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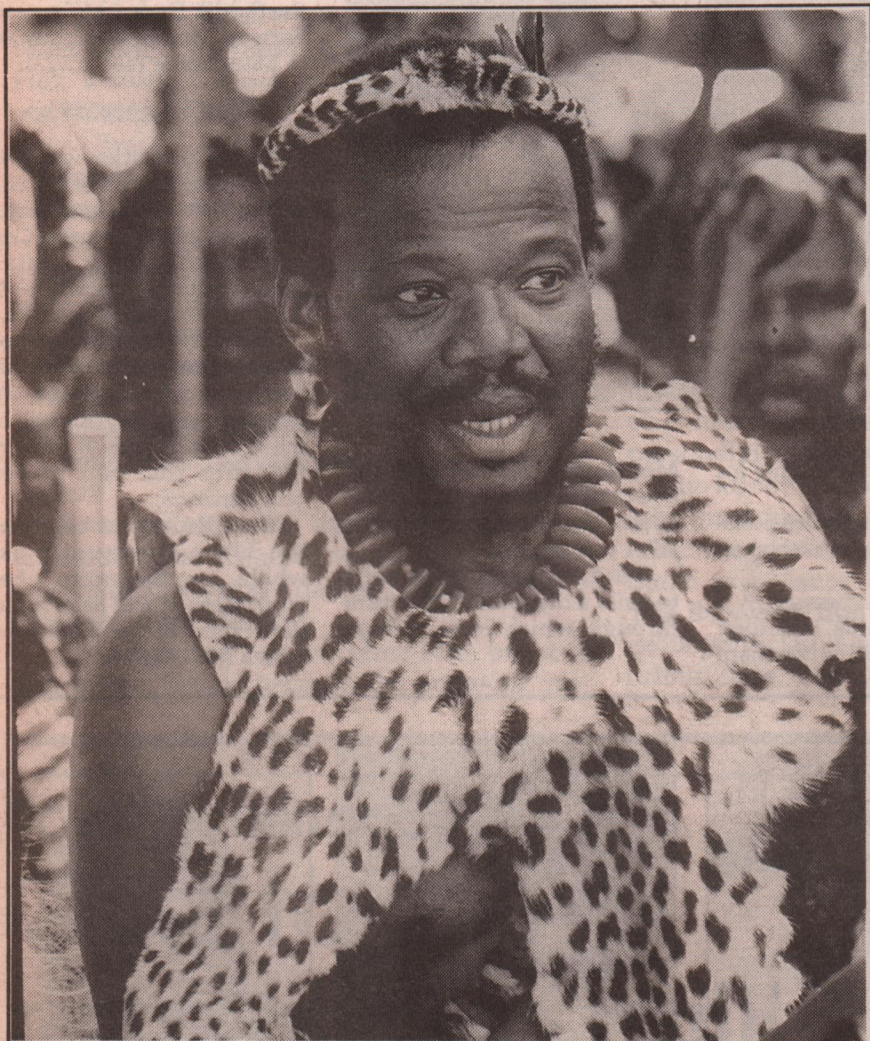
Strikers and claimants 25p

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socialist OUTLOOK

State terror brings slaughter in Boipatong



Buthelezi - leader of Inkatha thugs



Nelson Mandela

No peace with white supremacy

THE BOIPATONG massacre last week show the stark reality facing the black masses of South Africa. De Klerk's regime has been trying to force a settlement with the carrot and the stick - the carrot of a share in power for the black middle class, the stick of violent repression.

The police and army have worked hand-in-glove with Zulu leader Buthelezi's reactionary Inkatha movement in murder and mayhem in the townships. The aim is to demoralise and intimidate the militants; to make them think there is no option but to negotiate a

lousy deal. That lousy deal with enshrine the veto of the white minority.

The Boipatong massacre was the regime's response to the strike of one million black workers last Tuesday. Because of the massacre Nelson Mandela had no option but to call off the Codesa peace talks.

But the struggle now faces a turning point. At the base of the ANC there is a determination to fight. Either there will be a mass mobilisation to defeat the racists and their Inkatha accomplices; or state terrorism will demoralise the freedom movement and it will slide toward defeat.

300 rally to Anti-Racist Alliance convention

By Rachel Newton

MORE THAN 300 anti racist and labour movement activists, around a quarter of whom were black, packed the ARA's first convention on 13 June.

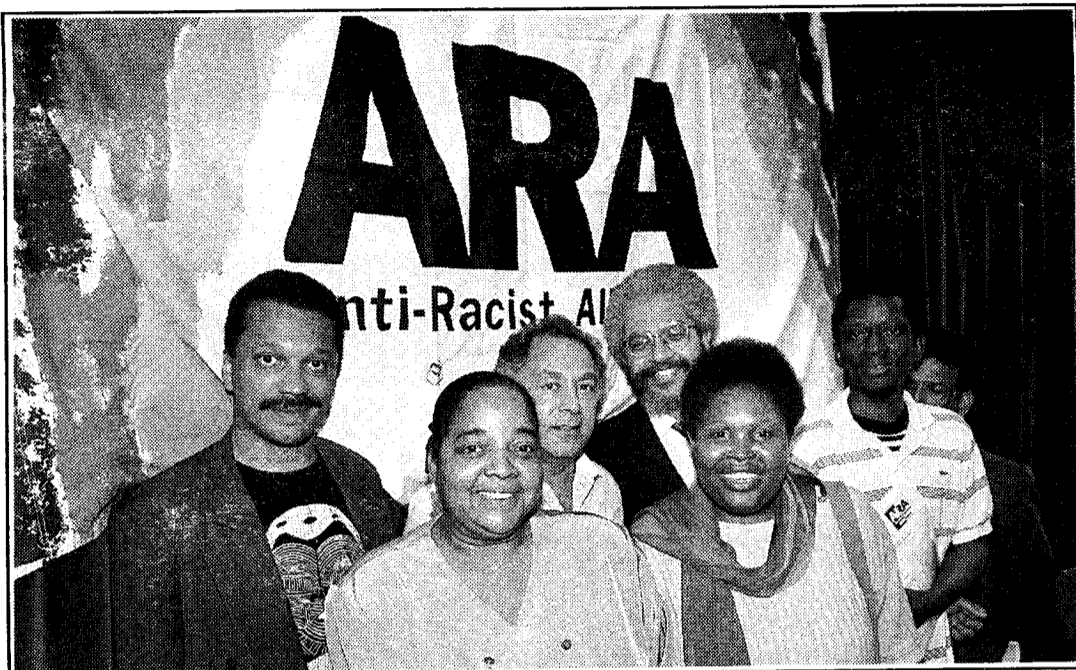
The event was clearly a great success, proving the ARA's ability to attract broad forces. Ken Livingstone MP and Manning Marable, a leading black US academic, were among a host of speakers.

Anti-racist activists from Germany and Belgium gave the event a strongly European character, describing the alarming increase of state racism and the growth of the far right in their countries.

Manning Marable drew on US experience to stress the necessity for a democratic anti-racist movement with a grassroots base and real links with the community.

Pointing to Jessie Jackson's 'Rainbow Coalition', he warned against the top-heavy model, relying solely on national figures in the public eye.

Drawing out clear links between race and class in the anti-



MSF delegation to ARA convention

racist struggle, Marable pointed to the recent Los Angeles riots as an example.

The convention was billed as an opportunity for anti-racists to exchange ideas and experiences and discuss the way forward for the movement. But

there was in fact little time for discussion.

Important issues were nonetheless raised in a workshop on racist attacks.

Concern was expressed by a number of militants, including representatives of the Newham

Monitoring Project and the Southall Monitoring Group, about the direction that the ARA was taking.

Delegates stressed the need to build a democratic structure through which local groups

can participate on a national level.

And that the ARA should lend active support to existing black and anti-racist groups, respecting their autonomy.

One of the most positive points to emerge from the convention was the overwhelming interest and support shown for the Siddik Dada/ Mohammed Sarwar Memorial Committee in Manchester (see SO 23).

Demonstration

A clear indication was given by members of the ARA committee that the demonstration called by the Memorial Committee for 22 August would be made a national priority for the ARA in the coming months.

The convention was a positive step forward, but despite being the first black-led anti-racist movement, ARA still has many tests to pass. It must not fall into the trap of self-proclamation.

The ARA neither represents the black community as a whole, nor the entire labour movement. It will have to earn the respect of the coalition on which it is based.

Step up fund drive!

Socialist Outlook supporters have launched a £7000 development fund, to be completed by next November. The fund has two objectives – to stabilise the fortnightly production of the paper, and to buy new equipment.

However, in a busy political period our supporters have not responded as quickly as we hoped – only £260 to date! Achieving the fund by November means starting early, not leaving it all to the last moment.

When the newspaper was launched we relied heavily on the equipment we got six years ago to produce a monthly magazine. Much of that equipment is wearing out and becoming unreliable.

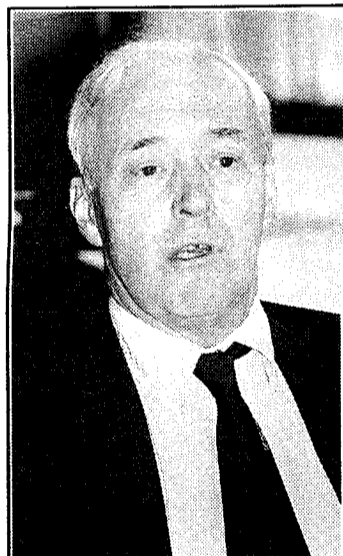
More up-to-date equipment will make a substantial contribution to a more attractive and better laid-out paper.

It is vital that supporters' groups get going on the fund, to make sure we have a substantial sum before people go off on holiday.

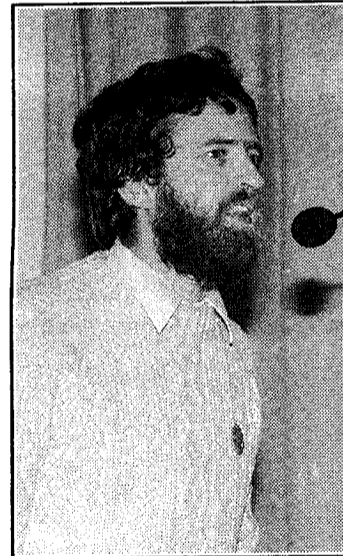
We have entered a period of rapid political changes, domestically and internationally. The strikes in Germany, the uprising in Los Angeles and other US cities, and the turmoil in eastern Europe are indicators of the period we are entering.

At home the left is undergoing rapid changes as a result of Labour's electoral defeat. In this period the need for marxist ideas is greater than ever. Over the past few months our sales and subs have been going up. Help us to continue to go forward.

Send all donations to: Socialist Outlook Fund, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.



Benn



Corbyn

Labour Left conference

Two steps forward, one step back

NEARLY 600 people attended the Campaign Group's Conference of the Labour Left on Saturday June 20, in Leeds.

Tony Benn, Dawn Primarolo, Audrey Wise, Ken Livingstone, Jeremy Corbyn, Bernie Grant and Bob Cryer among other Campaign Group MPs were there, and addressed the conference as well as listening to the points raised by the participants.

A basic resolution setting up a working group for broadening the Campaign Group into extra-parliamentary areas was overwhelmingly passed despite initial reluctance from some Campaign Group MPs to commit themselves to such a

venture.

But, after a very inadequate discussion, the only resolution put to the conference around which to discuss a minimum political basis for a broader regroupment of the left at a later date, beyond but including the Labour Left, was defeated by a two to one vote.

This missed opportunity comes at a time when the left faces a situation unprecedented since the war – with strikes at an all time low, a serious election defeat and the Tories and the employers set to step up their offensive.

At the same time the present window of opportunity to more effectively organise the left in the post-election situation may not last for long. The idea that

this can be achieved without defining the key political issues posed at this time and organising around them is a false one.

This conference however, is a step towards the formation of a united left current inside the Labour Party. Throughout the day there was a very cooperative and friendly mood, with little of the sectarian bickering that has been a blight on the British left for so long.

Whilst not being over-optimistic, the moves taken at this conference could be the start of some positive developments on the left in Britain, particularly if the SMTUC conference on July 18th/19th and the Conference of the Left in October have positive outcomes. We shall have to wait and see.

The rotten stench of decay

As the 20 July Labour leadership election approaches, more and more details are being revealed about in-fighting in the highest councils of the party.

Supporters of John Smith, it appears, hatched a plot to oust Neil Kinnock before the general election. Unfortunately their man wouldn't play ball.

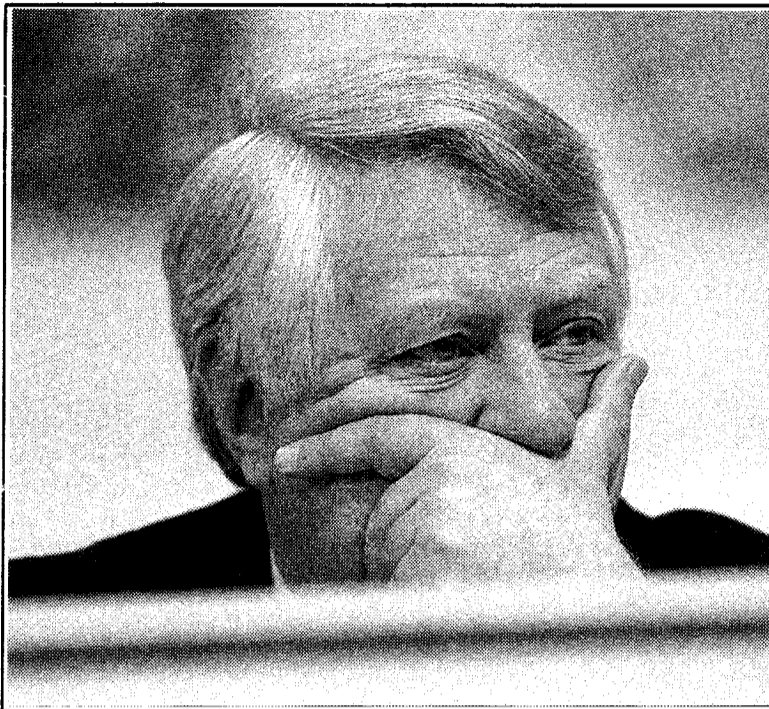
At the same time, relations between John Smith and Kinnock broke down and the two hardly spoke to each other. Kinnock's press secretary Julie Hall wouldn't speak to his chief of staff Charles Clarke or Communications Director David Hill.

