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# socialist OUTLOOK



**German workers show the way**

# Time to fight back!

'SUPERPOWER RETAKES GUTTED CITY' was last week's Observer headline. Just 15 months after the 'new world order' was proclaimed by killing 100,000 in the Iraqi desert, the US ruling class faced the humiliation of an uprising of the poor and oppressed in its own cities.

In Germany hundreds of thousands of striking public sector workers have just given Chancellor Helmut Kohl a bloody nose.

Ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall the media have announced the final victory of capitalism. But world capitalism as an economic system is failing badly.

The economic crisis is hitting Britain hard, and new attacks on the unions and welfare state are being quickly prepared by Major's government. After Labour's election defeat, neither the Labour nor union leaders have any answers.

The Labour leadership election, after the undemocratic exclusion of Livingstone and Grant, is becoming a farce. Neither Smith or Gould have anything but empty platitudes to offer.

Germany and the US show it is possible to fight back. The German workers won despite harsh anti-union laws. Waiting for the next general election, perhaps as far away as 1997, is a useless option for British workers. Now is the time to fight!



# If Smith or Gould is the answer, it's a silly question Labour's choice of evils

By Harry Sloan

Friederich Engels described British elections prior to the Labour Party as being a choice of which member of the ruling class would next exploit the workers.

Now a special Labour Party conference is to decide which Kinnockite is to press ahead with the rightward policy changes that have brought a humiliating fourth electoral defeat and now further disastrous losses in council elections.

It was bad enough for many to realise that Neil Kinnock's reactionary rule changes had blocked any left wing challenge from Livingstone and Grant.

It is even worse to sit through the charade of a debate between the Gouldite Tweedledees and Smithite Tweedledums - a debate in which all the traditional terminology is useless.

Is John Smith, the union bureaucrats' choice, who exudes all the charisma of a merchant banker on Valium, to the 'right' of Bryan Gould, the super-annuated yuppie who masterminded Kinnock's catastrophic 1987 election flop?

Is Margaret Beckett, the former Bennite who backed the miners in 1984 before swerving to the hard right, (only to rediscover her CND card in a dressing table drawer during the leadership contest), less 'radical' than John Prescott whose main fighting credentials centre on his pugilistic exploits in the Commons tea-room?

When you reach the magnetic North Pole, your compass will not work. Labour's policies have been so far removed from any socialist or working class framework that the conventional pointers of left and right mean nothing. This is even more true now the 'soft left' have divided their

support between the various leadership contenders.

The LCC in particular is split, with some following Gould while others, like the bookies' friend Robin Cook (clearly with an eye to the best chance of preferment if he backs the winner), are backing the Smith campaign.

Quickly into the lists for Gould was Clare Short, with an article in *Tribune* backing him because 'he is more radical and imaginative', but also backing Smith - 'John Smith and Bryan Gould would make a fine team'.

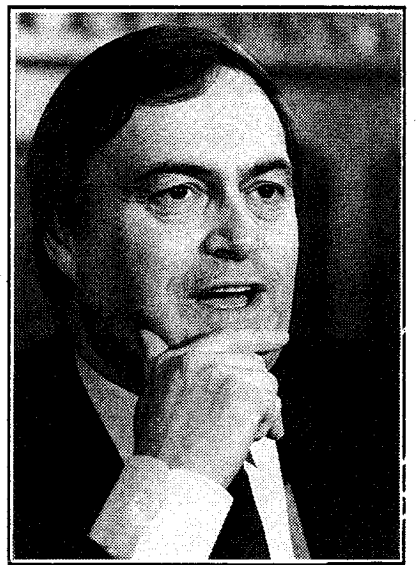
The reality is that all four contenders stand guilty of flagrant, long-term Kinnockism. Despite Kinnock's pre-election joke that no sensible householder would call back a plumber who had already failed three times to fix a leak, Labour Party members are being asked to choose a new leader from a gallery of failures.

Smith and his deputy Beckett - the

architects of Labour's wretched economic policy, so conservative as to offer nothing to working people; so half-baked as to give the Tory press a field day, run on a ticket of more of the same.

Gould's gossamer-thin left credentials rest on his commitment to economic 'interventionism', though he also pioneered the concept of 'social ownership' as a facade behind which nationalisation was abandoned. He was quick to describe Paddy Ashdown's cheeky suggestion of a Lib-Lab block as 'interesting'.

The extent of Prescott's political challenge to the existing leadership can be seen from the fact he is willing to be deputy to John Smith, doing the dogsbody work of building the party organisation while Smith steers through right wing policies.



Is he any better? John Prescott

For the left there is little option but to campaign for a write-in campaign to spoil papers by showing support for Livingstone and Grant, and to press for rule changes to lift the ludicrously undemocratic requirement that a challenger requires the endorsement of 20% of Labour MPs in order to stand.

# Scottish anger mounts

By Gordon Morgan

THE GENERAL election result in Scotland shocked most commentators, especially the increase in Tory seats.

The Tory concentration on maintaining the union, and on Labour's tax plans, allowed them pick up 40,000 extra votes.

The Labour vote held steady and the SNP picked up extra votes from the Liberal Democrats, but not enough to make a breakthrough.

Labour's Scottish executive was paralysed by the election result and remains unable to respond to events.

The SNP having predicted a breakthrough which did not materialise then predicted another breakthrough at the district elections, which also didn't happen. With fewer MPs and only one district council they must reappraise their tactics.

Despite Tory gains Labour retains control of all Scotland's major cities, despite their vote having fallen to 34 per cent.

After the initial election shock their was anger throughout Scotland that such a result had been allowed to

happen. Seventy five per cent of Scots voted for constitutional change, and for the fourth general election in a row this was denied.

At least three separate cross-party groups were set up to campaign for constitutional change, and in particular for a referendum. The most significant was Scotland United backed by Campbell Christie of the STUC and Pat Kane of *Hue and Cry*.

So far two rallies have been held in Glasgow attracting five and a half thousand and six thousand people respectively. Local committees are being set up.

## Multi-question

The Scottish referendum campaign is backed by the Scottish group of Labour MPs, the SNP, Liberals and Greens. Although the exact formula has yet to be determined, all support a multi-question referendum in Scotland on the status quo, devolution or independence.

Many hurdles remain however. Labour is committed to campaigning for a referendum,



but no committed to holding one if the government says no. The SNP wants to hold a referendum but is internally divided on tactics. It won't go into a constitutional convention, but seems willing to operate on a referendum sub-committee.

Now the district elections are over the Salmond wing of the SNP may be able to win tactical co-operation with Labour if they agree.

The key issues are the wording of the referendum and laying out a timetable. It would cost about £2 million if the government refused to play ball. The favoured date is St Andrew's day in November; if there was a 'yes' vote to constitutional change, a mass rally would be held in Edinburgh in December to coincide with the EC heads of government meeting.

Labour is clearly divided on this issue. Around a dozen Labour MPs are backing Scotland United. Others like Brian Wilson are vehemently opposed. They key for success is pressure from below.

At a Scottish Socialist meeting, with over two hundred attending, from the Labour party, the left SNP, and independent socialists, there was a general agreement to build a socialist campaign for a referendum; building the committees from below, but arguing the socialist answer at the same time.

This campaign has a sell-by date of one year hence. If a referendum hasn't been held by that time, or another major initiative taken, demoralisation will set in.

# Women speak - will Labour listen?

By Terry Conway

WOMEN INVOLVED in the Livingstone Grant campaign are trying to ensure that women's issues are forced up the agenda in the leadership election.

They are fed up with the fact that it is the centreground of the Labour Party who have made propaganda around making the party more women-friendly. For them of course, this means getting rid of nasty 'macho' things like strikes and demonstrations.

They ignore the millions of women in low-paid, part-time jobs; without nursery facilities and deeply affected by cuts in public services. Making Labour listen to women is not about abandoning socialist policies, it is about rebuilding the principles of struggle and solidarity.

So women are coming together to organise a fairly unusual meeting as

part of the discussion on what way forward for the party. Under the title 'Women Speak: Labour Listens' they have organised an afternoon of debate and dialogue to which all those who stood in the leadership and deputy contests have been invited.

Each candidate will be given five minutes at the beginning, and five at the end, to state what they think Labour can and should do in support of women. But the bulk of the meeting will be discussion from the floor.

The meeting has been sponsored by Women for Socialism, Labour Women in NAC, Women in Black Sections and the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

'Women Speak: Labour Listens' Saturday 23 May, Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London N7 (Finsbury Park tube) 2-5pm. Creche, Refreshments, Wheelchair Access. Admission £1/50p. All Women Welcome.

# Sheridan elected in Glasgow

Tommy Sheridan was returned as Scottish Militant Labour councillor for Glasgow Pollack while serving six months in Soughton prison for anti-poll tax activities.

Scottish Militant Labour took two seats in Glasgow, plus a further two of sitting councillors expelled for association with Militant. They just failed to take one other.

Militant Labour have four seats on Glasgow council, compared with five for the official Tory opposition. Labour has 55.

Militant Labour's main base is in the south of Glasgow where they built huge support through the poll tax campaign. They showed that votes could switch to left candidates in local elections.

# March against racist attacks Stop racist policing

Sunday 17 May

Assemble 2.30pm Drummond St., London NW1

March to Kentish Town police station  
Called by Drummond St. Asian Youth Association

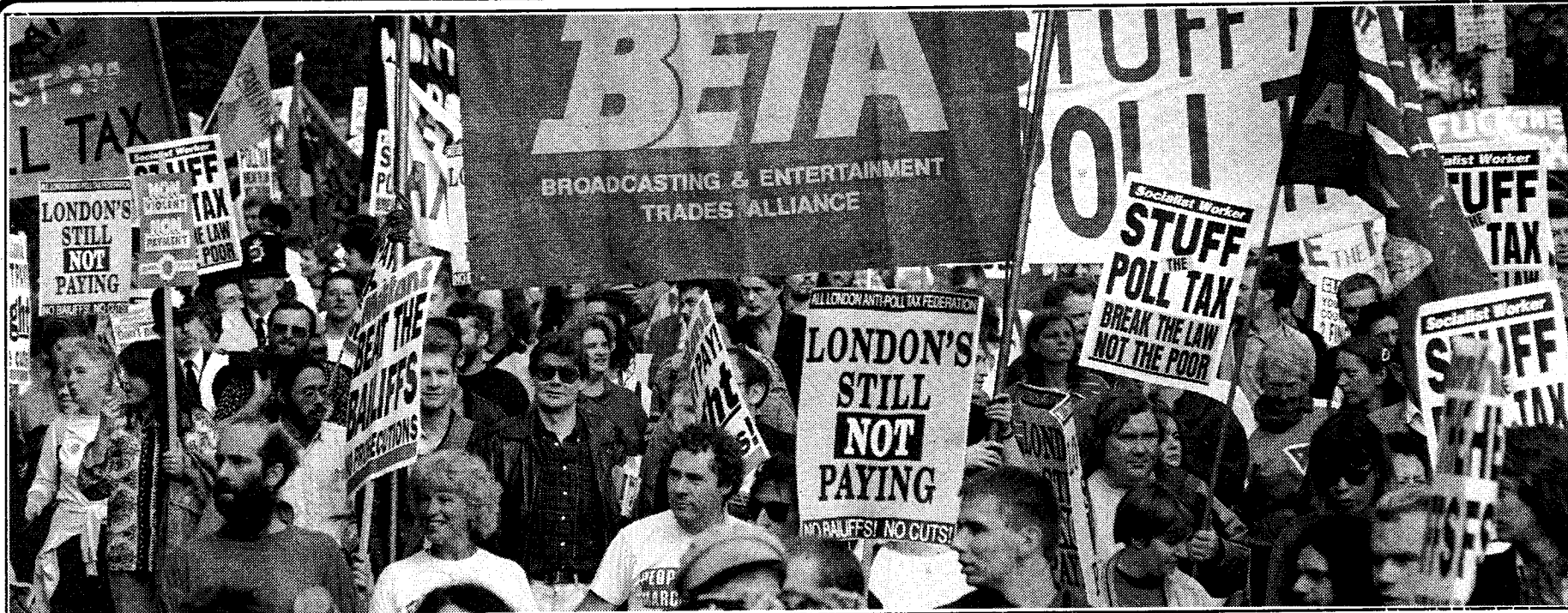


PHOTO: John Harris

## Time to regroup the left

# For fighting left unity!

LABOUR'S general election defeat and the election for the new Labour leader must mean some hard re-thinking on the left.

In the next period the new realist right wing will intensify its attack on the left throughout the labour movement. The working class is going to be under renewed attack from the bosses and the Tories. In situations of defeats the way is opened for drawing right-wing and defeatist conclusions.

But this is not the time for demoralised abstentionism or routinist responses. On the contrary the left must go on the offensive against new realism and the legacy of Kinnockism.

The candidacies of Smith and Gould provide a focus for all those who want to move the labour movement further to the right. *Indeed the impending victory of Smith is more than just a re-run of Kinnockism; it is the victory of the hard right.*

The project of the right wing and the trade union bureaucracy will be to weaken the links between Labour and the unions, and work, over time, towards a new form of coalitionism with the Liberals. Some ideologues of a new 'anti-Tory' coalition even argue that the foundation of the Labour Party was a mistake.

For workers at the sharp end of struggle the choice of waiting for a Labour government (until 1997!) is no longer there. The response of the union bureaucrats will be to urge compliance and acceptance of the bosses' offensive – job-cutting, 'Japanisation', speed up – rather than resistance.

### Deepen defeat

Now the left must say as loudly as possible: the right must not be allowed to get away with it! They have delivered us defeat after defeat. They want to deepen defeat, opening the way for open business unionism and political coalitionism.

How can we fight back? In the Labour Party, there is now a choice. The decision of the Campaign Group to stand Livingstone and Grant was a big step forward. Despite the undemocratic stitch-up preventing them being formal candidates the campaign will continue. Good. The right wing are trying to gag the left, and it will not be gagged.

But the election campaign will come and go. More important in the long term is that the new situation is used to *reorganise and regroup the fighting left*. How can this be done?

Obviously there needs to be a move towards the maximum unity of all those forces who reject new realism and stand by socialism, class struggle and democratic advance; and those forces need to debate out the key political campaigns which can begin to build an opposition to the slide to the right.

Crucial here is the role of both the Socialist Movement and the Socialist Campaign group of Labour MPs. The Socialist Movement must turn itself into a more active, campaigning force.

### Livingstone-Grant

First tasks include an all-out mobilisation around the Livingstone-Grant campaign, and building for a huge turnout for the Socialist Movement trade union conference on 18 July, the Leeds conference of the Labour left in June and the Convention of the Left in the autumn.

But the Socialist Movement cannot stand alone: it has to broaden its base of support and seek fighting unity with all other forces pre-

**"The dividing line now is all those who stand against new realism and for class struggle on the one hand, against those who are going to capitulate to the right-wing consensus of the union and Labour bosses"**

pared to stand out against new realism in the labour movement.

