and supported by about one third of them, or one in nine of the Six Counties population. It conducts a ruthless military campaign against the British Army but *primarily* against the local Protestant "state forces" — right down to the shooting of workers who are involved in what the IRA designates as servicing the state forces. A considerable number of its killings are borderline or outright sectarian — and all of them are seen as such by the Protestant community. It keeps a pretty firm grip in its own areas. That it racketeers is common knowledge.

But Allen and Loach give us idealised freedom fighters. For example, a woman goes to the US lawyer's press conference. She offers him a photo of a British/RUC "road-side execution". She works for *Republican News*, but, oddly, can't get this sensational picture to an audience except via the Americans.

She lives in the Divis Flats at the bottom of the Falls Road, alone with a baby. Her husband, we hear her tell the heroine, is "doing twelve years. Caught doing a punishment for the IRA. Against a gangster who was exploiting his own community".

Not for shooting a one-time RUC reservist who resigned six years ago in front of his kids in the parlour, or shooting a carpenter who took work repairing a police station... In an interview, Loach complained incredulously that some Tory had said that the film was a message from the IRA. In fact the IRA are usually more sophisticated.

The RUC chief is a vigorous character. He talks about dead RUC men whose funerals he has to go to. There is other, similar, 'balancing' talk. But all the images, all the TV-ad-technique manipulation of sympathy and approval, are piled up on one side. We have heavy endorsement and outright propaganda for an idealised IRA fighting a foreign army, with the Orange population reduced to unidentified, unaccountably angry, Union-Jack-waving morris-dancers in one early scene. All we get of the real Ireland is selected tourist shots of Belfast, and Belfast backdrops to the thriller. As I've said, very Hollywood!

Allen's and Loach's technique is worth examining, because it tells us something about the left of which they are part and of which their mental habits, as displayed here, are typical.

Development is not by way of dramatic confrontation and the organic working-out of real situations and real characters: it is by way of wordy explanations backed up by the manipulative camera. You don't see life — even heightened or selected — or real political and historical debate unfold before you; you see images and "captions", rationed out by people who keep the full "text" to themselves and dole it out bit by bit.

Of course you might in socialist agitation or propaganda present only a limited section of the truth, maintaining an honest, proportionate relationship to the whole. *Hidden Agenda* does not. It falsifies, arbitrarily suppresses, slants and selects.

I'm not sure I know what "left wing cinema" is. But it has to be about perceptions, images, and understandings of the world — and of the viewer's place in it — which dispute those of the bourgeoisie to one degree or another. If so, then *Hidden Agenda* is left-wing cinema when it explores the activities of the secret state. Not very left wing, *Guardian* left perhaps, but left nevertheless.

On Ireland it is anything but left — unless left be turning the viewpoint of one's own bourgeoisie inside out, and it isn't (try that approach on the Second World War, for example, and see what results you get; or look at where it led us for so long vis-a-vis Stalinism). Against the hard realpolitik of the British and Irish bourgeoisie the film puts a fantasy. It runs away from challenging their "perceptions" of the existing "Irish problem", and comes back with a prettified and simplified and historically anachronistic version of its own.

Of the various ways of losing the ideological battle with the bourgeoisie — by which events on the industrial and political fronts of the class struggle are ultimately shaped — Loach and Allen here favour the method most common with Trotsky's epigones for 40-something years: retreat from the reality to be defined and understood into a more comfortable fantasy version of the world.

Hidden Agenda, made by two of the most talented leftists in the British entertainment industry, is, like *Perdition*, evidence of the dissolution of what has passed for "Trotskyism". Instead of class politics on Ireland, they give us a peculiarly old-fashioned and naive middle class Irish Catholic nationalism.

It illustrates Lenin's dictum: without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practice — not even revolutionary artistic or literary practice. And you do not get revolutionary theory without first drawing up a balance sheet on what is what in the reality you are grappling with.

Black Britain

Television

By Penny Newell

BC2's new series *Black Britains* traces the history of four black families in Britain today.

Parts one and two were on Monday 7 and Tuesday 8 January. The rest of the series, I think, is going to be on Tuesdays at 7.40

Part one went back through the archives, covering Liverpool's first race riots in 1919, following the murder of a black seaman, and statements from a trade union official in 1955: "Black people smell, have unpleasant habits, and take our jobs."

It then looked at the separation of children and parents in black families, and the effect this had on the children. Caribbean children were often left with relatives 'at home'. African children were left 'at home' or fostered — primarily with white people in the country

One of the children, Kofi, said he imagined "England to be a place close to heaven".

The reality was very different. Kofi's mum said: "Home is Ghana — no matter how long we have been here we will always appear as strangers."

The second part looked at the rise of fascist and racist reaction; the Immigration Acts of 1968 and 1971; the famous Smethwick by-election won from Labour by the Tories with the catchphrase "If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour"; and the London dockers' march in support of Enoch Powell in 1968.