Cliques inside the top apparatus plotted against one another in a bewildering array of personal animosities. Other star players in the soap opera included Patricia Hewitt and Peter Mandelson.

There is no explanation for this pantomime in the sphere of political differences. All these people adhered to the same Kinnockite, new realist, advertising agency school of politics.

What really caused the conflicts was the realisation that Kinnock was a no-hoper and that there was a grave danger of Labour being defeated in the election.

The in-fighting has its comic side, but it is also tragic. Tragic because the hopes of mil-



Getting a whiff? Hopeless Roy Hattersley

lions of working people became the playthings of conflicting advertising strategies and the personal rivalries of a bunch of yuppie twerps.

This idiocy speaks volumes about what has happened to the Labour Party. When the left fought against Hugh Gaitskell over the H-Bomb and Clause 4, in the late '50s and early '60s, they were fighting against a serious bourgeois politician. Gaitskell was an agent of the ruling class, but at least he had a coherent

social democratic philosophy.

Kinnock and Smith by comparison are light-weights bereft of ideas. This is not because of personal capabilities, of lack of them. Rather it is because of the total collapse of right-wing social democracy before Thatcherite pro-market ideology.

Ever since Kinnock was elected in 1983 Labour has run scared before the Tories. The Policy Review produced a watered-down Toryism, but nothing in the way of a serious alternative plan for governing Britain.

In the leadership election nothing has changed. Gould's appeal for 'radical ideas' has no substance whatever. Adjectives like 'radical' and 'bold' are just so much hot-air from the leadership hopefuls.

In this situation the Labour left just has to tell the truth. The advertising people and spin-doctors are overpaid court jesters without two ideas to rub together. The 20 July coronation of John Smith will be a hollow and pathetic ceremony. And

without a fight back by the left, the empty space where the party's brain ought to be will be filled, before the next election, by ever-more-rightwing garbage about coalitions with the Liberals and the philosophy of the market.

If that happens, the road to further decay of the party and heavy membership losses will be wide open. Only the left can put an end to the 'politics as advertising technique' soap opera.

Royal comings and goings... Grist to the republican mill!

By Geoff Ryan

"A Royal wedding we
adore,
The pomp and panoply of
yore,
We'd just as soon head-
line, of course,
A Royal scandalous
divorce."

(Leon Rosselson, "Song
of the Free Press").

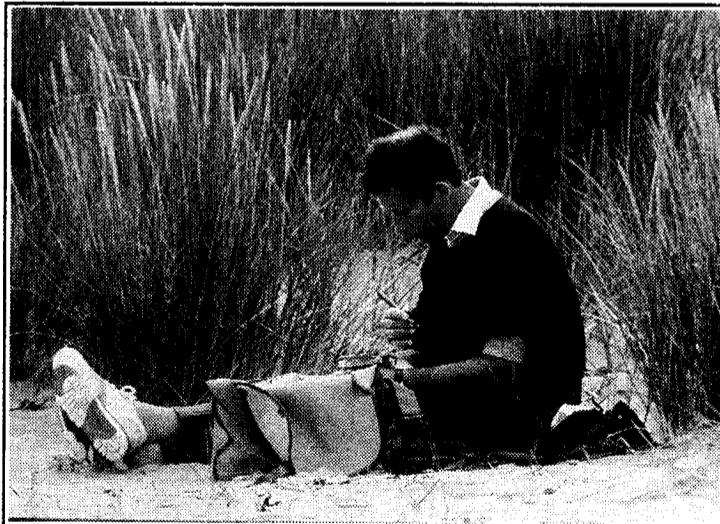
THE PAST FEW weeks have seen a frenzied attempt by sections of the British press to underline the accuracy of Leon Rosselson's comments.

Other passages from the song also ring remarkably true. Speculation on the state of the Wales' marriage, pictures of Diana in tears, reports of suicide attempts and bulimia nervosa all *Brighten up the breakfast food*.

The nauseating hypocrisy of Andrew Neill (not so amused by stories of his affair with Pamela Bordes) is rivalled only by the sanctimonious condemnations of others who have never hesitated about *prying into privacy and dipping into dustbins*.

Their indignation about revelations concerning Charles and Diana has never prevented these same hacks spreading lies about Arthur Scargill, denouncing strikes (*except in Poland*) and *trendy lefty loonies*, or stoking up racism, xenophobia and homophobia.

When he was alive these *guardians of the national interest* covered up for



Already turned into a frog?

every bit of Robert Maxwell's dirty dealings. Only after his death do they feel able to expose him as a crook. After all, Maxwell was one of them and - unlike most victims of media vilification - could afford litigation.

Their new found enthusiasm for privacy has more to do with *Down with all those rival bleeders, Trying to lure away our readers* than any concern for morality. They wax lyrical about newspaper ethics but still publish the same stories. After all, the main priority is "to give a healthy boost to sales".

The relationship between the media and the Royals has hardly been 'private' in the past. We have all been subjected, ad nauseam, to Royal investitures, jubilees, marriages and births etc.



The Royals never complained about 'privacy' when their every deed was used to increase their popularity.



Now the fairy tale is over

If the Prince now turns out to be a frog they have only themselves to blame. What worries them is not their privacy - but their survival.

The salacious gossip about the Wales's love life, hard on the heels of Fergie and Andy's rift, has - whatever the intentions - opened up a debate on whether the Queen should start paying taxes.

The right of Charles to benefit from anyone dying intestate in the Duchy of Lancaster is queried. The future of the monarchy has even been called into question. Good!

Socialists can only welcome this rise of Republican sentiment. It is a disgrace that Labour leaderships have

consistently supported the reactionary institution of monarchy.

The notion that a particular family has the right to own and control vast amounts of wealth because of an accident of birth is the opposite of socialist ideas and ideals.

Despite its 'constitutional' nature the monarchy still has enormous formal powers. In theory, at least, the monarch appoints the Prime Minister and asks him or her to form a government. MPs have to swear allegiance to the monarch.

300 years after the start of the Civil War against Charles 1st we have to ensure there is no throne for his namesake to occupy.

NALGO Conference Delegates vote for action, left falls to pieces

By Doug Thorpe,
Islington NALGO

The creation of new public sector union UNISON moved a step closer as conferences of local government union NALGO and health workers' union COHSE joined public employees in NUPE to vote for merger.

The amalgamation will now go to a ballot of the three unions' members in the autumn.

The debate at NALGO conference was marked by the use of heavy-handed tactics by the union bureaucracy, stifling debate over the draft rules of the new union. This, combined with divisions on the left, do not bode well for the future.

But high points of the week

included the Local Government Group's decision to call a special national meeting around fighting privatisation.

They are also launching a series of national and regional events in a campaign against compulsory competitive tendering.

Anti-union laws

And delegates also voted to affiliate to the 'Unshackle the Unions' campaign and to support those who challenge Tory anti-union laws.

Socialist Outlook supporters played a prominent role in winning delegates' support. Both decisions overturned recommendations from the union executive.

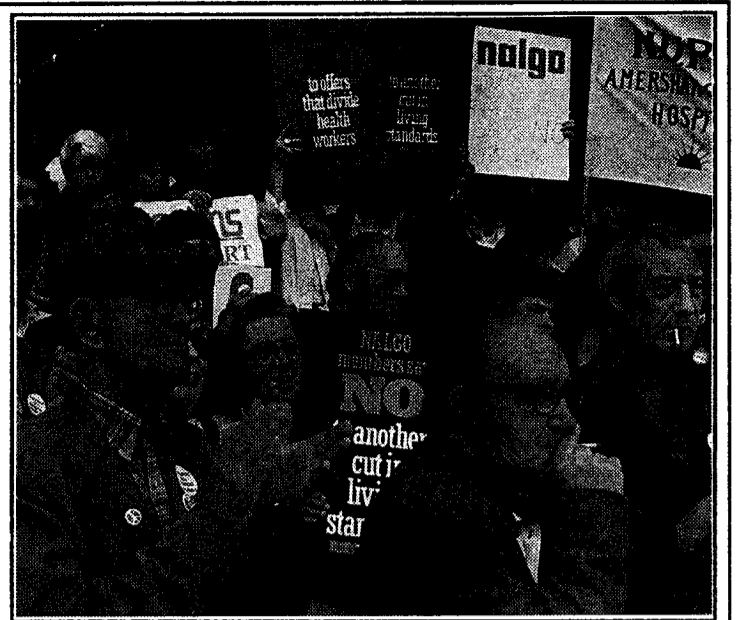
Pro-choice activists also had a high profile, with women successfully picketing and

taking over anti-abortion meetings, collecting £300 for the National Abortion Campaign in the process.

But despite progressive policy decisions, the left was more divided than ever. The SWP-controlled Broad Left was almost invisible, taking no part in the major debates, including the crucial discussion on merger.

They withdrew a motion calling for affiliation to the Anti Nazi League, making the debate on anti-racism a low key affair.

Though no clear contender emerged to organise the left, a number of initiatives showed promise. Islington NALGO are calling a conference on privatisation and a number of branch activists in the Metropolitan District are beginning to coordinate their



NALGO left needs to get its act together to face UNISON challenge

efforts.

Whether the Campaign for a Democratic and Fighting Public Services Union can provide a national focus will depend on whether it can take a clear position on the merger ballot without fragmenting.

Newham

The overriding priority for the left over the coming weeks is to build support for the Newham branch. The whole branch is balloting to take action in support of Poll Tax and Housing Benefit strikers. The

strikers have been threatened with the sack if they don't return to work.

The NALGO executive has recognised that its strategy of using strikes by key workers on full pay is at stake. It is now offering the whole branch strike pay equivalent to full take-home pay.

This is a go-for-bust attempt, exposing the problems of relying on a high level of strike pay to groups of workers, while isolating them by taking no regional or national action.

Labour opts out of schools struggle

By Richard Hatcher

Is the battle over opting-out already lost? The Labour leadership says yes.

On 10 June Jack Straw and David Blunkett, Labour's spokespersons on education and local government, issued an 'advice note' urging Labour Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to cooperate with opted-out schools.

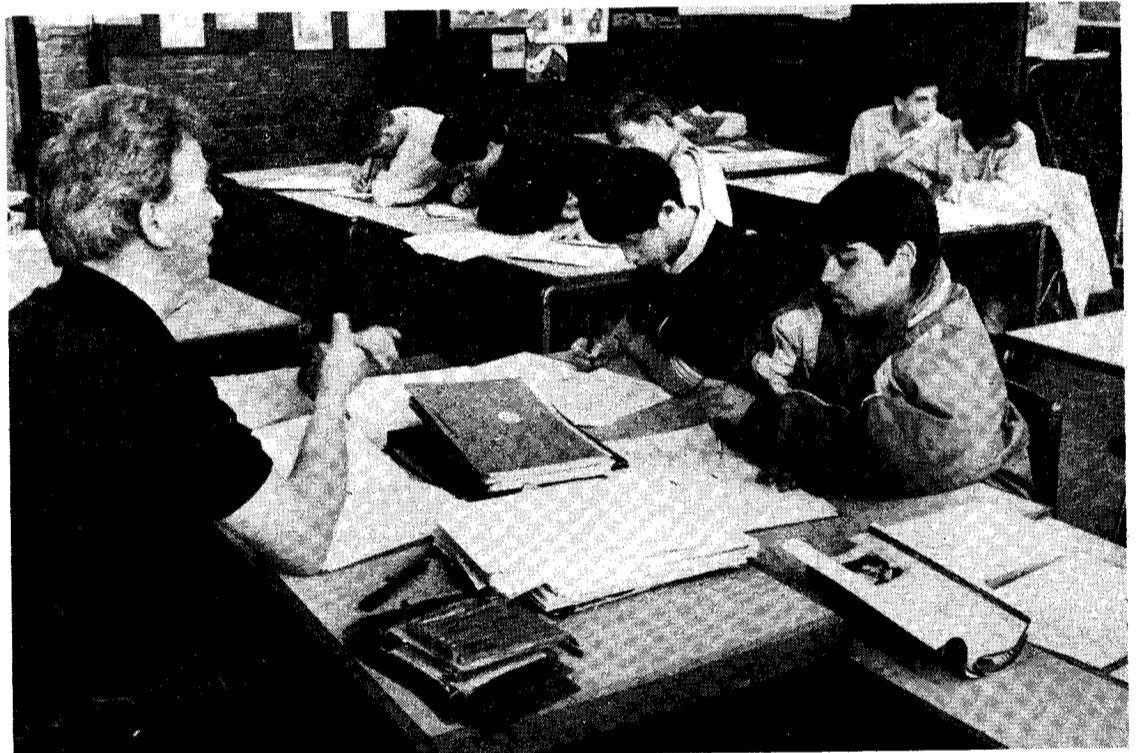
At the same time as they threw in the towel, in a community centre in Handsworth, Birmingham governors, parents and local leaders of the teachers' unions NUT and NAS/ UWT were meeting with councillors and Labour activists. It was the launch of a campaign to stop a local secondary school opting out.

That scene will be repeated all over the country, and many of those campaigns will win, just as some already have. One of the main deterrents against opting-out, for parents and governors, is the fear that they will lose all the support that LEAs provide in numerous ways.

Green light

The Labour leadership's retreat gives them the green light to opt-out, safe in the knowledge that they will continue to be supported by the LEA they are undermining.

Why has the Labour leadership abandoned its opposition to opting-out? It is yet another application of the logic of accepting the Tory agenda for education, rather than risk supporting



any struggle against it.

There is a more specific reason too. It's part of a change in the role of Labour councils - away from the politics of traditional municipal Labourism towards the politics of the market.

Straw and Blunkett spell it out: Labour authorities should sell their services to all schools, not just opted-out schools but private schools too. They reflect the interests of the new technocrats in the town halls whose aim is maximising income for the council.

They are unencumbered by social priorities, concentrating on their business-orientated urban regeneration strategy. Birmingham, with its high-cost prestige projects and its low spending on education, is a prime example.

Bad timing

Labour's opting-out of the struggle against opting-out couldn't come at a more inappropriate time. The battle to keep local authority schools is far from lost. So far only 250 schools out of 25,000 have opted-out despite substantial bribes.

A wave of attempted opt-outs will undoubtedly take place in the autumn. Its size will depend on the new funding arrangements to be announced in a White Paper later in the summer.