This is not a question of narrow tactical debates about whether to be in or outside the Labour Party. We need, for example, a fighting unity of all those in the trade unions, including forces currently organised around the Morning Star, to fight to unshackle the unions, attack new realism and resist the bosses' offensive.

Such initiatives would be strengthened by a more unitary attitude by the SWP and the Militant, both of which organise considerable forces.

The dividing line now is all those who stand against new realism and for class struggle on the one hand, against those who are going to capitulate to the right-wing consensus of the union and Labour bosses.

The *organisational* basis for reorganising the Labour left and class struggle forces cannot be sucked out of anyone's thumb. Clearly, the building of a new broad alliance of the left must be based on a commitment to class struggle, and not simply inner-Labour factional fighting.

But the precondition is agreement on a platform of clear anti-capitalist and democratic demands to fight together in the labour movement on.

### Scotland

The left must champion the demands for self-determination in Scotland and Wales. The fight for Scottish self-government in particular will be at the cutting edge of resistance to the Tories in the next period; it has an explosive dynamic. Any left regroupment which fails to take this on board will be still-born.

Other key bases of a new left platform must include the fight to unshackle the unions; combating racism, starting with the fight against the re-introduced Asylum Bill; fighting for women's equality; and the commitment of the labour movement to alternative economic policies, including a radical reduction in defence spending, re-nationalisation of privatised industries, a shorter working week with no loss of pay, and swingeing taxation of the rich.

These proposals should form the basis of new Socialist Charter, around which a campaign of signatures should be launched throughout the labour, women's and anti-racist movements.

All socialists worthy of the name will now mobilise all-out for the Livingstone-Grant campaign. But the opportunity must now be seized to forge a new alliance capable of fighting back against the new realist right and the Tories. As Fidel Castro once put it: 'Division in the face of the enemy was never a socialist or intelligent tactic'.

The extraordinary workers' mobilisation in Germany is a salutary reply to all those who want to write off the working class and its struggles. After the post-election shock, millions of workers will be faced with the choice of either fighting back or going under. It is likely that workers' struggles and confidence will only gradually be rebuilt; but to maximise resistance to the Tories and new realism the left cannot sit on its hands.



German strikers humble Kohl

# Vorsprung durch picketing

By Patrick Baker

PUBLIC SECTOR strikers in Germany forced Helmut Kohl's conservative government into a humiliating retreat, as negotiators backed down on their 'non-negotiable' pay offer.

Union leaders have recommended a 5.5 per cent deal, plus various lump sum extras, to their 2.5 million members. But many trade unionists are angry at the small increase in the offer, and want to stay out for a better deal.

In the biggest public sector strike Germany has seen in decades, hundreds of thousands of trade unionists have filled the streets for nearly two weeks, demanding a 9.5 per

cent pay rise.

Workers walked out in airports and post offices, and left their trains and rubbish carts standing idle. The strike cost hundreds of millions of marks.

### Warning given

Private sector workers are still in dispute, including engineering workers in IG Metall, Europe's biggest union. 'Warning strikes' of more than 100,000 have already been called to show employers that the engineers mean business. Building workers have started a work to rule and look set to join the strikers soon.

### Starting point

Private sector employers

were quick to claim that 'the result of the negotiations in the public sector can and will have no function as a model for private business'. But the 5.5 per cent deal is likely to be seen as a starting point, whatever employers say.

Helmut Kohl's conservative government is faltering, hit not just by strikes but also by the resignation of Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. With Kohl in headlong retreat and private sector strikes mush-

rooming, the time is ripe for public sector workers to stay on the offensive for a better deal. They have already made progress, but they could get more.

'We didn't go out on the streets for 11 days to get what we could have got a month ago', was the strikers' reaction. OeTV leader Monika Wulf-Mathies could face real problems in coming leadership elections if she is seen to back down without the best possible deal.



man Institute of Directors. After years of growth up until 1990, things have now changed. Since 1991, production has stagnated, orders have gone down and real income fell by at least 1.5 per cent.

That's bad enough for the bosses, but things are worse for the workers and the state, who have borne the massive cost of unification. The national debt has mushroomed and tax rates have increased for ordinary workers. Coupled with soaring unemployment in the east, that's a recipe for explosion.

### Defensive

With the strongest working class in western Europe, and around a third unionised, German workers are well-placed to force Kohl on to the defensive. Union leaders are beginning to

get more combative. Monika Wulf-Mathies, leader of the public sector union OeTV, said of the negotiations 'We stood next to each other and did not have anything to say'.

But while the workers are on the offensive and Kohl's government is weak, opposition to Kohl in the Bundestag (parliament) isn't strong. Bjorn Engholm's SPD, the equivalent of Labour, seems to have moved away from the idea of coalition with Kohl's CDU.

But it has no more answers to the destruction of east Germany's economy, or the decline of wages in the west, than the CDU. The left is weak, and in its absence it is the extreme right Republikaner who are gaining among the youth and the unemployed.

If the left can build out of the current wave of strikes, showing that workers' unity is a real alternative to the racism of the extreme right, it would be a real step forward for the German workers movement.

### Power-house

Germany is renowned as the economic power-house of western Europe and also as the bastion of social peace. But the last few weeks' strikes have seen more days of action than any of the last five years. The social peace is no more.

It was founded on the classic deal of social democracy - good conditions, low unemployment and regular pay rises in return for compliant unions. With an economic boom throughout the 1980s, Germany could afford it. Profits more than doubled, rising from 232 to 514 billion Deutschmarks (DM).



Kohl

### Under attack

Coupled with low unemployment and union laws that make Britain's look union-friendly, strikes were few and far between. But now all that has changed. It's not because Germany's unions have swung to the left, but because the economy is under attack - first from the international recession, second from the cost of unification.

'The economy is going through a durable recession and political confidence in the bourgeois government is falling'. This was not a radical union leader, but the head of the Ger-

# The largest prison house in the world

WHICH COUNTRY imprisons more of its population than any other in the world? South Africa perhaps?

No, the United States of America, guardian of western democracy. With a prison population of over 1 million, the USA's incarceration rate is nearly 50 per cent higher than that of South Africa. And it is expected to go up by a third in the next three years.

A disproportionate number of those imprisoned are black. If you are a black American in your twenties, you have a one in four chance of being in prison or on parole at any one time. There are now half a million black men in US prisons.

And the racism of the US 'justice' system extends to the darkest corner of the US legal

system, 'Death Row'. The death penalty in the USA was halted for five years in the 1970s because its application was so random as to be unconstitutional. But when it was reintroduced, only the letter of the law was modified - the basics were not.

Around one per cent of convicted murderers in the US are sentenced to death. 'People are sentenced to death not so much for what they do but for who they are' a new study of the penalty concludes. And that means, in practice, that those on Death Row are overwhelmingly black, poor and uneducated.

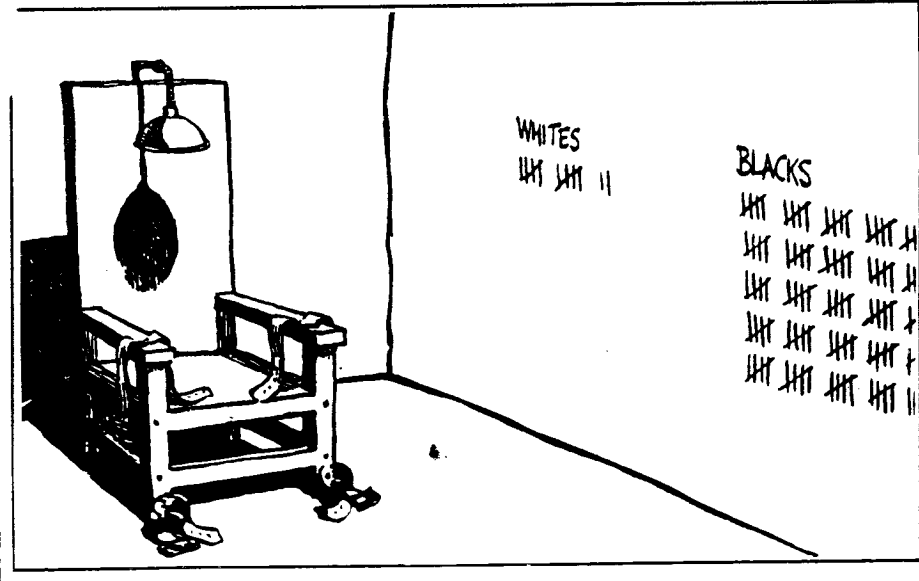
Now George Bush is trying to extend the death penalty, playing to the most reactionary 'law and order' sections of



US society. A new bill before Congress would mean that capital punishment was available for a further 55 offences.

The American Civil Liberties Union says of current US thinking 'Toughness is the universal solvent to every problem that America faces ... the death penalty is a symbolic demonstration of toughness'. They conclude 'there are over 2000 people on Death Row. If we were to kill them all ... the US would witness the greatest slaughter of its citizens by a western democracy this century...'

The prison system and Death Row are the sharp end of a system that is racist through and through. The only surprise in the explosions on the streets of LA, Atlanta and other US cities is that it didn't come sooner.



**"Germany is renowned as the economic power-house of western Europe... But the last few weeks' strikes have seen more days of action than any of the last five years. The social peace is no more"**





Poor united in LA uprising

## US Rebellion

# 'Not a race riot, a class riot'

By Jeff Mackler

THE QUOTATION in the headline above is taken from a special report in the 11 May edition of *Newsweek*.

This one-sided judgement by urban sociologist Joel Kotkin, that class — not race — propelled the protests, nevertheless helps explain the depth of the uprising in South central Los Angeles.

The intolerable conditions being suffered by Latinos and even white workers in this community spurred it to take action in solidarity with their black sisters and brothers when the outrageous Rodney King verdict was announced.

This is what triggered and gave force to the powerful response throughout that city and across the United States.

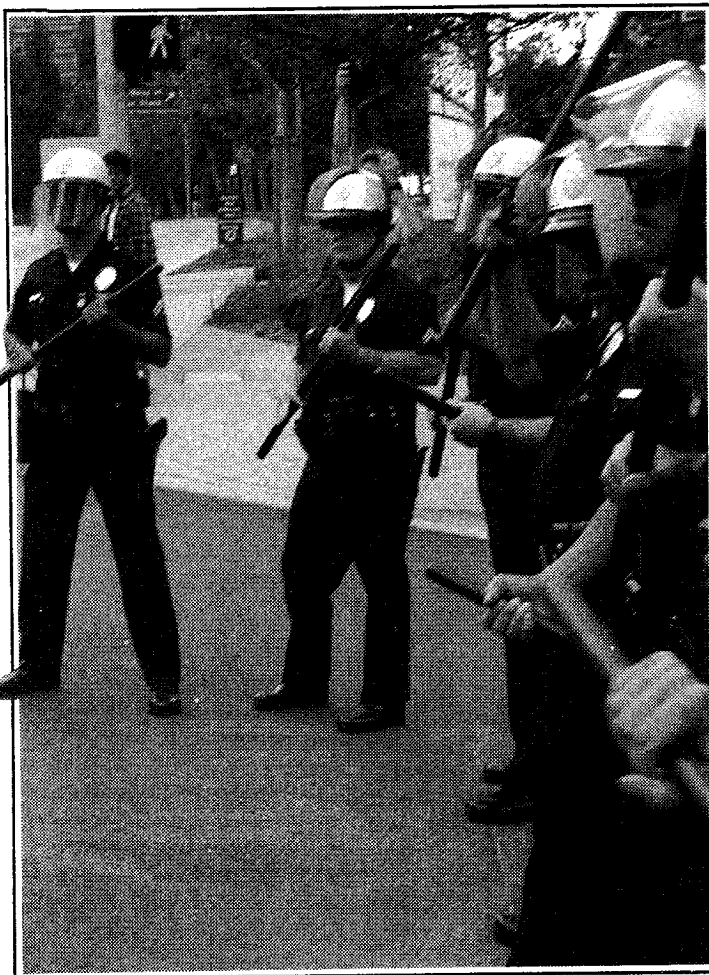
## Detonator

It was the fundamental issue of racial oppression which detonated the rebellious outbreak of mass protest. At the same time, it was the generalised misery suffered by all sections of the working class in the central cities which explains the multi-racial composition of the protestors and the exceptional force of their combined action.

This event reveals for the first time how deeply broad sectors of the working class have been affected by the relentless decades-long ruling class assault on workers' living standards.

It also marks the latest and most convincing proof that the coming American revolution will combine a workers' struggle for class liberation with a black struggle against super exploitation and national oppression.

When four white cops were caught on videotape in the act of beating black motorist Rodney G King within an inch of his life while being arrested for a traffic violation, the US ruling class was put on trial in the eyes



LAPD — keeping the city safe for the rich

of America and the world.

The repeatedly televised video, showing 81 seconds of one of the most brutal beatings ever captured on film or tape, allowed the whole world to eye-witness a day in the life of black America.

## Naked

The only surprise in this racist jury's decision was the sheer nakedness of its upside-down verdict: the jury ruled that this prostrate and helpless black victim was the criminal and that the four gun-toting club-wielding cops were his intended victims!

A reaction from the black community was only to be expected. But the fury of the upris-

ing in South central Los Angeles — which spread to cities across the land — exceeded all expectations.

The economic situation for African Americans has grown worse since the urban uprisings of the 1960s. Average black unemployment for the 1980s was over 11.4 per cent, nearly three times the rate for whites (4.1 per cent).

Among black teenagers unemployment stands at a constant 50 per cent and over 40 per cent of all black children are growing up in poverty. Over the last decade funding for social programs in the inner cities has dropped by 60 per cent.

One of the most telling statistics, which clearly reveals the pent up rage in the black com-



munity shows that there are more black males in prison than there are in college — one out of four blacks is either in prison or on parole!

On the spot television newscasts clearly showed that the fury of protestors was directed at a 'system' which shut them out and condemned them to lives of poverty. Virtually everyone interviewed cried out for jobs which could provide a decent living and decent housing.

## Outbreak

This forced the capitalist media to take note of the underlying economic and social cause of the outbreak of mass protest. It couldn't be denied or ignored.

The capitalist media worked overtime to create the basis for another white backlash like the one they created and nurtured after the ghetto explosions of the 1960s.

At that time one of their poison-pen journalists went so far as to concoct a story alleging the existence of a 'Blood Brotherhood'. A pure invention, never substantiated, in which unnamed blacks were alleged to be planning murder and mayhem against whites.

Today, virtually every news account of the Los Angeles uprising includes the word 'violence' in its title, the daily death toll was reported like scores in a World Series. And the false impression was driven home that it was black and latino 'rioters and looters' killing innocent whites.

But the fact is that according to the latest figures, of the 58 reported killed all but 14 of the dead were black and latino (26 blacks, 18 latinos, 2 asian, and 10 whites). This strongly suggests that it was cops who did the killing.

## Crisis of leadership

The first conclusion which can be drawn from the Los Angeles-centred rebellion is that the great force expressed in the uprising, there is evidence that a much broader revolt of working people is gestating beneath the surface of American society.