The programme also briefly ran through some of the resistance — the uprisings in 1982-3, and the New Cross fire march. As one of the parents of a young person killed in the New Cross fire said, "13 dead and nothing said", not even a message from the Queen.

That night, Wednesday, was the Cannon Street train crash. I noticed the Queen and the Prime Minister sent a message of condolence to the family of the one person killed in that train. Enough said.

I recommend you watch the remaining parts. Black people I work with are videoing it. The programme's title *Black Britain* is misleading and divisive, because it is only about people of African and Caribbean origin and descent. Black Britons from the rest of the world have been left out. Ethnicity is the name of the game.

As A Sivanandan said to the GLC Minorities Unit in 1983: "On the ideological level a new battle is

being mounted by the state against black struggle whereby they could be broken down into their ethnic and through that their class components.

"Ethnicity was a tool to blunt the edge of black struggle, to return 'black' to its constituent parts of Afro-Caribbean, Asian, African, Irish — and also, at the same time, to allow the nascent black bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie really, to move up in the system. Ethnicity delinked black struggle — separating West Indian from Asian, the working class black from the middle class black.

"Black as a political colour was finally broken down when government moneys were used to fund community projects, destroying thereby the self-reliance and community cohesion that we had built in the '60s."

Seven years on, many 'ethnic' groups funded by councils and government are being dumped.

I am hopeful that black as a political colour will re-emerge. Unfortunately this programme will not aid that process.



Broadwater Farm

The Michael Foot of the 1930s

Books

Mick Ackersley reviews *George Lansbury, by Jonathon Schneer* (Manchester University Press, £29.95)

George Lansbury was the Michael Foot of the 1930s. A long-time left winger, he became Labour Party leader in the wake of the collapse of the minority 1931 Labour government.

Lansbury was a reformist Christian socialist and pacifist with a long record in East End working class politics. He was also heavily involved with the suffragists and suffragettes fighting for the rights of women.

To George Lansbury belongs the honour of having led an entire Labour council to defy the law and go to jail, in defence of their electors. In 1922 the Poplar council in London's East End refused to obey the rules governing the organisation of social services 'relief' for the unemployed and the destitute. Unlike the local



George Lansbury (centre holding child)

government left of the 1980s, they were not self-serving poseurs and careerists, but fighters willing to stand their ground for their principles.

Lansbury's great days had long passed by the time he became leader, which happened in this way.

Faced with the dislocations of capitalism after the 1929 Wall Street crash, Labour's top leaders, Ramsay MacDonald, Jimmy Thomas, and Phil Snowden, went over to the Tories. They helped set up a spurious 'National Government' in which a semi-senile MacDonald remained Prime Minister, but was in fact now a willing prisoner of the Tories and 'National Liberals'. They imposed savage cuts on the unemployed, and the whole working class faced a hostile government for the rest of the decade.

Labour was thrown into turmoil. A major part of the left, the 15,000-strong Independent Labour Party, left the party in 1932, but a sizeable left remained, organised in the 'Socialist League', whose 'Tony Benn' was Sir Stafford Cripps. As in 1979, the mood of the left was 'Never again' — nothing like McDonaldisism ever again!

Though it was a left of very limited dimensions and perspectives, it was a more serious left than the Labour left in the early '80s was — more working class and more concerned with preparing a radical

(reformist) attack on capitalism. Ideas which were to serve *Militant* in the 1960s and after as the basis for its professed belief in a peaceful road to socialism in Britain — that all a radical socialist Labour government had to do on getting a majority in Parliament was pass an 'Enabling Act' — originated with Sir Stafford Cripps. (In a 1934 book, *The Labour Party in Perspective*)

It was this left, in these conditions, which secured the election of the elderly George Lansbury as party leader.

Like Michael Foot in 1983, Lansbury led the Labour Party to a crushing defeat — by the National Government in 1935. Unlike Foot, who effectively nominated his successor, Neil Kinnock, Lansbury was brutally driven out by the big union leaders, in the first place the T&G's leader Ernie Bevin.

Clement Attlee, who was on the centre left of the party, replaced him, and remained party leader for 20 years.

But by then the rational and logical divisions and distinctions between left and right had been pulped and muddled over, and everything mixed up, by the influence of the Stalinists. In the early 1930s the tiny CP was breaking up the meetings of the Labour Party 'social fascists'. When similar policies smoothed Hitler to power in Germany, the world Stalinist movement swung sharp right.

Now they advocated the 'Popular Front' — government of the working class left in alliance with groupings such as the British Liberals. They became very influential in the Labour Party, dominating the left.

By 1936 the Stalinist-dominated 'left' advocated coalition politics for Labour, and the right — Attlee and Morrison — defended the independence of the Labour Party!

That 'left' too — like the 1980s left which opted to be local government administrators instead of using local government positions to rally workers to stand up to the Tories, as George Lansbury did in Poplar in his day — disgraced and destroyed itself.

By now Lansbury was a very old man. He died in 1940. He deserves to be remembered with respect.