But fears that everyone will opt-out are mistaken. There is still a strong attachment among governors, parents and heads to the LEA system. And it is doubtful whether the government wants every school to opt-out.

Major's announcement on 16 June of plans to 'intervene' in failing schools

is a tacit admission of this. A much more likely aim is around 20 per cent of secondary schools, enough to create a new selective system.

In that context, there is everything left to fight for. The left should ignore any irresponsible talk of 'opting-out from the left' and prepare now to campaign. It should press Labour councils to retain their commitment to cutting off services to opted-out schools as an effective deterrent to others.

Why you should say no to opting-out

● Opting-out will cut the school off from the benefits that the LEA provides - ranging from support services and in-service provision to administrative back-up and bulk purchasing.

● Opting-out means extra money, but:

- most of it will go on services that the LEA used to provide
- any gains are at the expense of other local schools
- it's only a short term bribe which will dry up soon

● Opting-out undermines local democracy.

instead of a measure of control by the community through elected councillors and Labour Party governors, the school would be run by a governing body dominated by non-elected, so-called 'first governors', answerable only to the Secretary of State.

● Opting-out will undermine trade union rights and conditions.

Many schools will seize the opportunity to get maintenance work done on the cheap, undercutting union rates at the expense of local authority direct labour. Teachers will become more vulnerable to arbitrary management freed from the constraints of local authority agreements.

● opting out is the first step to selection.

For some schools, their aim is to become selective schools. For many more, selection will creep in by the back door.

Prepare now to campaign

● Monitor schools - identify the ones at risk

Build up an LEA-wide picture of which heads and governing bodies are considering opting-out.

● Organise a joint union response

United action between the NUT and the NAS/ UWT is essential to prepare their members. The teachers' unions also need to liaise with non-teaching unions whose members' jobs may be put at risk by opting-out.

● Get the Labour Party organised

Local Labour Parties need to coordinate their governors, on a branch, constituency and district level, with regular LEA-wide governors' meetings and local working groups.

Bosses ride roughshod over unions

As the Tory anti-union offensive hots up in the aftermath of the election, support has been growing for the Unshackle the Unions conference. Patrick Baker spoke to COLIN CHRISTOPHER, General Secretary of the furniture and timber workers' union, FTAT. Christopher has been a leading supporter of the campaign since its inception, participating in the press launch with miners' leader Arthur Scargill.

How have the anti-union laws affected FTAT's work, organising in the furniture industry?

Absolutely dramatically. The freedom to strike within the law is now almost non-existent.

But how long will workers bow to this exploitation? How long will they allow employers to ride roughshod over them?

The most important effect has been the ability of employers to withdraw trade union recognition, which is vital to any union's ability to organise. What we're facing now isn't just the withdrawal of existing recognition, but the setting up of non-union workplaces.

In many greenfield sites, we are now forced to recruit from the outside. It's not surprising—why should employers choose



to allow unions?

Some figures in the labour movement have recently been calling for an end to the links between the Labour Party and the unions. What's your view?

This point has to be pursued vigorously. Any break in those links – or even a dis-

tancing between the two – would be disastrous.

It saddens me that the very character of the Labour Party is being threatened. On whose authority are these leading politicians floating this idea?

As soon as they did so, it was picked up by the gutter tabloids, and they are now calling the tune. All of this without any serious debate or analysis. If the architects of this campaign are allowed to get it off the ground, it will be a disaster for the labour movement.

This isn't just on the level of abstract ideas. Speaking to a meeting of pensioners the other day, they were saying 'We need Labour and the unions to represent our interests'.

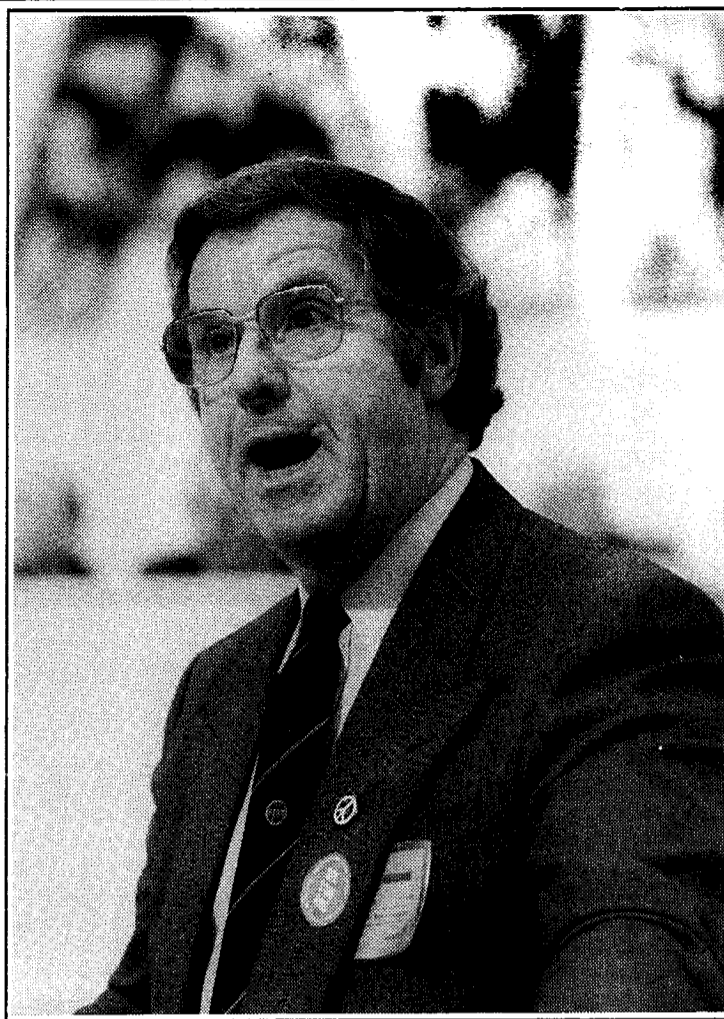
What role will the Maastricht treaty play for unions? Would the Social Charter be a step forward?

Certain parts of the trade union movement have seen the Social Charter as a soft option, compared to the anti-union laws.

Their attitude has sometimes been 'If Maastricht comes in, we'll have what we want'. But they're ignoring the fact that there are big problems with it—like rejecting the closed shop.

Some have reacted by accepting the criticisms – but I think the attack on the closed shop has been a crucial part of the weakening of the unions.

I've never accepted that



FTAT's Colin Christopher – backing Unshackle the Unions

there's anything undemocratic about the closed shop. To be honest, most of those that wanted to opt out in my experience weren't acting out of principle, but because they didn't want to contribute.

What role do you see for the Unshackle the Unions campaign?

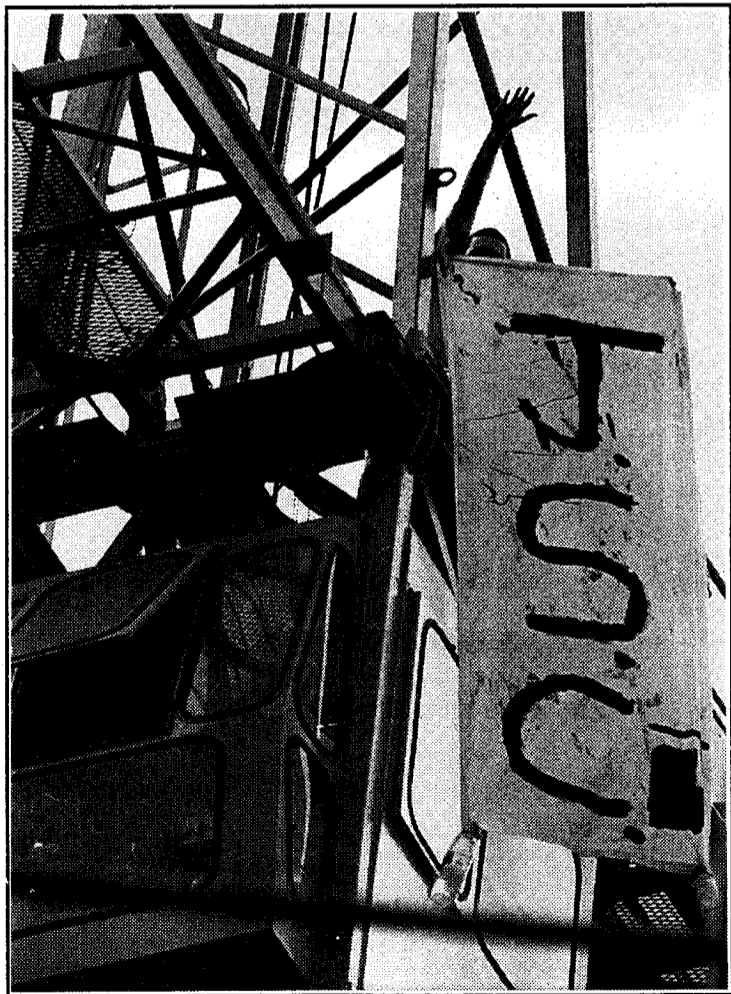
It has a particular importance after the election. FTAT and other progressive unions have been in the vanguard of the call for repeal of all anti-union laws.

At the TUC in Glasgow last

year, we and the NUM put forward just such a resolution, calling for support for the ILO convention.

The Unshackle the Unions conference can develop the debate we need, and make people ask 'Do we just accept the imposition of anti-union legislation?'

But it's not just the laws that are already in place, though they're bad enough. The new rounds of laws that are coming aren't as innocent as they seem – particularly those threatening the check-off system. Michael Howard's obviously decided to take us on to the bitter end.



In the latest battle for union rights, building worker Michael Dooley occupied a crane at a West London site after an imposed single-union deal between the company and the engineers' and electricians union AEEU.

The rank and file Joint Sites Committee launched a campaign against the deal after stewards from building workers' union UCATT and the TGWU were sacked. One victimised worker explained 'This dispute is about democracy. It is about the sacking of elected representatives and the forced imposition of an unwanted union.'

Trades councils and building workers rallied to support the workers in a mass picket, but the UCATT leadership disowned the action.

S THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT
Trade Union Committee

Second Conference 1992

**18th – 19th July
Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London**

**WHICH WAY FOR
SOCIALISTS IN THE UNIONS?**

**Fighting the
employers' offensive**

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We enclose £ _____ (£10 waged/ £3 unwaged per person)

Name/position/organisation _____

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PHOTO: Paul Mattsson

Beyond an equal age of consent

By Sam Inman

With a real possibility of legislation to equalise the age of consent for gay men, it is easy to understand the optimism prevailing in the largely gay men's scene.

But have the upper echelons of the Tory party really undergone a 'road to Damascus' transformation in their at-

titude? Of course not, as the only partial concession to homosexuality in the armed forces showed.

While any progressive reform should be supported, we should have no illusions that we are in for an easy ride. John Major's government will not be making concessions out of the goodness of their hearts, but only for the purposes of diplomatic manoeuvring.

If a bill is introduced, there will again be much heated media debate over those of us who persistently refuse to have consenting relationships with the opposite sex.

Marginalised

And it is easy to see how lesbians - who have an equal age of consent - will be further marginalised in the ensuing

melee.

The national lesbian and gay weekly, *The Pink Paper*, is right to argue that we 'need a spectacular campaign from us and our allies' to whip up a 'wind of change' throughout society and step up pressure for anti-discrimination legislation too.

They are also right that lesbian and gay teenagers are going to need 'support lines, meeting groups and health ad-

vice now more than ever'.

But they are wrong to assume that a little pressure on Tory ministers - without self-organisation for mass action - will get even these limited reforms.

Tory ministers have made it patently clear to other campaigners that they will not introduce anti-discrimination laws. Why should they treat us any different?

Many local authorities have used Section 28 to withhold funding and support to lesbian and gay youth groups.

No leading Tory has yet argued for its repeal. Why should we believe it will, while the Tories are smashing up local government?

Labour policy

So what is the alternative? It may sound boring, but the Labour Party already has good policy, achieved through years of campaigning, particularly by the *Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights*.

If Labour MPs were forced to implement it, while the Tories are divided, they could push through a bill.

It could not only equalise the age of consent for gay men, but repeal S28, and bring in anti-discrimination laws too. But Labour is only going to do this under mass pressure from our community.

By allying ourselves with supportive sections of the labour movement, rather than confused Tory MPs, the lesbian and gay movement at least stands some chance of winning something we can all build on.

Why 'Queer politics' are not enough

Recently the pages of the lesbian and gay press in Britain and the USA have been filled with a new debate - on 'queer politics' and building a 'queer' movement. REBECCA FLEMMING investigates.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was Queer, and Queer was the Word.

Before the beginning, Queer was an abusive epithet, mainly aimed at gay men. It was occasionally used by lesbians and gay men, publicly in chants and privately to refer to ourselves. It was used to inject an element of self-depreciation, parody or defiance.

After the beginning, Queer became a radical new word for lesbian or gay, which some felt was clumsy (hence 'lesbian and gay') or had become as institutionalised and sexually respectable as homosexual.

T-shirts

Organisations such as *A Queer Tribe* in Brighton and *Queer Nation* (QN) in the USA were born, and *Outrage's* 'Queer as Fuck' T-shirt, so successfully advertised by Jason Donovan, was much in evidence.

These groups shared certain themes. The focus was on publicity stunts and there was a conscious emphasis on style, culture and a good fuck.

For some, that is where Queer remains - a label with a cutting edge, provocative and sexy, and a single, inclusive term for lesbians and gay men. But both of these points have been questioned. Is a Queer wedding

any more radical than a gay wedding? Certainly the constant splintering of QN around gender and race demonstrates the limits of words to resolve political issues.

Some north American lesbian academics have taken the concept of Queer several stages further and created 'Queery'. Their ideas are rooted in a complex discussion involving psychoanalysis and different forms of human communication.

Campaigning (doing) is conveniently reduced to theatrical stunts, media coverage and use of the word Queer (saying).

Apolitical

On this side of the Atlantic there has been the appearance of 'Queerpolitics', also loosely linked to the new activism. It has captivated the lesbian and gay press. It has been shaped by the move towards individualism and the apolitical after 13 years of Tory rule.

Sex is a fundamental concept for 'Queerpolitics' - we have again become what we do in bed, cottage, dungeon, or whatever turns you on. Worse, this is seen as a victory over lesbian feminism which is reduced to its pro-censorship, anti-sex current.