But the most important lesson is that without effective

leadership and without a program around which the power of the exploited and oppressed masses can be effectively focused, spontaneous rebellions are not enough.

Up to this moment, unfortunately, such a leadership with the courage to lead and an effective program for action has yet to emerge.

The generation of the 1950s and 1960s found its Martin Luther Kings and Malcolm Xs, and the generation of the 1990s will also find leaders.

Furthermore, the crisis revealed by the fallout from the Rodney King verdict affects the working class as a whole, which also has not yet solved the problem of leadership. Nor is it a coincidence that this challenge to working people in the central cities comes on the heels of the defeat of the United Auto Workers, the most powerful industrial union in the country, in their strike against Caterpillar Inc.

## Mass arrests

On top of all other causes of discontent, 13,500 people have been arrested in connection with the rebellion in Los Angeles.

On May 6, it was reported that 6,600 protestors were still being held without charge. Ordinarily, they must be released if charges have not been made before the legal limit of two days has expired. But the California legislature took emergency action on the same day that the two-day limit expired — extending the holding period without charges to an unprecedented seven days!

The vote upholding this fundamental violation of human rights was passed by a shocking majority of 62-0 in the California Assembly and 33-0 in the Senate.

This gives them time to concoct phoney felony charges against those who dared to protest against police brutality, juridical injustice, and political and economic repression.

Jeff Mackler is co-National Secretary of the US Fourth Internationalist organisation Socialist Action.



# Tube workers vote for strike

By Pete Williams

RMT members on London Underground have voted 2-1 for strike action against the Company Plan. There was a 65 per cent turnout in the ballot.

The National Executive Committee, which contrary allegations in the mass media, is overwhelmingly dominated by right wingers elected by fully postal ballots, voted for immediate talks with management.

It also voted to talk to the other rail unions in an attempt to forge unity with them in a campaign against the Plan and for the issuing of mass leaflets to the public.



RMT chief Jimmy Knapp

Meanwhile the other rail unions – ASLEF, TSSA and the Confed – continue to refuse to ballot their members on the grounds that the Plan 'doesn't affect their members'!

The failure to name a date for strike action is a problem as management may well combine with full-time officials to delay negotiations beyond 28 days, by which time under the anti-union laws, action must commence.

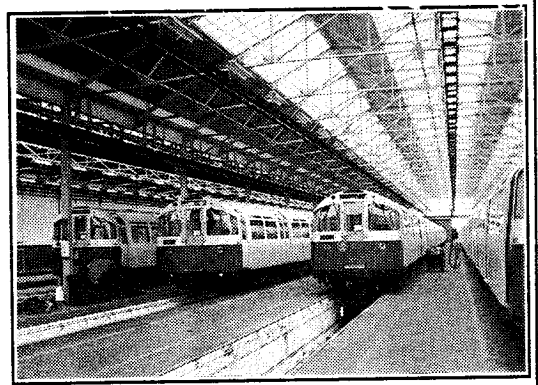
However talks with the employers became unavoidable once the LUL management changed their position on negotiating the Plan after the RMT ballot had commenced.

Prior to that the management had been absolutely adamant that the Plan was not up for negotiation. All they wanted was to discuss implementation with local representatives.

With the RMT ballot underway,

management informed the workforce by individual letter that they were now prepared to negotiate within the existing machinery and would honour the Promotion, Transfer and Redundancy agreement which has as its corner stone the vital principle of seniority.

The danger now is that minimal concessions will persuade national negotiators to call off the fight allowing management to revert to imposition in a few months time.



The membership stood up to management lies, intimidation and misinformation and delivered a remarkable mandate for strike action within a fortnight of a crushing electoral defeat.

Once again it will be up to the RMT District Council to turn the mandate into effective defence of the members.

# Car unions fix ballot to back japanisation

By Tony Johnstone

UNION leaders at Rover, from the right-wing of the EETPU to the TGWU 'Broad Left', were determined to get workers to accept the management proposals in the document 'Rover Tomorrow'.

The document introduces 'New Management Techniques' in one fell swoop.

It proposes, for example, complete flexibility, team working and 'continuous improvement', setting a precedent for the whole motor industry. Its acceptance was a travesty of democracy.

Only one or two changes were made at a national level – there will be no short-term contract workers and unions will predominate in negotiation structures.

All the rest was left to plant-level negotiation. After six months, with no involvement of ordinary workers, a few more concessions were made, largely

around the question of seniority in certain, very particular situations.

Union leaders then argued for acceptance. To persuade union structures within Rover to accept the deal they argued 'If you don't accept this, the company will just implement the original document'.

So the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) unanimously recommended the deal, and then a 150-strong delegate conference confirmed this with only around four votes against, followed by a plant-level committee.

In Cowley, the Joint Shop stewards Committee (JSSC) wasn't allowed a vote. In Longbridge, the JSSC first voted against, but after a visit from TGWU official Tony Woodlay, they agreed to accept.

Shop floor meetings were hostile, particularly those held by management in Cowley and Solihull. The impression was given that workers had no real choice. But this was hardly challenged by the unions – the NJNC never issued

a single leaflet.

But shopfloor hostility was so strong that they broke down this barrier and, at Cowley and Solihull, voted heavily against the deal. Then came the 'counting' of the votes.

Manual voters, from each plant were added together, and then added to the staff vote. So there was no way of knowing how each plant had voted – and no way of challenging the result.

At the count itself, the manual workers' vote was first announced as being against, with a majority of 240. After a 'recount', this changed to a vote in favour, with a majority of 16.

All those at the count favoured a 'yes' vote – so no further recounts were held. Added to the staff vote in favour, there was a majority in favour of 169, out of a total of 24,000 votes.

So on April 16, the unions happily signed the agreement. Not so happy are the workers, who have to live with it and can't understand where this 'yes' vote came from.

# TUC tries to shackle trades councils

By Sam Stacey

This year's Trades Councils' conference will be official, unlike last year's. It was organised 'illegally', after being disbanded by the TUC.

Forced by the level of opposition to reinstate them, the TUC apparatus now aims to return to the past – barring the conference from discussing anything contrary to TUC policy.

They have already ruled 'out of order' resolutions supporting the 'Unshackle the Unions' campaign and the TUC-affiliation of the oil workers' union OILC.

While the TUC's retreat was a victory, they shouldn't now be allowed to reduce the conference to a talking shop. But with the Trades Councils currently under review, last year's unity against the TUC's undemocratic action, will not be so easily achieved.

Local TUCs agree on the need to maintain the conference, and on the need for representation at the TUC Congress.

But a document recently produced by the TCJCC is more problematic. First, it proposes the automatic affilia-

tion of all unions to their Trades Councils.

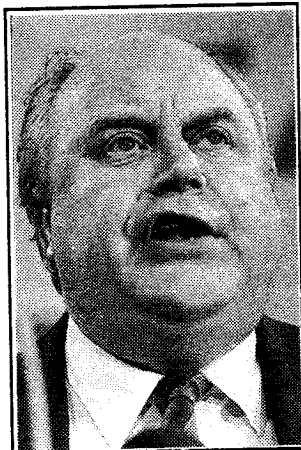
But it also says that affiliation money should be paid direct to the TUC. At the moment, local TUCs get the money from the unions, and control their own finances.

Trades councils often operate outside the TUC's formal rules – in theory they can't do anything contrary to TUC policy, but many do just the same.

Movements against the Gulf war and for Poll tax non-payment saw many defy the bureaucracy at Congress House. Control of the purse strings would be a powerful weapon in the hand of a TUC regional secretary to force local TUCs to toe the line.

The other problem relates to the Joint Consultative Committee. At the moment the JCC is powerless – it can't even carry out decisions of its own conference. This cannot go on.

The Trades Council movement needs autonomy within the TUC's official structures to develop its potential. The TUC decides policy at its Congress, but can't impose that on individual unions. Why should Trades Councils be any different?



Stormin' Norman Willis



NUT leader McAvo

# Teachers challenge NUT leaders' retreat

By Ian Kaye

The main teachers' union (NUT) conference met this year under the shadow of the Tory victory. But delegates remained combative, and not ready to give the NUT's Broad Left/right wing (now almost indistinguishable) an easy ride.

The Conference started with a procedural manoeuvre from the Broad Left. So as not to embarrass Kinnock, ran the argument, motions would be divided into 'Policy' and 'Action', to be debated in separate areas of the agenda.

The intention was clear – the leadership could 'left face' on policy, and then oppose any-

thing but the most token of gestures in action. But it backfired and the manoeuvre was rejected.

This was to be the key to the leadership approach – card votes and any procedural device to delay discussion. But since the conference wouldn't go away, the Broad Left told us their reaction to the fourth Tory term. The strategy had changed from 'Wait for a better government'; now the word 'longer' had been inserted.

The majority of the left, grouped in the Socialist Teachers Alliance (STA), tried to amend this, focusing on the threat of job losses and redundancies. This fell, promptly splitting the left over whether to vote for the leadership's new

point-blank to implement the decision, and ordered security staff not to allow Stafford into the union HQ.

Now moves are afoot to force Ecclestone to back down at the union's National Executive. If these attempts fail, a campaign is likely to be launched within the union for a Special Delegate Meeting to sack him.

The NUJ right-wing's other move at the conference was to try to use the union's financial crisis to try to slash back every last vestige of the union's campaigning structures; but they were again heavily defeated by delegates.

In elections, NUJ Left candidates generally did well. John Toner was elected unopposed as Vice President; Pergamon strike leader Jim Boumelha tied with right-winger Bob Trevor, and will serve as President for the first six months, and Kyran Connolly came within ten votes of unseating the union's General Treasurer.

The conference also agreed to back the 'Unshackle the Unions' campaign and to get involved in the work of the Anti Racist Alliance and the Anti Nazi League.

realist motion – with many against, but the SWP in favour!

Teacher appraisal, the cutting edge of 'new management' of schools and a vital ingredient of performance related pay within teaching, caused a lively debate. Left opposition to the leadership line – negotiation of local appraisal schemes – won considerable support, only being defeated through manoeuvres.

Victories included motions on racism, which included affiliation to both the ARA and ANL. And a left motion calling for national strike action to oppose redundancies not only survived a weakening amendment from the executive, but was also carried almost unanimously.





PHOTO: Paul Herriman/Profile

# Benn and Scargill launch Unshackle Unions conference campaign

TONY BENN and Arthur Scargill both called for unions to break the anti-unions laws at the May Day launch of July's Unshackle the Unions conference.

Bakers' leader Joe Marino and Furniture Trades (FTAT) general secretary Colin Christopher both spoke at the launch, together with leading member of the Haldane Society and industrial relations expert John Hendy QC.

The conference, at Conway

Hall on 18 and 19 July will focus on bosses' offensive through 'Japanisation' and new working practices, as well as the anti-union laws.

The Saturday of the conference will coincide with the special Labour conference to elect a new leader. A rally addressed by Benn and Scargill will take place at 6pm that evening.

## Election defeat

The campaign to 'unshackle the unions' has been launched

by the Socialist Movement trade union committee.

In his speech Arthur Scargill traced the general election defeat to the domination of the labour movement by new realism.

He argued that the 1984-85 miners' strike should have been turned into a general strike, and that the leadership of the labour movement fatally underestimated the possibility of anti-Tory advance through the poll tax campaign.

The new Tory anti-union

law will abolish the check-off system of union dues payment, enforce full postal ballots, cooling off periods before strikes and introduce the right of individuals to sue unions for loss of service.

The Unshackle the Unions campaign was backed unanimously by last week's NUJ ADM. And building the conference was a theme of speakers at May Day events in Southampton, Manchester, Birmingham, Oxford, Chesterfield and Newcastle.

Unions must break the law - Scargill

## Block vote under fire Will Labour become like the US Democrats?

By Paul Lawson

BOTH John Smith and Bryan Gould agree that a reform of Labour's links with the unions is necessary; indeed this is the broad consensus among Labour and union leaders alike.

All declare that the public wielding of the huge block vote is 'inappropriate to a modern party'. What lies behind these proposals for change, and how should socialists react?

The present form of the block vote is of course highly undemocratic - hundreds of thousands of votes cast at

Labour conferences by right wing union bosses, without the least consultation with their members. But this is not the reason for the current trend to diminish, or abolish, the block vote.

### Working class

Rather, what is being posed now is a move to weaken the links between Labour and the organised working class. It is part of the process of trying to radically shift the Labour Party away from its identification as the party of organised labour.

The present form of the block vote has been the guarantee of right-wing



domination of the party. It was the block vote which stopped Benn being deputy leader and installed the Kinnock-Hattersley 'dream ticket'. It was the block vote which steam-rolled through the Policy Review and the defeat of radical policies in the 1980s.

But the repeated defeats inflicted on the left have effectively sanitised the party from any radical challenge for the foreseeable future. The block vote is unnecessary, at least in its present form, to ensure right-wing domination.

### Liberal link

Loosening direct links with the unions is required by the right wing in order to position the Labour Party to be able to move towards open or *de facto* coalitionist policies with the Liberals.

No one should be fooled into thinking that the moves against the block vote are designed to give more power to ordinary Labour members. Rather, the farcical outcome of the nominations process in the leadership election will lead to a reorganisation which strengthens the grip of the PLP.

In any case, it is harder and harder for left-wing resolutions to circumvent the procedural hurdles and make it onto the floor of Labour conferences.

The left must approach this question from the viewpoint that the formation of an independent working class party based on the unions is a big step forward for the working class. The situation in, for example, the United States where no such party exists reveals the problem clearly. Capitalist politics in the US is a joke and no form of working class politics makes it into the national

political arena.

But defending Labour's union links must also involve campaigning against the farce of union general secretaries wielding millions of votes.

In the short term, there is little chance of a complete rupture between Labour and the unions. Labour becoming a simple capitalist party like the US Democrats is a long way off. But the process of attacking Labour's position as a party of organised labour is gaining momentum; it should be resisted.

## Back Unshackle the Unions

The July conference is the culmination of a long campaign to gain support for the Unshackle the Unions statement, launched by the SMTUC, the Haldane Society Employment Committee, the Solidarity Network, Labour Party Socialists and Trade Union News.

The statement, published below, has now been signed by hundreds of labour movement activists. In the build up to the July conference, efforts should be redoubled to gain support for this initiative.

Get your union or political organisation to sign the statement.

Signatories so far include MPs Tony Benn, Dennis Canavan, Jeremy Corbyn, Eddy Loyden, Alice Mahon, Alan Meale, Dawn Primarolo, Dennis Skinner.

Union secretaries/presidents include: Arthur Scargill, Ken Cameron (FBU), Joe Marino (BFAWU), Colin Christopher (FTAT), Ronny MacDonald (OILC), Peter Heathfield (NUM).

Dozens of union branches and regions have signed the statement. Last week's NUJ conference supported it unanimously.

**S THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT**  
Trade Union Committee

## Resisting 'New Management Techniques'

### Unshackle the Unions

Which way for socialists in the unions?

