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# *socialist* **OUTLOOK**

**Britain, Germany, France:  
the growing scandal of**

# **Racist**



PHOTOS: David Hoffman

# **Europe**



Special features pages 2, 3 and 4



Germany

# Neo-Nazis target alienated youth

by Hans-Jurgen Schulz

Jorge Gomoudai was killed in Dresden at the beginning of April, as part of an 'open hunting season' on foreigners. Since then, no night has passed in the 'new, democratic and peace-loving Germany' without an assault or a fire-bombing.

Nonetheless, German police recently announced that no action could be taken against neo-nazi organisations, because 'there is no evidence of any organised involvement'.

But recent polls show a worrying rise in support for the racist right in Germany. More than a third of west Germans, and nearly a quarter of east Germans consider themselves sympathetic. One in ten would vote for them.

The neo-nazis are gaining support among young people. There may be only 1,500 organised in far right groups in east Germany; but 1 in 20 consider themselves fascists.

But the wave of fascist attacks is not entirely a reflection of a new phenomenon. In June 1989, Marger Honecker, the ex-President of East Germany's wife, proclaimed that 'the seeds that the educationalists of our country have sown have borne fruit'. She spoke too soon. Even then, 6% of east German youth identified with the radical right. Rather than education, it is the reality of authoritarian east Germany that has borne fruit.

Now no hostel for asylum-seekers, foreigners or immigrants is safe from assault or harassment. Before it was frequent - now it is constant. The wave of arson and murder may fade away - but it will be back,

because it reflects the reality of German society today. The problem must be tackled from the roots.

Reactionary and extreme right opinion is clearly to be tolerated by the establishment. And a militant fascist mass movement is a real possibility today. A few thousands could become some tens of thousands with a bit of organisation.

What are the roots of the rise of the radical right?

In east Germany, stalinism has left behind an ideological vacuum; in the west, liberal democracy is losing ground, with the exception of the intelligentsia. Established parties have lost any real base among Germany's youth; their youth organisations attract only the career conscious yuppies. The unions, despite a larger paper membership among the young, do little to fire their enthusiasm.

It is the sense of powerlessness, strengthened by the decline of social security, solidarity and democracy, that predominates. In reality, whoever is old or ill doesn't stand a chance. Unless you sprint in the factory, you are sacked. The experience is 'dog eat dog' and the moral is capitalism. These are the roots of the problem, exacerbated by the lack of an alternative.

Unification took the radical right by surprise and disorientated it. This was particularly true of the west German Republikaner, who had attracted more than 2 million votes in the 1981 European elections.

Internal quarrels then reduced their membership to less than 15,000. But more recently, the party has bounced



PHOTO: David Hoffman

Bitter fruits of Stalinism: East German fascist youth

back, and now declares over 25,000 members. They may not have the potential for the mass rallies of the early '80s, but they are nonetheless far and away the strongest force on the radical right, other than in the east.

Attempts by the Nationalist Party (NPD) and People's Union (DVU) to join forces with the 'German List' in elections were meanwhile a spectacular failure. Rather than creating a new mass party, another grouplet was spawned.

These organisations, based in the petit bourgeoisie, have not been able to reach out to new sections of society. They remain primarily electoral fronts, rather than real political parties. Their electorate is worrying large - but largely passive.

But it is they, along with the tabloid press, that give 'respectability' to the campaign of terror against Germany's black and immigrant population. The unhesitating hounding of those seeking asylum provokes and strengthens the prevailing reaction.

And this climate has given rise to a new breed of fascist

group to those discussed above. These openly fascist organisations have an active cadre and go straight for the working class youth, rather than worrying about electoral fronts. Between them, these skinhead-based groups probably organise some 3,000 youth.

Disorganised they may be, but they are dangerous. A leading east German police officer warned in May of the coming wave of terror, organised 'by conspiratorial methods'. In reality, an active kernel of organisers has moved among the skinheads, encouraging further action and trying to build an organisation.

One thing is certain - their resonance is greater than it has ever been in recent years. For the first time since the end of the nazis, Germany once again has a militant fascist movement.

The horror provoked by this wave of violence has given rise to demonstrations all over Germany. Protest has been strengthened. And the basis has been created for a lasting, mass anti-fascist movement.

But the tactics of the fascists

must be answered directly. The militant fascist groups are heading straight for the working class youth - and that is precisely what the left must do.

The fascist threat cannot be beaten back solely through the protests and legal measures so dear to the hearts of the liberals and reformist left. When one group is banned, a new one will be formed a day later.

What we need is a lasting, broad mass movement against the fascists. We need to organise in every town and city - meetings, demonstrations, propaganda. We need, above all, to counter the hatred of foreigners with a campaign against unemployment and for the right to housing.

This article was abridged from 'Avanti', journal of the Revolutionary Socialist Group (GRS), supporters of the Fourth International in east Germany.

**Picket the German Embassy!**

**11 November  
4 to 8pm, Belgrave Square, SW1.**

Organised by Newham Monitoring Project/Refugee Forum/Campaign Against Racism & Fascism

**"The fascist threat cannot be beaten back solely through the protests and legal measures so dear to the hearts of the liberals and reformist left. What we need is a lasting, broad mass movement against the fascists"**

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## As EC politicians fiddle Racist fires sweep Europe

By Sam Inman

'PEOPLE once again fear pogroms in Germany', stated a declaration on 8 October from leading German intellectuals, condemning the upsurge in vicious neo-Nazi attacks against the country's Black, refugee and Jewish communities.

In the previous three weeks there had already been nearly 500 attacks, leaving one African dead, two Lebanese children critically burned, and many more injured.

Germany's Christian Democrat government has responded by agreeing a clampdown on the number of asylum-seekers with the country's 16 regional states.

They also got agreement with opposition parties on transforming former army bases into refugee camps. Tens of thousands of refugees will be housed in 90 camps across the country.

Lawyers have suggested that the new measures breach the German constitution, and anti-racist campaigners have condemned them as an incitement to further neo-Nazi attacks.

The German situation is one of the worst in a common pattern developing across the whole of Europe. Far-right and fascist parties are rapidly gaining popularity, violent racist attacks are mushrooming in both their frequency and ferocity, and all manner of nationalisms are bubbling above and beneath the surface. The mainstream establishment parties - right, centre and social democratic - are falling over themselves to prove their own iron resolve to combat the 'problem of immigration'.

\*In France, former premier Jacques Chirac has said that French people are being driven 'crazy' by the 'noise and smell' of immigrants in the country. Former interior minister, Michel Poniatowski, has compared France's immigrant community to the Nazi occupation of the country. Le Pen's National Front has gained massively in

popularity. One in five voters now support the NF and Poniatowski has called for a right-wing coalition with the party.

The ruling Socialist Party's response has been predictably shameful. At the same time as denouncing racism, they have proclaimed a new crackdown on immigration and are preparing to organise mass deportations.

\*In Austria the neo-fascist Freedom Party has trebled its vote to 18 per cent in provincial elections, and may bring about the collapse of the country's ruling coalition government.

\*In Sweden the six-month old New Democracy Party got 7 per cent of the vote in September's general election on the back of a populist anti-immigration campaign. Fascist paramilitary groups are also growing, despite the arrest in August of four leaders of the Storm Network (for bank robbery and hijacking a police arms depot), a group allied with the White Aryan Resistance organisation in the US.

\*In Switzerland there has been a wave of racist firebombings and attacks on refugees. A recent opinion poll showed 60 per cent of Swiss people are in favour of using the army to prevent the entry of refugees. The fascist Swiss Democrats are collecting signatures to call for a referendum on halting immigration.

\*Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Romania have all seen an escalation of racist and anti-semitic attacks, which so far show no signs of abating - indeed quite the reverse as the Eastern European countries slide deeper into economic, political and social catastrophe.

\*In Britain, with the strictest immigration laws in Europe, racist attacks are on the increase and more people are being denied asylum status. The fascist British National Party has been estimated at having some 1500 cadre now, and they are becoming more confident in their ability to gain support from poor white working class estates.

The social and economic crisis in Europe makes it wide open to a new surge of racism. Not only recession in the west, but the collapse of Stalinism, have created waves of unemployment and economic migrants.

With all this economic and political uncertainty in the world, and with the collapse of the Soviet bogey, the right wing in Europe needs a new enemy.

This 'new' enemy has been used by the right wing many times before - the now 15 million strong Black or Third World communities living in Europe who have been settled for more than two generations, or who have come as migrant workers or refugees.

But the scale of attacks on Europe's Black and refugee

communities is escalating sharply.

A rising number of Eastern European people are heading west, desperate to escape the enormous economic deprivation and hostilities to national minorities.

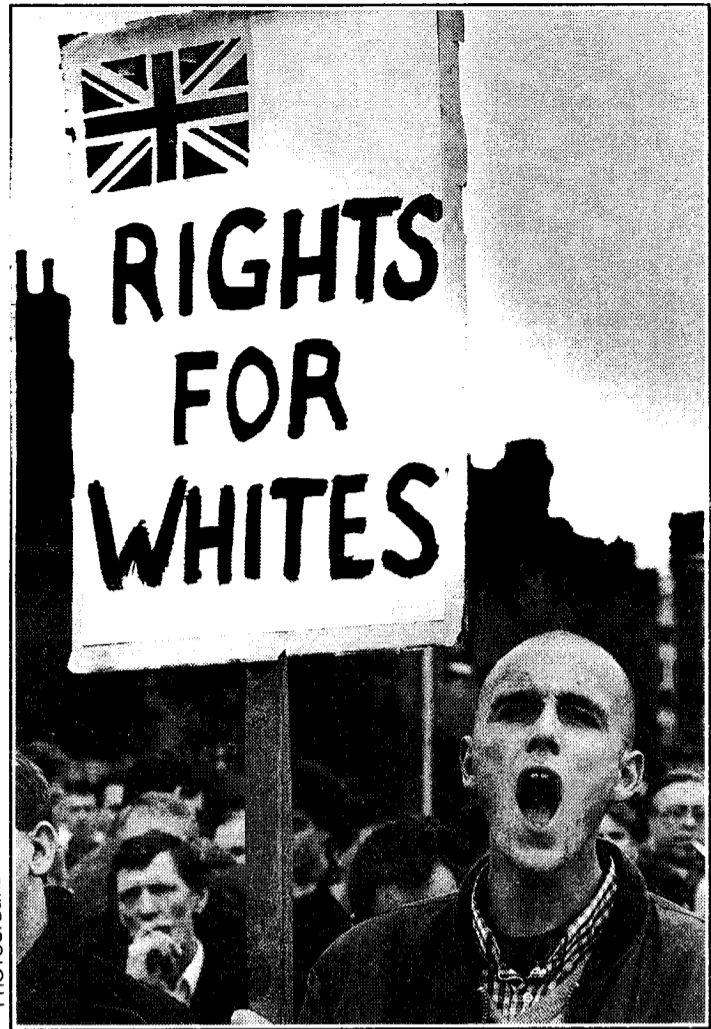
### Fortress Europe

At the same time, European governments have been informally working out methods of creating a 'Fortress Europe' to keep out third and second world immigrants and asylum-seekers. This is what John Major meant when he demanded a 'perimeter fence' for Europe at June's EC summit. Since then, all over Europe, politicians have stepped up their use of the racist card.

Euro-racism is nothing new. Both the TREVII group and the Treaty of Schengen were set up in the 1980s to put in place ground rules between European states over the entry of refugees, immigration and repatriation procedures.

The growth of the fascist right shows the utter failure of the dominant working class organisations - the social democrats and Stalinists - to respond to the concerns of millions of workers affected by the crisis.

It also shows the weakness of the socialist left. Socialists all over Europe must work together now, alongside Black communities and anti-racist campaigners to ensure that the fascist dream never again becomes a reality.



PHOTOS: David Hoffman

## How to fight the fascists

By Julian Wood

THE FASCISTS are on the march again. How can we fight them? What type of organisation should we use?

Probably the largest anti-fascist organisation in Britain at the moment is Anti-Fascist Action (AFA).

It has traditionally had a policy of what it calls 'implementation of No Platform' by which it means using whatever means necessary to prevent fascists being able to meet.

The necessary means have tended to include sticks, boots and fists, given that fascists tend to be impervious to reasoned argument.

AFA describes itself as a united front organisation but in reality operates like a political party.

But we need a much broader campaign than this to be effective. The first thing to do must be a huge campaign against the ideas of the



East London demonstrators recall the history of anti-fascist struggle

fascists, going into the estates and the workplaces, anywhere people gather.

From there we have to get people into activities against the fascists - marches, festivals, and so on.

And we have to get organisation against the fascists, where the community protects those who are the targets of fascist attacks.

It is at that stage, where we have a strong movement against the fascists, that we are in a position to take the fight to them.

The mobilisation of white tenants against a recent black march against racist attacks in South London, the BNP taking 25 per cent of the white vote in Tower Hamlets, and the resurgence of fascism in Europe - east and west - mean it

has become a major priority for socialists to take up the question.

But if we can build in the workplaces and estates the strength of our view of how to build will be proven.

The fascists plan on standing in 60 seats in the coming general election; we need a national anti-fascist campaign against that. There will be national anti-fascist marches and mobilisations in that campaign.

If we can mobilise against the fascists the numbers that we could during the days of the Anti-Nazi League (1977 to 1979) then physical confrontation to stop the fascists will be back on the agenda, this time backed by the strength of a movement.



# French right lines up with fascists

by Patrick Baker  
 FOR THE FIRST time since its 1987 defeat, the French 'orthodox' right has launched a racist offensive against France's black population.

Led by ex-President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and ex Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, large sections of the French right are now trying to outdo the fascist Front National (FN).

Pierre Mauroy, general secretary of the Parti Socialiste (PS), said of the current unity offensive towards the extreme right:

'Until recently, divisions in the right have just made me smile; now their constant attempts to outbid each other make me shudder'.

And with good reason. The 'orthodox' right has a history of vicious attacks on France's black community.

In 1986, the joint RPR/UDF election manifesto proposed to abolish the right of children born in France of immigrant

parents to naturalisation; and to restrict that right for those marrying French people.

In addition, it proposed that any candidate would have to swear 'to be loyal to the French Republic, its laws and constitution'.

But this move towards the FN provoked an outcry, and was beaten back by the massive student mobilisations that swept France some months later.

For the students were not only against the right's attacks on education, but also identified with the anti-racist movement SOS-Racisme.

Tens of thousands chanted slogans defending black people's rights on the student demonstrations; and joined a massive demonstration against racism a few months later in March '87.

And when Devaquet, the education minister, was forced to withdraw the education reforms, the reforms to the nationality code went with them in a retreat by Prime Minister Jacques Chirac.

Now Giscard d'Estaing, supported by Chirac, is once again of the offensive. And there is nothing subtle about the new proposals: their aim is to 'send back' hundreds of thousands of black people each year.