This is combined with a retreat from autonomy - the 'Queer Movement' is not the lesbian and gay movement by another name. Rather it encompasses - in theory - some lesbians and gay men, bisexuals, transsexuals and transvestites (the vast majority of whom are straight), heterosexual sado-masochists, and paedophiles, among others.

Outrage!, for example, is no longer a lesbian and gay organisation but a Queer one, prompting some to leave.

All the demands of Queerpolitics are on the individual - who is urged to be Queer. This is in contrast to the lesbian and gay movement's project, calling for society to accept and incorporate lesbians and gay men. This may well be the direction of lobbying groups like *Stonewall*, but at least they are doing something, however inadequate.

Shocking

Queerpolitics is empty gesture, posture, signifying nothing, let alone a radical alternative. The only public action seems simply to shock, in the most reactionary way. It prefers not to ask why, avoiding confronting key issues around the nuclear family, gender, race and class in its search for the glib and sexy.

But ultimately, words can't substitute for politics. People, gay or straight, can announce themselves to be Queer, but will it change anything?

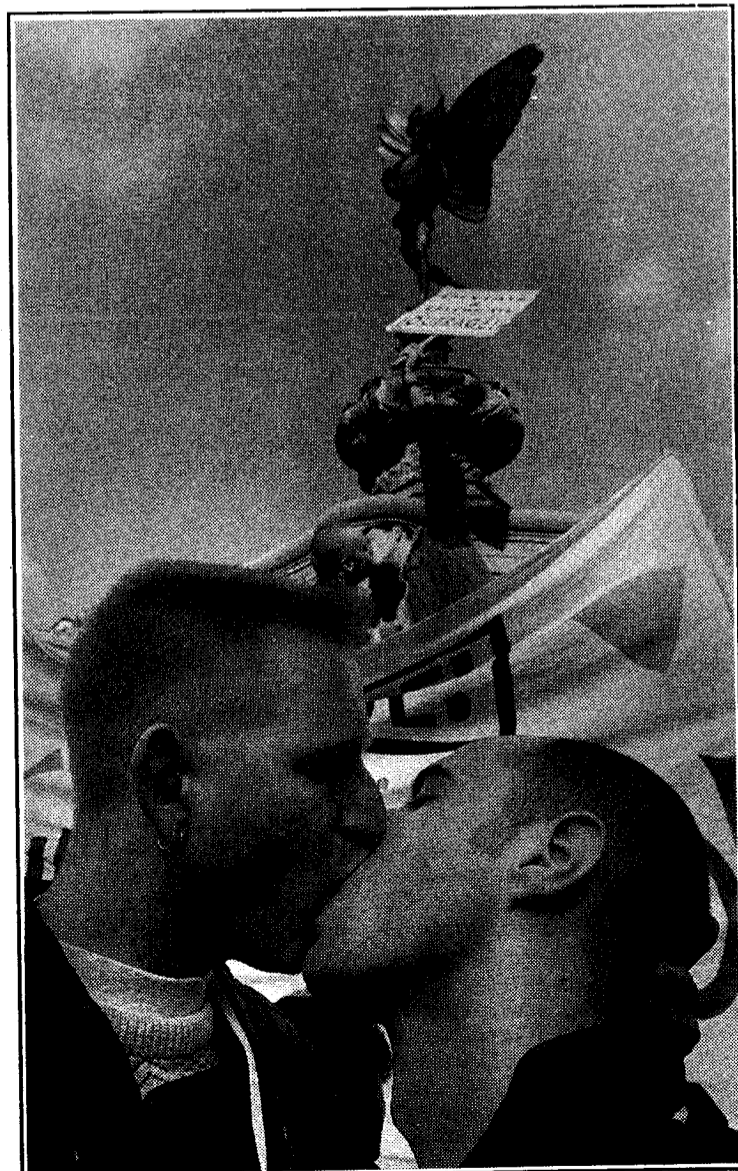
Will it help lesbian mothers keep custody of their children? Will it stop gay men being sent to prison for consensual sex? Will it move us one iota towards a society where people can decide their own sexual orientation, free from inequality and oppression?

Unfortunately the answer to all these questions is 'no'.

Oppressed

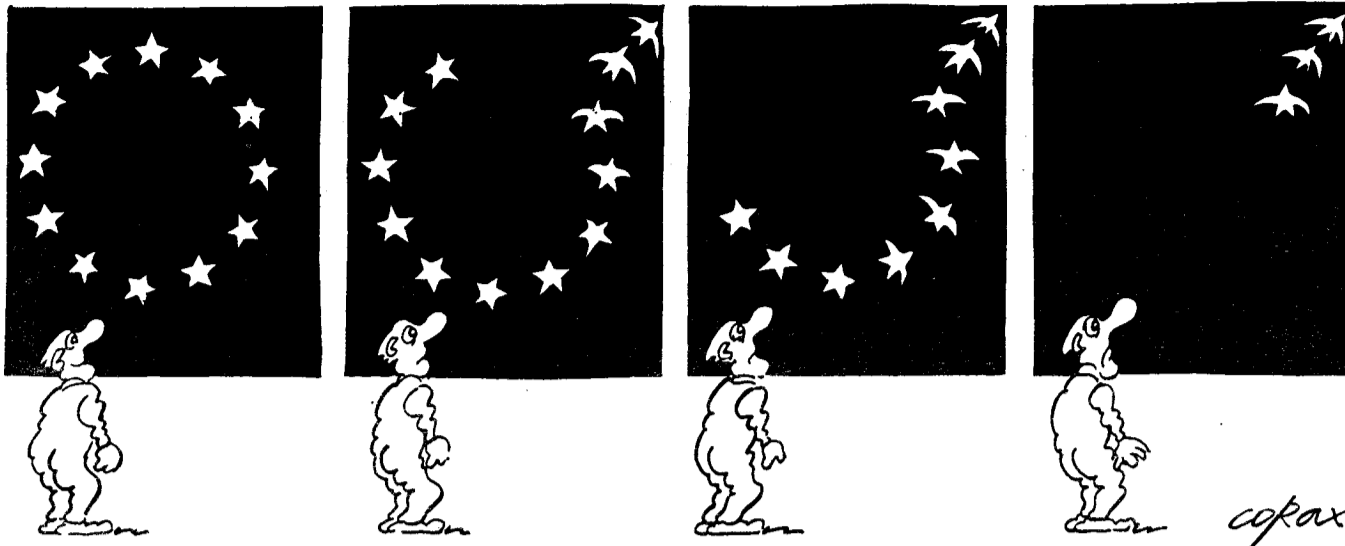
The harsh reality is that one sexual identity - heterosexuality - is privileged, and one - lesbian and gay sexual identity - is oppressed. That can't be wished away.

It demands a long, hard struggle for lesbian and gay liberation, to end a specific oppression rather than a vague norm. And struggle means doing, not saying.



Outrageous stunts are fine, but don't amount to a strategy for lesbian and gay liberation

PHOTO: Paul Mattsson



Irish Maastricht referendum

Anti-abortionists throw away 'No' votes

By Anne Conway, Dublin
People's Democracy

The 7-3 vote for Maastricht in the 26 County referendum became increasingly likely in the final days of the campaign, as voters moved away from the 'No' lobby due to high profile media coverage of the 'Pro-Life' campaign. Other forces opposing Maastricht were largely ignored.

But the 30 per cent vote against the Treaty was quite im-

pressive, given the weight of the 'Yes' lobby. This included the four main political parties, Labour, the ICTU union federation, big business and farming organisations, and the Council for the Status of Women.

Tax-payers' money was used to fund the 'Yes' campaign, and the national TV and radio were commandeered by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) for a Presidential-style broadcast, with no right of reply.

A government spokesperson was widely quoted in the media at the start of the campaign 'We

will have to strike terror into the hearts of the Irish electorate'. And the conduct of the campaign - one of bribes and threats - confirmed this strategy.

Until the anti-abortion protocol in the Treaty came to light - with the case of the 14 year old girl denied an abortion - it had seemed that there would be no significant opposition. But this threw the government into disarray.

Recent opinion polls have showed more than 80 per cent against the fundamentalist

policies of anti-abortion groups such as SPUC. On this issue alone mass opposition could have been mobilised against the Treaty.

But the 'Repeal the 8th Amendment' campaign prevaricated when it came to challenging the consensus of established women's groups in favour of the EC. So SPUC were allowed to set the agenda.

The Repeal campaign's conference had decided on a 'No' vote. But it stayed on the sidelines, despite the fact that the Protocol would copper-fas-

ten the amendment into European law, denying Irish women the right to travel.

Despite the unions' call for a 'Yes' vote, opposition to Maastricht was strongest among working class communities, which experience unemployment and deprivation. The Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed was among those calling for a 'No' vote, as was the Union of Students in Ireland (USI).

USI were instrumental in setting up 'Youth Against Maastricht', the most promising feature of the 'No' campaign. They campaigned on a progressive platform for workers' rights, women's rights and defence of Irish neutrality.

But the main anti-Maastricht campaign, the National Platform, refused to distance themselves from SPUC in the hope of some spurious tactical advantage. The opposite proved the case.

In post-referendum interviews, many said they had voted in favour of the Treaty because they didn't want their vote interpreted as pro-SPUC.

When the realities of Maastricht begin to bite - cuts, job losses, and the restructuring of the Irish economy as a more subordinate part of Europe - antipathy towards the political establishment is set to deepen still further.

The role of the labour and trade union bureaucracies in confusing and defusing struggles will be considerably weakened.

South Africa

Whites dig in to defend privilege

By Charlie van Gelderen

Boipatong will rank with Sharpeville and Soweto in the pantheon of South African infamy.

The events of the past week will surely have brought home to the leaders of the ANC and the SACP that the leaders of the white ruling class are not prepared to negotiate away their powers and privileges.

In the course of the CODESA negotiations the ANC have bent over backwards as far as they dared to placate 'white fears'. They were prepared to drop their demand that the new constitution had to be agreed by a two-thirds majority.

Against the government demand of 75 per cent they proposed the compromise of 70 per cent. This was not acceptable to the National Party and its Inkatha allies. Concessions were made not only in the political sphere, but also over economic policy.

Some of the nationalisation clauses of the Freedom Charter have been watered down. In the last weekend in May, the ANC drew up its guidelines for a post-apartheid economy.

It emphasised that 'quick-fix' solutions, so often proposed by liberation movements in the past, were out. Nationalisation as promised in the Freedom Charter was their only option in relieving inequality and poverty.

It was more important to balance the priority of the needs of the poor with policies designed to attract both local and foreign investors. Emphasising their need for flexibility, the document said 'The ANC envisages a dynamic private sector'. They would seek to reduce public sector spending.

This paper was greeted with enthusiasm by Derek Keys, the Minister of Finance and Trade in the De Klerk government. All this was of no avail.

Better than the ANC leadership, the government perceived that mass pressure on a government which included the ANC could bring about unwanted changes to the social and economic structure of South Africa.

The De Klerk government set out with a deliberate policy of destroying the process towards a democratic, one person-one vote election by fostering mayhem in the townships in conjunction with Inkatha.

In April a judge in the Pietermaritzburg Appeal Court, Justice Woolthen, exposed in more detail than ever before in a South African court of law the police strategy of employing blacks in collusion with the right wing Inkatha Freedom Party to do the work of the state in their dirty work against the ANC.

The judge himself has since been subjected to police harassment, including having his phone tapped. While the ANC has suspended the armed struggle, the government has reinforced the security forces in preparation for a new assault on the liberation movement.

De Klerk has presented a picture to the world of a reforming government,



Headed back to jail? Nelson Mandela

determined to bring to an end the injustices of apartheid. It is a policy which has already reaped dividends in terms of the abandonment of sanctions by the international community, and South Africa's readmission to the world of international sport.

But at the same time the government has taken decisive steps to ensure that it can meet any renewed threat of armed resistance with massive force. He has introduced new legislation to make it easier for the police to listen in to telephone calls, open the post and bug offices and houses.

He has allocated 205 million rand, 41 million pounds, for a new underground bunker for the airport. The discredited National Intelligence Service, which was involved in siphoning state funds off to Inkatha, has got a new headquarters costing 145 million rand.

As there are no external enemies in sight, these measures are obviously aimed at internal security - that is the liberation forces. He is openly talking of reintroducing the state of emergency. Conceivably Nelson Mandela could find himself back in prison.

Verdict of Brazilian Workers' Party

Extracts from a speech by Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, President of the Brazilian Workers' Party to the alternative 'Global Forum' held in Rio on June 2.

Roots of crisis

"THE DEGRADATION of the environment which is today threatening our planet is the expression of the values of a society which commercialises relations between men and women, which engenders social injustice and the destruction of our natural and historic inheritance.

"The ecological crisis that humanity is now experiencing and which threatens its future is the result of conceptions of economic and productive development, shared both by capitalism and bureaucratic state socialism."

Indigenous peoples

"THE FACT that the problems of the environment have an international character does not exempt a government from proposing a project for national development, to be decided democratically by the nation, which contains an environmental dimension. It is insufficient to create reservations for the indigenous peoples, areas for extraction or units for the protection of nature without a policy for the democratisation of land ownership – a genuine agrarian reform – and without social policies to support the traditional populations of these zones.

"The neo-liberal policies of free exchange have, for example, dealt a hard blow to the rubber producers of Amazonia, forced to leave their home in order to survive.

"It doesn't do much good for a government to delight themselves with expressions such as 'sustainable development' if the populations of Amazonia and other regions are abandoned in sectors where their relationship with the surrounding areas exposes them to permanent risks.

"No development is conceivable if, in order to pay off the external debt and obey the orders for structural adjustment demanded by the international bodies, a government dismantles housing and health programmes and abolishes public services, particularly for control of the environment."

Rhetoric and reality

"WHAT IS THE ecological rhetoric of a government or the 'green labels' of businesses worth if the working population lives, in the fields and factories, in a hell created by industrial pollution and toxic emissions, or if it is forced to consume thousands of tons of products harmful to health thrown into the atmosphere or the water, without there being the slightest social control over this extortion.

"The tactic of the great powers is to empty the debate of these themes whilst the eyes of the world are on Rio and the pressure of the ecologists is being strongly felt, in order to advance solutions of privatisation and to use the external debt as an instrument for blackmail."