Manchester

Saturday 18 - Sunday 19 July

Speakers include: Arthur Scargill, Tony Benn MP, Ronnie McDonald, OILC

Details:

Carolyn Sikorski 53a Geere Road, London E15

## Unshackle the Unions

*'WE DEMAND the complete repeal of all anti-union legislation and that the British government comply with the Conventions and Principles of the United Nations International Labour Organisation for the full restoration of union rights.*

*We do not accept the criminalisation of union activity and the attacks on civil liberties.*

*We reject the argument that a trade union movement of 8 million members has no alternative but to comply with anti-union legislation.*

*We support trade unionists threatened by the use of the laws and all those who challenge the laws to defend their interests.'*

I/we support the Unshackle the Unions statement

Organisation.....

Name.....

Position held (personal/official capacity).....

Address.....

Phone.....

Send to Carolyn Sikorski, 53a Geere Rd, London E15



# Reaching out to the soft left

The undemocratic rules of Labour's leadership election have excluded Ken Livingstone and Bernie Grant from being formal candidates. But a 'shadow' campaign continues with meetings all over the country. Socialist Outlook talked to KEN LIVINGSTONE about the campaign and the future of the left.

John Smith is about to become Labour leader. Is this a continuation of Kinnockism or a further shift to the right?

UNLIKE Kinnock, John Smith doesn't come from the left of the party, so there isn't the personal bitterness against the left.

Kinnock hasn't spoken to Tony Benn since 1982 or me since 1986, but Smith has left the lines of communication open. As far as I remember John Smith is almost unique in never having attacked another Labour Party member. This is one of the things used against him by people like John Cunningham: 'where were you during the fight against the Trots'?

But on the issues of policy, such as 'targeting benefits', which is a codeword for supporting means testing, and the danger of coalitionism, then there is a big danger of a further shift to the right.

In 1981 Tony Benn got 49.5 per cent of the electoral college in the deputy leadership battle. This time you got only 13 nominations from the PLP. This obviously reflects a decline in the Labour left nationally. How do you explain this?

YOU'RE comparing the absolute high point of the left in Britain since the war with a very different



Livingstone - campaign goes on despite stitch-up

situation today. This has to be the low point. But I'm not pessimistic.

I think there are going to be a lot of industrial struggles against attacks on the welfare state. And it is clear that Smith is coming up with an agenda which is going to galvanise the left against him.

Instead of proposing big defence expenditure cuts Smith will propose cutting welfare benefits to a huge swathe of middle income families, which is what the 'Commission on Social Justice' is all about.

This fits in with what is going to happen throughout Europe. The absence of a welfare state in Japan means that Japanese capitalism has a distinct advantage; and the United States has the

same advantage. Now capital throughout Europe is going to move against the welfare state, giving rise to the most massive struggles.

Equally we're moving into a decade in which environmental issues are going to come to the fore dramatically with the destruction of the ozone layer. So this is going to be a decade in which both economic and social struggles, and the ecological and economic crises, are going to put left issues back on the agenda.

Still 13 nominations is a small base to start with?

ACTUALLY it was fourteen, Ronnie Campbell's vote got 'lost'. But in any case this small block of votes represents a bigger parliamentary left, because there were numbers of people pressurised by their local parties, or disgusted with the whole process, who couldn't or wouldn't vote with me this time.

We have a left core from which we have to expand. And that means reaching out to the soft left. Obviously a lot of the people supporting Gould share concerns about the welfare state, the environment, the trade union link, devaluing the pound, and of course shared our concerns about the Gulf war. About a third of the PLP can be won to the left, so the Campaign group has got to find some way of reaching those people.

Equally we have got to reach out to the trade union lefts, because these people are going to be at the forefront. And this is why we have launched a Socialist Forum, to see what kind of common ground and common agenda there is on the left.

The 13 points we've put forward may not satisfy every left group, but they are a realistic basis for discussion. It's 'objectivist', or voluntarist, to imagine that in

this situation we could suddenly recreate something like the old Bennite left.

Over the past five years a lot of people have left the Labour Party. Surely left organisation has to reach out to trade union and campaign activists who refuse to be in the Labour Party?

THAT'S fine. I don't have the slightest objection to the widest umbrella organisation of the left, including many people who don't want to be in the Labour Party. Provided that doesn't exclude the essential task of actually organising in the Labour Party.

The Socialist Movement could have been the ideal framework for that. The problem was that there were a lot of people who quite openly saw it as the forerunner of a 'red-green' party, or new socialist party, for which there was no basis.

Once you start talking about that, no union broad left will touch it. It's a clear waste of time.

In the end, should the left vote for Gould and Prescott?

**"We have a left core from which we have to expand. And that means reaching out to the soft left.... about a third of the PLP can be won to the left"**

I SPENT two years on the economic policy review group chaired by Gould. And for nearly all that time we were fighting together against people

like Gordon Brown and Patricia Hewitt, who were taking a classic neo-liberal line of 'let the market do it all'.

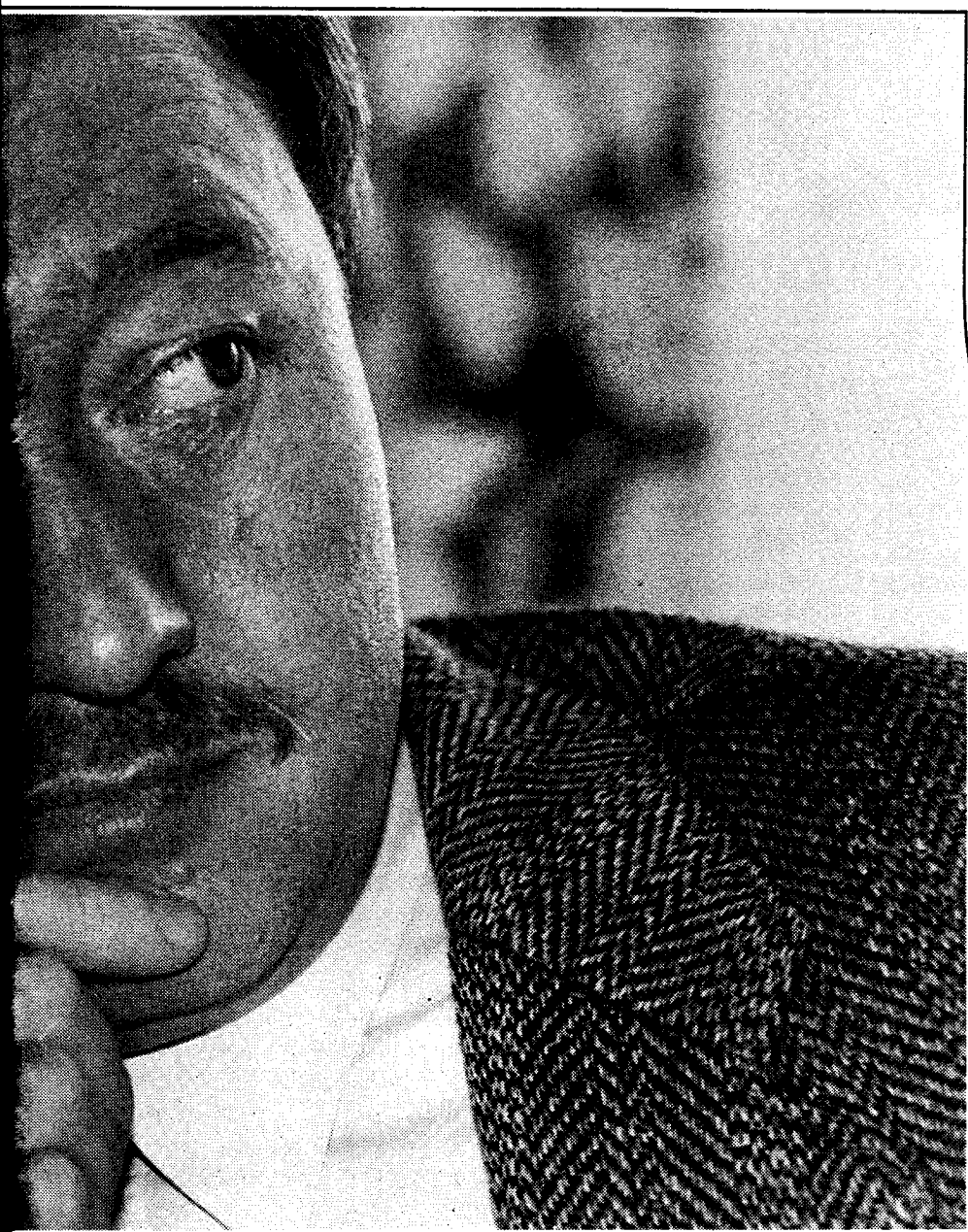
Bryan Gould and myself both argued for intervention, subsidies and planning, the differences being solely those of scale.



One loser hands over to another

PHOTO: Andrew Ward





Despite the fact that you and Bernie Grant are not formal candidates, the campaign goes on?

YES, we have meetings all over the country. And beyond that there will be plenty for socialists to do.

We are entering a most turbulent and dangerous decade, the world is being torn apart. There's the most massive crisis in the ex-Soviet Union and eastern Europe as well as the third world, and a real danger of fascist governments arising in Europe.

During the last period when the US and British economies were in crisis, capitalism was sustained by Germany and Japan. Now, Germany's economy is turning down and there is the banking crisis in Japan. Just one major mistake and you'll get a slump. They may avoid it, but the danger is there.

What are the key tasks for the left?

THE FIRST task is to preserve the trade union links with the Labour Party. Without those links the Labour Party would decline into just another capitalist party, and that would be a massive blow to working class organisation.

The second is defence of the welfare state. It's quite clear now with the financial crisis of the state that either the government has to cut back sharply on defence spending, or deeply attack the welfare state, and no prizes for guessing which one they'll choose.

The third point is international organisation of the socialist and labour movements. There's not the slightest doubt now that capitalism now is totally globalised, and to respond to that the socialist left has to build genuine rank-and-file links between working people, not just trips round the world for top parliamentarians and union leaders at the expense of the Second International. It's question of building links between working people in struggle to stop them being divided by the multinationals.

The period when the world was divided ideologically, and that you had to choose sides between different states, is now over. We are entering what is more like a pre-1914 period, which means one where the working class has to build its own internationalism.

I think that in the next period of crisis if you got a single breakthrough, like Lula winning a presidential election in Brazil, or any broadly anti-capitalist force making a major breakthrough, then the whole situation would explode and be transformed.

When you had Nicaragua standing up, or Peru defying the IMF, then these places were small enough to be crushed. But it would take just one anti-capitalist force to come to power in a major country, which couldn't be easily crushed, to divide the world on international class lines. That's how turbulent and fragile the international economic and political situation is.

Interview by Phil Hears and Patrick Baker

Bryan Gould was demoted by Kinnock for all that, and removed from the industry portfolio – the same way Michael Meacher was demoted for still defending some trade union rights.

Labour went into the last election with the most orthodox economic team we had since 1929. All the talk is now that John Smith won't allow anyone like Prescott or Gould any economic portfolio at all.

So if that is the case there is the basis here for a long-term working arrangement and community of interest between the hard left and the soft left, on questions like defence, Europe, rejection of the Maastricht accords, the environment etc.

But the key thing here is the attitude to the unions. The left can't vote for any candidate who is calling for the ending of the trade union link. Prescott is in favour of keeping it, so no problem we can all vote for Prescott.

As for Gould, it depends which way he comes down. There was a good letter in the Guardian last week from the Gould camp saying 'keep the block vote but democratise it'. That's fine. But unless Bryan Gould openly comes out on this question we can't vote for him.

But there's another question coming up before this election, and that's the debate on the Maastricht accords. Part of that is tying Britain to the Exchange Rate Mechanism, and this quite clearly means, as the Campaign Group said, a deflationary policy putting another million people on the dole. So we should call for the Labour Party to vote against the Maastricht accords. And we want to see people like Gould and Prescott, if not actually voting against the accords, then at least criticising them.

The Campaign Group has a block of votes which could determine the outcome, at least on the deputy leadership election. So we should say we want something for those votes. We should demand that Gould and Prescott also come out against all witch hunts.

In this respect, it's worth noting that Bryan Gould's main organiser is Nigel

Stanley of the LCC, which is precisely the body organising a witch hunting campaign against Bernie Grant in his own constituency for standing in the deputy leadership election.

But surely Gould is compromised by years of clear support for Kinnockism?

WHICH is precisely why without some clear commitments, to the union link and stopping attacks on the left, then there's no point in voting for him.

Is coalitionism really being prepared? Or it just fantasy?

YES, for certain. The whole of the Guardian/New Statesman type of 'left' are talking about it.

It will be delayed if Labour's support begins to pick up, but as we approach the next election, if there's the slightest doubt about the outcome, the right wing in the party and the unions will start to demand an electoral pact with the Liberals.

Frankly, it's not realistic to expect that MPs who had no qualms about supporting the killing of 100,000 Arabs in the Gulf war will be disturbed about an electoral pact with the Liberals!



## socialist OUTLOOK Comment

### Why we won't be backing Bryan

KEN LIVINGSTONE's decision to stand with Bernie Grant in the leadership contest was absolutely right. For the left to lie down and play dead in the post-election situation would be disastrous.

As Ken Livingstone points out, the 'shadow' election campaign now gives the opportunity to rally left wing and socialist forces against the right and new realism.

The comments that Livingstone makes in the interview about the turbulence of the world situation are well-judged. Stalinism may be at death's door, but to interpret that as some final victory or stability for world capitalism would be wrong. The uprising in the United States and the mass strikes in Germany are the first signs of the stormy period we are moving into.

Socialist Outlook supporters will do everything possible to promote the campaign of meetings and rallies which Ken Livingstone and Bernie Grant will now hold. But we have strong reservations about the tactical course which Livingstone outlines for the left.

In the first place, there are no conditions in which the left should vote for Bryan Gould in the leadership election. Gould is utterly compromised with years of support for Kinnockism and the witch hunt. Of course, Ken Livingstone lays down strong conditions for supporting Gould; but to imagine that Gould will come out and oppose the witch hunt is unrealistic.

But this is an indication of a more substantial disagreement. Livingstone implies that a third of the PLP can be won to the left, and that the Campaign Group must have a strong orientation to building alliances with the parliamentary 'soft left' – what we would prefer to call, at best, the centre.

But in the end Labour MPs reflect the pressure of their base, and the strength of the Labour left nationally. Most of the 70-odd new MPs are a Kinnockite levy, and the Labour left is very weak. The Labour left could only be rebuilt as a result of substantial developments in the class struggle. That is why any new alliance of the left needs to base itself on the forces in the unions and mass campaigns, as well as the Labour left, which are key in turning the situation around.

The Socialist Forum being launched by Ken Livingstone must be judged from this angle. If it remains at the same level as groupings like Labour Left Liaison and the Womens Action Committee, essentially concerned with inner-Labour faction fighting, it will be still-born. If it becomes a much broader alliance involving forces based on class struggle, then it could be a substantial step forward.