Dubbing France's immigrants an 'invasion', Giscard's allies have said that without an alliance with the fascists, 'France would become an African and socialist boulevard given over to anarchy'. Jean-Marie Le Pen, FN leader, is lapping it up.

The heart of Giscard's proposal is to amend the French constitution, so that the right to nationality would be based not on 'residence', but on 'blood'.

As for Edith Cresson's unpopular socialist government, she has not taken the opportunity to place herself at the head of anti-racist counter-mobilisation.

Instead, both she and the 'integration minister' Kofi Yamgnane have pledged to control immigration, and called for black people to drop their

cultures - 'If they do not agree, they should go home'.

And the first steps have now been launched by security minister Barbot, ex-head of the notorious Police Nationale. From now on, asylum-seekers have no right to work; and a witch-hunt is being launched against those 'secretly working'.

This is a vicious circle from which immigrants cannot escape: first you are denied a work permit, then expelled for working without one.

But despite the government's capitulation to this slide towards the racist right, an anti-racist movement to defend France's black community has been launched.

In response to the annual fascist 'red, white and blue' get-together, the 'Appeal of 250' called a 'black, white, arab' counter-mobilisation. Launched on the slogan 'Enough of the Front', the appeal has pledged to 'counter the National Front wherever necessary'.

Numerous local groups have already been formed. A national forum of local mayors has also been formed to counter the racist threat, with the aim of 'struggling against all forms of exclusion, violence, racism and xenophobia'.

But so far, the response has not been enough. An alliance between sections of the UDF and RPR with the fascists, already one of the most powerful parties of the far right in Europe, would be a powerful threat to the whole European workers movement, as well as black people.

The answer is clear. The response to the racist right must be the same as in 1987 - to mobilise tens of thousands on the streets, bringing together the black community, the unions and the left to defeat the fascist menace.

This is the way to defeat the right - and those like Edith Cresson who drag the name of socialism through the mud by capitulating to the racists.

## Bloody anniversary of French state racism

by Geoff Ryan  
 THE RISE OF RACISM in France today has led to a spate of attacks on North Africans. Such attacks are nothing new. Thirty years ago this month the Algerian community was brutally attacked by French police and dozens were killed. This massacre has almost been written out of history.

On 17 October 1961, 50,000 Algerians marched in Paris to protest against the racist curfew in force. They were not allowed on the streets after 8pm. Cafes frequented by 'French Muslims' had to shut at 7pm.

The demonstration took place while France was still waging a bloody war against Algeria - but after De Gaulle had conceded the principle of independence. In both France and Algeria the white supremacists of the OAS, aided by sections of the army, were carrying out a reign of terror.

Although the demonstration was called by the FLN (the main anti-imperialist organisation in Algeria) the Algerian community didn't raise independence slogans - to avoid accusations of 'provocation'. The whole community turned out.

Despite the Algerians' restraint, the French state, and large numbers of French people, saw this protest as a threat. Racist hysteria was whipped up by press talk of 'barbarians'.

At the Pont de Neuilly the police opened fire, killing a 15 year old youth. The shooting went on for a further half-hour. At Metro stations, Algerians were attacked as soon as they came onto the streets. When protesters tried to block roads, police encouraged motorists to drive into them. In Nanterre the demonstrators were led by women carrying small children - but they too were viciously attacked.

Thousands were arrested and held in parks and stadiums, where they were savagely beaten. Twenty years earlier the Nazis had detained the Jewish community in the same places.

### Censored

Despite the brutality of the police attacks, virtually only the revolutionary left protested. Newspaper reports were heavily censored. The few who raised some criticism were more concerned that the violence happened on the streets of Paris.

Savage attacks on the Algerians were everyday occurrences. As long as the attacks were confined to the ghettos, French 'liberal' opinion was not unduly troubled.

Even 30 years later, nobody knows how many died. The official police figure is three

deaths (including a Frenchman on holiday in Paris).

Yet three weeks after the demonstration, over 60 bodies had been recovered from the river Seine, many with their hands tied.

The real number killed - shot, drowned, hanged from trees or battered to death - is almost certainly 200-plus, yet no police were ever charged. Nor was there any attempt to find out what happened to perhaps another 200 'missing' Algerians. To ensure the truth never emerged, tens of thousands were deported.

Six months later, despite the OAS terror, Algeria became independent. The generals who had led the army revolt were largely forgiven, OAS supporters fleeing the country were welcomed in France.

Despite the thousands of OAS murders, only seven members were ever executed - and two of those were non-French nationals in the Foreign Legion. The 200 or more Algerians who died on October 17 were quickly forgotten and written out of French history.

The police chief, Maurice Papon, is now facing charges of 'crimes against humanity' for his role in the deportation of



De Gaulle: defended massacre

Jews from Bordeaux during world war II. But in 1961, De Gaulle defended his role in the mass murder on the streets of Paris.

We owe it to those who died in Paris and Algeria to fight against racism in France and throughout Europe. In France this bloody anniversary was commemorated by a demonstration organised by a broad coalition of anti-racist and immigrant groups, trade unions and political parties.

Among them was the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, French Section of the Fourth International, virtually the only current in the French workers' movement which can proudly recall its consistent support for the Algerian revolution.



# Tories fail to squash fears over NHS

## YES! It really is privatisation!

By Harry Sloan

NEVER believe a rumour until it is officially denied.

The more John Major's government, stung by Labour's unexpected offensive, insists that it does *not* want to privatise the NHS, the more suspicious people should become.

This is even more true when we see how the Tories are pressing home their Thatcherite NHS reforms which have already marketised the service and set up opted-out hospitals as self contained businesses.

Of course the Tories are not aiming at a fully-privatised US-style health care system: the US system consumes more than double the share of national wealth compared to the NHS, and leaves 40 million people without health cover.

### Ruinous

Even American employers, stung by the ruinous cost of private medical cover for their employees, are no longer in favour of their system. A Chrysler boss recently claimed that the company medical scheme adds \$700 to the selling price of each car. Estimates suggest that if the US system remains unchanged, it could gobble over a third of GNP by the year 2030!

The Tories want above all to cut state spending on health, forcing individuals to pay more. They also want to expand private provision and profitable openings at every



Thatcherism alive and well in John Major's health reforms

level of health care.

Long before the full marketisation of the NHS began in April, thick wedges of private enterprise had been driven deep into vital services.

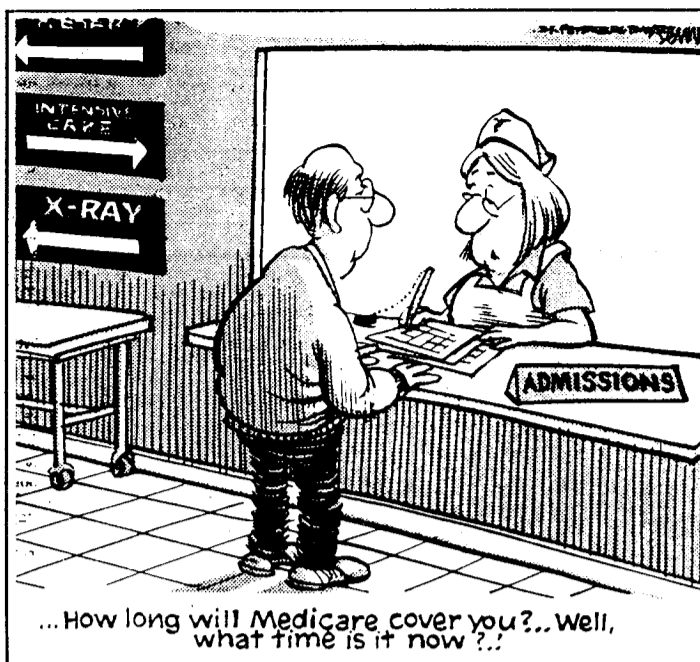
### Contract firms

● Since 1984 health authorities have been compelled to put ancillary services – cleaning, catering and laundry – out to competitive tender. Others have privatised portering and other services. In each case standards of hygiene and patient care have plummeted as cheapskate private firms have moved in, seeking

profits from key support services and low-paid staff.

● NHS chiefs have been encouraged to siphon off taxpayers' money into developing and refurbishing lavish private wards and wings, and into deals with commercial medical firms. A key 'freedom' of opted-out Trusts is their scope to switch NHS beds to private use without any public consultation. Yet few NHS beds make a profit: many stay empty and *lose* money, since there is already huge over-capacity in the private sector.

● More and more health authorities are closing down



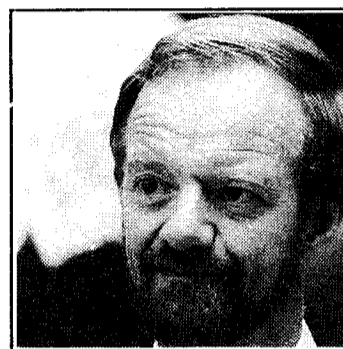
their long-stay beds for the elderly and hiving off these patients to private, profit-seeking nursing homes. There the fees are paid from means-tested social security income support, often 'topped up' by health authorities as a cheap way to get rid of the elderly. West Berkshire DHA is setting the pace, with its plan to close down all its 200 long stay elderly beds by 1993, while two private nursing homes are built on NHS land and a brand new NHS unit at Newbury is handed over to private management.

● Vital areas of health research and treatment – notably on cancer and heart disease – as well as front line services such as intensive care baby cots at Guy's Hospital, are increasingly funded from *outside* the NHS by charity appeals or private firms. IVF treatment is almost unobtainable on the NHS in London. In Kettering, sterilisation operations for women are only available privately; last January NE Thames Regional Health Authority published a list of non-emergency operations it proposed no longer to provide on the NHS, forcing patients to pay or go without.

● Meanwhile soaraway prescription charges under Thatcher and Major have been matched by the new £10 minimum charge for eye tests and astronomical bills for dental checks and treatment.

It is precisely these type of bills – paid only by those of working age who are in employment – which point the way for future Tory strategy.

Once the new 'market' system is fully functional, every NHS operation, treatment and course of drugs will carry a



Robin Cook

precise costing and price tag. For years the Tory right has argued that in-patients "who can afford to do so" should pay the 'hotel' costs of bed and board while in hospital. Once the full range of prices are clear, why not extend this, and follow the example of dental charges, by imposing means-tested fees for every treatment?

### Threat

The mere threat of facing such substantial bills could press-gang millions more people into taking out pre-emptive health insurance.

In this way the Tories could force individuals to subsidise the NHS while insurance firms could also cash in at a profit.

Twelve years of Thatcherism have failed to persuade even one in eight of the population to take out medical insurance. But if Major wins another term, the bludgeon of means-tested charges could yet do the job.

Robin Cook and the Labour front bench are absolutely right to point the finger at the Tory drive towards privatisation of the NHS: they must not be allowed to retreat on this between now and the election.

## Trusts launched into crisis

AS Health Secretary William Waldegrave unveiled a second wave of 99 opted-out Trusts, new evidence emerged of the chaos of the new NHS internal market.

Many health authorities are simply not paying their bills.

The giant Bloomsbury & Islington DHA, covering three London teaching hospitals, and facing cuts of £9.4 million this financial year, could be plunged deeper into crisis.

At the end of July the authority had fallen £10 million short of its target income, £7.8 million of this because other health authorities had delayed paying their bills. A massive £4 million was four months overdue!

Another £1.2 million may already have been lost because 'customer' health authorities have paid B&I less than the invoiced amount.

Half way through the financial year, this kind of bureaucratic nightmare confronts hundreds of directly-managed hospitals and opted-out Trusts.

## Will NCU fight BT threat to 16000 jobs?

By Joan Armstrong

BT, the most profitable denationalised firm, has announced plans to make 16000 engineers and clerical workers redundant during the next 18 months.

Plans to shed this huge part of the workforce stem from the massive influx of new technology and the deepening economic recession.

For the National Communications Union (NCU), it poses a major challenge. Will it co-operate with these redundancies or will it fight? The signs are not good. An article in the latest issue of the NCU journal, entitled 'How the jobs agreement will work' poses the jobs cuts in a positive light.

It says: 'BT believes that there is an urgent need to 'rebalance' its engineering and clerical workforce. The result will be job losses. Pressure comes from the severe effects of recession on the company, as well as from the introduction of new technology and the impact of growing competition as a result of government decisions...'

It is no accident that this has been the response of the current leadership of the union, which has increasingly gone along with new realism and the Kinnock leadership in the Labour Party.

Over the past year BT has already shed 5000 managers, and has decimated its workforce, who belong to the UCW - doorkeepers, cleaners, catering staff. Now it is

aiming against telephonists, radically cutting back staff who work on directory enquiries. Having dealt with the UCW, BT feels strong enough to take on the NCU.

A recent article in 'The City' showed that BT wants to shed as many as 30,000 jobs in the long run. Immediate plans include cutting nearly 3000 jobs in the Personal Communications Division; up to 650 in Group Logistics and 2850, including over 2000 engineers, in Business Communications.

Other big job losses will hit Worldwide Networks, with job losses here concentrated in London.

The sackings threat has led to widespread calls from branches for a special conference to discuss a

coherent fighting strategy to defeat the cuts.

The whole issue is a challenge to the union's Broad Left, which has been increasingly under pressure from new realist ideas. The elements of a fightback plan are already contained in the so-called 'Broad Strategy' already adopted by NCU conference. But will it be activated by the NCU leadership?

The issue now is whether to 'roll with the punches' and accept a flood of voluntary redundancies which will permanently reduce and weaken the workforce; or adopt a fighting strategy based on the demand for a reduced working week with no loss of pay, and strike action to stop redundancies. The NCU is at a crossroads.



# Courts rule against part-timers

Earlier this month, the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) failed in the High Court legally to eliminate unlawful discrimination against part-time workers on the grounds that it contravenes Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome. Ninety per cent of part-time workers are women, some 4.6 million women. In this fourth article in our 'Women in the Unions' series, EMMA DEAN looks at the issue.

THE High Court's decision to reject the EOC's claim, goes completely against a ruling in 1989 from the European Court of Justice on a similar case.

In that case a West German woman part-time worker successfully argued that West German legislation, which excluded those working 10 hours or less a week from statutory rights to sick pay, contravened Article 119 and EC directives. This Article requires equality of treatment between men and women.

The Court ruled that, since a

greater proportion of women worked part-time, legislation excluding them from pay rights effectively discriminated against women.

## Implications

This was thought at the time to have important implications for women workers in Britain, since according to even government surveys, many sick pay schemes in the retail sector (where large numbers of women part-time workers are employed) do discriminate against women.