New model needed

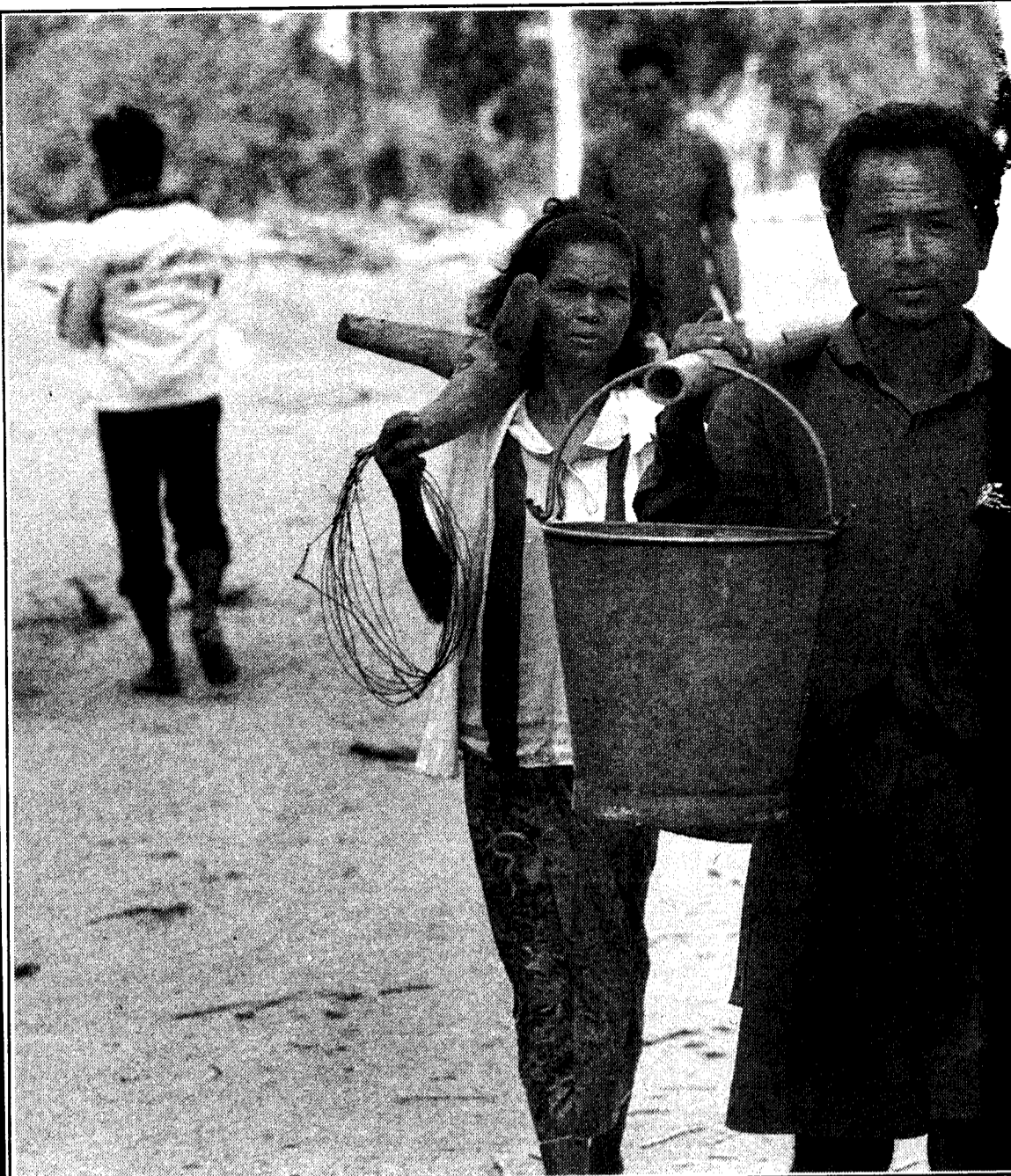
"THE WORKERS' PARTY considers that the debates at Rio, particularly the parallel Forum, can represent a decisive step for the reinforcing of a universal consciousness in favour of a new model of development for humanity.

"We do not subscribe to the policies of governments or the complicity of these governments with those who devastate the soil of our planet, pollute the atmosphere, drastically change the living conditions of millions of beings and endanger the more and more scarce water resources.

"The challenge which faces all ecologists and genuine socialists is not simply to formulate a policy for protection, an enormous enough task in itself, but to throw up the bases for a new model of economic development which radically alters the existing structures of production and which can be capable of reconciling growth, social justice and respect for the environment.

"This new model demands a radical transformation of world politics, a genuine democratisation of international institutions (starting with the UN) and the suppression of the 'guardianship' exercised over humanity by the IMF, the World Bank, the G7 and such organisations.

"It is of prime importance that we pursue a policy of peace, disarmament, demilitarisation of the world, which can only be achieved by an increasing intervention of citizens, men and women, into their daily struggles."



Not much on offer for those that need it most

Less than nothing from hot air Summit

Austrian marxist
**HERMANN
DWORCZAK**
examines the
predictably feeble
outcome of the Earth
Summit in Rio.

THE BENEFITS OF the big show in Rio bore no relation to its cost. Essential questions such as the world economic order were not on the official agenda.

The Bishop of the Brazilian See of Xingu Erwin Krautler concluded that:

"The developed countries will go on as before. Neither the debt burden nor the problem of low raw material prices was seriously discussed."

The gross output of texts was certainly impressive, but their content much less so.

● The 900-page all-embracing *Agenda 21*, which is to show us the ecological path into the 21st century was considerably watered down. The vexed question of financing the relevant measures by the industrialised countries was covered by the formula "0.7 per cent as soon as possible". At the moment they make only 0.3 per

cent of their GNP available.

● The *Rio Declaration* gives 27 arid principles. Some feel of how vacuous they are comes from principle number three, which calls us to rally to a worldwide social partnership: "All states and peoples should work together to eliminate poverty, and income inequalities should be reduced."

● The *Declaration of Principles of Forestry* keeps up the pace on empty phrase-mongering: "The safeguarding of the forests will be connected with the provision of financial aid from the North".

● The *Biodiversity Treaty* was not signed by the United States.

● The *Climate Convention* is so wholly toothless that even George Bush felt able to sign it.

Electioneering

Bush's presence in Rio had of course nothing to do with the environment and everything to do with the forthcoming American presidential elections.

He acted like a bull in a china shop. The script for his thundering about was provided by the ultra-conservative Heritage Foundation think tank. The US negotiators

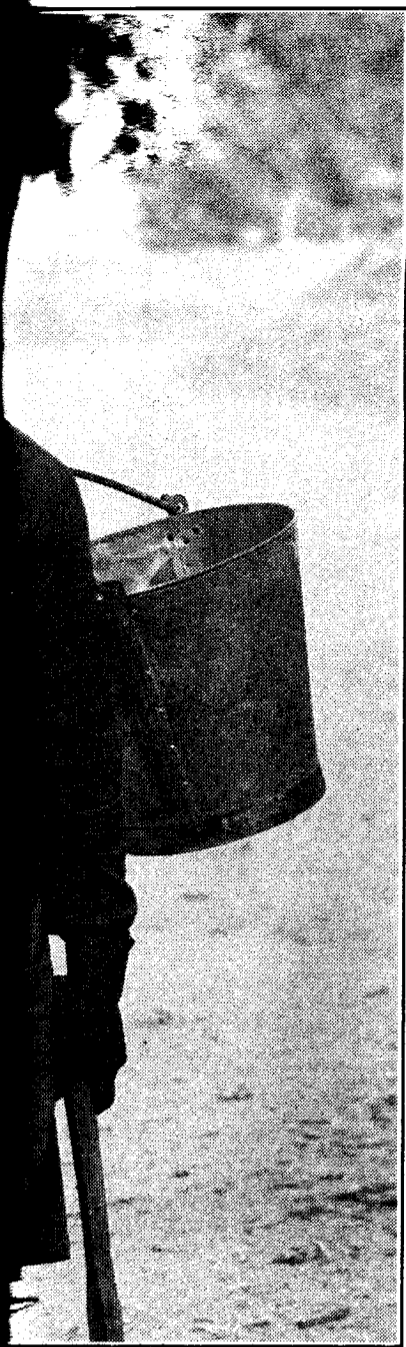
at Rio were given a rule of thumb, which was to 'Avoid any detailed plans which tie us down to a definite reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases within a definite timespan.' Also 'Third World countries must themselves create enough wealth to finance their own environmental programmes.'

Delegations which pressed for a more serious climate convention were put through the diplomatic wringer. One delegate from Iceland said that 'US pressure on our country was stronger than in the turmoil after the Gulf War.'

While the USA established itself at Rio as the world's number one anti-ecological country, the 'ecological awareness' of the other capitalist industrialised countries is – for all their rhetoric – hardly more developed.

Much noise has been made of the stated intention of countries such as Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, the EC and Japan to bring down their greenhouse gas emissions to the 1990 level by the year 2000.

In fact to meet the emergency a much bigger reduction is required: but in any case the promised undertaking is built



Bolivian peasant march protests over-exploitation

Rio Summit continues 500 years of plunder

By Roland Wood

IN THE SAME year as the Rio Summit, the mass movement in Latin America and the Caribbean celebrate 500 years of resistance to imperialist plundering of their natural resources.

No doubt the irony of this got lost somewhere in the mass of paperwork. But even if the agreements reached at Rio were strictly applied, little will change. What was most starkly lacking from the agenda was a debate on the root causes of environmental destruction on the continent.

In particular, the debate on finance was dominated by renewed posturing about countries from the North. They made much of their willingness to meet the long standing UN objective of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) being given as aid to the Third World.

Stingy

But as the *Financial Times* of June 15 pointed out, 'The stinginess of aid pledges by the rich countries fell below the most pessimistic forecasts.' The Rio organisers have had to concede that the Third World will have to finance four fifths of their environmental work themselves.

The \$50 billion net annual outflow in debt repayments from South to North was never considered important enough to tackle.

But the debt crisis, more than anything else today, expresses the deep subordination of the continent to imperialism and is invariably the cause of increasing environmental problems.

The Latin American economy began to deteriorate fast at the beginning of the 1970s, and in an attempt to improve the situation the then governments began to build up large external debts. Even while deals on debt reduction have occasionally been reached, these countries have been paying

nothing more than interest on these debts ever since.

By the mid 1980s, with the debt crisis spinning out of control, a new article of faith had been generated: if it moves - export it. The aims of this export fever were twofold:

First to obtain foreign currency, primarily to service the debt repayments, but also because as the crisis deepened it was becoming more difficult to obtain new loans.

Surplus

Second to reach a surplus commercial balance of payments in order to show, at least on a superficial level, economic health.

Until this cycle is broken little headway will be made on the worsening environmental problems.

Latin America is told to save its natural resources - but at the same time it is forced into a position where it has to sell those resources, at world prices over which it has no control, to continue servicing the debt.

Even where substantial aid has been promised in an attempt to overcome this problem there is little prospect of it having much effect.

Brazil is a case in point. As a reward for being host to the Summit, Brazil is set to receive up to \$4 billion in new aid - compared with a possible \$2.5 billion pledged for environmental projects worldwide.

Inflation

But it is highly unlikely that much of the promised aid will go towards any environmental projects. Inflation is rising again, last month reaching 22.5 per cent, and an expected turnaround in growth has not materialised. Businesses are increasing prices

rapidly, fearing another price freeze.

Perhaps President Collor's most pressing concern though is a possible collapse of Brazil's accord with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Mr Moreira, the economy minister, failed to meet first-quarter targets in April.

Now he admits those of the second period may also be missed due to continuing high inflation and interest rates. These are resulting in an explosion in domestic debt, alongside the \$16 billion external debt. In times like these \$4 billion will do very nicely.

It is no surprise that both the IMF and the World Bank are cited as two of the major financial institutions who will be responsible for the administration of these new aid packages. An excellent example of giving with one hand and taking away with the other.

Also of interest following the Rio Summit is the state of financial health of some of the more subsidiary institutions that have become involved of late.

In particular the Inter-American In-

vestment Corporation (IIC), affiliate of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) set up as part of President Bush's 'Latin America initiative', has been facing difficulties in expanding.

Ironically the IADB only lends to the corporation at the same rate of interest that it lends to member countries. Given the sums of money that have been involved, the IIC is quickly heading into the same debt quagmire as many of the countries it is meant to be aiding.

Written off

The larger parent organisations seem to be on the verge of recognising that the IIC debt will have to be written off if any of the proposed environmental projects are going to get off the ground, let alone succeed.

500 years after Latin America's natural resources were first shipped off for the benefit of the North it is time to dump the IIC and their ilk, and simply write off the debt at source.

ng
mmit

on sand. In 1988 Austria and other industrialised countries promised in Toronto to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide by 20 percent by 2005. Instead such emissions are up 14 percent on their 1988 levels.

Austrian chancellor Franz Vranitsky, chosen as West European spokesman for his supposed 'sympathetic attitude' actually hauled Third World countries over the coals and made it clear they had to pay more attention to the profit-driven logic of the capitalist market.

Only the politicians, inhabiting their own rarefied zone, appeared to detect a beneficial change in the atmosphere as a result of the Rio Summit.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl saw it as giving 'a new definition to the notion of solidarity.' The German news weekly *Der Spiegel* talked of 'a step towards eco-change,' and Brazil's former environment minister claimed that the conference 'led to a raising of awareness'.

Greenpeace climate expert Wolfgang Lohbeck was more realistic, warning: "The industrialised nations will carry on as before."



Hard-headed Bush - leader of the world's most anti-ecological nation



What really happened at the Earth Summit? And what did it mean for the fight in defence of the environment? EILEEN GERSH reports.

The Rio summit involved two main confrontations over the future of the world's ecology.

At the summit itself the so-called G7 nations, the richest and most powerful capitalist states confronted the 128 poor or moderately well-off states over what (if anything) was to be done to defend the ecology, and who was to pay.

Off-stage, the 'anti-summit', the Global Forum, brought together representatives of indigenous peoples like the Amazonian Yanomani indians, ecology groups like Friends of the Earth and voluntary groups like Oxfam.

At the summit each government was allotted equal speaking time, but this was fake equality, covering up the refusal to do anything substantial.

Decisions were called for on four documents:-

- A convention on global warming
- A convention on biodiversity
- The Rio Declaration
- Agenda 21

To investigate the real workings of the summit it is useful to examine each of these in turn, and then look at what was left out.