Thatcher's dream – the US nightmare

# Fortress Los Angeles

## City of Quartz

By Mike Davis

Vintage Books, £8.99

Reviewed by Jane Kelly

IN THE BLACK ghetto of South-central Los Angeles, 70% of black men will have been involved with the criminal justice system before they are 35.

Across the US more young black men are in prison than in college.

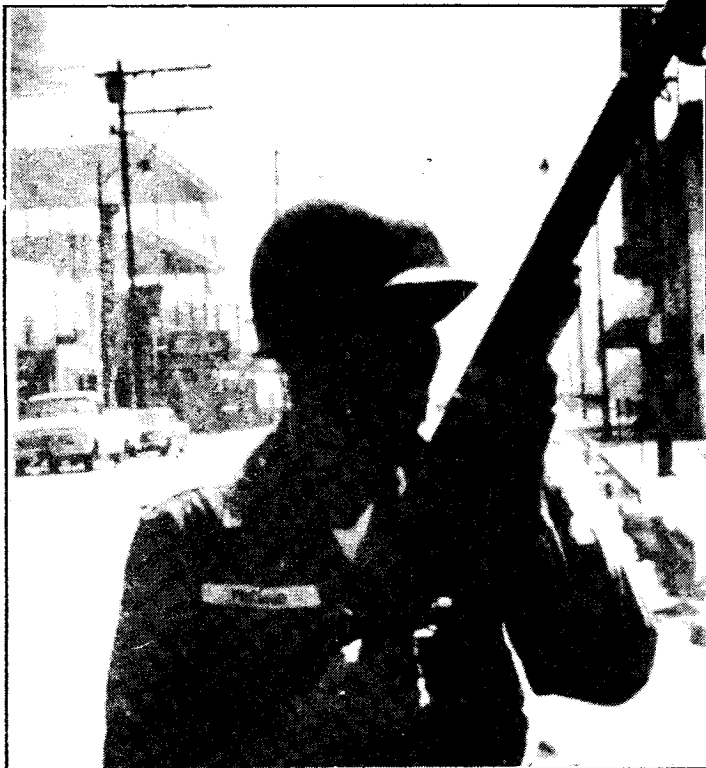
The insurrections in Los Angeles and across the US cities, sparked off by the obscene verdict in the Rodney King affair, has lifted the lid on the enormous racial and class tension, felt especially in the inner cities in the US.

But the revolts have deeper roots and are also the result of recession, being paid for by the poor and under privileged. In the US, the richest country in the world, more than 25 million people are on food vouchers. Without a welfare state the soup kitchens and vouchers catch only the most destitute and vulnerable - all 25 million of them!

It is no coincidence that it was in LA, home of the Hollywood dream, that these events started. Mike Davis' book *City of Quartz, Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*, recently published in paperback, examines the corruption and racism of the notorious LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department), led by Police Chief Daryl Gates, and the history of the gangs, especially those in South-central.

### Vietnam-style

In a chapter entitled 'The Hammer and the Rock' he describes how the LAPD use Vietnam style operations to bust drug offenders. In one operation 'arresting more black youth than at any time since the Watts rebellion of 1965 ... Kids are humiliatingly forced to 'Kiss the sidewalk' or spreadeagled against police cruisers while officers check their names against computerised files of gang members. There are 1,453 arrests... mostly for trivial offences like delinquent parking tickets or curfew violations. Hundreds more, uncharged,



have their names and addresses entered into the electronic gang roster for future surveillance.'

Vietnam metaphors proliferate. 'This is Vietnam here', says the chief of the District Attorney's Drug Unit: 'the Viet Cong abroad in our community' says a local mayor.

This same Southcentral area was once the home of the LA Black Panther Party. With the Party leadership formed from gang members, gang hostilities in the mid 1960s virtually ceased, while black youth politicised under the influence of the Civil Rights movement and Malcolm X, forming patrols to monitor police abuse and guard the annual Watts festival, rather than trade narcotics in the streets of the area.

### Socialist ideas

But as in the rest of the USA, the Panthers' politicisation of blacks, as well as Malcolm X's increasingly socialist ideas, were beginning to endanger the state.

As elsewhere, the Black Panther leaders in LA were murdered, 'on the

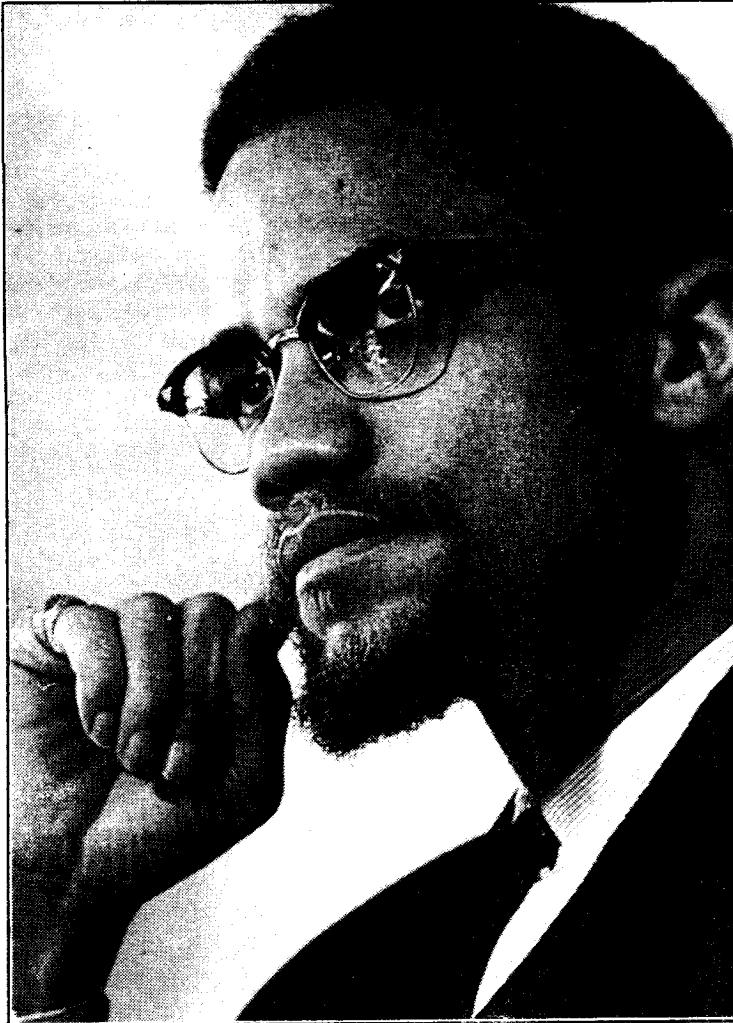
campus of UCLA by members of a rival nationalist group (which Panther veterans still insist was actually police instigated)... Although a general massacre of the Panther cadre', at their Southcentral HQ, 'was narrowly averted by an angry community outpouring into the streets, the party was effectively destroyed.'

### Gang activity

What took its place was a resurgence of gang activity.

The recent events of Southcentral are the result: a mixture of violent criminal activity against people and property in their own neighbourhood, combined with a more political response of attacks on police stations, city halls and banks. But the lack of a radical leadership with a way forward, is a disaster.

Los Angeles was developed as a union-free town in competition with highly organised San Francisco. Compared to that city, nothing about LA's geography makes it an ideal place for a huge city.



Other chapters show the 'Anglos', the white Los Angelenos, getting their residential areas designated so that they could (and still do) exclude 'inappropriate', that is black and Latino, home owners moving in.

Thus the exclusive areas of wealth like Beverly Hills and Simi Valley (just outside the city line, where the trial was held, also home to the Reagan Library) keep out any but the white rich from buying homes or even visiting.

Public space too is increasingly planned for the exclusive use of the wealthy. 'Fortress LA' Davis calls it.

Malls and hotels provide 'safe', 'clean' environments, confident in the knowledge that the poor, the blacks, the Latinos, working in the sweat shop districts nearby, are shut out.

The divided communities of LA provide the starkest example of the raw edge of capitalism. Huge wealth sited next to, but not among, desperate poverty.

A society of the totally free market, without a welfare state, where to be 'on welfare' is to be fed in soup kitchens and with food vouchers; a world where the ideology of 'freedom' and 'choice' are bandied about but available only to the better off; a world of the two-thirds, one-third society, the richest country in the world where the state has to place tanks on the streets to control its population.

The lesson for us is that this is the society proclaimed by Thatcher. The events there in the past weeks expose the reality of Thatcher's dream.

# Basically screwed up

## Basic Instinct

Directed by Paul Verhoeven

Reviewed by Sam Inman

IT WOULD be a gross understatement to say that this film has got a few people hot under the collar.

Reviewing *Basic Instinct* in *City Limits*, Bonnie Vaughan describes it as 'a film of such vile sentiments as to make anyone despair of what it takes, let alone costs, to make a hit'.

Maybe there is something deeply wrong with my lesbian psyche, but actually I thought this a rather funny film, certainly well worth ignoring the reviews and going to see it for oneself.

The only disappointments for this reviewer were (a) a certain male character ended up *not* getting spiked with an ice-pick, and (b) there is a boringly high content of steamy straight sex – not exactly my cup of tea.

Catherine Tramell, the murder-

writer and murder-suspect around which the film revolves, is played wonderfully by Sharon Stone. She is one mean woman, cold as dry-ice, and with a bisexual appetite to match her conventionally stunning beauty and her fabulous wealth.

Michael Douglas plays the loathsome detective, Nick Curran, who wants to nail Catherine for the murder-by-ice-pick of her rich, ex-pop star bed-mate – a murder described in detail in her latest book.

He gets confused – poor chap – by the unemotional way in which Catherine saw her relationship with the deceased, 'we never dated, we just fucked'.

Somewhat predictably, they end up having an affair. Equally predictably, the affair is devoid of passion but has plenty of sex. Both are using and manipulating each other. Her, for her new book. Him, to solve both the murder and the enigma of a woman who can control him.

As a thriller, however, this film is superb. Psychological tricks that crop up time and time again ensure that from beginning to end the

viewer is ensnared in a complex, if unbelievable, plot. There is also one of the best car chases I've seen in a long time.

So what of the criticisms? Well, the only lesbian in the film appears to be Roxy (Leilani Sarelle), a justifiably jealous lover of Catherine's. But this is not the place to dissect some of the reasons why lesbians may get more than a little irate at the complexities of being in love with a bisexual woman – and there seem to be a few of these in the film.

As to accusations of homophobia and misogyny, I really fail to understand them. Nearly *all* the characters are self-seeking, egotistical manipulators. The world is full of them.

And one thing, which no review I've seen has picked up on, is that it is all set in the social circles of the super-rich and the San Francisco police department. Why would anyone expect to find a positive image there? The best thing to do is have a laugh at them all screwing each others' heads up.





# Irish pro-choice campaign left to fight alone

By Anne Conway,  
Peoples Democracy

WHEN THE case of the fourteen year old rape victim hit the headlines in February, the establishment political parties, particularly the women TDs (Irish MPs), made a lot of concerned noises.

Now that the dust has settled, all are prepared to ask for a YES vote in the Irish referendum on the Maastricht Treaty on 18 June. This is despite the EC protocol that protects and copper-fastens the 8th Amendment – the constitutional article which caused the internment of the fourteen year old and which prohibits abortion information and counselling.

Along with the bourgeois parties, practically every other organisation has shied away from expressing clear opposition to the protocol.

Most disgracefully, the Con-

gress of Trade Unions, the two biggest unions in the country, the Irish Labour Party, and the Council for the Status of Women, have all called for a YES vote to Maastricht.

This is seen by many as clear evidence that the co-option and incorporation of the leaderships of organisations representing the oppressed has been completed.

The *Repeal the 8th Amendment Campaign* has been left to fight on its own. With meagre resources, the campaign now has no back up from those we would expect to support us, such as women's committees in the unions.

The far-left is probably the single biggest force within the campaign – but they have hardly showered themselves with glory.

They have been in and out of the campaign, depending on the strike level, and have complained from the sidelines

about 'indecisive leadership'. This is despite it being within their power to carry through the clear and unambiguous campaign policies – REPEAL of the 8th amendment, NO to the protocol, NO to Maastricht.

Instead they have run off on a tangent, confronting SPUC in a most provocative way – including harassing and attempting to block a demonstration of the anti-abortion forces. Although organised by the *Socialist Workers Movement* – sister organisation of the SWP – the stunt rebounded on the campaign.

Despite the setbacks though, there have been a number of very successful campaign activities. Packed meetings have taken place in Dublin and other areas.

On 6 May, over 150 women took part in a symbolic solidarity trip, from Dublin to Holyhead, to highlight the large number of Irish women who



travel to Britain for abortions every week. They were met by women from the Irish Women's Abortion Support Group in Britain, and the event received wide media coverage.

Regardless of the outcome of the Maastricht referendum, the real struggle over abortion

rights will come when the poll is over. The Church and Fianna Fail can be expected to mobilise fully against any liberalising of Ireland's anti-women laws.

Support and donations can be sent to: *Repeal the 8th Amendment Campaign*, PO Box 3441, Dublin 8, Eire.

# Afghanistan: end of a failed experiment

By Bill Turner

AN ERA has ended in Afghanistan. A thirteen year experiment – dominated by war and Soviet intervention – has been brushed aside. And that war – superficially, a straightforward Cold War confrontation – has moved from tragedy to farce.

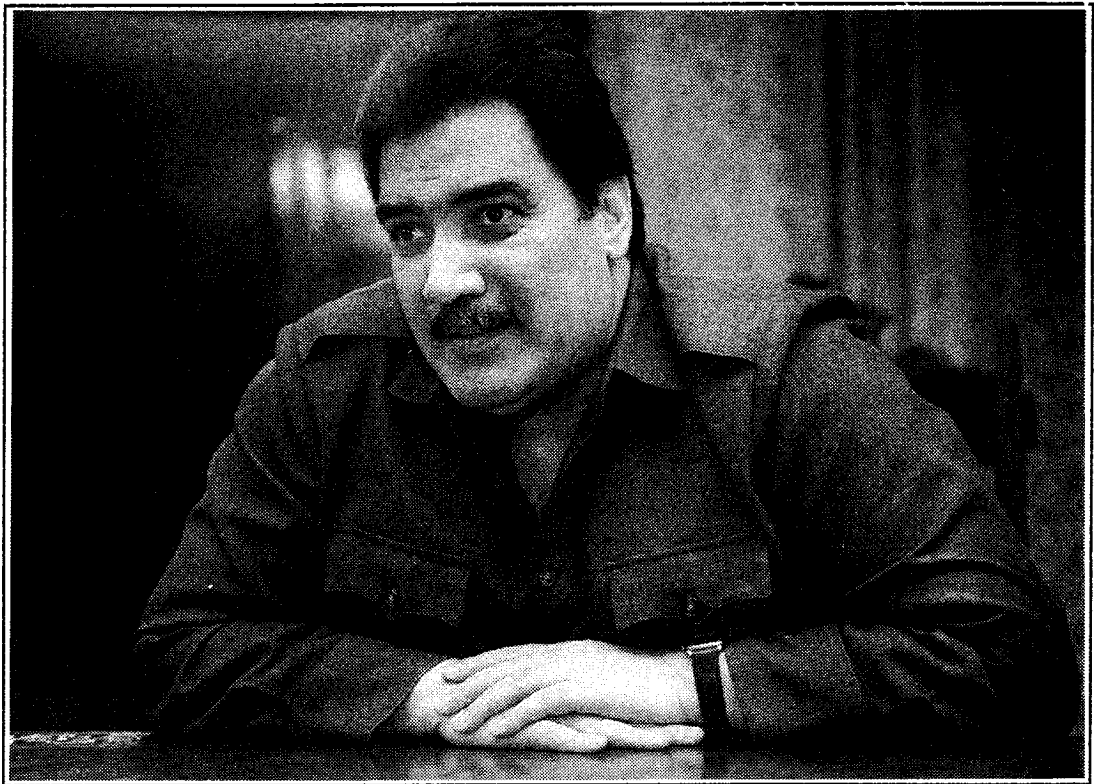
Now the war has shifted – to a tribal-based conflict between 'moderate' Muslims and the more extreme followers of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. That the Afghani tragedy will continue, and in some respects worsen, is the easiest prediction to make. But what is it that has really happened in Afghanistan?