Stupid and nasty

Cinema

For sheer brutal exploitative cynicism 1991 will be hard put to it to do worse than 'The Rookie'.

This is 'Dirty Harry meets the rich kid doing a dangerous job he doesn't need to do to prove something to his dad'.

Eastwood is Eastwood, of course. This is stupid and nasty even by 'Dirty Harry' standards — and a lot less gripping.

1991 will be hard put to do



worse. But there are still fifty weeks to go, and a lot of rich

people with money to invest on nasty comic book sleaze.

LETTERS

Why Tariq Ali gets away with it



Tariq Ali's type are sympathetic to butchers like Mao

WRITEBACK

Dear S.O.,
I've done it again!
Your recent article on the Campaign for the Gulf

Write to SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

I agree with Al Richardson's view that Tariq Ali's political trajectory

(SO 470) can be explained by the fact that he never really broke from his Stalinist upbringing and has now reverted to type.

But Richardson rather skirts the question of how, therefore, Ali could masquerade as a Trotskyist for so long. Surely the policies of Pablo and their sympathetic standpoint on Stalinism allowed Tariq Ali to peacefully coexist within the ranks of Trotskyism for much longer than any revolutionary socialist could feel comfortable with?

Ernie Jones
North London

Who's who?

After reading John O'Mahony's complaint that "a very large number of Socialist Outlook people have by-lines

in Socialist [the new Socialist Movement newspaper]", I was disturbed by the appearance of Josef Pinior and Alan Mathieu in the same issue of *Socialist Organiser*. Both are members of the Fourth International, which Outlook is affiliated to. Perhaps Davy Jones is in fact your "effective editor"?

Of course, if the 'Organiser' part of your logo gets any smaller, who is to know which paper O'Mahony is attacking?

Clifford Singer
Socialist Interim Editorial Board

Rate rises no answer

AS WE WERE SAYING...

The question of rate rises is becoming a dividing line between those who want to take on the Tories in action and those who want to limit themselves to verbal opposition.

For most Labour Councils that are putting up the rates have not tried to build a campaign in

the local labour movement against cuts and rate rises. They have decided in advance there is no such support, and used this as an excuse to implement rate rises.

Of course, they are engaging in a self-fulfilling prophecy, as they will not get any support if they do not go out and build it.

Gordon Brewer, SO, 6 January 1980

WHAT'S ON

- Friday 18 January
'Troops out of the Gulf', Sheffield University Socialist Organiser meeting, 12.00
- Friday 18 January
Anti-war meeting, Maidstone Tech College, 1.00. Speaker: Matt Cooper
- Saturday 19 January
Anti-war demonstration. Assemble at 12.00, Charing Cross, London. Called by the Committee to Stop the War.
- Saturday 19 January
Anti-war demonstration, York. Assemble at 12.00, Clifford Tower, York. Called by York CAWG
- Saturday 19 January
Anti-war demonstration, Oxford. Assemble at 3.30, Martyrs Memorial, St Giles, Oxford. Called by Oxford CAWG
- Saturday 19 January
Women for Socialism AGM, Wesley House, Wild Court, London WC1, 9.30am
- Monday 21 January
'Socialists and the Gulf'. Socialist Organiser meeting, SSCAU, West St, Sheffield, 7.30
- Monday 21 January
Anti-war meeting, Worcester HE College, 5.00. Speaker: Mark Sandell
- Monday 21 January
Anti-war meeting, Leicester Poly, 8.00. Speakers include Jeremy Corbyn and Mark Sandell
- Monday 21 January
'No Gulf War', West Indian Centre, Clarendon Rd, London, 7.30. Speakers include Tony Benn and Bernie Grant. Sponsored by LPS and Black Sections
- Monday 21 January
'No clampdown in the USSR', Lucas Arms, Grays Inn Road, London, 7.30. Panel of speakers. Organised by the Campaign for Solidarity with Workers in the Eastern Bloc
- Tuesday 22 January
Debate on Gulf crisis, Lancaster University, 6.30. Speakers include Mark Osborn
- Tuesday 22 January
'Beyond Cable Street', Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London, 7.30. Organised by the Jewish Socialist Group
- Tuesday 22 January
Debate: 'A woman's right to choose', Liverpool Poly, 7.30
- Debate between Janine Booth (NUS) and Life
- Wednesday 23 January

Picket of Irish Embassy for Irish women's right to abortion information, London Embassy, 1.00. Organised by LSE SU

Wednesday 23 January
'Fight racism and fascism', London Left Unity meeting, UCL, 6.00

Thursday 24 January
'Ireland: Beyond the Slogans!', Socialist Organiser, York University, 11.15

Thursday 24 January
'Troops out of the Gulf', Socialist Organiser meeting, Nene College, 5.00

Thursday 24 January
Gulf debate at Newcastle University Labour Club, 1.00. Speakers: Mark Osborn, NOLS

Thursday 24 January
Anti-war meeting, Leicester University, 1.30. Speakers include Mark Sandell