The global warming convention simply called for action to limit the emission of carbon dioxide, the major cause of the 'greenhouse effect'.

The hopelessly inadequate aim of this was to get a consensus to limit CO2 emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000. But in order to get the US to sign it was watered down further.

So despite the fact that over 100 nations signed, this will have little effect. Other greenhouse gases like methane were not even discussed.

The Biodiversity Treaty most clearly highlighted the conflict between the Western capitalist countries and the rest. The G7 countries claim the right to patent species 'discovered' and developed by pharmaceutical companies. Enormous potential profits are involved in this.

The other nations claim the right to a share of the profits produced from their land; especially since the 'discoveries' are often from information supplied by indigenous peoples who have known and used these species since time immemorial.

The US would of course not agree to this and would not sign. Even among those signing there was no agreement who to fund the convention.

Brazil's former environment

Fear and loathing in Rio

secretary, sacked for speaking out against his government's policies said inadequacies of the convention were 'one of the greatest threats to humanity', handing control to a few huge corporations and ruining countless small farmers.

The Rio Declaration, which the US found itself able to sign, was merely a long and pretentious declaration of pious principles, which committed no one to anything.

Agenda 21 aimed to outline how the principles of the Rio declaration could be implemented. It is concerned with the elimination of poverty, hazardous waste disposal, the environment and health.

Although it is not legally binding on the signatories, the US objected to several clauses and would not sign. The key proposal is that each nation should contribute 0.7 per cent of its gross domestic product to the objective of eliminating poverty and defending the environment. At present only the Scandinavian countries do this.

Some G7 nations have pledged to reach this target by 2000, others only as 'soon as possible'.

Agenda 21 established the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to help implement its aims, but in fact this will be really a satellite of the World Bank. The poorer countries rightly have little confidence in it.

Also a Sustainable Development Commission has been established to report on progress to the UN; but it is unlikely to have any enforcement powers.

Overall the poor countries con-

sidered Agenda 21 to be soft on key issues of development and the environment, particularly arms spending, the massive third world debt, and the role of the multinational corporations.

There was no agreement on protection of the forests. But the debate brought out crucial issues in the fate of the forests. The rich countries want the forests defended, but the poor countries ask who is to pay for the loss of revenue and trade.

As might have been expected, there was no agreement on the debt of the poor countries to the rich. Just the in-

terest on these debts amounts to \$50 billion a year! It is the debt which explains why poor countries fell their forests and grow cash crops for export, rather than basic foodstuffs for themselves.

Instead of dealing with the debt, the rich countries concentrated on population control.

Population control is a double-edged issue. Yes, of course women in these countries should have both the right and the means with which to choose how many children to have. But again at the root of the population explosion is poverty. Poor families want lots of children to support older people where there is no welfare state.

Carefully kept off the agenda of the summit were the crucial issues of the role of the transnational corporations, arms spending, the plight of indigenous peoples, the real causes of poverty and urgent questions like the crisis in Africa, where millions face death through drought and starvation.

Debating this was left to the Global Forum, which drew up 33 treaties of its own, outlining the principles of sustainable development and conquering poverty.

The summit achieved nothing, but the very fact that it happened showed the fact that the key issues of the future of the planet have impinged on the consciousness of tens of millions of people.

The spectacular role of the United States as the world's most anti-ecological nation reveals the truth of the matter. Destruction of the environment cannot be separated from poverty and the irrational structure of wealth and production. In the end, only socialism will save the planet.



John Major insists that a recovery is underway – but the economy remains deep in slump, with unemployment rising. JAMIE GOUGH diagnoses the deep malaise of British capitalism.

THE HORRORS MOUNT. Total British output has declined for two years. Both the depth of the recession and the real level of unemployment, approaching four million, are the worst since the 1930s.

Companies have been net borrowers for the last four years – another post-war record. The balance of payments remains in deficit despite the recession, an unprecedented and ominous sign of the weakness of manufacturing.

Government spending is heavily in deficit and will remain so for many years, threatening entry to European Monetary Union (EMU). This catastrophic situation shows the failure of 17 years of austerity.

The Tories' greatest economic achievement was to expand productivity between the peaks of 1978 and 1988 at a rate higher than the EC average, at around the British rate during the post-war boom.

To some socialists, this failure comes as a surprise. The left has seen capital's attacks on the working class as capable of reviving British profits by shifting income from workers to firms.

Major defeats

Capital has inflicted some major defeats on labour. Strikes are at their lowest level since 1891. So why is capital in a worse state than ever?

Part of the answer is that the world economy remains in crisis. Slump rather than low growth in output was avoided in the 1980s only by the creation of vast indebtedness of firms, consumers and governments.

This prevented the devaluing of capitalist assets, and in fact inflated the value of many, most spectacularly shares and property. But destruction of capital values is a necessary part of how capitalist economies are revived – increasing the exploitation of workers is not enough.

So far, capital hasn't swallowed enough of this bitter medicine. The accumulated debts now weigh dangerously on the economy, as Canary Wharf shows. The current widespread bankruptcies may snowball.

Worldwide capitalist confidence is low. In this international context it is inconceivable that Britain, which is structurally one of the weakest imperialist economies, could have 'revived' – even, let's say, to its performance in the boom years.

Contradictions

But not only has the British economy not revived, it has fallen even further behind its main rivals. One reason is that the contradiction between devaluing and sustaining capital values has been particularly sharp in Britain.

Savage bouts of deflation in the early 1980s and now have devalued much of industrial capital, yet the wild debt creation of the mid-'80s 'boom' inflated the value of other assets.

Central to the failure has been the lack of attention to the socialisation of production which is an essential part of late capitalism. The most successful capitalist economies have had a high degree of coordination between firms, organised by the state in Japan and by the banks in Germany.

The state supports production and tries to secure an appropriate labour force for capital. This socialisation is not simply opposed to free markets: it helps make markets work.

Socialisation of production has been neglected in Britain because of the tradi-



The paralysis of British capital From 'get rich quick' to Major's slump

tions of capital – its lack of attention to the domestic economy, its individualism and belief in free markets.

So British austerity has placed particularly strong reliance on the weakening of state industrial intervention, on privatisation, on imposing market discipline on firms and workers and freeing markets from their influence.

This has successfully devalued both capital and labour. But it has had severe penalties for capitalist profitability.

Innovative sectors of industry and services have lacked support and coordination. Meanwhile, government policy has feather-bedded low-risk activities like property development and the privatised utilities.

It has encouraged low productivity, cost-cutting production which creates little surplus value. Neglect of infrastructure like transport, training and housing have damaged the supply of labour power, and resulted in skilled and professional workers being able to increase their wages relatively fast in the 1980s.

So even the Tories' cost-cutting hasn't worked. You can't just proclaim free markets: you have to ensure the production which creates them.

Lacking an industrial strategy which could direct their spending, the Tories have been susceptible to interest group pressures and political expediency. Lavish handouts to property companies and farmers, softness towards cartels, and continuation of the mortgage tax relief are irrational from the point of view of capital as a whole.

The Tories have failed to develop any active collaboration between capital and labour, as in Germany, which would help socialisation to be planned within the workplace and outside.

The 'get rich quick' attitude encouraged by the Tories – the mid-eighties consumer boom, privatisation bingo, the maintenance of dividend payments by British companies during the present recession – cuts across long term strategy and sacrifice for domestic production.

Balancing capital mobility with

socialisation is always a problem for capital. They are dependent on each other, but also opposed.

But this contradiction has always had especially negative results in Britain. British traditions have caused a neglect of socialisation: austerity governments since 1975 have deepened, rather than corrected, this bias.

No answers

British capital is still inclined to look overseas for its solutions. But this provides no answers, even for the most internationalised sections of capital.

A weak domestic economy produces a weak pound. British bank shares performed worse in the 1980s than industrial ones.

John Major represents a very tentative recognition by the bourgeoisie of these problems, now rubbed in by the recession. The appointment of Heseltine as Industry Minister heralds an attempt to think about industrial strategy.

But the Tories are not about to embark on a strong 'modernising' project. Capital is not convinced that the working class has been sufficiently defeated.

And modernisation would take big sacrifices from most sections of capital. Both capital and the working class would have to be convinced that long term sacrifices were acceptable in order to achieve an even longer term benefit.

But British culture is completely averse to this approach. And world stagnation and the recession make both classes particularly averse to sacrifice.

The modernisation hoped for by Tory wets and social democrats is blocked by powerful class forces – or the fear of unleashing them.

Strategically, British capital is paralysed.

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

Democracy, national rights and Maastricht

I applaud the cover of SO 23 – the just struggle against 'Fortress Europe' has indeed been well served by the result of the Danish referen-

dum on Maastricht.

As socialists, however, in our opposition to the EC it is important that we differentiate ourselves from those most reactionary currents within the British and Europe bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie (Thatcher, Le Pen) who also, for the most disgusting reasons, oppose the development of the EC.

In this respect to say 'we should demand that the British people have their say; if the Danes can have a vote, why not the British?' is unfortunate. It implies that the point of contention is the disregard of the rights of the 'British people' (!) by the EC.

This is very dangerous. We oppose the EC as we oppose all the political, economic and military blocs that the bourgeoisie seeks to make because they mitigate against the interests of the working class and oppressed.

Hatred

It is not the interests of the 'British people' that we seek to promote but those of the world working class; including, of course, the working class of the British state.

Instinctive hatred of British nationalism has led some currents on the left to erroneous positions on Europe. 'Workers Power', for example, assumes an abstentionist position on the whole business, while the old 'Socialist Organiser' favoured a pro-EC position.

It is to Socialist Outlook's credit that it has not gone down this road. But it still remains absolutely essential that alongside our opposition to Maastricht and Fortress Europe, we also present ourselves as the most implacable enemies of 'big power' nationalisms in general and Great British chauvinism in particular.

Ed George
Caerdydd/ Cardiff.

From Detroit to Wigan

In the Midnight Hour

The Young Vic

Reviewed by Celia Dignan

If you've ever wondered what Wigan had in common with Detroit, and why a generation of Northern white working class teenagers fell in love with soul music, then this play provides an insight into Northern Soul.

Set in a dance hall in the 'sixties, this musical focuses on the hopes and dreams of a group of young people for whom soul is a means of escape from the monotony of everyday life.

'In love, in the dark, for a couple of hours you can forget about the factory and the wet bus stop on a Monday morning', explains woman of the world Roxy, to her naive Catholic friend Rita.

The dance hall is, according to philosophical Jane Austen-reading cloakroom attendant Beattie, a 'palace of dreams'. A place where once a week building labourers become cool soul men and factory girls can dream of a better life.

But reality has a nasty habit of intruding. Roxy, Rita and the other young women who regularly turn up in search of the man of their dreams, instead find themselves competing for the affections of a bunch of lads whose idea of a chat-up line is 'I'd like to give you one'.

So Roxy sings 'finding a good man is like looking for a needle in a haystack'.

And what hope is there for angry young man Cliff, who falls in love with Roxy and attempts to lure her away from bad guy Creech, with promises of something better?

If it all sounds a little corny, that's because the play's message is a simple, if grim, one. Despite that it's very funny and has some very strong performances.

The women characters are refreshingly strong, and have a capacity for self-irony which enables them to rise above their sometimes depressing situation.

The show is packed with classic soul hits, and if you like soul music and a good night out at the theatre, it is unlikely to disappoint.

Demonstration

Free the
Cardiff 3!

Assemble: July 4, 12.30pm
James St, Butetown,
Cardiff



Under Stalinist leadership – PKK Pesh Mergas

Wrong answers on Kurdistan

Keith Veness (SO23) takes me to task for criticising Massoud Barzani but ignores the central point – that by attacking the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) during his visit to Turkey Barzani was aiding the Turkish government.

What are the facts? Barzani's speech took place at Ankara airport on March 31st – when the Turkish army was carrying out a brutal war against the Kurds.

It was made on the same day 14 Kurdish MPs resigned from the SHP (Social Democratic and

Populist Party) in protest at its role in the DYP-SHP government. It took place when the State Security Court was demanding the death penalty for 22 MPs from the HEP (People's Labour Party) for speaking Kurdish or wearing Kurdish colours!

Keith tries to have things both ways. He plays down support for the 'irrelevant' and 'adventurist' PKK, yet if it did launch the Newroz uprising then it clearly has considerable support. Even if Newroz were complete adventurism then socialists should still support

the PKK – whilst criticising its strategy and tactics, as I did.

But if Keith is right and the PKK doesn't have support, then his position is far worse. The uprising must have been a spontaneous Kurdish revolt against military occupation. In that case anyone who fails to support it is aiding the Turkish government's repression.

Is the PKK 'irrelevant' in the fight for Free Kurdistan? The PKK – at least in its statements – fights for a united, independent Kurdistan. The KDP (and PUK) limit themselves to 'autonomy' within the existing Iraqi state – a point stressed by Barzani.

They don't raise the demand for the unity and independence of Kurdistan – elementary requirements for a Free Kurdistan. In that sense the PKK – despite its awful, Stalinist politics – is in the leadership of the fight for Kurdistan and Barzani's actions are a stab in the back.

Geoff Ryan
Brixton

Missing the point on autonomy

Angela Bryan (SO 23) has totally missed the point about lesbian and gay autonomy.

The politics of the lesbian and gay liberation campaign has developed out of (and into) a lesbian and gay analysis of the systematic and structured discrimination that lesbians and gay men suffer, individually and collectively.

A crucial basis for developing that analysis has been the right to have 'our own space', that is our right to determine our own struggle and our own chosen strategy for liberation.

We are still struggling for our right to autonomy to be recognised. Many lesbian and gay groups are denied existence. The presence of bisexuals denies our existence further still.

The experience and realities for bisexuals are not fundamentally the same as for lesbians and gay men. Bisexual men and women must take responsibility for the power they inherit

from their position as heterosexuality defined.

Because of their collusion with the straight world, what bisexuals bring to the lesbian and gay campaign is completely different from lesbians and gay men. Bisexuals must acknowledge this if we are going to have any dialogue at all.

I am not suggesting that bisexuals should not or cannot have a forum of their own – that is for bisexuals to decide, and doubtless lesbians and gay men would make alliances with them on certain issues of sexual politics.

But in political terms, bisexual experience is not lesbian or gay experience, and any lesbian and gay campaign MUST reflect lesbian and gay experiences if we are going to achieve liberation.