The ruling demonstrates that women workers cannot

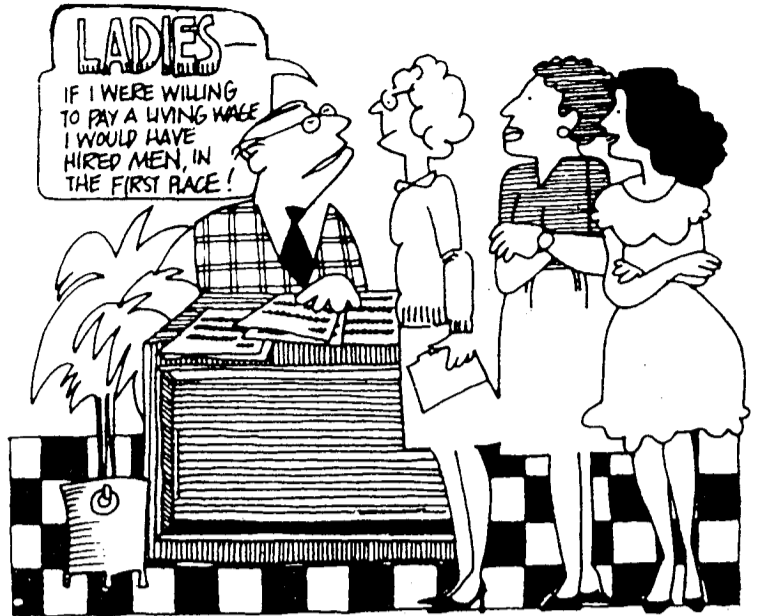
rely on a legalistic framework (British or European) to solve the problems of discrimination in the workplace or the reasons why women are forced into part-time, low-paid and low-status jobs.

For many women, working part-time is a necessary result of not being able to find full-time work. It is not unusual for women to have several part-time jobs, particularly in cleaning, catering and retail.

But for many women, part-time work allows them to fit their paid work around their family responsibilities. As a result many women are found working twilight shifts, part-time during school hours, or on weekends.

## Assumptions

Challenging traditional assumptions over the sexual division of labour, both in the home and in the workplace, is therefore vital when campaigning around rights for



part-time workers.

At present, if someone works less than 16 hours a week, they have to wait for five years - rather than two - to qualify for compensation for unfair sacking, redundancy or maternity pay. If you work less than eight hours a week, then you don't qualify at all.

Some 2.4 million part-time workers are not covered by National Insurance benefits and are therefore not covered by social security protection.

There is also the question of low pay. The average hourly

earnings for women who worked part-time in 1990 was £3.95. That was the average, many thousands of women work for substantially less.

The vast majority of part-time workers are not in a trade union. This is also the case for homeworkers and temporary workers, most of whom are also women. Some trade unions have begun to try and recruit these workers but there is still much that needs to be done.

# Queen to solve philosophical problem

By Ray Dominguez

THE QUEEN has been asked to arbitrate in a row over dodgy philosophy degrees at University College Swansea (UCS).

The dispute reached a watershed in July when the MA degree in philosophy of health care was scrapped.

Despite this vindication, Michael Cohen and Colwyn Williamson - two of the lecturers who blew the whistle on the MA course - have been suspended from their jobs. A third, Anne Maclean, paid off in February, is now asking for her job back.

College authorities lodged a string of disciplinary charges against the lecturers after they made their complaints.

Students in the philosophy department quickly established a defence committee. For their stand against the suspension of Maclean, the student union was fined 2000.

The University of Wales (UoW), meanwhile, reneged on its initial promise to investigate the centre for philosophy and health care, and the college - which spent over 100,000 during the disciplinary hearings - hoped to steamroller its way out of the outcome.

But three days before the council



We are not amused

was due to consider a recommendation to dismiss Cohen and Williamson, the University announced that it was commissioning a report from Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer. The lecturers were suspended pending the outcome.

This turnaround was probably due to a number of factors. Three weeks earlier Cohen and Williamson published their evidence of 'serious improprieties' in the awarding of degrees. A number of professional philosophers had already protested to the University. Entire departments registered their protest and the media profile, sustained by student protest, intensified.

The UoWs' very existence as an education authority is dependent upon the other University colleges in Wales; colleges who have every reason to be apprehensive about their association with Swansea.

In April a high-level University committee stripped one candidate of his MA for plagiarism, and expressed 'unease' at 'certain weaknesses in the overall administration of this MA scheme'.

If the inquiry announcement saved the two lecturers' jobs in March, Swinnerton-Dyer's report did the same in July. Lord Callaghan, as president of the University, pushed a compromise on the college council. The suspensions were replaced by 'enforced study leave'.

UCS have publicly declared that Swinnerton-Dyer's recommendations are 'unconstitutional', and the MA course has been submitted, unaltered, as a new course.

But they have twice been sufficiently worried to hold back from striking the dismissal blow. If the campaign dies now, then they will not be so wary - regardless of what Liz Windsor has to say.

# Still no rights for kids!

Hailed as 'the most radical piece of legislation to affect child care to date' the Children's Act claims to be an innovation and many predict that it will revolutionise child care law.

But is it really such a radical step? Here KATE AHRENS looks at the act and examines its implications.

THE CHILDREN'S Act is a comprehensive piece of legislation which formalises what has always been seen as 'good practice' in

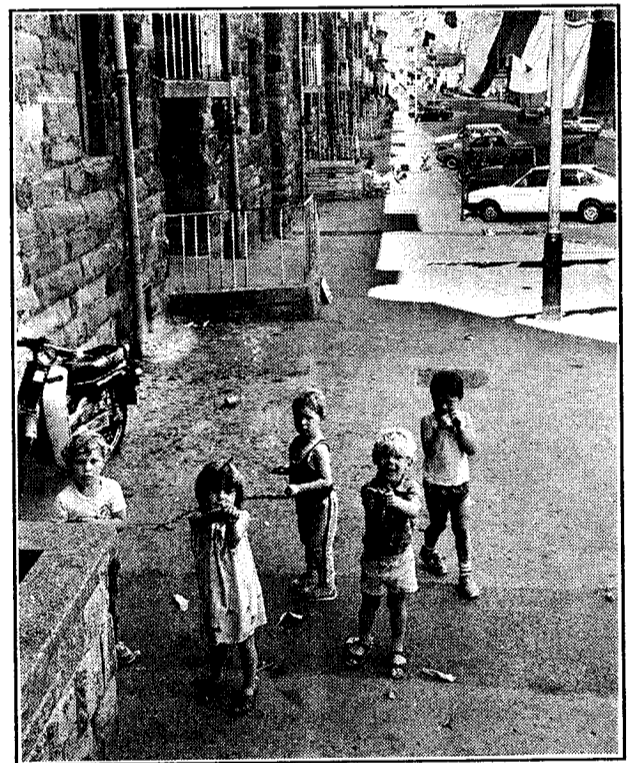
social work circles, providing parents with rights to challenge care orders, and encouraging voluntary agreements between parents and social workers.

It also introduces mechanisms for children to take steps in court cases - widely explained as 'expanding' children's rights.

Under the Act, court orders must be justified as part of a general plan for the family involved - it is no longer possible (in theory) to apply for an order and then think about the longer term problems. Every action must be with the 'child's welfare' paramount.

'The child's welfare' is a phrase much applauded by individuals 'concerned' with the existing structures, but it is a dangerous one. The Act doesn't allow children to determine how to protect their own welfare, but leaves it to social workers in consultation with parents.

And how often has 'it's for their own good' been used to justify such things as corporal punishment, locking children and young people up and National Service? Not everyone



Working class kids: are the Tories really on their side?

would agree that those actions were 'best' for the children involved.

Although the Act has been described as expanding children's rights, in reality, it makes very little difference to the choices open to children.

Children (who are considered mentally 'mature' enough) can now argue for contact orders with their parents whilst in care. They can challenge emergency protection orders and push for the ending of care orders.

These measures will serve only to increase the pressure on children. Now parents, social workers, and the courts will have added reason to 'persuade' children to take a certain course of action which they, not the children, consider to be in that child's 'best interests'.

The aim of the Act is in fact to re-entrench the family as the unit of welfare in society. Most of the changes such as the right to challenge care orders after 72 hours are designed to reduce intervention by the state.

But even at this it will fail. The lack of resources available from the government will mean that much of the Act will not be effective. Sections relating to care orders are so vaguely and ambiguously worded they leave considerable room for interpretation by judges and lawyers.

In the end, the only real effect will be to change the jargon used by the courts and the child care establishment. And the next 'scandal' over child abuse cases will be used by a whole new layer of 'concerned' politicians to argue for further cosmetic changes.

## Women in the Unions Conference

23rd November  
10-5

Wesley House,  
4 Wild Court,  
London WC1



# Cuban communists under siege

by Patrick Baker

The fourth congress of the Cuban Communist Party took place in the atmosphere of a last stronghold under siege. And with good reason, as economic and political threats from the West multiply daily.

But the communists did not buckle under the pressure. They didn't extol the virtues of the capitalist road and Western democracy, as so many erstwhile socialists have done in recent times. Instead, they defied the USA and insisted that it was the destruction of capitalism that had given Cuba its remarkable standards of health and education.

The congress coincided with the removal of the last vestiges of Soviet support for the island state. It was an opportunity for

Castro's leadership to map out a new strategy to defend the gains of the revolution. But, sadly, that opportunity was largely missed.

The closed-session congress did, however, respond to the threat to Cuba's economy and George Bush's vocal campaign for 'democratic elections'. Further austerity measures, as well as a strategy for increasing foreign investment and self-sufficiency, were agreed. And elections to the party central committee were, for the first time, open to nominations from local party cells. But Castro rejected any radical changes to the political or economic system.

His claim that the party still commands overwhelming support among the Cuban people is almost certainly true. And the 'dissident' groups given massive coverage in the

Western media clearly represent very little.

But Fidel Castro's claim that 'the people are ready to die' is a hostage to fortune. As austerity bites deeper, the congress' refusal to allow any significant move away from economic centralisation will become more contentious.

The argument that marketisation brings with it the threat of corruption has a point. But some measure of independence for small farmers could have been one response to Cuba's deepening economic crisis. And the rejection of a move towards more democracy or pluralism throws away one of the best chances of maintaining popular support for anti-capitalist policies.

Castro is, of course, quite right to say that capitalism has failed to answer the problems



of underdevelopment; and that Western 'democracy' is a fraud.

But economic centralisation has hardly solved these problems, particularly in underdeveloped countries. And one-party states haven't been bastions of democracy, even with the popular organisations that have always distinguished Cuba from the Brezhnevite model.

Cuba must be defended

against Bush's offensive, the aim of which is to turn Cuba into another client state, so familiar from Central America. This is the primary duty of socialists in the West.

But, at the same time, we must be honest. The best way to defend social gains in Cuba is for its people to be as involved as possible in running their society - and that means pluralism and democracy.

## Mexican elections

# The prostitute's campaign

CLAUDIA COLIMORO hit the news in 1991. She stood as a candidate on the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) slate in the Mexican federal elections.

She is a feminist, and has fought hard for contraception and abortion rights. She is a prostitute who has campaigned for the legalisation of her profession.

I AM 35 and have three children. I started working as a prostitute while I worked for the social security. I had financial problems when one of my children was ill.

I worked more than 12 hours per day in an office, and also had to oblige my boss's sexual desires to keep my job. I soon realised that I could make much more money as a prostitute.

### Struggle

Over four years ago I got involved in the struggle against AIDS - the other girls needed to know the causes and consequences of this terrible disease. This was very difficult work and we had no money. But we founded the association 'Cuilotzin'.

It fights for health care and civil rights for prostitutes of both sexes, and street children. It also supports domestic workers who suffer sexual harassment and violence.

The association organises meetings about AIDS and its prevention. We work with the National Anti-AIDS Coordination, which provides condoms

which we give to the prostitutes. Now the girls refuse to go with a client who won't use one. We have achieved very positive results.

There is now a hospital which deals with prostitutes' medical problems. They are examined regularly for the AIDS virus, hepatitis B and other contagious diseases. It also provides free gynaecological and buccal tests, as well as free operations for them and their children.

### Hypocrisy

We want prostitution legalised and their rights recognised. Refusing legal status is proof of the double standards and hypocrisy in society. It makes oppression and exploitation by officials easier.

In Mexico, prostitution is controlled by laws passed 56 years ago, which are completely obsolete. Legal recognition would be a big improvement on being at the mercy of corrupt officials and police - even if it meant paying taxes!

It would also allow a much more effective control on AIDS. The current legislation is actually the 1934 law on syphilis,

with the word replaced by 'AIDS' throughout.

After our work, people who blackmail and exploit prostitutes can be punished, sacked or even imprisoned. We have also won the right to nurseries for the children of prostitutes who work by day.

This was challenged in 1990 after a meeting between representatives of prostitutes and the Health Ministry. The anti-abortion 'Provida' movement destroyed the two existing prostitutes' nurseries. Now only prostitutes know where they are.



"In the frontier zones, the women who work in the free-trade sweatshops drudge for 15 hours a day and still don't earn enough to live. About half of them have to work as prostitutes at the weekend"

### Sweatshops

We have a similar project for prostitutes. We don't intend to teach them to sew or embroider, do crochet or cross-point. They must have real choices so that they can get well-paid jobs when they decide, from age or fatigue, to leave this profession.

Women's wages in Mexico are pitiful. In the frontier zones, the women who work in the free-trade sweatshops drudge for 15 hours a day and still don't earn enough to live. About half

of them have to work as prostitutes at the weekend.

This will go on as long as such low wages exist and real social security and creches are absent. Women will continue to become prostitutes to eat and feed their children - 95% are mothers.

I am also a feminist, and took part in the National Convention of Women for Democracy in March 1991. It includes 40 organisations, movements and women's unions. The convention proposed me as an electoral candidate and looked for a party that would put me on its list.

### Violent attacks

After various rebuffs, the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) and the Socialist Electoral Front (FES) accepted. This cost them votes and provoked violent attacks from the right, particularly the Party of National Action (PAN) and Provida.

As well as calling for the legalisation of prostitution, sex education and a systematic campaign against AIDS, I also supported the liberalisation of abortion. Provida produced photos of a dismembered eight-month foetus. I, Rosario Ibarra and other feminist PRT candidates were described throughout as 'aboters'.

Work with the PRT has been important for me, even though I'm not a member. I agree with many points of their political programme. Examples would be free sexual choice, the right to organisation, the rejection of violence against women,

democratic rights, the legalisation of abortion and the reappearance of the 'disappeared'.

### Corrupt authorities

My election campaign was very difficult. At first, journalists were friendly enough, comparing me to the Italian deputy 'la Cicciolina', an ex-pornographic model. Later they realised I was serious and determined to make myself heard, to see abortion legalised and break the power of the corrupt authorities.

I said loud and clear that every woman can end up as a prostitute, and that blessings and white dresses are only trying to hide the fact that you sexually belong to a man. Then I was fiercely attacked.

During the campaign, I heard about the prostitutes' needs throughout the country. Their rights are systematically violated. I heard of attacks on prostitutes and transvestites by police; and of the health department keeping information on people taking AIDS tests, although it's meant to be anonymous. We oppose these onslaughts by the authorities; prostitutes are citizens like anybody else.