Thursday 24 January
Anti-war meeting, Crewe and Alsager College, 7.00. Speaker: Mark Sandell

Thursday 24 January
'Ireland: beyond the slogans', Socialist Organiser meeting, Packhorse Pub, Leeds, 7.30

Friday 25 January
Debate on the Middle East, LSE, London, 1.00. Speakers: John

O'Mahony (Editor, SO) and Tony Greenstein

Friday 25 January
'Socialist Feminism', UCL Labour Club, London, 1.00. Speaker: Janine Booth

Saturday 26 January
Anti-war demonstration, Sheffield. Assemble at Caborn's corner, 11.00

Saturday 26 January
Anti-war demonstration, Birkenhead. Speakers include Tony Benn

Saturday 26 January
'Workers Liberty in a changing world', Socialist Organiser London dayschool, 10.00-5.00. Many speakers. £4 waged, £3 students, £2 unwaged. Tickets from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

Saturday 9 February
Scottish Labour Party Socialists Conference, 10.30-5.00, Drummond Community School, Edinburgh. Speakers include Jeremy Corbyn

Saturday 9 February and Sunday 10 February

'Socialists and trade unions', Socialist Organiser weekend for trade unionists, Manchester Town Hall, 10.00am Saturday. More details from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA

Saturday 16 February
'A strategy for the Labour left', LPS conference, Camden Town Hall, London, 10.00-5.30

Socialists and the trade unions A Socialist Organiser and Workers' Liberty weekend school

Saturday and Sunday, 9-10 February 1991
Mandela Building, Manchester Poly Students' Union, Oxford Road, Manchester.
Cost: £5 waged, £2.50 unwaged. More details: phone 071-639 7965, or write to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Divided on tactics

EYE ON THE LEFT

The war finds the would-be Marxist left united in its opposition to the US-British military action in the Gulf, but divided on tactics and on attitudes to Iran.

Socialist Worker and a lot of smaller left groups (*Workers Press*, *Workers Power*, etc, and, more notably, *Socialist Action*) have defended Iraq's stance in the five months since it invaded Kuwait as 'anti-imperialist'. They have denounced the idea that Iraq should pull out of Kuwait as a 'concession to imperialism'. However, after a flurry of articles in *Socialist Worker* in August, *SW* and *SA* have kept this view pretty much to themselves.

For most public purposes, their position is pacifist. They campaign through the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf (which has opposed war, but supported sanctions, and pointedly *not* called for troops out), and shun the Campaign Against War in the Gulf, which calls for troops out.

Militant, as ever, has joined no broad campaigning activity against the war. It has

agitated for 'troops out' but not for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait; it raises 'a socialist federation of the Middle East' as its immediate answer to the Gulf crisis, as if a socialist revolution across the whole region were something to be achieved simply by decree.

Socialist Outlook and *Labour Briefing* have taken a position very similar to *Socialist Organiser* (troops out of the Gulf, Iraq out of Kuwait, support for Iraqi self-defence against US-allied conquest).

They have also raised the slogan, 'self-determination for all peoples of the Middle East', though further inquiry will reveal that some of them, somehow, do not consider the Israeli Jews to be a 'people'.

Internationally, as far as we know, just two other groups have taken the same line as us: the VSP ('United Socialist Party') in German, and the 'Fourth Internationalist Tendency' in the USA.

Most revolutionary left groups in continental Europe have taken an intermediate position not represented in the British left: no explicit support for Iraq and no explicit accrediting of Saddam Hussein as 'anti-imperialist', but a refusal (apparently on the grounds that it would be a 'concession to imperialism') to call for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

Is Stalinism good for you?

Les Hearn's



SCIENCE COLUMN

Whatever you say about the Chinese state, it has certainly done wonders for the people's health. Don't get me wrong — I'm not saying that Stalinism is good for you!

However, it cannot be denied that, whereas in the 1940s only about half of children could expect to reach middle age, now the figure is more than 90%.

This and other facts about the life, health and death of the people of China are to be found in *Diet, Lifestyle and Mortality in China* (DLMC), a study of many thousands of individuals in 65 counties. This study was reviewed recently by *New Scientist's* Features Editor Gail Vines. You'll forgive me for not buying my own copy — it's £95.

China's battle against deaths from malnutrition, infections and parasitic diseases has been largely won in just 40 years, far quicker than was achieved in Britain, though of course they were able to use the discoveries of modern science and medicine.

Patterns of death are now similar to those in the West, with 'chronic' diseases killing people in middle age. Chief among these are strokes, emphysema and cirrhosis or liver cancer, both complications of Hepatitis B which is common in the Far East. Missing from the list of major killers are heart disease and lung cancer, of which more later.

China's biggest health survey was the originator of the *Chinese Cancer Atlas*, published in 1980. In the mid-'70s, an army of 600,000 researchers surveyed 96% of the then population of 850 million. The survey revealed some intriguing findings, such as that liver cancer might differ in occurrence by as much as ten times for areas a few hundred miles apart.