The thirteen years of 'communism', led by the

stalinist Peoples Democratic Party (PDPA), were indeed an experiment. The experiment was not just doomed because of the Soviet military intervention, though that nailed the lid on the coffin.

It was also an attempt at social advance in a society that was undeveloped in every sense. A small country of less than twenty million, 90 per cent its population live in the countryside, and one in six of those are nomads. It is population deeply imbued both with Islam and with tribalism.

Tribal allegiances are a reference point for every section of society, not just the Mojahedin – the PDPA too was affected by tribal conflict, principally between the majority Pushtuns



Collapse of Soviet Union finished Najibullah

and minority Tajiks. This forms an essential backdrop to today's situation.

But also, Afghanistan's industry is tiny. In 1978, the industrial workforce was estimated at 40,000 – one in every five hundred of the population.

So the PDPA's bid for power wasn't doomed from the start – that came with Soviet domination – but its tiny social base of urban workers and intellectuals meant that it was precarious, to say the least.

The second point is that Afghan society was almost destroyed by the war between the USSR and the US-backed Mojahedin. Nearly half the population were uprooted; one third became refugees; three quarters of roads and 60 per cent of rural health centres were destroyed.

The PDPA's base among the urban population, particularly in Kabul, almost certainly remains. And it is that popula-

tion, particularly women, who will suffer most under Mojahedin rule. The few 'liberal democratic' freedoms that Afghanistan's urban population were able to enjoy are already starting to be destroyed.

Afghan society is shattered. As in eastern Europe, for most people the 'word' socialism' signifies military domination of

their country. And that association will not be easily dispelled.

The lesson that is driven home once again is that socialism can't be imposed. And when it is imposed in a backward country, in alliance with 'foreigners' who are seen to militarily occupy the country, it is very damaging indeed.

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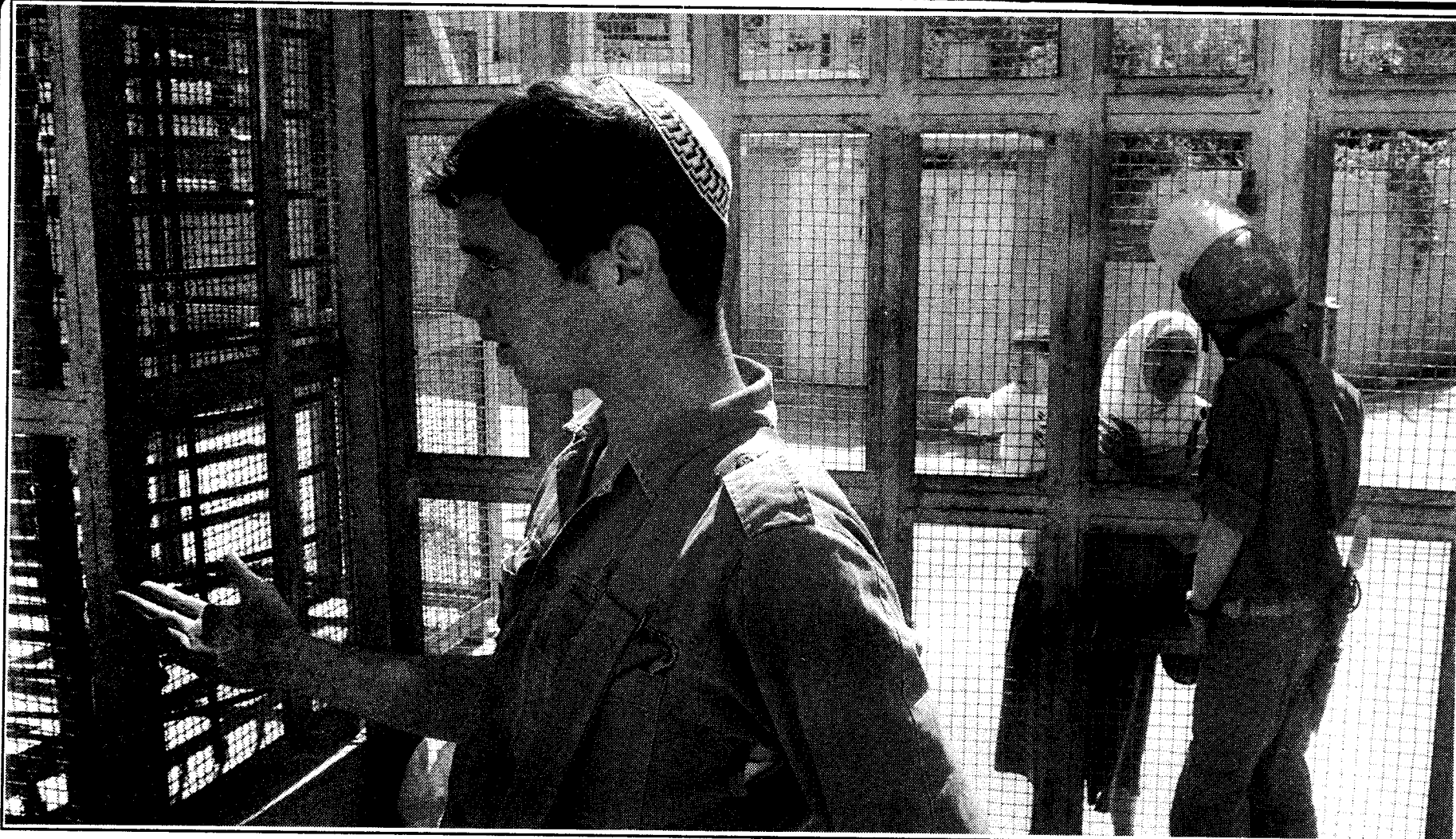
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Defenders of the racist state

PHOTO: Jez Coulson

# Is Zionism racism?

By Michael Warschawski

IN 1975 the United Nations General Assembly 'resolved' that Zionism was a form of racism. But the equation of Zionism with racism requires that the terms be defined.

Zionism is a political movement working for the solution of the Jewish problem by bringing the Jews to the land of Israel and the establishment there of a sovereign Jewish society.

Racism: According to Even Shoshan's authoritative dictionary of the Hebrew language, racism is 'The point of view that the nations of the world are divided into inferior and superior races'.

On the face of it then Zionism has no racist dimension at all; at most it is a utopia, more suited to the 19th century than to present-day reality. Zionism does not state that the Jewish people is a superior race or that the Arab nation is inferior.

And indeed this definition is the basis for the claims of all those who denied the validity of the UN resolution: the Jewish people is not a race, and Zionism does not speak about inferior or superior races. Therefore Zionism is not racist.

Yet there is another definition of racism, closer to its meaning in colloquial language. Racism is the discrimination against human beings on the basis of their national, racial, religious or ethnic origin.

In this sense Zionism as an ideology is not racist, but the Zionist enterprise and the Zionist state of Israel is very, very racist.

## Discrimination

Discrimination between Jews and Arabs is inscribed in the identity card and in the genetic code of the state of Israel and has had a vital part in defining the nature of the existing regime and its laws, its national priorities and its dominant culture.

First an aside: the United Nations which in 1975 condemned Zionism as a

form of racism, bears no small responsibility for the existence of the racist regime in the state of Israel. In 1947 a UN resolution established two states in Palestine, one almost entirely Arab, and the other with a majority of Jews.

One way or another, by defining the Jewish character of the original Israeli state, the UN granted international legitimacy to Israel's racist character and perhaps to its expulsion of the Arab population.

## Jewish

The statement in the Israeli Declaration of Independence proclaiming Israel to be the state of the entire Jewish people, expresses the essence of the existing regime, and defines the collectivity of the state of Israel.

This collectivity is not of all the state's citizens, but of the entire Jewish nation, over and above Jews who are citizens of the state, and excluding citizens of the state who were neither born to a Jewish mother nor converted to Judaism according to Jewish law.

In other words not only does a Jewish mafioso from Paris have the ability (via Zionist institutions) to help determine the state's priorities, but the few Palestinians who managed to obtain citizenship have neither the right nor the ability to be part of the sovereign collective.

A blatant example of this can be found in the land Laws which forbid Arab citizens to buy 'national land' or 'state land', while Jews living outside Israel who are not its citizens, have that right.

Another example is the Law of Return. Every Jewish person has the right of residency in Israel; by contrast there is no absolute right of residency even for an Arab citizen of Israel. It is always provisional and on sufferance.

The pretentious liberalism of Israel's founders - and the need to keep the United Nations quiet - made it hard for them to legislate open apartheid laws. But since the existing regime was based on an apartheid system they were com-

pelled to search for sophisticated ways to institute this racial discrimination.

The primary form this has taken is security and the state of war; the Law of Present Absentees, the Military Government of Arab areas until 1966, and the non-repeal of the mandatory Emergency regulations. These are just a few examples of the way in which a system of double standards was created under the pretext of a state of emergency.

The initial Zionist approach to the country's inhabitants can be described as 'ecological racism'; the Arabs are part of the landscape, sometimes an interesting bit of folklore, mostly a nuisance.

This way of relating continued after the establishment of the state as well: the Arabs 'disappeared'. Including from memory.

The minority who remained in Palestine were placed in 'reserves' in the hope that they too would disappear (the Kafr Qsem massacre, and the plan of which this was a part, took place only five years after the mass expulsion of Arabs, which went on until 1951).

The Arabs who remained were accorded the status of provisional citizens and given the vote.

## Third class citizens

That the Arabs would be third class citizens went without saying; the state of war with the Arab world, and the relatively small size of the remnant left after the mass expulsions, made their expulsion from the collectivity easier, even for the most liberal Israel Jews.

The state and society were not only Jewish in theory but also in practice; and at that time the contradiction between a Jewish state and a democratic state was not obvious.

It was therefore possible to put in place a policy of discrimination without apparent hatred, without problems of conscience, without moral anguish; Israeli society in the 1950s and 60s could easily free itself of any association of with openly racist ideologies.

In the 1960s a combination of factors brought about a revolution in the relation of Israeli society towards the Pales-

tinians in the state. The internal economic and political needs of Israeli society, which led to the end of the period of military government, and to greater integration of the Palestinian minority into society; the addition of one and a half million more Palestinians to the area under Israeli rule after the 1967 war; and the foundation of the Palestinian national movement and its successes after 1967.

## Racist

These three factors prevented the continuation of a policy of ignoring the non-Jew within Jewish society, exposed the racist character of the current regime, and granted legitimacy to various forms of racist behaviour and openly racist ideology.

In 1967 the Palestinians became a 'problem' and the 'problem' activated the potential racism inherent in the existence of an exclusivist Jewish society.

For peoples as for individuals, dealing with reality as it is, including its past, is an essential condition for being able to overcome existential problems.

Denial of reality is a much shrewder enemy than open hatred. The existence of the Palestinians is indeed a problem for the advocates of a Jewish state, and especially for those Zionists who honestly champion democratic and humanistic values.

The problem is not that there are Palestinian Arabs who claim to belong in Palestine and demand their rights over land, but in the contradiction between a democratic approach and one which claims exclusivism in a place where there are other human beings.

The price of Israel being an exclusivist state is that it is being turned into a mixture of South Africa, Northern Ireland and the Wild West. In simpler terms, the choice is between either a democratic state or Massada.

*\*Michael Warschawski is a leading member of the Revolutionary Communist League, Israeli section of the Fourth International.*



Ex-Trotskyists in auto-destruct mode

# Bad news delights Socialist Organiser

By Paul Clarke

SINN FEIN president Gerry Adams lost his West Belfast seat at the general election, a fact greeted by *Socialist Organiser* (SO 520) with the headline: 'Good news from West Belfast'.

For *Socialist Organiser* this amounted to a 'rejection of sectarianism' by West Belfast workers.

At the level of facts this is absurd. Adams lost his seat despite the fact that his vote, absolutely and in percentage terms, went up. Some hundreds of loyalist voters switched to the SDLP to vote Adams out.

SO supporters say the SDLP is the 'party of the Socialist International'. It may be thus affiliated, but it is not, like the Labour Party, a party based on the workers movement. It is a bourgeois nationalist party, full stop.

## Joy at defeat

SO's joy at Adams' defeat stems not from principled considerations, but from their irrational prejudice against the national struggle in Ireland.

Adams' defeat is simply a victory for imperialism, albeit a



marginal victory. Let *Socialist Organiser* chief Sean Matgamna's joy be unbounded.

This particular piece of nonsense led some SO contacts to stop buying the paper. But worse was to come.

In SO 521 Matgamna lets off steam with a huge attack on Ken Livingstone, denouncing him as a 'pantomime candidate', unleashing a stream of bizarre epithets (Lord Redken, Cheesy Red, the candidate of the *Sun* and culminating with 'scumbag'); and calling on Tony Benn to stand against him.