This was the first time a prostitute had stood in an election in Mexico, and a lot of women clearly voted for me. But there was massive fraud by the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party. This stopped us winning any representation. In the polling station where I voted, with several journalists present, there wasn't a single PRT vote by the time of the count....

I wanted to win because I wanted the media to end their horror stories and double standards. Our voice should be heard. I am a voice for those that have none.

"After our work, people who blackmail and exploit prostitutes can be punished, sacked or even imprisoned. We have also won the right to nurseries for the children of prostitutes who work by day"





**USA: Bosses' attacks and workers' resistance**

# Where workers still wait for a Labour Party

By Paul Le Blanc

The Presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George Bush have been described as a period of 'conservative-capitalist overdrive' by influential maverick-conservative analyst Kevin Phillips.

He means that it has been a period when the government and capitalist class tilt in a less democratic and social reform-oriented direction, adopting policies overtly favourable to the big business elite.

Economic imbalances and inequality grow rapidly in such a period. Despite his conservative views, Phillips' analysis is accurate.

Economic restructuring has created a devastating reality for many industrial working class communities in the US. In my own Pittsburgh area, which used to be the steelmaking capital of the world, and is the cradle of the US labour movement, communities of once-prosperous steel workers are turning into demoralised slums. Steel mills are rusting or torn down altogether; the biggest employer in the area is now the University of Pittsburgh.

This industrial decay reflects the economic weakening of the US, especially against its Japanese and European competitors. The US share of the world economic product fell from about 40 per cent in the 1950s to a projected 25 per cent in the 1990s.

Sectors of the US ruling class gathered around George Bush are trying to preserve their position through continuing the policies of imperialist resurgence started by Ronald Reagan. This strategy, involving the aggressive militarism we saw in the Gulf, is part of a larger strategy for US domination in third world areas.

The Bush administration has had undeniable short-term successes with its war policy in the Persian Gulf. But it is still an open question whether this policy will be successful in the long run; there is no certainty that military and

political clout can compensate for economic weakness in the long run.

But US capitalism is not just trying to solve its problems by military aggression abroad. In the last decade US workers have been under sustained attack. Part of that attack has been through economic restructuring and the change in the composition of the workforce. During the 1970s 38 million industrial jobs were lost; despite the fact that the absolute number of blue collar jobs is higher than ever, it is a declining proportion of the workforce.

## Living standards under attack

About 85 per cent of the new jobs created since the 1980s were concentrated in low-wage white collar and service jobs; there has been a significant expansion of part time and temporary employment. Real wages fell by eight per cent during the 1980s. Almost 20 per cent of American workers have no health insurance and 40 per cent no pension plan.

The general decline of living standards has had profound impacts on the consciousness of the class. Younger workers face many fewer job opportunities than their parents. Twenty-two per cent of US children live in poverty.

White male workers serving as the sole 'breadwinner' have traditionally been seen as a privileged group in the working class. But their real income fell by an average 22 per cent between 1976 and 1984. Working class families need two incomes to survive at the same levels that their parents did on one income; there has been a huge increase in women in the workforce, and even an increase of illegal child labour.

Black and Hispanic workers are the majority of the working class in many parts of the country. They are the most oppressed of all; one third of black workers are officially categorised as living in poverty, as opposed to 11 per cent of white workers.

## Anti-War GIs face prison

SEVERAL US marines who refused to fight in the Gulf war are facing heavy prison sentences. Most immediately threatened are Marine Corps reservist Erik Larsen and reservist Tahan Jones. Both are from California.

Originally the two were charged with 'desertion in time of war' which carries the death sentence. This has now been altered to 'desertion to avoid hazardous duty and/or shirk important service', which carries up to seven years in prison.

Larsen is a particular target because of his outspoken anti-war activities before and during the war. He spoke at over 100 rallies in 20 US states, as well as anti-war protests in Germany, Italy and Britain.

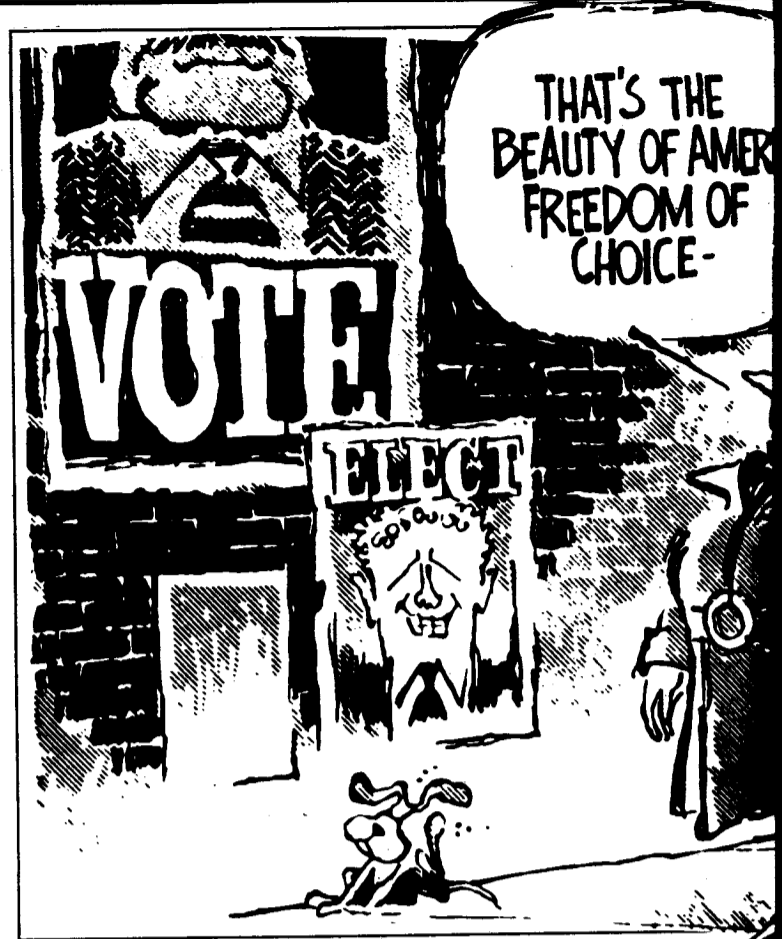
At a preliminary hearing the Marine Corps deliberately proceeded while Larsen's civilian lawyer was out of the country. Marine

lawyer Captain Wendell Arsi, assigned to defend Larsen, protested at this and was told by the prosecutor 'Civilian counsel is a prick and has to be taught a lesson now or later'. A judge ruled that the preliminary hearings were invalid and had to be redone.

The Marines have also tried to obstruct Larsen's attempt to gain conscientious objector status. But a district court judge in San Francisco has ruled that Larsen's application has to be heard.

Meanwhile a broad-based defence committee is conducting a vigorous campaign on behalf of the two marines.

Messages of support, and resolutions from labour movement and campaigning bodies should be sent to: Larsen/Jones Defence Committee, Box 225, 1678 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709, USA. Telephone (415) 655-1201.



## Resistance

The working class does not express itself mainly through the trade unions. Less than 15 per cent of all workers are in unions, and less than 10 per cent in the private sector.

However, there have been important fightbacks against the attacks. The fight by the Hormel meatpacking workers in Austin, Minnesota was supported by workers all over the country despite its eventual defeat.

The militancy of the United Mineworkers of America in the 1989 Pittston strike generated solidarity and a spirit of enthusiasm throughout the working class; the resulting victory has strengthened class struggle currents in the labour movement in the last two years. Many strikes have utilised novel tactics, including civil disobedience against court injunctions.

In my own Pittsburgh area there have been two long and tough strikes this past summer - among the workers of the Giant Eagle supermarket chain, and hospital workers in nearby Canonsburg. Both strikes generated a militant spirit reminiscent of the 1930s; in Canonsburg there were mass confrontations and arrests. Similar struggles are emerging in a number of localities.

Faced with the obvious bankruptcy of the 'respectable' class collaborationism of the AFL-CIO union federation leadership, union members and some union leaders are turning towards a more radical and socially conscious trade unionism. In some unions dissident caucuses reflecting new moods are making headway. These include Teamsters for a Democratic Union, the New Directions Caucus in the United Auto Workers and dissident networks among railworkers around the journal *Straight Track*. Other militant caucuses include the *Hell on Wheels* caucus among New York transit workers.

In addition to these stirrings of rank-and-file activism there is a growing interest, albeit modest so far, in international labour solidarity.

## Labour Party

But the absence of a coherent nationwide independent working class politics is seen as a serious deficiency by growing sectors of the union movement. While old-time bureaucrats and many social democratic 'professionals' are committed to the Democratic Party, significant numbers of union members are looking to the creation of a Labour Party.

Tony Mazzochi, a leader of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers says: 'The bosses have two parties. We want one'. He has recently initiated and urged

workers to join a new body called *Labour Party Advocates*. He says that when 5000 local union leaders are joined up, a convention will be called to form a Labour Party.

There are other stirrings of independent political action. Among the Afro-American community there is deepening resentment against the phoney reforms, empty promises and deep-entrenched racism of US society. A huge percentage of blacks have drawn radical political conclusions, reflected in support for Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. But the Rainbow is deeply flawed by being bound up with the Democratic Party. Recently, a former top strategist of the Rainbow, Ron Daniels, has broken with Jackson on the issue of the Democratic Party.

The National Organisation of Women has recently helped to lead mass struggles against reactionary attempts to restrict abortion rights. It has also declared its support for struggles of the Afro-American community and labour movement, and took a consistently anti-war position on the Gulf. A majority of the NOW membership, and a central component of its leadership, have taken a position in favour of a new party based on radical social and economic reform.

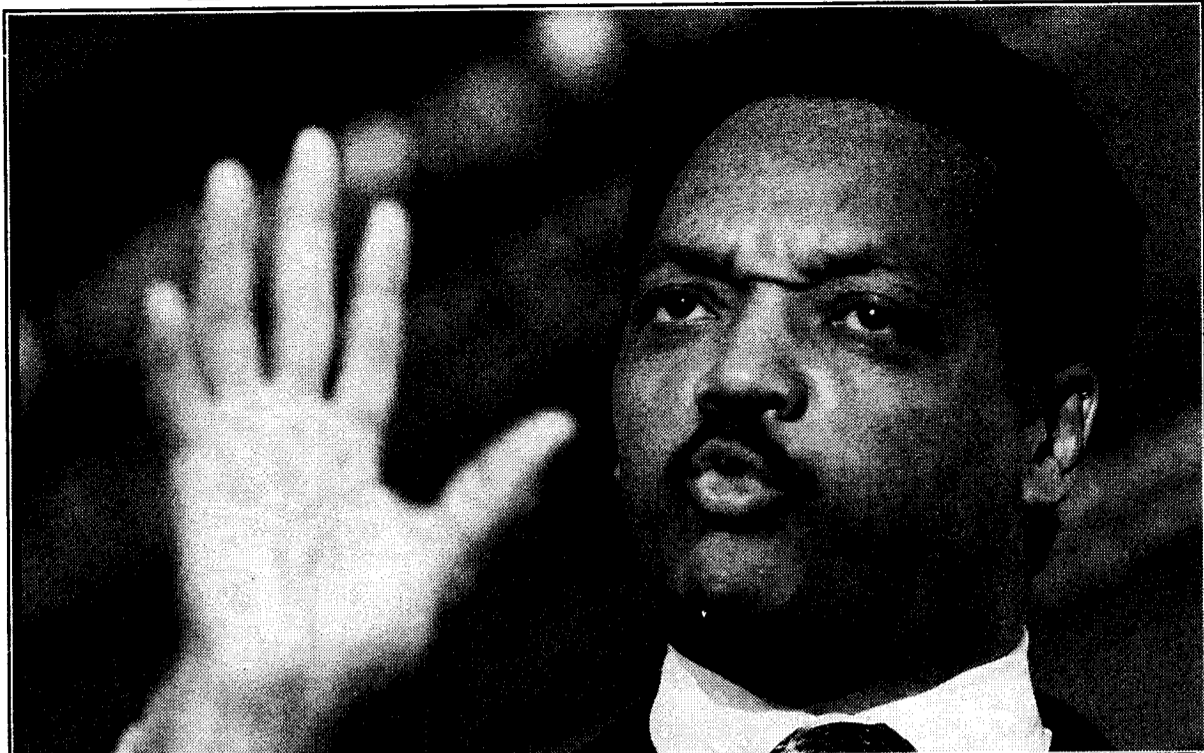
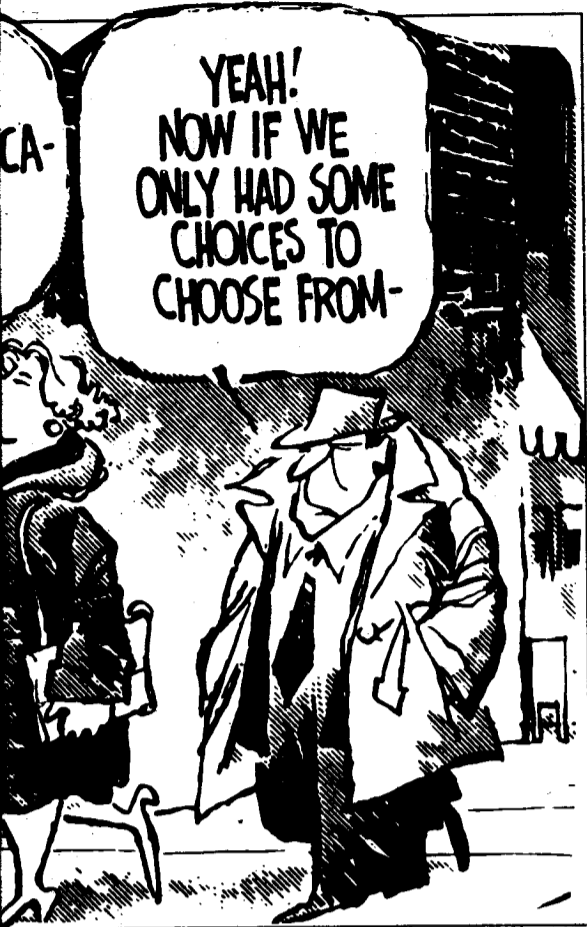
## Radical activists

Another important factor in the US today is the broadly based milieu of left-liberal and radical activists, many of them relatively young and a growing number of them part of the resurgent wave of politicising students. They constituted a vital part of the Central American solidarity movement, the anti-war movement of the Gulf, and the movement against US support to apartheid.

Such activists have also been in the forefront of struggles to defend abortion rights, which is a central struggle in the US at the present time. The federal government and the Supreme Court's conservative majority have been eating away at the legal rights of women to safe and affordable abortions, while right-wing Christian fundamentalists have been mobilising violent attempts to close down abortion clinics. Some of the most massive and militant demonstrations in recent years have been called to counteract these reactionary attacks. This issue is likely to be a focal point for future mass actions.