This suggests that special factors are causing (or preventing) that cancer and if identified, these factors could help reduce deaths. Such thoughts inspired many other researchers of which DLMC is the latest and biggest.

DLMC describes the variation throughout China of such causes of death as strokes, heart disease, lung disease and tuberculosis. But

it also describes nutrition and lifestyle, enabling links to be made between certain diseases and habits.

This relates to many controversies over diet and health in the West. For example, is high blood cholesterol a cause of heart disease or is its presence a coincidence? In China, levels of fat in the diet are far lower than in Britain. The average person gets some 15% of calories from fat in China but about 15% in Britain. Even a 'high' fat diet in China would count as a 'low' fat one here.

As you might expect, levels of heart disease in China are far lower than they are in Britain, leader of the world league for heart attacks. But even in China, those with higher cholesterol levels tend to get heart disease more frequently than those with lower ones.

There is also some support for the view that eating lots of fresh plant foods reduces the risk of cancer. Whether this may be due to the consumption of lots of vitamins is to be the subject of future research.

One scare raised in the West about diets high in fibre is that substances in the fibre may interfere with the uptake of iron, possibly causing anaemia. The Chinese ate, on average, one and a half times as much fibre but those on the highest fibre diets actually had the most iron in their blood. Even those who ate no meat did not suffer from anaemia, disposing of another myth.

Low intakes of dairy products, rich in calcium, did not seem to cause an inordinate amount of osteoporosis (loss of calcium from, and hence weakening of, the bones found mainly in older women). This suggests that giving a high calcium diet to sufferers is unlikely to help.

Of course, the Chinese diet or, rather, diets will change. The worry must be that, if it approaches the Western high fat, low fibre diet, deaths from heart disease and diet-linked cancers will rise. This is already found where groups of immigrants to the USA adopt the host nation's feeding habits.

More worrying is the certainty that deaths from smoking will rise over the next thirty years to peak at perhaps 1 million a year by 2025.

In the 1950s, one slogan was "food, shelter and cigarettes for everybody". Last year, the Chinese smoked one third of the world's cigarettes, the amount having trebled in just 10 years.

Smoking related diseases have a long incubation but already lung cancer leads other cancers as a cause of death in the cities. In the USA now, 'only' one third of men smoke while in China two thirds do.

Future research in China aims to see why emphysema, in the West largely linked to smoking, is such a major cause of death and whether the high rate of death from stroke is linked to the high level of salt in the Chinese diet. The survey of the trend in smoking related deaths cannot really be called research because we already know the answer.

Southwark: unions unite

By Roy Webb, NALGO shop steward, and Henry Mott, DLO shop steward

All the unions in Southwark are balloting their members on strike action to force the council to talk to the unions about a series of new policies designed to smash union organisation and open the way for mass compulsory redundancies.

The council proposals include:

- Scrapping existing redundancy schemes, one imposed against the wishes of the unions, leaving anyone facing redeployment as a result of cuts or reorganisation with no protection.
- Scrapping existing restructuring and re-organisation agreements which have been used successfully for over 20 years in Southwark.
- Cutting London weighting

for all manual trade unions.

- Introducing a new disciplinary code which allows instant dismissal without any right to a hearing and allows managers to tell you what they think you've done wrong and what the punishment is at the same time.

- 'Sickness counselling' which allows people to be disciplined and possibly sacked for taking time off sick.

- Cutting union representation. In NALGO, for example, the number of stewards will fall from over 250 to just 43.

If the ballot is successful, the strike action will consist of a one-day strike in the first week, two days in the second week, three days in week three and then, if no resolution has been reached, a move to escalate selective action, where whole buildings will be pulled out on full strike pay, calling out more sections as the strike continues to the point where the entire workforce will be on strike.

Since the Labour council returned to power at the last local elections (although with some losses to the Liberals), they

have consistently turned their fire upon the workforce in an attempt to blame the workers for the mess the councillors created by failing to stand up to the government's policies.

This has left most staff wondering what the hell is going on — as management have tried to smash their way around like bulls in a china shop.

Staff have found office accommodation shifted around, times of work rearranged, new management procedures introduced, 'threats' used instead of discussions to get results from staff, and complete neglect of any claims for

reassessment of grades to reflect the extra work involved in new duties.

No vacant posts, no matter how important, get filled.

Workplace meetings have been taking place all through the period of the ballot which ends on 16 January, with representatives from the different unions all coming to the meetings to speak and explain the joint nature of this action.

Manual workers are promising to provide braziers for all the picket lines and a welfare fund is established to offer support to those adversely affected by losing pay during the strike.

In NALGO, strike committees are being organised in every department, to allow as many people as possible to take full part in the dispute, and hopefully, draw new people into action in the union to rebuild its strength.

Each departmental strike committee will have elected reps on the Branch Strike Committee. This committee will have overall running of the dispute during the strike itself.

Picket rotas are being organised at the moment to ensure coverage of all buildings.