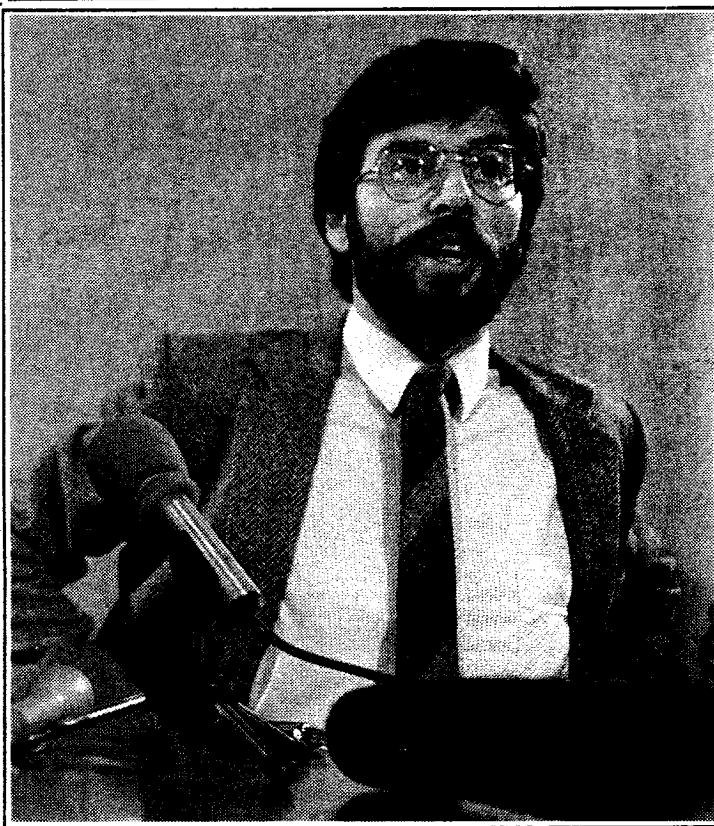
Of course Marxists have many disagreements with Ken Livingstone. Maybe Tony Benn would have been a better left candidate. But so what? Marxists don't support left Labour candidates against the right because we agree with them politically on everything, but because we support the fight of left against right to advance the struggle.

The main factor in the situation is that someone on the left has been prepared to get up and fight back against the new realists. The whole left should therefore stand behind Livingstone's campaign, while quite rightly making its criticisms of his policies.

But the bizarre antics by SO are not the end of the matter. SO supporters in the National Union of Students intend to take the NUS to court over its abolition of winter conference.

## Court intervention

The motivation for calling on the bourgeois courts to take action, overriding the independence of the NUS, is a simple factional one: NUS conferences are the highlights of the *Organiser* annual political routine. When paper sales and



contacts are up for grabs, who cares about political principle?

The present political gyrations of SO are just the latest of a series of eccentricities of this ex-Trotskyist grouping.

Others are, notably, denouncing the whole of the far left as 'irrationally bigoted against Israeli Jews' for backing the Palestinian struggle, and giving almost uncritical support to Boris Yeltsin.

*Socialist Organiser* is moving to the right politically at a rate of knots. Increasingly based on students, its leadership seeks to distinguish itself from all other left forces by the adoption of

bizarre sectarian badges of honour.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with open polemic in a Marxist paper; it educates and clarifies. But what is happening to a socialist tendency which denounces someone on the left as 'scumbag'? Especially when that denunciation comes from its best-known leader?

These kind of antics are the stock-in-trade of the international Spartacist tendency and other loonies. They reek of factional degeneration. *Socialist Organiser* is going into auto-destruct mode.

# 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



Liam MacUaid  
East London

## Referendum - a boost for De Klerk

Before writing his letter criticising SO's position on the all-white referendum in South Africa (SO April 17), Michael Wippell should have asked himself who has benefitted from the result - the liberation movement or De Klerk and the white establishment?

What is quite clear is that De Klerk, with an almost united white population behind him, is now in a stronger position in his negotiations with the ANC and the other organisations in CODESA.

Two days after De Klerk hailed his victory with the statement that this heralded the end of apartheid (again!), his government introduced a budget which maintained the differentials in pensions for the still officially designated four racial groups, with the black majority, as always, at the end of the queue.

A week after the referendum, the government announced that it was going to resume executions and tabled diluted proposals for power-sharing with the black majority. Far from moving toward the Constituent Assembly demanded by the liberation movement, the government team at the CODESA conference produced its latest proposals for an interim administration.

De Klerk was honouring his promises to the white electorate

that a future constitution would ensure that there would be no risk of a 'black dictator'. He also promised that the existing racist tricameral parliament might be kept as the upper house of a new parliament instead of the regionally elected senate previously proposed.

A real boost for De Klerk was the almost instantaneous abandonment of sanctions by international capitalism, despite the expressed request by Mandela and the ANC that sanctions should not be lifted until the constitutional issues had been settled. The culmination of this was the red carpet reception for De Klerk in Nigeria - a visit which took place without the approval of the ANC.

This is of particular significance because historically Nigeria has been one of black Africa's most implacable opponents of white minority rule. And Nigeria's president, Ibrahim Babangida, is the current president of the Organisation of African Unity.

Meanwhile the massacre of black people in the townships of Natal and the Rand continue - a useful weapon in the propaganda armour of the government - 'black organisations which cannot control their supporters are obviously not fit to take over the rule of the state.'

Charlie van Gelderen.  
Cambridge

## Ireland and the armed struggle

IT SEEMS to me that the real issue under discussion in the recent letters about Ireland is the role of the IRA's armed struggle.

That marxists and consistent anti-imperialists say they have the right to conduct an armed struggle against British imperialism is not in question. The debate is around the contribution this armed struggle, as presently conducted in Britain and Ireland, makes to the defeat of British imperialism.

My view is that it is making no contribution. The British Army loses more soldiers in training exercises than it loses to the IRA and while blowing up the City of London inconveniences capitalists, it will not bring British capitalism to the table to negotiate its withdrawal from Ireland.

Marx summed up its impact on British workers when writing of earlier bombs in central London, 'one can't expect London proletarians to allow themselves to be blown up in honour of the Fenian emissaries'.

The armed struggle is becoming ever more autonomous, more divorced from politics. It is the one thing every-body in the Republican Movement can

agree on, even if Gerry Adams is now saying that Sinn Fein 'understands' rather than supports the IRA campaign.

It is also the voice of a population excluded from political life, excluded from whole areas of the economy with no real industrial muscle - only the unionists are able to shut down the electricity supply, for example. Cheering a successful IRA action or providing a safe house is their way of retaliating against the British state.

### Working class

This is the politics of the powerless. The only force in Ireland with the power to defeat British imperialism is the working class. The task for revolutionaries in Ireland is to develop an organisation and a programme to lead this class, not to devise new ways of using Semtex.

Socialists in Britain have the duty to win the working class and its organisations to support the right of the Irish people to determine their own future.

There is a big contradiction between the armed struggle and the Republican Movement's avowed aim of a mass

movement against British imperialism. I think it would make for a more interesting debate in these pages to focus on this conflict rather than the merits of particular armed actions.

### Surrogate Kinnock

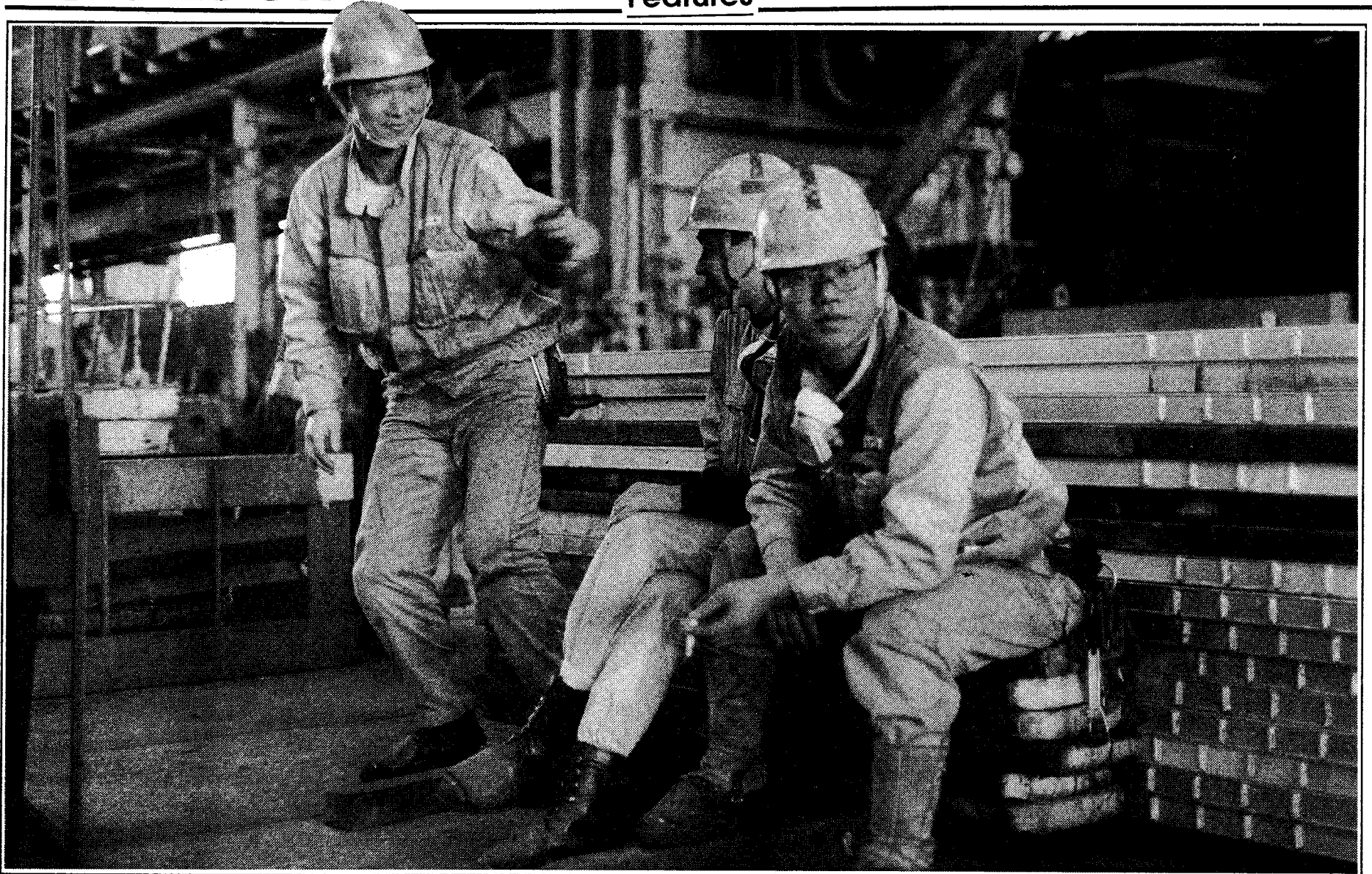
I WAS pleased with the latest edition of the newspaper and the analysis of Labour's election defeat.

Labour's performance proves that Kinnock and his policies have been completely discredited, and yet the labour bureaucracy is rushing, like lemmings, to appoint a 'surrogate Kinnock' as the new leader.

They don't seem to realise that changing a name at the top, rather than changing its policies, will offer an alternative to the Tories, will not win them any increased support.

Matt Gibbons  
York





Under the bosses' thumb - Japanese unions struggle for survival

## Japan Where unions are bosses' partners

PHOTOS: Dave Osler

Our Special Correspondent DAVE OSLER reports from Japan, where management lead the field in the use of tame union structures

IF YOU THINK you've got it tough being a trade union activist in Britain, imagine what it's like in Japan, the country where 'Japanisation' is not the latest employers' offensive but the daily lot of the working class.

Before bosses at the two neighbouring Sumitomo shipyards in Yokosuka established a company union in 1971, the independent Zennihon Zosenkai Roso organised the entire workforce. Now it's down to just 50 activists, with 1,250 in the so-called alternative.

### First union

As Sumitomo could not legally derecognise what became nicknamed the First Union, it systematically punished supporters with lower pay, eviction from company housing and denial of recreation; with Japanese companies owning all amateur sports facilities, militants don't even get a game of bowls on their day off.

For First Union diehards Takeo, Yoshiaki and Shin, also members of the 500,000 strong Japan Communist Party, 'it's a moral obligation for workers to fight constantly for justice. Many of our workmates respect our stand, but lack the courage

to join us.'

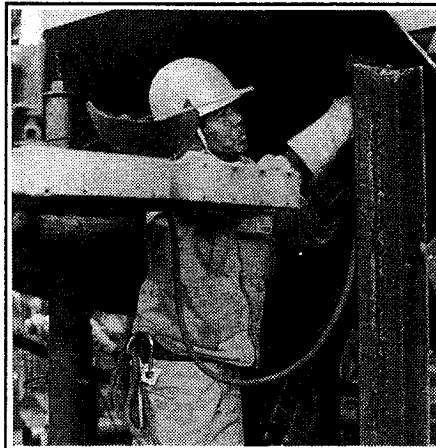
The company outfit ritually demands a decent rise, a bigger bonus and reduced working hours every year, but 'demanding' is where it stays. 'They have to pretend to reflect members' wishes, but in reality they ignore them. For management, it's great to have a union that accepts everything it says.'

The Japanese have an expression - '3K' - for jobs that are kitanai (dirty), kiken (dangerous), and kitsui (hard). This job, the men joke, is '3K plus Y', the last standing for yasui - low paid.

Basic pay for a forty hour week is £14,000 a year after 30 years' service. Japanese industrial workers command just two thirds the purchasing power of counterparts in the USA or western Germany.

Annualised hours average 2,300, around 500 above typical western levels. This excludes time spent in quality control (QC) circles, management pep talks where workers are forced to devise ways of working harder.

'Thanks to criticism of Japan abroad, the government wants the 1,800 hour year in place by 1994. Rengo (the mainstream union federation) has adopted



Lifetime jobs mean lifetime slavery in Japan

the demand. It's not going to happen.'

Japan's supposed 'lifetime employment' doesn't obtain in shipbuilding. The industry's workforce has been slashed from 361,000 in 1974 to around 126,000 today. At the two yards, it has fallen from 4,000 to 1,300 since 1979 without a whimper from the stooges.

Despite a national labour shortage, with 125 vacancies per 100 job-seekers, middle-aged unemployed industrial workers find it hard to get another job at a fair wage.

The First Union struck twice this year over pay, once for one hour and once for four. The effect on production was zero, but the outcome was symbolically significant. In a country where rises are graduated in hundredths of a per cent, the settlement was 5.05 per cent, with shipbuilding the only industry to breach the nationally

established 5 per cent benchmark.

This reflects bulging order books and rising profitability. Japan now builds 46 per cent of all new ships in the world. But with the economy in trouble, rises elsewhere were the lowest since 1980.

The steelworks at gritty working class Kawasaki, forty minutes train ride from Tokyo, is one of the most militant workplaces in Japan. The local authority has a Socialist/Communist majority.

### No alternative

But things aren't quite as good at the 3,500-employee Isuzu dumptruck plant. JCP activists Kenji, a warehouseman, and track worker Hisao work within the company union, because there's no alternative.

'We are ashamed to hear what western workers are told to 'learn' from the Japanese. Please tell British workers this - if they accept Japanese working practices, they'll end up with poorer living standards and worse working conditions. But if Japanese practices are introduced into western companies, workers will oppose them, won't they?'

At Isuzu, the 45 minute 'lunch break' routinely goes on QC. Saturday - theoretically a day off - is almost universally worked. Monthly basic for an average worker (meticulously defined as aged 35, two dependants and with the company for 13 years) is £1,000 a month pre-tax. Hino and Suzuki, apparently, are paid less.

Of the 18,000 workers in four major factories, 24 died on the job last year, with heart attacks due to the pace of work the biggest killer. Despite many accidents, only 72 people were given 'long term sick leave' - that is, more than a fortnight. This year has seen four deaths

already.