Many of this layer of activists have been active in anti-racist campaigns - for example over the cases of vicious police brutality in Los Angeles and against mob violence and killings in New York's Howard Beach and Bensonhurst. New York has also seen recent mass campus

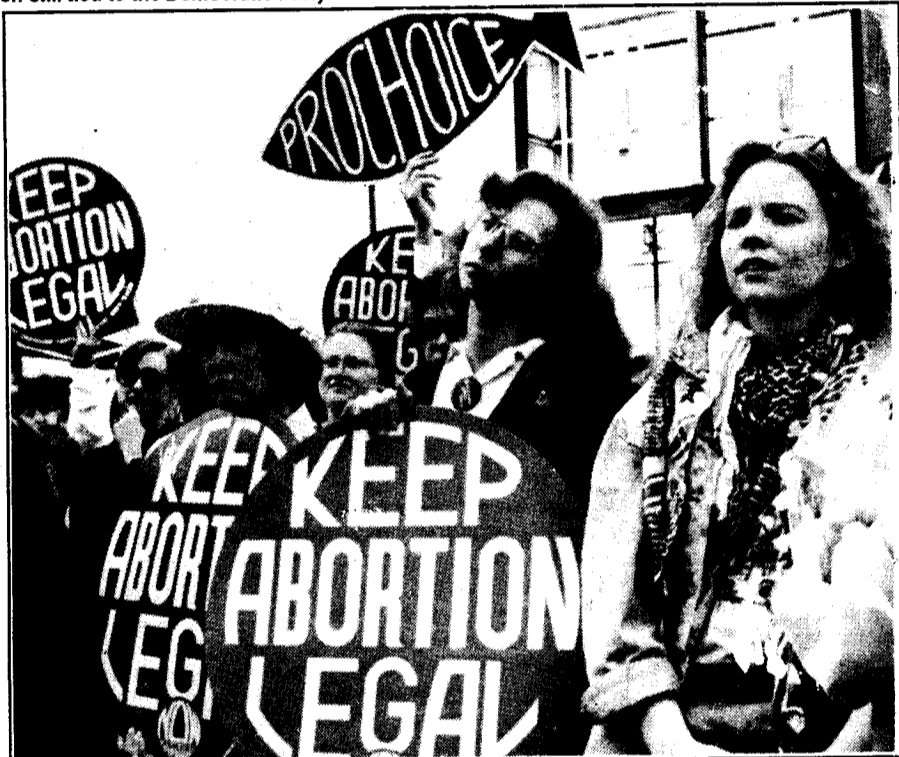




Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition still tied to the Democratic Party



George Bush with his favourite type of black: reactionary Judge Thomas



Abortion rights under fire even before Judge Thomas's appointment

protests against cutbacks and tuition fee hikes.

### The Left

As the foregoing indicates, we believe that in the 1990s, there is the real possibility of the creation of an independent working people's party, based on sections of the union movement, the black movement, the women's movement and layers of independent activists. There are of course no guarantees, but it is a real possibility.

In addition to this, there is a growing proletarianisation of the population, accompanied by radicalisation and deepening working class consciousness. Regardless of how the 'new party' developments unfold, there will be big opportunities for the left.

The most substantial groups to the left of the Democrats are the Communist Party and the Democratic Socialists of

America (DSA). The CP has around 5000 members, and continues to have a significant impact in social struggles and among some labour activists. But it is a shadow of its former self, and is undergoing an agonising crisis over the collapse of Stalinism internationally. It may well end up by splitting. Some members seem intent on hanging onto Stalinism, but others who leave may drift into social democracy.

The DSA is a social democratic grouping affiliated to the Socialist International. It too has around 5000 supporters, but many of these are people who do no more than pay dues and attend one or two special events a year. It has some influence among labour leaders and in the social movements, but so far has been incapable of building an activist movement which could act as a pole of attraction for younger activists.

The forces of revolutionary marxism in the United States are scattered, being mainly organised in the Fourth Internationalist Tendency, *Socialist Action*, and within a politically broader grouping of several hundreds called *Solidarity*. Urgent steps are underway to unify the forces of revolutionary marxism. If they are successful, there are good prospects for the building of a significant marxist force, which could play an important role in the vital struggle for the political independence of the US working class - a Labour Party. This struggle is of vital significance for workers world-wide.

Paul Le Blanc, author of *Lenin and the Revolutionary Party* (Humanities Press) is a leader of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency.



## Thomas case puts sexual harassment centre stage

THE CONFIRMATION of black judge Clarence Thomas to the US Supreme Court was a foregone conclusion. Presidential patronage was used massively to literally bribe Democratic senators into voting for him.

Nonetheless the case has rebounded on George Bush; it has made sexual harassment a debating point all over the US. There have been numerous reports of women coming forward to challenge sexual harassment in the workplace as a result of the case.

Bush's proposal of Thomas as a Supreme Court judge was a very calculated move. Thomas has a record as an equal opportunities lawyer, but is ultra-conservative on most issues. He opposes positive action for women and black people, and is violently anti-abortion. Bush calculated that by nominating a black conservative he would split the civil rights movement. His calculation was correct.

The fight against Thomas, which started months before charges of sexual harassment against him, focused on the abortion issue. In state after state, reactionary legislation restricting abortion has been passed. As is detailed in the accompanying article by Paul

Le Blanc, abortion continues to be a central fight for women's rights in the US.

In coming forward with charges of sexual harassment against Thomas, Anita Hill made a very courageous stand. She opened herself up to vilification, from the senators on the hearings committee and beyond. This she duly got.

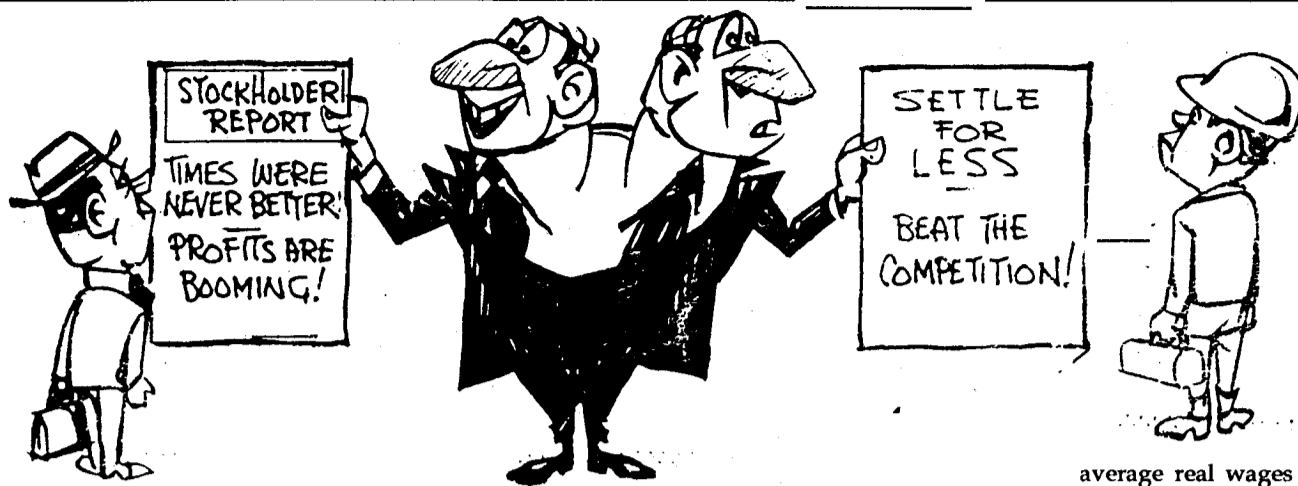
But although Hill had to suffer abuse from senators in the hearings, and although Thomas was confirmed, her actions won an important victory: sexual harassment has been put on the political agenda in the US as never before.

Anita Hill blew a hole in the wall of silence which surrounds the issue, and by doing so made it easier for women to resist harassment and to campaign on this question.

Thomas and his huge battery of lawyers ruthlessly exploited the fact that he was black. Thomas accused his critics of opposing him because he was an 'uppity black', and of being a 'lynch mob'.

But this couldn't disguise the fact that all the most reactionary and racist parts of the establishment mobilised in his defence. They were quite happy with a black Supreme Court judge provided he would support anti-black and anti-women judgements.





# Is capitalism in crisis?

By Andy Kilmister

WHAT do we mean when we talk of capitalism being in crisis, or the crisis of the US and British economies? Are the US and Britain in crisis at the moment? To answer these questions we need to distinguish three levels of crisis.

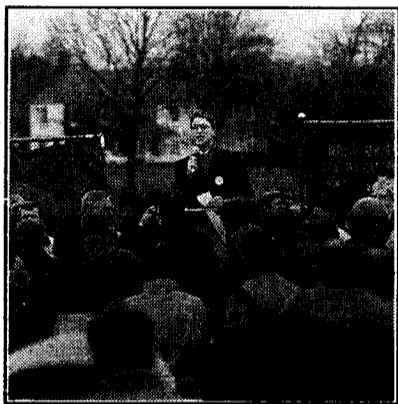
Fundamentally capitalism is vulnerable to crises because it depends on the exploitation of labour as the source of profit. As capitalism develops, more and more capital takes the form of machinery, forcing profits down.

However this long-term tendency can be offset by profits generated in foreign trade, increased exploitation of workers or technological improvements making machinery cheaper.

These strategies have their own problems though: for example forcing wages down can reduce sales and mean lower profits.

This is where the second level of crisis comes in. Slumps in production close the weakest firms and raise the rate of profit overall, laying the basis for future accumulation. In this way cyclical crises precede booms.

But as booms progress, wages and raw material costs rise, and if productivity does not rise fast enough to maintain profits, then slumps will recur.



Job losses: The sharp end of the slump

In the 19th century cycles happened fairly regularly, every decade or so. The greater complexity of modern capitalism, particularly the growth of imperialism and state involvement in the economy, has modified this pattern.

A particular set of circumstances - US regulation of the world economy and working class defeats in the 1940s together with the arms spending of the 1950s and 1960s - led to a 25-year upswing from 1948 to 1973.

A balance was maintained between mass production of consumer goods and demand stemming from relatively high wages and employment levels. These factors were temporary, however, and after 1973 the underlying cycle of crisis and recovery reasserted itself with slumps in 1974/5 and 1979/82.

So the concept of crisis refers both to the fundamental weakness of capitalism and to the periodic slumps which express this weakness and lay the basis for future booms.

But what is happening now? Here we need to look at a third aspect of crises.

Different national economies respond to crisis in different ways. In particular the USA and continental Europe diverged significantly in the 1980s.

The share of the USA in world industrial production fell from 44.4 per cent in 1948 to 29.5 per cent in 1973. The main reason for this was the long-term slowdown in the US rate of productivity growth; from 1960 to 1973 this was 2.5 per cent per year compared with 4.8 per cent in Europe and 9.6 per cent in Japan.

But after 1973 the US maintained its share of production and grew faster than in Europe.

Government spending, particularly on defence, and middle-class consumption fuelled by tax cuts, boosted demand even though investment was weak. The price was a sharp increase in the balance of payments deficit and government budget deficit. Income inequality increased and by 1989

average real wages fell to the level of 1961.

Corporate debt increased from 23 per cent of GNP in 1950 to 39 per cent in 1989. The corresponding rise for household debt was from 24 per cent to 64 per cent and for other nonfinancial business debt from 7 per cent to 24 per cent.

So we can speak of a third aspect of the crisis, the crisis of a specific national economy. The underlying US crisis has been sharpened by the way the US ruling class responded to the 1974 and 1980 slumps.

In many ways Britain has been similar, though the government budget deficit has been less and unemployment higher.

The UK company sector financial deficit reached record levels of four per cent of GDP in 1989 and five per cent in 1990. The governments of these countries face a dilemma.

Lack of home production and investment has left them vulnerable to inflation and trade deficits even in very weak upturns. A lot of speculative capital has been created.

But financial fragility means that any attempt to prevent this can easily turn into a major slump. So they oscillate between raising interest rates to control inflation and lowering them when a recession threatens to get too bad.

The current recession is an example of this. Fears of inflation in 1990 led to a restrictive monetary policy. The idea was to have a brief recession and resume growth in 1991. But this autumn the US economy stubbornly refuses to grow, Bush is having to put pressure on the Federal Reserve (US central bank) to cut interest rates further and to renegotiate the Federal deficit reduction package agreed last year with Con-

gress. None of the basic problems of debt and low productivity have been touched.

This kind of pattern is not limited to the USA and Britain, though it is especially acute there. In Japan credit conditions were eased in the late 1980s, as the Yen rose and the economy relied more on domestic demand. Now credit is scarcer and in the first seven months of this year 5,600 bankruptcies led to more than \$29 billion of bad debts. Investment is falling. South Korea's corporate debt rose by over 28 per cent in the last year.

Europe has escaped some of these difficulties. The problem there remains the high unemployment level compared with the US and Japan. Having the same rate of output growth as the US with much higher productivity growth has thrown millions out of work.

Do individual responses of regions and states to crisis mean that national or regional crises have superseded the general crisis of capitalism? Many economists think so. They point to EC links with eastern Europe, particularly German unification, and Japanese investment in Asia and argue that these areas are increasingly independent of one another and of the USA.

But this ignores the increasing internationalisation of the world economy, particularly the growth of foreign investment since 1986.

Foreign firms have become much more dependent on foreign investment in the 1980s. In 1989, for instance, 29 per cent of ICI's sales were in the US. The figures were 28 per cent for GEC, 29 per cent for Volvo and 48 per cent for Honda. The US recession is now affecting France, Italy and Japan.

Understanding the basic vulnerability of capitalism to crisis involves understanding the way in which individual crises act to resolve, temporarily, the contradictions of the system, and lay the basis for renewed growth. It also involves understanding the new contradictions which this process gives rise to, both in general and in specific national economies.

In this way we can analyse those periods when the continuing instability of capitalism becomes apparent to all, and creates the basis for an alternative system.

socialist  
**OUTLOOK**

Rally  
November 29  
7.30pm

## Socialism and the new world order

*Ernest Mandel*

(United Secretariat of the Fourth International)

*Janette Habel*

(author of 'Cuba - the revolution under siege')

*Carl Brecker*

(General Secretary of the Workers Organisation of Socialist Action, South Africa)

Kingsway College, Sidmouth Street, off  
Grays Inn Road, London WC1

## WOSA Tour

Carl Brecker, a leader of the Workers Organisation for Socialist Action (WOSA), is coming to Britain in November for a tour sponsored by *Socialist Outlook*.

WOSA is a comparatively young organisation in South Africa, but has built itself a significant base in communities and townships, especially among the youth.