A successful fight in Southwark will strengthen local government workers everywhere.

Mass picket at Taylor and Francis

By Stephen Holt, Taylor & Francis striker

The mass picket at Taylor & Francis publishers' London office on 16 January, in support of our strike over reinstatement and union recognition, was attended by over 100 trade unionists and other supporters.

The display of union banners will have convinced the management that they are not just dealing with ten individuals and that, like the Pergamon strikers, we will not go away.

Our FoC, Andy Smith, said: "The turnout today is an indication of the support we have across the trade union movement. It was a great success." Andy called on the management to negotiate a resolution of the dispute — their only action so far has been to offer the original seven sacked editors another week's 'redundancy' pay.

This offer was unanimously rejected by the NUJ chapel, and only served to strengthen our resolve.

NUS National Secretary Emma Colyer spoke about the coming campaign, together with AUT and NATFHE, to boycott Taylor and Francis journals and books. The new NUJ General Secretary, Steve Turner, visited the picket line to show support and his deputy, Bob Norris, spoke of the union's commitment to the dispute.

As the management become visibly more and more worried, morale on the picket line remains high. One of the strikers, Clare Freeman, sacked for coming out in support of the original seven, said: "Our actions are obviously having an effect. Now we have to keep increasing the pressure to force them to negotiate."

We call on all trade unionists to show solidarity by visiting the picket line, making collections for our strike fund, and inviting us to speak at their union meetings.

Contact the strikers on 071 278 7916 ext 229.

DSS staffing dispute — national coordination needed

By Steve Battlemuch, CPSA DSS South Notts

Management have published their review of staffing levels in DSS, and despite being over 100 pages long, it says nothing of substance to help DSS offices out of the mess they are in.

NUCPS brought members in Mansfield and Port Talbot out on strike from Monday 14th to add to the 11 offices that have been out since early November. CPSA continues to assist

management by doing nothing. In only two of the 13 offices where NUCPS are out, are CPSA out as well — Wallasey and Bloomsbury.

These members, who are only receiving half of the strike pay of their NUCPS colleagues, must not be left isolated, and credit must be given to the NUCPS strikers at Wallasey who are donating some of their strike pay to the CPSA strikers.

CPSA's DHSS Executive Committee meets in a couple of weeks time, and despite the lack of response from the staffing review are unlikely to

mount much of a campaign for more staff.

Whilst pressure should continue to be put onto the CPSA executive, activists need to get together to thrash out a national coordinated strategy to win more staff. A good start would be an activists conference linking together those currently on strike with those of us who think we should be called out!

Two more offices have joined the action — East Kilbride and Glasgow Bridgeton.

Printers need a fighting democratic Broad Left

By Cate Murphy, SOGAT CMS

The first meeting of a new trade union broad left will take place next weekend.

Activists from the old print unions, NGA and SOGAT, will get together to form a new broad left for the new merged print union, the GPMU.

Let us hope that this new organisation can learn some of the lessons from previous rank and file bodies in the industry.

The first and most basic point is that we need an accountable and democratic Broad Left. That means we don't want to see meetings like some of the old NGA Broad Left events, where no speakers from the floor were allowed and the Broad Left's 'line' simply 'emerged' from the top table.

Secondly, we want a Broad Left which, though keen to root itself amongst the strongest sections, actually sees its major task as to go out and win the unorganised and poorly

organised to fighting trade unionism. In particular, we need to discuss ways of winning over clerical and administrative workers in the smaller printshops, who are at present often non-union as well as the workers in the expanding 'quick print' sector.

Finally, we need a fighting Broad Left. The organisers of this weekend's meeting, 'The Shoe Lane Progressives', played not the most 'progressive' role imaginable during the crucial Wapping dispute in 1986-87. They argued against a Fleet Street-wide solidarity strike, backing instead Brenda Dean's utopian boycott campaign, and thus helped to prepare the ground for the Fleet St jobs massacre that followed. The 'Shoe Lane Progressives' appear too interested in just winning elections, but left leaders on their own without an effective rank and file network that can deliver action are of very little use.

GPMU Broad Left, Saturday and Sunday January 19th-20th. Starts 11am. Unity Club, 96 Dalston Lane, London E8.

Telecom broad left meets

By a Central London BT engineer

This Saturday's meeting of the National Communications Union Broad Left should be one of the liveliest in years.

Discussion is likely to focus on last year's controversial pay deal, which saw several Broad Left supporters on the engineering section executive vote for a scandalous deal that had been rejected in a ballot by the majority of Telecom engineers.

The deal included a new shift working agreement that would amount to a pay cut of between

£2,000-£3,000 a year for some engineers.

Over 100 branches voted to reject this deal yet the Broad Left did nothing, not even a leaflet, to raise opposition to the scandalous behaviour of the engineering executive.

What opposition there was tended to be uncoordinated and unofficial, often organised by BL supporters but not done in the BL's name.

This situation has got to change. The BL must dissociate itself totally from its supporters on the executive who backed this rotten deal, including general secretary Tony Young.