Workers are routinely moved from plant to plant, leaving family behind. The word Tan-shin-Funin ('transfer-separation') has entered the language.

Asking what the union does about all this prompts laughter. 'the union is the company's 'partner', it represents management's interests. Ordinary workers expect nothing from it.

'We campaign hard, but there hasn't been a single Communist union rep in the whole of the Isuzu group for 15 years. If you want to stand for a position, you have to be a workplace committee delegate. To stand as a delegate you need the permission of lower management.'

A JCP member with 100 per cent support in his section was recently elected unopposed; the bosses transferred him to another shop.

'We stand as union democracy candidates rather than party members, but management knows we are Communists and so do our workmates. The ballot isn't secret, so people who want to vote for us are often frightened to.'

The last strike was in 1950. Industrial action is now limited to unofficial overtime boycotts or refusal to participate in the theoretically voluntary QC. Occasionally, resolutions critical of the company union are carried. Two shops rejected this year's pay demand.

As they cannot even conceive of things getting better industrially, Kenji and Hisao look to parliamentary solutions. The JCP has launched a major labour legislation reform campaign under the slogan, 'lives worthy of human beings'. All hopes are pinned onto the eventual emergence of an anti-LDP coalition that can be pressurised into taking up some of the demands.



## CPSA

# Left activists hope for breakthrough

By Dave Osler

Civil service union CPSA enters its conference in Brighton this week with the right wing leadership accused of trying to rig elections for the union leadership and set to push a low pay settlement with substantial strings, including the end of national bargaining.

The row over the conduct of elections for the union's executive and top three jobs has now exploded into the public domain. The 'National Moderate Group' are accused of using their supporters at the union's HQ to provide ballot numbers in advance, giving their election campaign an advantage over both the Kinnockite 'Broad Left '84' group and the Militant-dominated Broad Left.

Members had not been told by Easter weekend exactly how much the government is offering in current talks. Now it has been announced that the executive are recommending a deal of just over 4 per cent, despite the rejection of a 4.5 per cent deal by the executive of the supervisory and ancillary workers' union

NUCPS.

NUCPS is likely to call for industrial action.

But CPSA's leadership may try to put the package to a national ballot during the conference period, when many activists will be away from their workplaces.

The threat of derecognition hangs over many departments and semi-privatised 'agencies'. In the Employment Service, some managers are now insisting that they are not legally obliged to consult unions on terms and conditions and have stopped doing so. Emergency motions are likely.

Another major issue will be the defeat of year-long strikes over claimant assaults on staff at open-plan dole offices at Forest Hill and Marylebone in London. The right is arguing they were qualified successes, with minimal concessions at some offices. But left wingers point to the lack of any serious coordinated campaign to win the disputes.

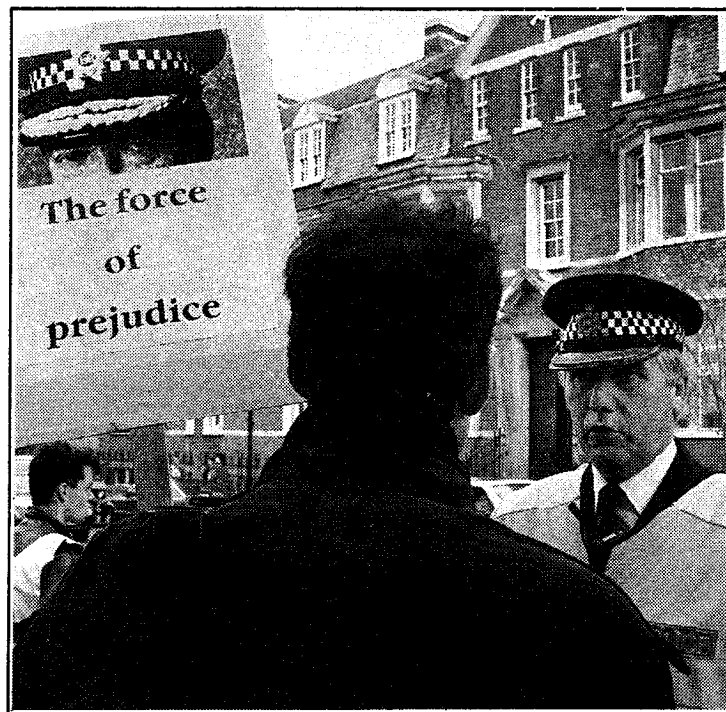
The CPSA ballot for a new General Secretary, with a close race in prospect between Militant supporter John Macreadie and right winger

Barry Reamsbottom, is one of those affected by the current malpractice scandal.

The hard left hopes the collapse of the Kinnockite breakaway Broad Left '84 faction's 'wait for Labour' argument will tip the balance towards them.

Socialist Caucus, with members both in and out of the Militant-controlled Broad Left, is organising many fringe meetings, with platforms including the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee and the Livingstone/Grant campaign.

PHOTO: Paul Mattson



OutRage! giving cops a hard a hard time in Islington

## OutRage! ditch autonomy

By Sam Inman

YET ANOTHER lesbian and gay group, this time the high profile OutRage! activist group, has ditched its commitment to lesbian and gay autonomy.

It is part of a long-term trend in the lesbian and gay movement away from autonomous self-organisation, towards lumping all 'deviant' sexualities together in the same basket. Under the all-embracing 'queer' label, lesbians and gay men now find themselves sharing what used to be their own political space with bisexuals, trans-sexuals, transvestites, sado-masochists, even 'gay-identified' straights...

At the recent OutRage! meeting that took the decision, someone - who was clearly worried about the proposal - asked if it meant that 'paedophiles' were to be included in the shopping list. Raising this, they were told, was being 'devisive'.

What relevance OutRage! may have had for lesbians and gay men at one time, is now disappearing fast. Under the guise of radical queerness, the reality of such 'identity' politics serves only to further depoliticise lesbian and gay communities.

Autonomous self-organisation is not an added luxury for building a lesbian and gay liberation movement. It is an essential prerequisite. If 'gay-identified' straights are to be allowed into lesbian and gay groups, why not allow

'women-identified' men into women's groups? Or 'black-identified' whites into black groups?

Why not, *Socialist Worker* may say. Well, in that case why not allow 'worker-identified' bosses to represent trades unions? Self-organisation of the oppressed is just as important as class-independence for workers.

In ignoring this, OutRage! have just signed away any right to say that they are the leaders of the lesbian and gay struggle. It is likely that the group will now start to fall apart through the pressures of its own internal contradictions. Nobody is arguing that people who are not lesbian or gay cannot support the liberation struggle - but it has to be lesbians and gay men who define what that struggle is.

### For Outrights! victory

LESBIAN AND GAY activists in Brighton intend to launch *Outrights!*, a manifesto for lesbian and gay liberation, on 18 May as part of the town's Pride '92 celebrations.

The aim of the manifesto is to 'reassert our basic rights and freedoms as a central issue of concern for the lesbian and gay communities'. *Outrights!* covers lesbian and gay issues in education, the law, the police, employment, health and housing. It also covers parenting and reproductive rights, young people, the arts, media and community.

## Student new realism wins the day

By Andrew Berry

This year's NUS conference again demonstrated the bankruptcy of the SWP and Socialist Organiser's methods in fighting the NOLS leadership.

Although the Socialist Organiser-dominated Left Unity candidate for President Janine Booth came very close to beating Lorna Fitzsimmons, the NOLS contender, they failed to win a single full-time position on the NEC.

The one victory of the weekend was the passing of the position of Black Officer into the constitution. This post has been fought for by black students for a long time and marks a step forward in the recognition of the right of oppressed groups to autonomy within the student movement.

However, the Conference was once again notable for the completely undemocratic manoeuvres of the NOLS leadership. This year, conference was artificially lengthened to push through a witch-hunting vote of no confidence in three left members of the NEC.

Left Unity's court action against the decision to abolish Winter Conference is continuing, despite criticism from both the right and the left for using the bourgeois courts.

Neither Left Unity nor SWSS can achieve the unity of the left necessary to defeat NOLS. What is needed is a genuine Broad Left committed not just to electoral success at conference but, more importantly, to building a real base in the colleges to recreate a fighting and democratic student union.

## Murray Bookchin tours Britain

MURRAY BOOKCHIN, seen as one of the main spokespeople on the left of the US Green movement, will be in Britain during National Environment Week (16-24 May) for a speaking tour.

While many *SO* readers may be unfamiliar with Bookchin's ideas and work, his is a refreshing voice from a country that has spawned some of the most reactionary ecological politics anywhere.

When leading members of the radical Earth First! activist group calling themselves 'deep

ecologists' - began talking of AIDS and famine as nature's just revenge, Bookchin fiercely took the debate up, pioneering his ideas about 'social ecology' - incorporating the state, class, race and gender into ecological philosophy and politics.

With the pathetically watered-down Earth Summit taking place in June, with every sign that the world's ecological crisis is worsening day by day, and with a Green Party in Britain that has lurched rightwards into virtual oblivion, socialists cannot afford to be ignorant about left ecological politics. Getting

along to one of the Bookchin meetings would be a useful introduction to the debates.

● 12 May: Cambridge University, Lady Mitchell Hall, 7.30pm. Donations.

● 14 May: Bristol University Students' Union, 7.30pm. Donations.

● 18 May: Leeds University, Rupert Beckett Lecture Theatre, New Arts Block, 7.30pm. Donations.

● 21 May: London, St James's Piccadilly, 7.30pm. 5/2.50 concs.

More information from Gideon Kossoff on 081 802 3932.

## Bringing Malcolm X to Brixton

By Jane Kelly

AN AUDIENCE of over 500, nearly all young and 95 per cent black, listened to Dr Manning Marable talk for an hour and a half about the life and ideas of Malcolm X in Brixton on May 8th.

Clearly inspired by his enthusiastic audience Marable spoke of 'brother Malcolm's' political evolution from the conservative black nationalism of the Nation of Islam to the revolutionary black nationalism and socialist ideas of the last three years before his assassination in 1965.

In writing a new biography of the black revolutionary leader, Marable has had access to FBI files on Malcolm X, proving that they followed his every move,

opened and copied his every letter, but now ironically providing the most prodigious source of information on his life. Due to be published this summer, it promises to be a much more serious and socialist account than previous biographies.

The biggest cheer of the night however, came when Marable, speaking of Malcolm X's recognition of the need to unite all the oppressed, reminded the men in the audience of the right of women to take their place in the leadership of the black movement.

He finished with a call to continue the struggle; 'No power gives way without a fight,' he said, 'Malcolm X would not want to be remembered as an icon. Climb on his shoulders and we will win.'

### One year on strike

No victimisations or sackings  
March to support Camden social workers

Saturday 23 May

Assemble 12.30pm Camden Town Hall,  
Judd St WC1

Called by NALGO Metropolitan District



Published fortnightly

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No 21

May 16, 1992

# socialist OUTLOOK

## One year on: still going strong!

# The left needs Socialist Outlook!



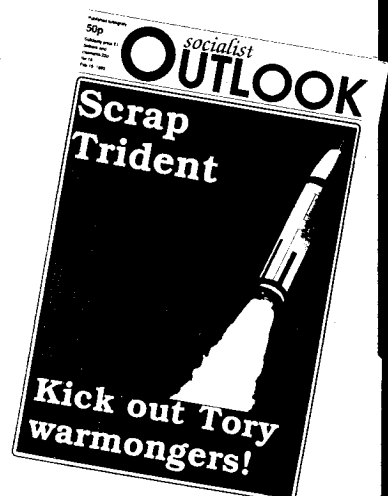
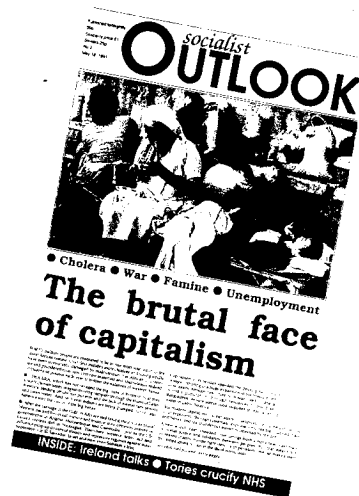
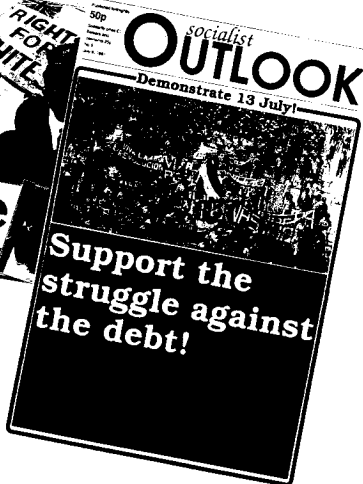
SOCIALIST OUTLOOK in its newspaper format was launched on May Day 1991. Since then we think it has become the best newspaper on the left.

We went from a monthly magazine to a newspaper at the end of the Gulf war. Our experience of producing newspaper-format broadsheets during the war had shown that we could reach many more readers with a campaigning newspaper style.

We started out with a front page on the struggle of the Kurdish people, denouncing the idea that the imperialists would defend them from Saddam Hussein. We were right. Since then the Kurdish people in Iraq have been the victims of new attacks by Saddam, and of air raids from Turkey while the West stood back and watched.

From the start Socialist Outlook campaigned against the baneful effects of Kinnockism in the Labour Party, and new realism in the unions. We backed the campaign to unshackle the unions launched by the Socialist Movement trade union committee, and carried detailed analysis of the effects of the bosses' offensive through 'Japanisation' and other new management techniques.

The summer of 1991 saw the offensive of the Milosevic Serbian regime against Croatia, and then in August the attempted Stalinist coup in the USSR. Socialist Outlook was second to none in analysing these events.



The rise of extreme right organisations in Europe, and the struggle against racism and fascism in Britain has been a constant focus of the paper. We have tried to make the paper a platform for the movements of the oppressed – black people, women, lesbians and gay men.

During the year of our existence we have constantly tried to be a paper of analysis, and not just *reportage* or simple-minded sloganising. In a period of dramatic world events, and the so-called 'crisis of socialism', the left needs not just a guide to action, but a political vision of a democratic socialist future.

Overall we think the paper has been a substantial achievement. But it is no secret that its production has been at the limit of our resources, especially financial resources. We have had to miss a couple of issues because of lack of cash. No left paper covers its costs through sales; whether you pay 40p or 90p for a left newspaper, it is being heavily subsidised by its supporters – and we are no different.

In the past few months our debts have accumulated, so we have made two decisions. First, we are going to continue. Second, we are going to put our finances in order and not allow our debts to overwhelm us; and that means that if we don't have the cash, we won't produce the paper.

The present financial situation is not the fault of our sellers. Many of them have done wonders. And many of our readers who are not in organised supporters' groups have been exceedingly generous. But still we need more sustaining regular cash from our supporters and readers.

So we want all our readers to do two things. First, send us a donation, no matter how small, *now*. Second, fill in a bankers' order to our 300 Club, using the form below. In the post-election situation the left needs Socialist Outlook more than ever. Now it's up to you.

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