Brecker's tour will be of interest to all those who want to find out more about the state of the liberation struggle, the political forces to the left of the leadership of the African National Congress. Provisional dates for the tour have been announced, venues will be announced soon. The dates are:

Southampton	11 November
Brighton	12 November
Bristol	14 November
Swansea	15 November
Central London	18 November
Oxford	19 November
Birmingham	20 November
Manchester	21 November
Newcastle	22 November
Glasgow	25 November
Southall	28 November
Socialist Outlook rally	29 November



# Polish marxist backs election campaign

by Dave Osler

MACIEJ GUZ is convenor of the militant breakaway Solidarnosc '80 union at Warsaw's FSO car plant, which organises around 1,000 of the 15,000 employees at the city's biggest workplace.

He is also a supporter of the Fourth International, introduced to trotskyism by a fellow detainee in the torture chambers of the Jaruzelski regime. After his release, he edited the underground Solidarity newspaper *Workers' Unity*.

Solidarnosc '80 was formed by activists who rejected the 1989 round-table agreement, which brought Solidarity into a coalition government with the stalinists, Guz explains.

'Politically, the split occurred during martial law, between the mainstream of Solidarity and the more radical Fighting Solidarity wing. But operationally, the split came after the round-table deal.

When the bureaucracy chose the pro-capitalist way of development, they looked to the peaceful current in Solidarity to help them transform the situation and pacify workers. Solidarity took the historic role of social democracy in western countries, a current of compromise.'

Solidarnosc '80 now has 250,000 members nationally and is the largest union in one or two cities. As well as left-



Walesa: looking to direct presidential rule

wingers, the anti-semitic right has support inside it.

The leadership, which Guz categorises as 'clerical-nationalist', wants to expel him, accusing him of being a 'communist' and a 'security agent'. But the FSO factory committee voted 15-2 against the move.

At plant level, Guz is trying to draw both Solidarity and the former state union OPZZ into a united front. Following the abolition of the old workers' committee at the state-owned factory, Solidarnosc '80 is organising an unofficial replacement, known as the 'Workers' Committee for People of Labour'.

'The programme is based on the transitional programme and the first programme of Solidarity - and that's not a contradiction. For instance, we struggle against the privatisation of state factories under the slogan *capitalism, no!*

He hopes to be able to recruit the best elements from OPZZ, which has been forced to act as a genuine union in order to justify its existence under the new political conditions in the country.

Guz warns that the end of stalinism could lead to capitalist restoration and a rightist dictatorship. The repercussions of the Soviet coup will strengthen the reactionaries. And direct presidential rule by Walesa or even renewed martial law are both possible.

It depends on the situation and the arguments used to introduce dictatorship. Part of

society still supports Walesa. Dictatorship may be introduced under the slogan of *decommunisation*, says Guz.

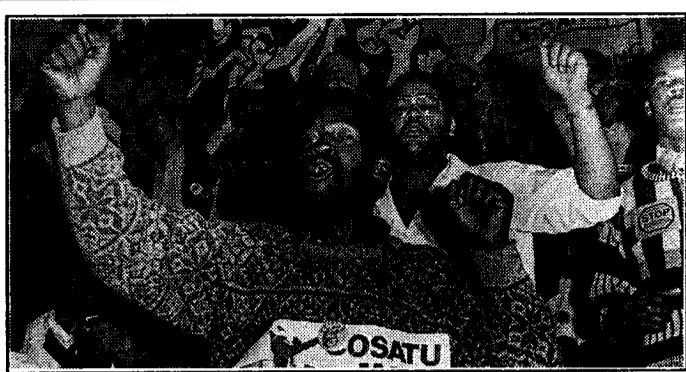
Despite its small size, the trotskyists in the NRL (Revolutionary Left Current) circulate almost 3,000 copies of their monthly paper *Dalej!* (Forward!), and have recently printed and distributed 10,000 copies of Trotsky's book 'Revolution Betrayed'.

In the general election on October 27, the organisation is critically supporting the OPZZ slate in Warsaw, known as WPZZ (Warsaw Agreement of Trade Unions).

'Their election programme is based on our proposals. Initially we were going to run an inter-union campaign, but Solidarity refused to take part and we thought WPZZ would only use Solidarnosc '80's name for propaganda purposes.'

Guz is critical of the Solidarnosc Pracy (Labour Solidarity) slate being organised around senator Karol Modzelewski, which has won support from Jozef Pinior, the best known Polish socialist in the West. Its politics, while social democratic, are explicitly pro-market.

While the class consciousness of Polish workers is very weak - a legacy of four decades of stalinism - Guz argues that under the attacks they will face during the process of capitalist restoration, they will be forced to defend themselves. This opens up the possibility of building a revolutionary movement.



## South Africa - workers' leaders threatened

LEADERS of the powerful South African workers' movement are once again under attack. Jay Naidoo, General Secretary of the COSATU union federation and Moses Mayekiso, leader of the miners' union, were recently arrested.

The union leaders have been convicted of kidnapping and assaulting an undercover police agent. The police spy was found outside the COSATU headquarters in the aftermath of a spate of bombings aimed at the union's offices.

But the magistrate that convicted Naidoo and Mayekiso found that the spy posed no threat to them. Their lawyers will be appealing against the conviction.

## Independence only answer to Yugoslav carnage

SERBIA'S attempts to hold together what was Yugoslavia by force are looking increasingly untenable, as Bosnia declared de facto independence.

The 4 million-strong state was immediately threatened with invasion by Belgrade. At the same time, Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic was signing the ninth peace deal in recent weeks in Moscow. But Gorbachev's intervention was no more effective than the increasingly farcical efforts of the EC, breaking down almost immediately.

The potential for reforming the Yugoslav federation looks increasingly small. Only Serbia and Montenegro are now prepared to be part of it. The only real alternative to Milosevic's bloody war for a Greater Serbia is the right to independence for Yugoslavia's nations.

And it is the peoples of Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia who will achieve it - not the EC or Moscow.

## Turks massacre Kurdish civilians

ON OCTOBER 11 and 12, the Turkish air force, supported by thousands of troops, bombarded Kurdish villages in Iraq with napalm.

Three civilians were killed and more than 30 wounded. The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), supposedly the target of the attack, claimed that none of its fighters were hit. But it did cause an exodus of refugees from the UN security zone, and destroyed housing recently built by UN workers.

The murderous attack forms part of an increasingly frantic election campaign by Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal. But it also seems to signal the failure of attempts by Iraqi Kurdish leader Talabani to improve relations with the Ankara government. These attempts conflicted with the PKK's guerilla campaign against the Turkish state.

British troops have been stationed nearby since the Gulf war, with a brief to protect Iraqi Kurds. But they took no action. It has been suggested that the aggressor's membership of NATO could be part of the explanation for this.

# Bulgarian elections: final nail in the Communists' coffin

by Kathy Kirkham

THE 'domino effect' of collapsing Communist Parties in eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union has finally reached the hitherto calmest corner of the Balkans.

In Bulgaria, the Socialist (formerly Communist) Party which clung to power after the bloodless overthrow of Todor Zhivkov in 1989, was ousted in the country's elections on October 13.

Although complete voting figures were still being compiled at the time of writing, it is clear that the opposition Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) will now form Bulgaria's first non-Communist government for four decades.

The UDF, a mixed bag of mainly pro-capitalist and pro-US forces, has been torn by bitter in-fighting for months over whether to collaborate with the Socialist Party (SP) in Par-

liament. In fact, shortly before the elections, three 'green' and social democratic groupings broke away and decided to go it alone (unsuccessfully) at the polls.

Nonetheless, the UDF has apparently won over 36 per cent of the vote, ahead of the Socialists' estimated 33 per cent. It looks as if the Turkish Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), with 6 per cent, will hold the balance of power.

There is little likelihood that the SP will be able to do any deals with the MRF to paralyse the new government. In Zhivkov's day, the Communist Party persecuted the million-strong Turkish minority in Bulgaria and in the run-up to these elections the Socialists continued to court the nationalist, anti-Turkish vote.

A UDF/MRF coalition is now the most probable development, though the UDF itself is by no means free of

anti-Turkish elements and the Turkish movement's leaders are sure to drive a hard bargain in an effort to fully regain their lost democratic rights.

The most significant outcome of the elections is the fact that, even faced with a disunited opposition, the Socialists were still defeated. The stage is now set for the final disintegration of the Party. Its decay became clearly visible last year when, despite its change of name, and its outright victory in the first free elections in June, the SP kept many of Zhivkov's old faces at the helm.

Still intact as well was the nomenklatura, the prosperous party members in the bureaucracy, the army and at the head of the state enterprises.

While they made plans to try to cash in on Bulgaria's first moves towards the free market, the mass of the people were already reeling



from unemployment, rationing and massive price rises.

An important turning point came with the September '90 Party congress, where reformers were outflanked by the old guard, whose hold on the party was reaffirmed.

By December, as the economy spiralled into chaos and after huge demonstrations and a general strike against austerity, the Socialist government was forced into a caretaker coalition with the UDF.

The present elections may have temporarily broken the political stalemate. Economically, however, Bulgaria remains the most unstable of any of the former Comecon trading partners.

It has the lowest foreign investment, sharply declining production, falling exports to hard currency countries and grave shortages of petrol and other essential goods.

Workers continue to radicalise in their fight to defend their livelihoods and democratic rights. The unions achieved a partly inflation-proofed pay agreement with the government and employers in January, anticipating the February price liberalisation, with a rise in the national minimum wage of 128 per cent.

Nevertheless, Bulgaria may yet have to go through the convulsions of its Balkan neighbours before conditions for a real renewal of the workers' movement and its leadership are created.



# Fighting back against the bigots

## High risk lives

Lesbian and gay politics after the Clause  
Edited by Tara Kaufmann and Paul Lincoln  
Prism Press, 1991  
£6.95

Reviewed by Dani Ahrens

THIS is an important and challenging book. As a chronicle of recent lesbian and gay history this collection of articles picks up where *Radical Records* left off. The articles reflect the diversity of lesbian and gay communities and essays by the editors provide a strong theoretical thread throughout the book.

Two particularly powerful articles are 'Disabled lesbians and gays are here to stay!' by Kirsten Hearn, and 'The making of a radical black gay man' by Peter Nevins. Both ex-

press anger at the oppressive attitudes and behaviour with which the white able-bodied lesbian and gay communities are riddled. But they also describe and celebrate the growing self-organisation of both black and disabled lesbians and gay men.

Less pleasant memories may well be stirred by Jonathan Louw's description of the intricate and bitter disputes that quite rapidly destroyed the London Stop the Clause campaign.

Louw underestimates the significance of political differences. But the piece is more seriously flawed by its exclusive focus on London. Indeed, one of the few weaknesses of the book as a whole is its London-centric bias.

Other contributors attempt to analyse the political basis of the Stop the Clause campaign. It is extremely refreshing to see a clear and well-argued critique of the 'we can't help it - we were born that way' line



PHOTO: Andrew Ward

Lesbians and gay men must build on strengths of 'Stop the Clause' campaign for struggles to come

of defence, that was adopted by most of the prominent campaigners against the Clause.

Nicola Field addresses similar issues. She also raises crucial questions about the meaning of the 'family' (pretended or otherwise) in a capitalist, patriarchal society and the meaning of childhood and the treatment of children.

This essay is also the only one to pay attention to the issue of education. But it misses the actual effects of Section

28 in the education system, as well as a strategic view for the way ahead.

Sarah Roelofs and Bob Cant contribute valuable scene-setting pieces on the Labour Party and local government respectively.

Tara Kaufmann's article on the use of the imagery of the Holocaust was particularly interesting. But the essays on AIDS and HIV, while important in themselves, did not make the necessary connec-

tions between AIDS and Section 28.

The book leaves the reader with a fairly rounded picture of what Section 28 is and isn't, as well as of the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign that sprung up to oppose it.

Celebration of the achievements of lesbians and gay men is well balanced by the many challenges that remain for both the lesbian and gay movement and for the left.

# Watching lesbian detectives...

## Gaudi Afternoon

By Barbara Wilson  
Virago Press

Reviewed by Rebecca Flemming

THE TITLE of Barbara Wilson's latest book is an obvious and unashamed pun on Dorothy Sayer's classic novel *Gaudy Night*. They both belong to the same literary genre - that of detective fiction - but the resemblance really ends there.

The massive difference between the two is a testament to some of the great changes in western society and its literary traditions that have occurred this century.

Protagonists seen in crime novels written by women are no longer aristocratic men in the mould of Lord Peter Wimsey. They are more usually strong, independent women who are more than a match for any villain. These women are also increasingly lesbians, who stride across pages imbued in feminist activity, experience and thought.

Indeed the flowering of lesbian feminist detective literature since the 1970s, including such classics as M.S. Beal's *Angel Dance*, has been the subject of endless speculation and debate.

Do lesbians make particularly effective sleuths? Should the texts be interpreted as

metaphor? Perhaps they represent on some kind of symbolic level an attempt by lesbians to solve the problems of, and make order out of, a hostile and alien world? Maybe they are a continuation of the tradition of butch dyke riding to rescue damsels in distress...

I prefer a more simple explanation. If you want an engaging and pleasurable read, without any pretensions of literary grandeur, then detective fiction is an obvious place to start. Books are always more enjoyable if you share their broad ideological framework and can identify with some of the characters.

The growing genre has also been the beneficiary of a range of strong authors whose work continues to develop and mature. Barbara Wilson is one of these, already known for crime novels such as *Murder in the Collective* and *The Dogcollar Murders*, in addition to other fiction.

*Gaudi Afternoon* breaks with her past style and successfully extends the boundaries of lesbian feminist detective fiction. It tells the story of one Cassandra O'Reilly, an itinerant translator of interesting ethnic origin, who is hired to find a missing person in Barcelona.

Set against the background of the architectural splendour and sexual diversity of the Catalan capital, the plot revolves around questions of identity. The identity of the



missing person, the identity of all the searchers, the identity of friends and lovers, parents and children, all shift and blur, puzzle and provoke.

All this is woven into a complex and cosmopolitan comedy of the bizarre. There is even an element of self-parody in the narrative. The book Cassandra is translating - the latest phantasmagorical blockbuster to emerge from Latin America, and to be compared to the works of Marquez and Allende - floats in and out of the story.

It is the parameters of gender identity that are particularly explored. A serious theme twists and turns amongst the beautiful scenery and sparkling and eccentric characters that populate the book.

In this it follows Wilson's previous writings - well constructed and characterised crime novels, which have nonetheless dealt with matters of great weight and importance. She has covered US imperialism, prostitution and rape, and pornography and lesbian sado-masochism.

The light-hearted approach is innovative. There is no murder, but plenty of mystery. And it also leaves the familiar terrain of urban America for romance Europe.

Shame on you if you have not yet read any of this genre! This book would be a good place to make amends.