The way forward for the left in the union is to build a serious democratic, accountable and

fighting Broad Left that can actively intervene in disputes.

Otherwise we may win elections, but we will never provide a serious fighting leadership that can take the mass of the membership with it.

NCU BL, 10am-4pm, Saturday 19 January, University of London Union, Malet St, London WC1.

In Brief

The 65 shorter working week strikers at South Wales Switchgear returned to work this week. Management sacked them last week but have now given

them their jobs back after a return to work agreement that gives very little to the strikers. The white collar workers have won a mere 20 minute reduction in the working week, this is despite supposedly having the full weight of the mighty Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions behind them.

The Guardian and Manchester Evening News are to impose a wage freeze on 1,850 workers. This is the first such freeze in the present slump. The NUJ said it was prepared for industrial action to force the company to back down.

The week 7-11 January 1991 saw 2,500 workers lose their jobs. The worst week since Thatcher's jobs massacre in 1980-81. The TUC was silent.

In Scotland the future of Ravensraig steel workers looks very bleak indeed. Shop stewards have reluctantly accepted their national union leadership's insistence that they can't stop the closure of the hot strip mill on 5 April, with the loss of 770 jobs, and the nearby Clydesdale tube works with the loss of 1,200 jobs.

To make matters worse, British Steel plan to take one of Ravensraig's furnaces out of action next month for at least a month.

The TUC has produced a consultative document on trade union rights under a future Labour government. It seems the TUC only believes that a union should have the right to effective recognition when it has a majority of over half the workforce. Below this level of membership unions will only have rights to 'consultation'.

The Siren song of 'viability'

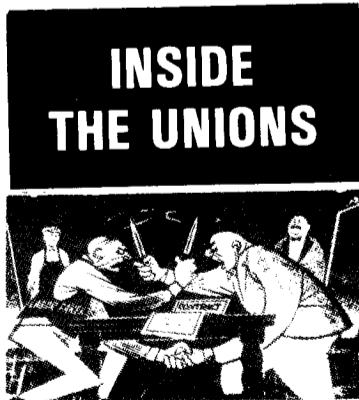
The dreaded 'R' word is now on everyone's lips: even that funny little man whatsname, the one who was Chancellor of the Exchequer after Nigel Lawson, now admits that we're in a recession.

Unemployment, even according to the much-massaged statistics used by the government, is running at 1.72 million and most independent analysts predict the 2 million mark will be reached by the end of the year. Thousands of redundancies have recently been announced in the motor industry, manufacturing, financial services, and the building trade.

No one seems to be able to predict the exact economic effects of the Gulf war but the inevitable increase in oil prices, reduction in global export markets, and damage to the all-important (though somewhat intangible) 'financial market confidence' all point to a deepening recession.

The response of the government, the CBI, the Bank of England and the countless 'independent' industrial research organisations has been quite predictable: industry can no longer afford 'uncompetitive' wage rises. Or, to put it another way, tighten your belts, you greedy sods on the shopfloor!

And it isn't just the government and



By Sleeper

employers who have been singing this old refrain; the TUC's Norman Willis issued an elegant new year's message, calling for co-operation and restraint in these difficult times. "Now is not the time for class warriors on either side to be locked into an historic conflict over allocation of fast disappearing spoils which will destroy their own and colleagues' jobs," declared the poet laureate of the trade union movement.

There is not, as yet, a lot of evidence

that these high-minded exhortations are cutting much ice on the shopfloor. Most workers are more concerned about the present 9.7% inflation rate than the threat of unemployment, and recent 'benchmark' pay settlements (notably, the 13.4% deal at Fords) have boosted shopfloor determination.

But there are some worrying straws in the wind. The Road Haulage Association, representing the main road transport employers, has responded to the TGWU's claim for 2% above inflation by offering nothing in most regions. In Sheffield and South Yorkshire the employers have refused to even meet the union over wages. The TGWU has yet to formulate its response.

At Rolls Royce, an initial pay rise of only 5% has been recommended by local union officials. The attitude was summed up by Mr Tony McCardless, the convener at the Derby plant: "Airlines are going into liquidation and there are massive lay-offs and downturns in profits. We are adopting what we believe is a responsible attitude". Local negotiators at Sunderland, East Kilbride, and Coventry are also urging acceptance.

This is the oldest argument in the book, and one that goes to the heart of what traditional, reformist trade unionism is all about: it's the 'viability'

argument that was used to such effect at British Leyland in the 1970s. The 'viability' refrain inevitably runs something like this:

- (1) The company is in deep trouble;
- (2) We've all got to make sacrifices;
- (3) There'll be no pay rise this year;
- (4) If you go on strike, the company will close down and then we'll all be out of a job. And you wouldn't want that, would you?

More often than not (as at British Leyland) the management will have the full-time officials and even the plant shop stewards singing the same song along with them; and, like the Song of the Sirens, it can be an irresistible chorus.