Jo Baxter
London NW6.

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Czecho-Slovakia – capitalism in half a country?

By Adam Nezval

The June 5-6 elections in Czecho-Slovakia show a massive rejection of shock therapy in Slovakia but a narrow victory for the right in the Czech Republic. This divergence makes the collapse of the Czecho-Slovak federation almost inevitable.

In the richer western Czech republic, Finance Minister Vaclav Klaus will depend on the centre-right People's Party (CSL) and the far right Republicans (SPR-RSC) for a majority of 16 in the 200-strong Czech parliament.

The Czech right is dominated by Klaus' Civic Democratic Party (ODS), which defends the current reform model. Although Klaus is a federalist, he is under strong pressure from the impatient Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA).

They want Czechs to separate from 'communist' Slovakia and seek German protection in their 'return to western Europe'. They have 6 per cent of seats in the Czech parliament.

Three left of centre lists stood against the governing coalition. The Czech Communist Party-led Left Bloc (LB) has become the largest opposition grouping, with 35 seats.

Its association with the previous regime will hinder cooperation with the Social Democrats (CSSD, 16 seats), the Liberal Social Union (LSU – an alliance of Green, Socialist and collective farmers' parties, 14 seats) and the social democratic Moravian Autonomous Movement (HSD-SMS, 14 seats).

According to Vrata Votava, a Fourth International supporter elected to the Czech parliament on the Left Bloc list, 'The widespread privatisation underway will make 1993 the year of mass redundancies, and subject the economy to the whims of German capital.

'Our alternative to privatisation is the lease of state factories to the workforce, with government-backed credits for cooperatives and small businesses. The Left Bloc also opposes the privatisation of health and state childcare, and the return of schools and hospitals to the church.'

In Slovakia socialist and



Czech president Havel want referendum before final division of Czecho-Slovakia

PHOTO: Scott Goodfellow

nationalist parties won 65 per cent of votes, in a massive rejection of the shock therapy that has devastated the poorer eastern republic.

The left-nationalist Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), which won 48 per cent of seats in the Slovak parliament, is demanding a 'new

In Slovakia socialist and nationalist parties won 65 per cent of votes, in a massive rejection of the shock therapy that has devastated the poorer eastern republic.

reform for Slovakia' – with or without the Czechs – by the end of the year.

The particular developments in Slovakia have pushed the national revival along progressive lines. Unemployment, at 14 per cent, is three times the rate in the Czech lands. Economic policies followed since 1989 are returning Slovakia to its pre-war position as an agricultural and labour reserve for the richer Czech lands.

The HZDS 'new reform' is based on massive job creation, and a state-led restructuring of

the economy. Worker and management buy-outs are to be favoured in future privatisations, and foreign investment subject to stricter conditions.

Differences are bound to emerge within and outside parliament over Meciar's proposals to build gigantic barges on the Danube and other Slovak rivers to generate half of Slovakia's energy needs, and build enough nuclear power stations to provide the other half.

As with other east European popular or national fronts, HZDS includes federalists,

separatists, pro-capitalist and social democratic forces. Neither its policies nor voters' expectations are crystallised, beyond the 'new reform' and an undefined 'Slovak sovereignty'.

With the crushing failure of the pro-capitalist parties, the role of the opposition goes to the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL, the ex-Communist Party), with some 20 per cent of the seats in the Slovak parliament.

SDL leader Peter Weiss says his party supports most HZDS policies, but will go further in demanding that progressive measures are genuinely carried out. Both stalinist and social democratic tendencies in the SDL will doubtless win new members as the HZDS wavers on economic and social questions.

The divergent views of the Czech and Slovak elites over the economic reforms makes the end of the federation certain, sooner or later. Both elites are trying to portray the other as responsible, in order to maximise international support.

For Czech Communist Party leader Jiri Svoboda 'any split-up of Czecho-Slovakia will be the fault of the Czech right. Their reform has proved socially unacceptable in Slovakia, and they would rather split the federation than slow down the restoration of capitalism. They would rather have capitalism in half a country.'

In the meantime, the strong result for HZDS in Slovakia blocks rightist policies in Czecho-Slovakia's assembly (parliament) where legislation must be passed by a separate majority of both Czech and Slovak deputies. HZDS alone decides whether the Klaus group can pass any legislation.

Meciar seems to have taken the tactical decision to support Klaus in the short term, while consolidating power in Slovakia. But any support for a continuation of federal pro-market reforms will benefit the separatist Slovak National Party (SNS) and the SDL.

Though the marxist Union of Communists of Slovakia (ZKS) polled less than 1 per cent, individuals like Vrata Votava were elected on the Czech Left Bloc list. But overall the marxist left in the new parliaments is overwhelmingly drawn from the ex-ruling parties, the KSCM and SDL.

Of the 16 per cent support these parties received in the elections, perhaps 12 per cent came from older voters nostalgic for the past, worried about their pensions and price rises, or concerned about growing German influence over economic and political life.

The rest come from voters who see the CPs as the best chance for building a new left party. The coming months will show whether they were right to give the CPs a second chance.

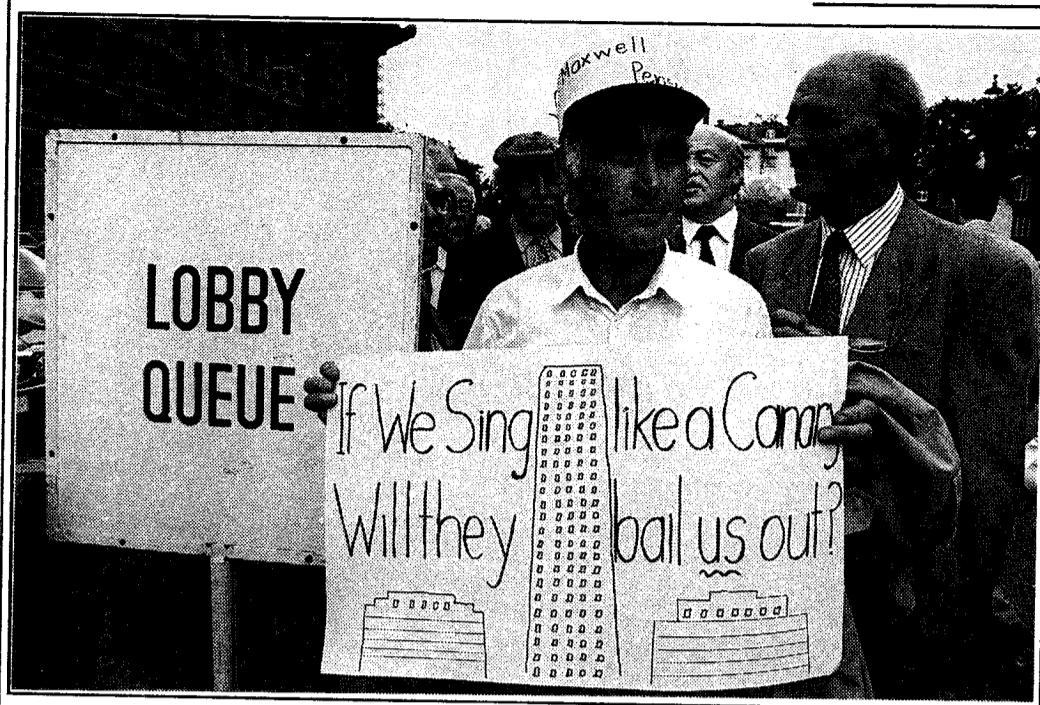
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Pensioners face ruin, while Maxwell brothers still control millions

Arrests to cover Maxwell shame

By Harry Sloan

THE ARREST of Kevin and Ian Maxwell and their late father's sidekick Larry Trachtenberg on charges relating to Cap'n Bob's £1 billion fraud was a flimsy figleaf to conceal the blushes of the establishment.

Until just before the arrests police had been insisting that their investigations would take months to com-

plete. And there is no chance of court action before next January.

The highly-publicised dawn arrests - complete with live television coverage, with only Pandora 'Piss Off' Maxwell apparently not tipped off in advance - were designed to take the heat off the government.

Highly embarrassing revelations of the extent to which the dead tycoon's movements had been monitored by the secret services

have done nothing to prove the Tory case that they knew nothing of Maxwell's wrongdoings.

As Steve Bell's brilliant cartoon in the *Guardian* summed up, the spooks' verdict on Maxwell was 'It's OK - he's a fat crook, but he's not in CND'.

The state turned a blind eye not only to Maxwell's business swindles, but even to his role as a banker for the KGB. But while

GCHQ spymasters apparently played the role of an indifferent CID team sitting back to watch a group of joyriders, the banks and financiers who fed Maxwell a heady diet of loans have been equally embarrassed.

The whole world now knows how easy it was for the old rogue to rip off top clearing banks, and how easy it is in Thatcher's deregulated City for a single-minded crook to clean out the pension funds of thousands of employees.

Tragedy has degenerated into farce, with top banks, after handing out millions in hopeless loans, now clinging desperately onto shares Maxwell stole from pension funds to use as security - arguing that they must protect their own shareholders.

Fake purge

The farce continued on June 17, when the board of Mirror Group Newspapers carried out a pretend purge - ousting newspaper man Ernest Burrington from the Chair, only to replace him with banker Sir Robert Clark, a close confidante of the Maxwell brothers and a non-executive director under Maxwell!

With a news-hungry Financial Times leading the pack of journalists pursuing the issue, government, banks and the police found a common sense of embarrassment which led to the dawn swoop.

But the charges so far laid against the Maxwell brothers relate to relative peanuts - a total of £135 million, mainly in transactions after Maxwell's death. This is just scratching the surface.

Frank Field MP has suggested as much as £1 billion may have been

salted away in obscure bank accounts and trusts in Liechtenstein and elsewhere. Even the Liechtenstein banks seem more willing to hand back stolen shares and restore some semblance of decorum than their British equivalents.

Meanwhile the business pages are clamouring for a clean-up of legislation covering pension funds, which under Thatcher emerged as the richest, fastest-growing sector of the savings industry, enjoying lavish tax perks, but without even the most flimsy safeguards for savers - as 32,000 Maxwell pensioners have discovered.

John Major's refusal either to bale out the pensioners, or to compel the City to clean up its own mess and bale them out, leaves thousands stranded, drawing little comfort from the tokenistic arrests.

The sick joke of convicted Guinness boss Ernest Saunders strutting around, wealthy and scot-free, after a few months in open prison followed by his miraculous 'cure' from Alzheimer's disease, shows how little the Maxwells have to fear from British justice.

End business secrets

Nothing could more clearly underline the fact that business secrets under capitalism are designed purely to keep secrets from the workforce and to protect the guilty.

The media unions should take up the fight for the opening of the books of the Maxwell empire, while in every firm unions must demand a full opening of the books and workers' control of pension funds.

Ten London hospitals set to close

MANAGEMENT at the crisis-hit University College and Middlesex Hospitals have still not decided what closures to carry through to bridge a massive £14m spending gap.

A £6m package of cuts including the closure of the Elizabeth Anderson Hospital for women has already triggered an angry reaction from health unions and local campaigners.

But a special meeting of Bloomsbury & Islington health authority on June 19 failed to

resolve the issue of the missing £14m, even while managers publicly admitted that either the UCH or the Middlesex would probably have to close.

The Bloomsbury crisis is only part of a wave of cash problems that has triggered a new spate of closures across London.

Even before the secretive inquiry under Sir Bernard Tomlinson produces its recommendations later this year, eight other London hospitals, several of them national centres of excellence, comprising over 1,500 beds, face the imminent threat of closure.

In addition, major development schemes - including the promised re-provisioning of a children's hospital - have been scrapped as the capital's health service falls victim to the Tory government's new internal market.

A London Health Emergency survey of plans adopted by health authorities and opt-out Trusts in London shows that hospitals on the danger list include:

- **ATKINSON MORLEY'S** Hospital (Wandsworth DHA, 135 beds), the biggest specialist neurosurgery unit in England & Wales, serving the whole of the south of England. If the St George's Hospital opt-out application is approved, Atkinson Morley's would be closed and

transferred from its 31-acre site to share a small building on the overcrowded St George's site.

- **QUEEN MARY'S HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN**, Carshalton (100 beds). Another world-famous hospital threatened by the asset-stripping St Helier Trust, which calls for the closure of Queen Mary's, but no funding is available to build promised replacement facilities on the cramped St Helier site.

- The **BROOK** Hospital, in Greenwich DHA (500 beds). Regional plans to rationalise specialist neuroscience services would remove this from the Brook and transfer resources to King's College Hospital, while the opt-out Greenwich Healthcare Trust proposes to close its Accident and Emergency services.

- **DULWICH** Hospital, (256 beds) threatened with closure by the centralisation plans of the King's Healthcare Trust, whose opt-out application has been provisionally agreed but frozen until 1993.

- **RUSH GREEN** Hospital (Barking Havering & Brentwood), (190 beds) whose closure by 1995 is the centrepiece of an acute services opt-out application of the 'Havering Hospitals Trust'.

- **ST ANDREWS** Hospital, Newham, (297 beds). The

Newham opt-out application spells out plans to centralise all acute services on the Newham General Hospital site, leaving St Andrews ready for closure.

- The **SAMARITAN** (47beds) and **WESTERN OPHTHALMIC** (30beds) Hospitals in Parkside, whose closure is included in the prospectus of the St Mary's Trust, another opt out that has been frozen until next April.

Already cancelled is the promised 66-bed replacement for the axed **SYDENHAM CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**, which has fallen victim to the reduced capital plan of the Guy's-Lewisham Trust. Instead, paediatric services will remain in portakabins and refurbished wards on the Lewisham Hospital site.

London Health Emergency has branded the closures as 'a full-blooded asset-stripping operation'. The result will be fewer beds, forcing patients to wait longer or travel further for treatment.

"Many of these closures are being smuggled through in the application documents of would-be Trusts, who hope to avoid any proper public consultation. Nothing could more clearly show that Trusts and the internal market mean closures in London."

Scargill backs Pergamon rally

By Bill MacKeith

THREE YEARS after their one-day strike against Maxwell's Pergamon Press, 23 journalists are still fighting for union rights.

In the latest move to rally support for the struggle, 100 people attended a rally in Amsterdam on 18 June addressed by Arthur Scargill. The miners' leader told an enthusiastic audience that the Pergamon NUJ chapel had told the truth about Maxwell all along.