## TV franchises

# Sudden Death at Camden Lock

MRS THATCHER expresses her great regret. TV-AM, symbol of the union-busting, de-regulated yuppie eighties and the apple of Mrs T's eye, has lost its franchise.

The great ITV franchise auction has also given the thumbs-down to Thames, which provides London's weekday ITV programmes. Among the thousands of expected redundancies is Carol Thatcher, who works for TV-AM.

A lot of what is provided by companies like Thames and TV-AM is utter pap - so why should anyone worry?

In fact that new franchise system is a hidden form of political censorship; and like other forms of de-regulation it will worsen output, casualise the workforce and weaken the unions. Why?

First, as Thames's NUJ FoC and Labour Black Sections activist Marc Wadsworth pointed out, the whole ITV reorganisation began - and Thames's chances of winning the franchise plummeted - because of Thatcher's anger over *Death on the Rock* - the Thames documentary which exposed the deliberate assassination of IRA volunteers in Gibraltar.

Other TV companies will take note of Thames' fate. The new system has removed control over the allocation of franchises from the (government-appointed) IBA to the new, government-appointed, ITC.

The criteria adopted - basically going to the highest bidder, plus some vague 'quality controls' - is an

invitation to bidders to massively cheapen production costs.

The franchise winners that replace the big ITV companies will no longer be programme producers with a large staff and facilities. Instead they will be little more than publishing agents for programmes produced on contract by much smaller private production companies, and rely even more on bought-in 'off the shelf' productions, especially US-produced sitcoms, of the kind which increasingly pervade Channel 4.

Small independent producers in Britain have come up with a lot of interesting and innovative material. But in future they are going to be at the mercy of the purchasing (and political) policy of the franchised companies.

Working in TV will more and more become like working in the theatre - casualised, with many more workers 'enjoying' long periods of 'resting' between assignments.

TV jobs were already under heavy pressure. Both the big ITV companies like ITN, and the BBC, have been shedding jobs as fast as they can. For the ITV companies the recession has meant a huge cutback in advertising.

Combined with the advent of cable and satellite, bringing dozens of new channels, the franchise system brings TV much more directly under the control of big business - and big business political values.

That is the strategic goal for which TV-AM was sacrificed.



# Feedback

We welcome letters on any subject but please keep them brief. Letters over 350 words will be cut. Send your letters to: *Socialist Outlook* PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU

## When will the left 'be back'?

The article on the Labour Party (LP) conference in SO9 by Sean Tunney refers to the decision by delegates to endorse the front bench strategy on European Economic Union, yet there has been little discussion in *Socialist Outlook* about the implications of this and its relationship to other developments in the LP.

The endorsement by Kinnock of a single European currency and central banking system takes the Party away still further from some of the assumptions about economic policy shared by both the Labour right and left on the 'interventionist' state, that the manipulation of sterling and regular increases in inflation could go at least some way to controlling unemployment and stitching up agreements with the TUC bureaucracy on planned economic expansion.

Labour's recent conversion to the Delors programme brings it in line with significant parts of European social democracy, that has shown more enthusiasm than sectors of the European ruling class for the creation of a European megastate, and its 'social charter'.

Realising that a future Labour government would, as a result of 'Europeanisation', not even have the ability to determine its own level of budget deficit and consequently social spending levels, John Smith and Labour's economics team have identified the German SPD as a shining example of what a truly European social democratic party can achieve, and, with a sprinkling of 'supply side socialism' plan to turn the

British mouse into the German elephant.

Yet, unlike the flag-waving folk down at Brighton, Comrades Smith, Brown, Beckett and Co are well aware that their little plan is an Alice in Wonderland operation, and, as Sean's article stresses, recognise that it is imperative that they hang on to the trade union legislation to prevent the working class from effectively responding to a situation where production costs and wage levels are determined by German economic performance levels.

The Delors proposals will increase dramatically the level of single union deals between multinationals able to pick and choose locations and EETPU-type unions that represent the 'core' workers that these companies seek to incorporate and separate from the rest of the working class, putting considerable pressure on relationships between unions representing skilled and unskilled, already strained over the minimum wage policy.

Finally, a possible spin-off from European integration may well be increased pressure on Britain to standardise election procedures with those in the rest of Europe and bring in proportional representation, making Labour a rather different type of social democratic party to what it was at the beginning of the 1980s, the time of Bennism.

While we can only speculate, statements like 'the left will be back and socialism with it' (SO9, front page), should be avoided.

Martin Allen  
London W13

## No real substitute for capitalism

I'm sure I wasn't alone in being surprised at the front page of Outlook No.9. Surely, talking of the 'Bosses' Second Eleven', is only telling one half of the story. In fact, it gives credence to the view that the Labour Party is somehow becoming like the American Democrats.

Indeed, the whole point of my article on Page 2, given the title 'Proving themselves to the City' was to point out the immense contradiction between Labour giving even small pledges on the economy and proving themselves to capitalism.

The British economy is so weak that if Labour does not challenge the market, then the expansion of welfare capitalism becomes impossible. Yet, it needs to make commitments so as not to be outflanked to the left by the Liberal Democrats.

In fact, Labour's embrace of full European Monetary Union will mean it will have less potential power than ever before to intervene into the economy. The price of entry will be an austerity programme.

Labour cannot just be a party of capital while the link with the trade unions remains. Opposition to austerity, combined with anger at Labour's betrayal on welfare, will not be stifled for long. Ironically, the catalyst for renewed union action, could be the struggle to implement the National Minimum Wage.

This opposition will eventually find its expression in the Labour Party, exploding the myth that unless Labour breaks with the trade unions it can ever be purely the 'Bosses' Second Eleven'.

Sean Tunney, Brighton

## Labour's witch hunt strikes into miners' heartland

LABOUR'S NEC have imposed a candidate for the 7 November by-election in Hemsworth constituency. The candidate who had the vast majority of the nominations and the backing of the locally powerful NUM, left-winger Ken Capstick, has been overturned in favour of Kinnockite Derek Enright.

The NEC decision is indicative of the state of democracy in the Labour Party. Hemsworth constituency is centred on the town of South Emsall, which was at the heart of the 1984-5

miners' strike. It includes the huge pit of Frickley, and included the South Kirby pit, shut down two years ago.

Frickley and South Kirby miners were among the most militant and determined during the 1984-5 strike. David Jones, the first miner to be killed during the strike, came from South Kirby. And Ken Capstick started work at the pit at the age of 15.

The NEC says that Capstick 'has no record of activity in the party' - despite being a member for 13 years.

Capstick annoyed the

Labour leadership by moving the resolution at this year's NUM conference condemning the Labour leadership over the anti-Scargill media witch hunt. He has also committed the heinous 'crime' of opposing the anti-union laws.

The NUM plays an enormous role in Hemsworth Labour Party. Ken Capstick was the miners' choice, and that of local party branches. Kinnock played an abysmal role in the miners' strike. Now he reveals his continued contempt both for the mining communities and democracy.



PHOTO: John Harris (FL)

Tory vendetta has targeted unions' solidarity

## Tories plan pit butchery

LAST week a report by merchant bankers Rothschilds on the coal industry was leaked.

Commissioned for the Department of Energy, it proposes the near-destruction of the British coal industry, reducing the number of pits to 14 and the number of miners to just 11,000.

Rothschilds' proposals are in the context of the long-term plan to privatise coal production in Britain, breaking up British Coal.

This will certainly be on the Tories' agenda if they win the next election. Despite claims by Energy Minister John Wakeham that nothing has been decided, the destruction of the domestic coal industry has been a long-term Tory objective.

Plans to destroy the coal industry have nothing to do with economics and everything to do with politics and the class struggle. Plans to defeat the miners, the infamous 'Ridley plan', were already in place when Thatcher came to power. After the defeats suffered by the Heath government at the hands of the NUM in 1972 and 1974, the Tories were determined to crush the miners once and for all.

Ironically, at least half the pits in Nottinghamshire, the centre of scabbing during the miners strike and home of the scab Union of Democratic Mineworkers, will be closed down under the new plan.

But coal will still be by far the most important fuel for the new private electricity companies, PowerGen and National Power. But

it will be imported coal, from parts of the world where labour is cheap.

Imported coal will be complemented by the nuclear industry, which far from being run down is being beefed up through the building of Sizewell B and possibly other nuclear plants.

Despite claims that it is more 'economic' to import coal, the cost of building ports and port facilities to handle imported coal, and the enormous costs of the nuclear industry far outweigh the costs of relying on domestic coal.

The decision to try to cut the industry to the bone and to privatise what is left has nothing to do with economics, and everything to do with trying to finally eliminate the industrial power of the miners.

## Finishing off the Poll Tax

by Stuart Brown, S.Notts  
Against the Poll Tax

Whether it's 'Can't Pay' or 'Won't Pay', councils aren't really bothered about who they put in prison. On Thursday October 3, the rabidly Tory Rushcliffe borough council attempted to jail Evelyn Arslan.

The council had already sent one person down - activist Soroosh Ayandeh, for the maximum term of three months! Before going into court, Evelyn, her solicitor, and her local anti Poll Tax union all felt she had a strong case. She earned so little that it would have taken the council seven years to deduct the money from her wages just to pay off last year's Poll Tax.

She had filled in the wage arrestment form. But because she earned so little, the council promptly returned it and sent in the bailiffs - with no success.

Yet still the council summonsed her to a committal hearing - and still the court tried its hardest to send her down!

Evelyn was given a suspended sentence and ordered to pay the full amount with four weeks; so much for our 'classless, caring society'.

Such vindictiveness can only fuel the anger and resentment against the Tories. Their attempts to smash the non-payment campaign by the threat of imprisonment is doomed to failure. Resistance against the tax is far too strong - and the legal procedures to recover the debt far too lengthy.

Throughout the country, hundreds of similar struggles are being waged daily, both in the courts and against the bailiffs. With the Great Poll Tax Rebellion in full swing, the need for a unified campaign and a coherent national voice has never been greater. Over recent months the All-Britain Anti-

Poll Tax Federation has been deafeningly silent.

In order to ensure the final burial of the Poll Tax we need to maximise the fight against it. It is crucial that solidarity and support networks are forged, and that communication, both regionally and nationally, be strengthened. The 'Finishing Off the Poll Tax' National Conference in Manchester has the potential for doing just that.

Organised by independent anti Poll tax groups across the country, the conference promises to be a welcome relief from some of the stage-managed rallies that we have seen in the past. It is essential that local groups get involved.

This is our campaign and if we really do want to see an amnesty for non-payers and Poll Tax prisoners, plus an end to cuts in local services as well as the Tax itself, then the campaign needs to be united.



# Tottenham Three vindicated But the real criminals are still in control!

by Shaun Waterman  
THE DRAMATIC exposure of police malpractice during the Blakelock murder investigation has vindicated the Tottenham Three and their supporters.

But it has not secured the men's freedom, nor brought to justice those who forced false 'confessions' from Engin Raghup and Mark Braithwaite, and forged Winston Silcott's interview notes.

More significantly, there remains no guarantee of reforms which might prevent a repeat of their ordeal.

On November 25, the Court of Appeal will hear lawyers acting for Engin Raghup argue that his 'confession' cannot be a safe basis for a conviction, because of his psychological

vulnerability under interrogation.

There is no guarantee that he will be released. The evidence is overwhelming, but the history of the Appeal Court does not augur well.

Douglas Hurd's recent leap aboard the legal reform bandwagon has left senior judges isolated, even within the establishment.

The consequences of refusing Engin's appeal will be severe. Liberal opinion will be outraged, and the world's media will pillory the British legal system.

In order to maximise the pressure on the judges, the Tottenham Three families' Campaign is appealing to unions, legal experts, human rights groups and others to send observers to the hearing.

Meanwhile, we will attempt to get the remaining two appeals into court as soon as possible.

The total collapse of the case against Winston means that his appeal may not be contested. But he will stay in jail, convicted for murder in 1986, after he killed boxer Anthony Smith in a knife fight.

When the Birmingham Six were released this year, their first thoughts were for the innocent people that they had left behind in jail: Judith Ward, the Tottenham Three, the Bridgewater Four and many others.

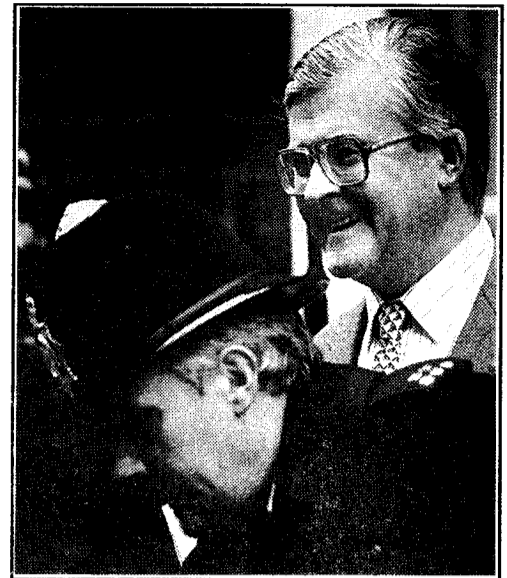
At their urging, Liberty (the National Council for Civil Liberties) launched a campaign for criminal justice reform, highlighting a number of the worst frame-ups that they encountered during the long years of their imprisonment.

More importantly, Liberty are also trying to recruit a national network of lawyers to take up such cases free of charge. What is missing from

this excellent initiative, however, is any attempt to organise the relatives and friends of these prisoners, and to win mass support for their release.

After all, reform or no reform, the criminal justice system will continue to be racially biased and open to manipulation by its servants - the police, and its masters - the politicians.

Police officers, even senior ones, may be prosecuted, but the real criminals - the judges, Attorney Generals and Home Secretaries, will go unpunished. British 'justice' will remain a process in which the protection of power and privilege comes first.



Preserving the system: Home Secretary Baker

It is up to all of us who recognise this to stand by its victims - whoever they might be. On his recent national speaking tour, Paddy Hill urged the audience to 'take a leaf out of the ruling class' book.

"They all stick together: the police, the judiciary, the politicians. We should do what they do - close ranks against our enemies and f\*\*k the bastards!"

## Join our 300 Club!

Socialist Outlook has been going for six months in a fortnightly newspaper format. In that time we think we've made a real contribution to the left. But no one is more critical of the paper than its staff.

In the next few months we will be attempting to improve our coverage and design. But to maintain the high standards we have set, and improve on them, we have to face hard facts. No left wing paper covers its costs from sales - and the costs of producing newspapers is going up all the time.

To give us a minimum regular income we have launched the '300 Club'. The idea is to get 300 of our regular readers to contribute a stand-

ing order of £5 a month; and each month those in the club stand a chance of winning £50 in our prize draw.

We think there are easily 300 regular readers who could afford £5. It's a small sum, but it would guarantee our finances for the foreseeable future.