There is no answer within the limits of 'normal', day-to-day trade unionism. The only answer is a revolutionary one: we're not willing to pay the price for an economic crisis not of our making. This involves raising issues like plant occupations, workers' control and the need for a planned economy. Big and difficult demands, especially after a decade of new realism. But this is the only answer there is to 'viability'. How, in practice, we go about putting forward the anti-'viability' case, will be fleshed out in future columns: but as the recession deepens, it's an argument we cannot duck.

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Tony Benn on the Gulf war

"This is the beginning of a terrible tragedy"

The American Blitzkrieg on Iraq, and the air attacks on Baghdad mark the beginning of a terrible tragedy for the

peoples of the Middle East and the world.

A few hours ago President Bush let it be known that he was 'at peace

with himself' and now he is at war with humanity.

Although this operation is supposed to be on behalf of the UN, the Secretary-General was not, apparently, even told of the attack, in advance.

This is a quite unnecessary war that will solve nothing, and when it is over there will have to be a Peace Conference covering all the problems in the area.

If that Peace Conference had been convened a few weeks ago the war would never have taken place.

Some of the American commentary on TV during the bombing has verged on the obscene, with the correspondents excitedly comparing the bombing to a fireworks display on the Fourth of July, with no mention of the men, women and children who will certainly have been killed or maimed.

Our own forces there are also victims of this tragedy, and those British servicemen who may become casualties could be injured or killed by weapons supplied by arms manufacture in the west, sold at a great profit.

This is an American war, but the British government, and all those who have supported it must share the full moral responsibility for what has happened.

Patients shouldn't bear the cost

By Stephen Smith (MSF, Guys Hospital)

The Tories are preparing to give an open-ended commitment to cover Health Authorities' "extra costs" due to Gulf war casualties.

Minister William Waldegrave has said that "Health Authorities... should not be inhibited by financial constraints". His government has cut the number of NHS beds from 362,000 in 1979 to 270,000 in 1990, and the cuts have accelerated in the last three years!

The Tories can find money for war, but not for basic services for working-class people.

Local emergency services have indicated that they will be unable to cope with "civilian" cases if called up to deal with large numbers of wounded soldiers from the Gulf. The rich will still be able to get treatment by paying, but NHS patients will be told to wait.

Extra beds and ambulances should be provided. The labour movement and the health unions should demand that the Government provides resources to maintain health care for the majority during the war.



US Marines prepare for Anthrax attack

Most Gulf casualties will die untreated in transit

By a health worker

Hospital bosses in Manchester have drawn up secret plans for dealing with a third of the estimated 12,000 casualties a week who will be flown in from the Gulf if a war starts.

Over 60 stretcher cases with massive injuries and contaminated open wounds will be stacked three high and three deep in planes carrying in casualties direct from the battlefields — most will die, untreated, on the flights.

The 'walking wounded' will be herded 200 to a plane with only minor first aid — many who are casualties of chemical gas attacks will already be suffering from psychotic illnesses and be heavily drugged. Children are expected among the casualties, according to the Health Authorities' plans — they will have been caught up in battles raging around towns and cities in Kuwait and southern Iraq.

When the casualties arrive at Manchester Airport, eight 'triage teams' will allocate them to hospitals in the area — if they are

Pay beds escape military call-up

...with the NHS... pay beds... military call-up... The NHS is simply not equipped to deal with... Many will die for lack of treatment... The mental state of many of the injured will be horrific, too: chemical weapons in World War I produced psychotic effects from which thousands never recovered.

alive and 'saveable'. The airport, and the main receiving hospitals, will become 'security zones', with limited access and possibly armed guards. The security is, ostensibly, to prevent 'Iraqi terror attacks', it will also prevent TV crews seeing and filming the carnage and relatives seeing the state of the injured soldiers.

The effect of the war will be horrendous for those caught up in it — the Ministry of Defence has told hospitals to expect many of the wounds of the injured to be 'contaminated' by chemical and

biological weapons...but no-one knows how to treat them. Many of the injuries will be horrific burns, on a scale the NHS is simply not equipped to deal with. Many will die for lack of treatment. The mental state of many of the injured will be horrific, too: chemical weapons in World War I produced psychotic effects from which thousands never recovered.

The effects on local hospital services will be devastating too. While Manchester hospital chiefs plan to keep the Wythenshawe Hospital open as a 'civil' accident and emergency centre, most of the city's other hospitals, along with ones in Stockport, Tameside and Salford could become 'military hospitals', with no treatment available for NHS waiting list patients and only limited accident and emergency services.

The Ministry of Health claims the costs of the Gulf war 'will be met', and they will stomp up the cost of keeping the hospitals going. What they won't do is make the facilities available to keep treating ordinary patients, or to catch up later with the huge backlog of growing waiting lists. Everyone will suffer —

except those who can afford to use the private hospitals which will stay open, and making a profit, as if nothing was wrong.

**Demonstration
Against the War!
Saturday 19
Assemble 12 noon
Embankment
(Charing Cross)**