Scargill went on to call on Pergamon's Dutch owners, Elsevier, to meet the NUJ's demands for recognition, jobs and compensation. He argued that only solidarity action - not the Maastricht Treaty's Social Chapter - would prove effective in guaranteeing workers' rights.

A delegation of strikers is working in Amsterdam to pressurise the company, and has won a promise from distribution workers to boycott Elsevier titles. Anna Wagstaff of Pergamon NUJ called on Dutch unions to step up pressure on the companies.

Mike Sherrington of the NUJ industrial council stressed the importance of the struggle, and called for renewed efforts to increase financial support for the strikers.

Save the EGA!
Women's vigil
Saturday
July 4th
1pm
Outside the
Elizabeth Garrett
Anderson Hospital

Euston Road,
London NW1
(nearest tube Euston)

Student fightback statement wins support Defend yourself! Defend your union!

"We are opposed to the undemocratic way in which the attempts at structural reform have been made in NUS. We are also opposed to the court action being taken against NUS by the opponents of reform.

We call for the resolution of the debate on reform to be carried out in an indisputably fair way - by NUS conference, according to NUS rules."

Sponsors

NUS London
Manchester University: Doug Wong (Comms Officer); Bill Eyres (Academic affairs); Jamie Moore (Internals officer*); Matt Jordan (Campaigns officer 89-90, Secretary Fallowfield LP).

Manchester Polytechnic: Anne Taylor (Campaigns Officer).

University College Salford: Anthony Gregory (President).
Salford College of FE: Mike Brooks (President).

Manchester Area NUS Council: Duncan Chapple.

NUS London: Kevin Blowe (Convenor); David Prenderghast (Convenor*); Matt Byrne (QMW President*, NUSL Gen Sec*); Tara Bradley (Vice President Goldsmiths, NUSL Welfare*); Jorg Zapf (NUSL Exec*); Kumar Balasingham (NUSL Education officer*); Andrew Berry (Communications, City Poly exec).

SOAS: Debbie Mortimer (Co President); Maria Lypni (Co President).

City Polytechnic: Simon Fletcher (President); Jessica Twombly (Welfare Officer*); Ian O'Donnell (Executive*); Viv Francis (Womens officer*); Bash Khan (Special Needs*); Anthony Adshead.

Polytechnic of E.London: Simon Deville (Exec*).

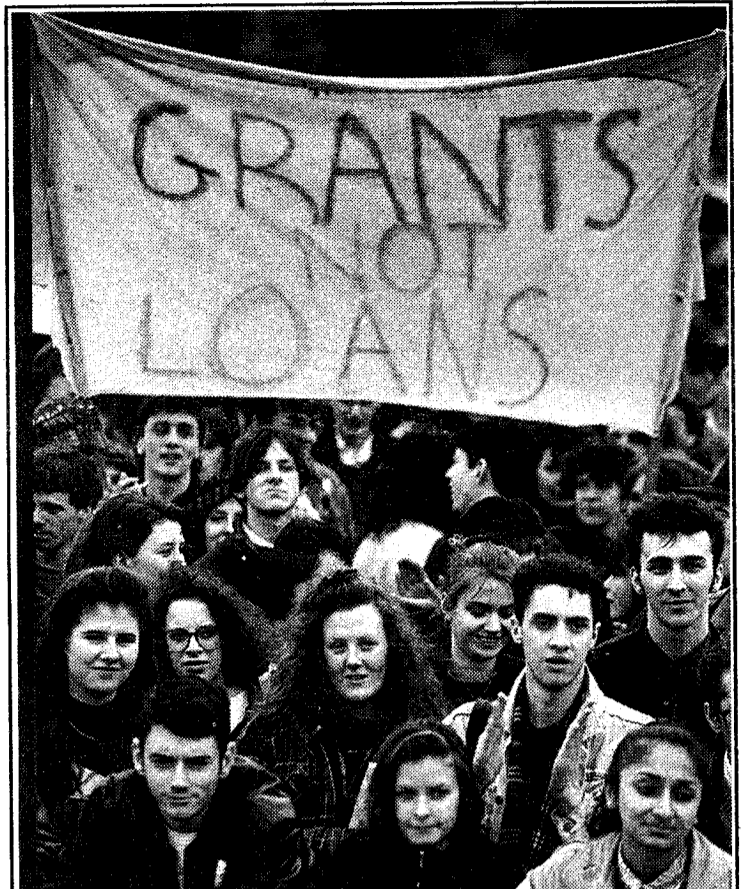
LSE: George Binette.
West London Institute: Ruth Bimber (Entertainments).

London Inst of Education: Maggie Newton (co President).

Oxford Polytechnic: Parm Kaur (Treasurer, Labour Club); Samia Bano (Chair, Labour club); Nicos Trimikliniotes (Occupation activist).

RUCM: Jane Foster (Womens Officer).

(* = officer elect, 1992-93)



Students' sit-in fights for resources

By Parm Kaur and Dave Scholes

They said it couldn't happen at Oxford Polytechnic - but it did, six months after other colleges. Why?

Student numbers have increased apace over the last year, without corresponding increases in resources. It's only now that students' anger and frustration has been focused into direct action.

Ineffective students' union campaigns over overcrowding, high canteen prices and lack of library facilities have failed to either motivate students or influence the management.

But as unrest increased, students' union leaders were forced to put forward a weak motion calling for occupation. This was strengthened with further demands and a call for the occupation of the 'Gibbs Building' teaching block.

The occupation was immediate, starting with some 200 students, and sustained by a core of 50. The majority had not previously been involved in student politics, and were

mature students and women.

Union support on the campus was strong. NALGO local government workers, NATFHE lecturers and porters and cleaners from NUPE fully supported the occupation and its demands. Messages of support were also received from numerous other colleges, unions, the Oxford East Labour Party and Tony Benn MP.

The occupation lasted a week, the longest in the polytechnic's history, and ended in an agreement with no victimisations. It was also agreed that there would be 'extensive negotiations' between the students' union, director and chair of governors when the occupation was over.

The directors agreed to issue a press statement recognising the occupation demands as reasonable.

The Student Union executive were not behind the occupation voting to end it as early as the first full day of the action. But the occupation must be judged a success.

There now exists a group of students committed to ensuring that the demands are fought for, and are prepared to take direct action again.

Rem 11: a year's battle against victimisation

By Dave Warwick

The 'REM 11', victimised postal workers, have been out of work for nearly a year, but the campaign for their reinstatement is growing as anger builds up in union branches.

The REM 11 Post Office Counters workers in South East London were in the forefront of the 1991 Union of Communication Workers (UCW) dispute. They had also campaigned against the introduction of new duties in their workplace.

They were sacked for what the

management described as 'overtime fraud' - but were in fact set up. The practice of 'job and finish' is common to both the REM unit and the Post Office in general.

They were given permission to leave early after completing their work - but this was the reason given for their suspension and subsequent sacking.

The workers are still waiting for an industrial tribunal. In the meantime unions across the country have financially supported them, and the recent UCW conference agreed to mount a campaign for industrial action among

the postal counters membership if the employer refuses to comply with a tribunal reinstatement award.

Support has been impressive, but needs to continue. Postal workers rightly see their victimisation as part of a wider strategy for smashing effective trade unionism in the industry.

The back-door privatisation of Post Office Counters is continuing apace. An ever-increasing programme of counter closures is likely to be stepped up with the Tories' election victory - and all remaining counters franchised.

This would be an important setback to all postal workers and the fight to defend their working conditions. This explains the strength of support for the REM 11 among UCW members - and it underlines why the trade union and labour movement should support their struggle.

Support and donations to:
Mr ML Haley, Branch Secretary, UCW CLS Branch, Room 123, RMLSE, 239 Borough High St, London SE1 1AA.

Wrong line helps axe Telecom jobs Dial NCU for sell-out!

By an NCU member

'RELEASE 92' is British Telecom's (BT) plan for cutting 24,000 jobs this year - on top of last year's 20,000. Such is the demoralisation among BT staff that enquiries have exceeded the company target by 2-300 per cent.

This formed the backdrop to this year's national Communications Union (NCU) conference. The union executive's new realist majority have fully collaborated with BT management in negotiating the deal.

While the left accepted that it was too late to stop the plan, it did put a stop to union support for one of the most dangerous features - the creation of a company by Manpower UK, using ex-BT employees as short-term contract labour.

In this context the unanimous support for a national strike ballot with a 'Yes' recommendation in the event of compulsory redundancies may prove pretty meaningless.



And every other proposal for industrial action was opposed by the executive - over a shorter working week, and the use of external contractors for example - unfortunately with most delegates' support.

Policy success

But the Broad Left (BL) won some significant success on policy issues, revealing how far right the executive majority has drifted.

An innocuous motion calling for a Labour government to increase its shareholding in BT was agreed, despite energetic opposition from the top table.

The BL was able to hold its own in both executive elections and the conference, having shed its Kinnockite/CP right wing last year to the so-called 'Unity Campaign'.

A Broad Left rally with Ken Livingstone attracted a third of conference, and 200 delegates and observers signed the 'Unshackle the Unions' statement.

One of the NCU's main problems is plummeting membership - which will only be partially offset by recruitment in Mercury and Cable TV.

No concrete proposals have emerged in merger negotiations with postal workers' union UCW, but they are likely to roll back both unions' best democratic practices.

For those remaining in BT, the Post Office and Girobank, productivity drives and attacks on conditions are planned - particularly on the 9-day fortnight and flexitime working.

The BL must be at the forefront of defending these hard-won gains, as part of a broader campaign in defence of jobs.

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socialist OUTLOOK

Europride – threat and illusion

By Peter Purton

Twenty one years after the first defiant demonstration, the organisers of this year's Pride – the words Lesbian and Gay have been optional for some years now – have chosen the theme of Europride.

We have been faced with Section 28, the Criminal Justice Act, state attacks on our right to parenthood and child-raising, and the highest age of consent in the continent. With no end in sight to the government from which these attacks came, sections of the lesbian and gay communities have looked with longing at the liberal regimes of Europe.

Surely 1992 will bring these joys to benighted, backward Britain? This is an illusion. Top of Major's agenda is certainly not bringing about an improvement of our lot.

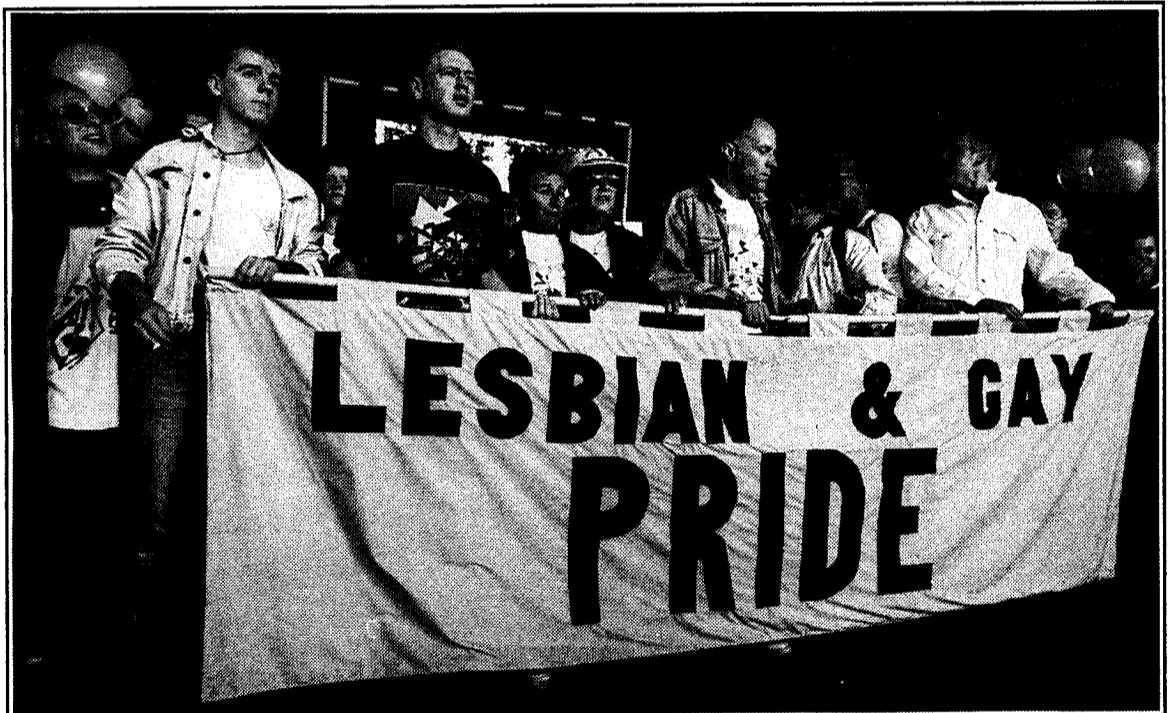
In a prolonged economic recession, far more likely than any general liberalisation of laws is a generalisation of social and political attacks on public spending and on all who stand in the way of restoring the profitability of capital.

That means the welfare state, health, trade union rights. It means increased state powers to drive these changes through against popular resistance.

Is it likely that Britain will adopt Denmark's legalised gay marriages or Holland's state support for lesbian and gay organisations? Or rather that Europe will fall in line with more reactionary regimes in Britain and Germany?

The other side of European integration is Fortress Europe. The measures are being put into place to keep out 'non-Europeans' – ie black people. At the forefront of growing harassment of black communities are the resurgent ultra-right and fascist groups, feeding on the racism generated by government policies.

These are the same people who as happily attack lesbians and



gay men, the heirs of the nazis who herded gays into the gas chambers in hundreds of thousands. A European state based on racist criteria of who is a 'real European' will be no friend to black people, to black lesbians and gay men – or the lesbian and gay community as a whole.

Europride has not escaped these racist consequences. The original symbol was two – white – hands: symbolic indeed of the white domination of the lesbian and gay movement, and of the unaccountability of the Pride committee, now a PLC.

Far from being the answer to our problems, 'Europe' threatens us with new and even more restrictive measures. The real solution lies in a hard political battle, not anti-political carnivals.

It lies not in a white Europride but in an active struggle against racism. It is not to be found in courting wet Tories, but in allying with the oppressed.

Unless we can win some genuine lesbian and gay internationalism, Europride may soon become Eurodespair.