These are tough times for socialists; activists in particular have a lot of calls on their finances. But we think that Socialist Outlook has provided a serious regular voice for revolutionary marxist ideas which must continue. We ask all our readers to support it by joining the 300 Club. Please fill in the form below and send it to us.

The first 300 Club draw takes place next month.

### Please include me in the Socialist Outlook 300 club

My bank.....  
Bank address.....  
My full name.....  
My bank sorting code.....  
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## NUJ: reinstate Daniel Stafford!

IN A FURTHER twist to the chain of events flowing from the bureaucratic sacking of NUJ General Secretary Steve Turner. Financial controller Daniel Stafford has been dismissed.

The move has provoked a threat of industrial action from the APEX chapel at the NUJ head office.

Since Turner's dismissal, Jake Ecclestone has been acting General Secretary. He has repeatedly shown himself to be a disastrous candidate for the job.

In a move deplored by a number of NUJ branches, Ecclestone axed all resources for the union's race and sex equality committee. He has ignored all protests from within the



PHOTO: John Harris

Fighting on despite chaos at the top of the union: Pergamon strikers

union, using its financial crisis as an excuse.

Ecclestone now appears to be moving against anyone who will not obey his every command, convinced that the post of acting General Secretary gives him absolute power. This time he has another excuse - since the financial crisis did not seem

the best reason to put forward for sacking its financial controller.

NUJ branches must demand Stafford's immediate reinstatement and support APEX if they do take action over the sacking. But the case underlines the need for elections for a new NUJ General Secretary as rapidly as possible.

This has been the best way forward since Turner was originally sacked, as a number of branches have recognised. But Jake Ecclestone's increasingly power-mad behaviour make an election an urgent necessity.

### Socialists for Labour Campaigning for left policies in the general election

Saturday 16 November

11am-5pm

Camden Town Hall, London

Workshops on: trade union rights, women, anti-racism, poll tax, minimum wage, democracy, defence, the welfare state

For more information contact SFL, c/o Gorefield House, Canturbury Road, London SW6

Socialists for Labour is sponsored by Labour Party Socialists

### Labour Party Socialists AGM Is there a future for the left in the Labour Party?

Sunday 17 November

10am-4pm

Camden Town Hall, London

For more information contact LPS, c/o 58 Florence Road, London SE14

### National demonstration against racist attacks

Sunday 10  
November

Assemble

1.00pm

Aldgate East  
tube

Whitechapel  
High Street, E1

Supported by Anti-Fascist Action



# Unipart go union-busting

by Jack Johnson

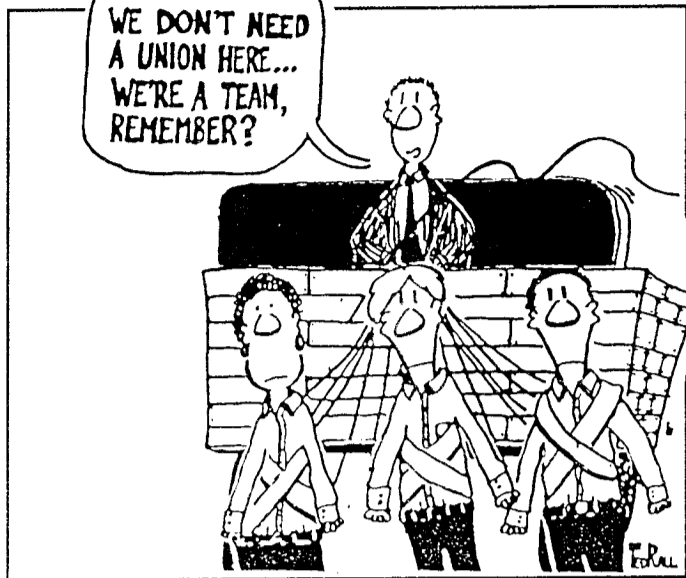
UNIPART workers at Cowley in Oxford were called to a meeting on October 4 and given six months notice of union derecognition and the introduction of 'new management techniques'.

This was what they called 'World Class Performance'. The document given to the workforce is similar to the new Rover plan, except that it is more explicit and actually withdraws union recognition.

Workers were told that directors had been to the USA, and that US-style derecognition was the only way forward. They were shown a video of a non-union American firm, to show 'how well it works'.

The withdrawal of recognition from one of the best organised plants in the country, if successful, would be a major blow to the trade union movement. It would show that nowhere is safe from union-busting. In recent years, trade union leaderships have given in to almost every employer's demand. But they still weren't satisfied.

In March, the three senior stewards in the plant were sacked. Only two weeks ago, the appeals of two AEU stewards were rejected. They were sacked for 'undermining



a team leader'. All of this has greatly weakened the workforce. They are now being badgered to sign new 'contracts of employment' that formalise the plant's non-union status.

Every employer in the car industry will be looking to see how the unions react. The trade union movement must now launch a counter-offensive in defence of union rights. Conferences of shop stewards should be called to map out a strategy for such a campaign.

Meanwhile, the company is proceeding with its 'World Class' policies. The Unipart document outlines what this means:

a) A 30% increase in all targets, and the abolition of industrial engineers' studies.

b) A wage review in November, after which these will end. Individuals will be in a 'salary range' within which they can move. They will be individually 'appraised' as 'average' or 'above or below

average', on which any increase will be based.

Who will make this appraisal is unclear, except that the operator will have daily meetings with the team leader, who will also assess them weekly - 'At least every three months they plan to have a wide-ranging, two-way discussion with you'.

c) As for representation, the company will have 'independent', elected 'forums'. 'After each Forum the outcomes will be reported to everybody through Team leaders and Area Team leaders.'

So much for the independence.

Workers will be able to use a forum member to represent them in case of any grievance and this forum will also deal with redundancies 'which become unavoidable'.

It also makes it clear that all seniority is ended, and in the event of redundancy, the management can keep temporary contract staff, and dismiss any worker, regardless of length of service.

Unipart's new offensive is the thin end of the Japanisation wedge. The labour movement must now go all out to defend union rights. The alternative is the kind of decimation of union organisation that we have seen in the USA.

## NUT elections - vote for a new leadership!

by Keith Sinclair

TEACHERS will shortly be receiving NUT ballot forms for the union's biennial elections. The left within the union is organising a strong challenge for all the available positions.

The leaderships of both TUC-affiliated unions, the NUT and NAS/UWT, have in practice adopted new realist policies. The NUT leadership are resting their hopes on the election of a Labour government.

Obviously socialists support the election of a Labour government, right wing as a Kinnock-led one would be. Nevertheless, it is madness for the NUT to believe that this is the magic solution to the problems of under-funding of education.

The current leadership of the NUT has shown itself to be completely incapable of defending its members' interests. On most issues, such as pay, 'campaigns' are restricted to glossy publicity in the press. Such advertising campaigns do nothing to involve the membership, large sections of them - who pay for the adverts through their union dues - treat them with cynicism.

On one key topical issue - the appraisal of teachers - the NUT actually support its introduction! Members in schools are being asked to believe that appraisal is a wonderful opportunity for 'professional development', rather than another weapon to be used by management.

Given the current leadership's record, it is essential to maximise the number of votes for the slate of candidates supported by the hard left Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA).

### STA slate

**Vice-President**  
Vote Carole Regan 1, Will Reese 2, Richard Reiser 3.  
**Treasurer**  
Vote Ian Murch  
**Examiner of accounts**  
Vote Joan Ivens 1, Dick North 2

Ballot forms must be returned by midday, November 20. Copies of election statements for STA candidates can be obtained from Will Reese on 0203 332320

## Defending London's public services

THE IMAGE of the 'prosperous South East' is belied by the reality facing working people in London. Anyone who lives there will tell you that London is a city in crisis. Local authority services are collapsing, a result of wave after wave of cutbacks.

Public transport goes from crisis to utter collapse - it must be the worst in any capital city in an advanced country. If you want proof that market society doesn't make everything work efficiently, try spending a morning on the Moscow metro and then compare the London Underground.

Other basic services like education and health are in a chronic state.

The crisis of all these vital services is compounded by un-

employment increasing faster than the national average, and the increasingly dire housing situation, with council rents going through the roof.

Since the decline of London Bridge which linked local authority unions in the fight against ratecapping, there has been an absence of serious co-ordination among London unions and campaigning organisations.

To try to overcome this a Crisis in London conference has been called to try to establish a permanent campaign to link the efforts of the different groups fighting back. All those concerned with the campaign against assault on working people represented by London's crisis should support this campaign.

## Threat in the post

Management of Royal Mail Letters (RML) are following the union-busting trail with an ultimatum to the postal workers' union UCW. The trigger for this latest attack is the introduction of 'Business Development' and the drive towards Japanese style Teamleaders and Teamworking.

Post Office chiefs have unilaterally decided that they no longer see the union structures and facilities agreement as appropriate, and have announced that if a new agreement to their liking is not reached, they will scrap the existing arrangements in January (as soon as the Christmas rush is over).

Management aim to bypass the UCW's present branch and section officials, and to break up the bargaining into each separate unit of staff, with any disagreements taken to divisional level. The UCW's 'divisional reps' (the RML are pushing for only one per

division) would have no accountability to local branches. RML wants them to be full timers acting as an ancillary arm of management: their most important task would be 'to resolve registered disagreement'.

The RML's threat to withdraw facilities if its new scheme is not accepted would lead to effective derecognition of Branch and Section officials, the loss of release time for lay officials, and the loss of union office facilities. This has successfully scared the UCW's right wing national leadership. Far from fighting these proposals tooth and nail, UCW national negotiators are already retreating on most of the key issues raised by RML.

The Welsh Regional Committee has written to UCW HQ challenging these concessions and opposing any deals which buy peace at the expense of UCW members.

A useful circular spelling out the dangers has been sent out by the Cardiff (Uniform) Branch.

## Crisis in London

### Defend London

### Services

### CONFERENCE

Saturday 9 November

10.30am to 5.30pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1

Registration: £2 waged or 50p unwaged, from Ed Hall, c/o Lambeth NALGO, 6a Acre Lane, SW2 5SG.

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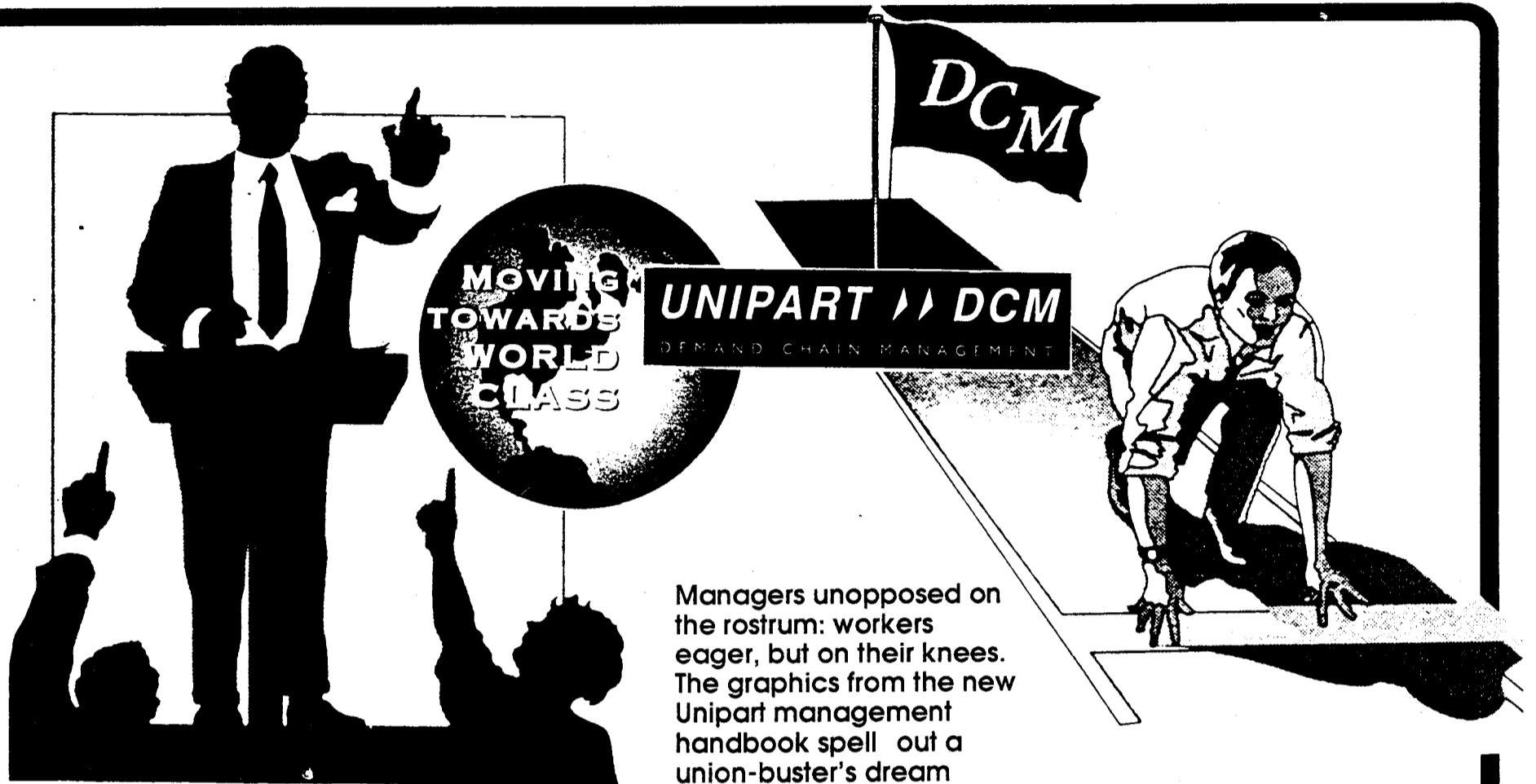
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# socialist OUTLOOK



Managers unopposed on the rostrum: workers eager, but on their knees. The graphics from the new Unipart management handbook spell out a union-buster's dream

# STOP THE UNION BUSTERS!



PHOTO: John Harris

Last week workers at the Unipart plant in Oxford - the best organised plant in the town - found out that their union is to be de-recognised! Instead they will have a new 'Japanised' system called 'Demand-Chain Management' imposed on them.

The blow against Unipart workers is a huge threat - if Unipart can be de-unionised then so can thousands of workplaces nationwide.

Throughout industry new management and working techniques based on 'japanisation' are looming. With them comes the threat of de-recognition, or much-reduced union rights.

The Post Office is threatening to tear up existing agreements with the UCW. Rover faces total 'Japanisation'. Newspapers and television stations have seen journalists confronted with 'personal contracts' and derecognition of the NUJ. The miners face new closure plans which could crush the NUM.

It is time for the unions to fight back against this deadly threat; and doing that means challenging the anti-union laws. Otherwise huge blows against working class organisation could be inflicted.

**INSIDE: The Unipart ultimatum page 15; UCW under attack  
Tories butcher coalfields... BT jobs under the axe**