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Up against the laws: Burnsall strikers

PHOTO: Mark Salmon

Unshackle our unions!



Arthur Scargill

FIRST SPAIN, then Germany, now France: all over Europe workers have been taking industrial action that would flout the vicious anti-union laws imposed by the British Tory government.

The French lorry drivers' action, blocking main roads, should remind us of the trial of strength that enabled Thatcher to impose those laws.

In Britain during the 1984 miners' strike, TUC leaders sat back and watched as police blockaded whole mining villages - and stopped cars on motorways on the slightest suspicion that they might have been carrying NUM pickets. They watched the NUM sequestered, they watched pickets beaten, and they did nothing.

Then the same TUC leaders watched as the printworkers and P&O seafarers were picked off, isolated and defeated. Ever since that time

the trade union leadership has been on the retreat, and the membership under fire.

Workers, like the women at Burnsall's in Smethwick, who stand up and strike for their rights now face a battery of anti-union laws that are among the most repressive in the world, and 'new realist' union leaderships determined to do nothing to challenge them.

The only concerted campaign to break and destroy this legislation is the Unshackle the Unions campaign, organised by the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee.

Its conference in London on July 18-19 will discuss the fightback against the new management offensive. It will be addressed by Arthur Scargill, and by Tony Benn, and is sponsored by leaders of the Bakers' union, the Furniture union and a host of trade union bodies. It offers the only immediate hope of organised support to workers in struggle.

BE THERE!

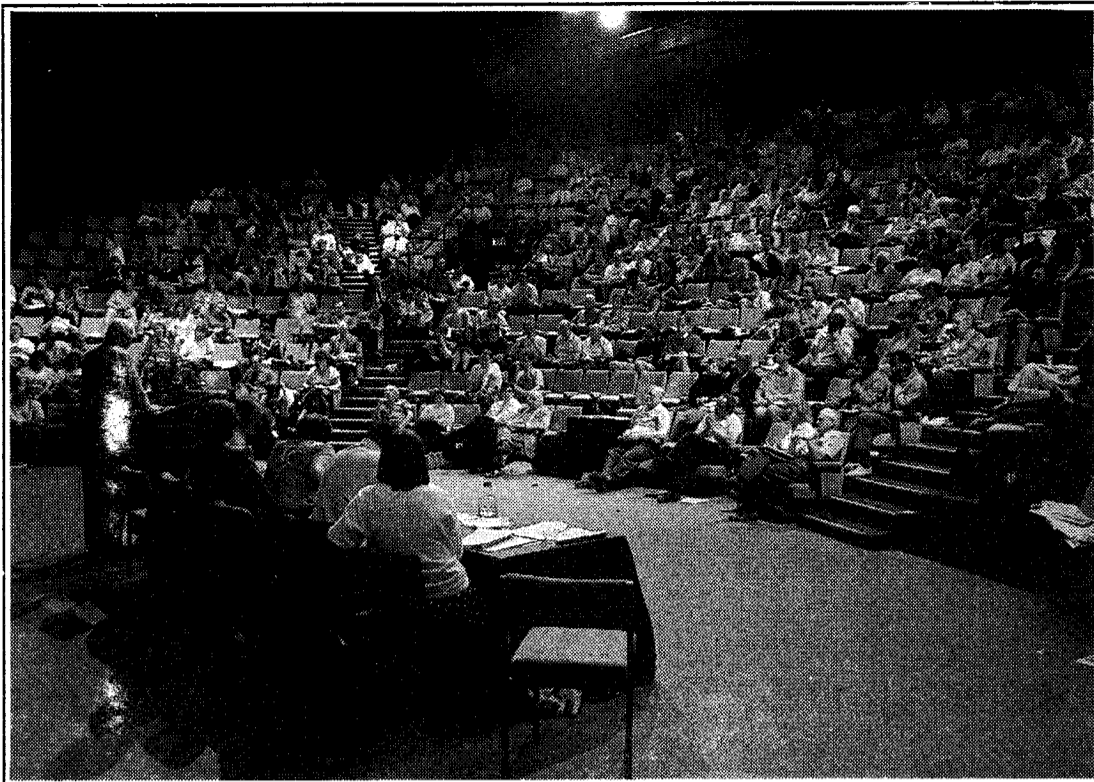
S THE
SOCIALIST
MOVEMENT
Trade Union Committee

Second Conference
1992

18-19 July

Conway Hall, Red Lion
Square, London

Registration £10 waged/£3 un-
waged



Over 500 attended Leeds Labour Left Conference

PHOTO: John Harris

Witch-hunt resumes in Lambeth

By suspended councillor
Steve French

JUST WHEN you thought it might be safe to dare say the word 'socialism', the witch-hunt is underway again.

There was a brief stand-off, whilst bureaucrats rigged the selection of Labour candidates and lost the general election.

Now the Labour Party's expensive fast-track expulsion machine (the National Constitutional Committee - NCC) has set dates for the first batch of purges. 13 Lambeth councillors and Vauxhall Labour Party member Steve Nally will have 'disciplinary' hearings in July.

The timing of the hearings means that they could be the last socialists expelled during Kinnock's regime or the first victims under John Smith's leadership. To remind you of some of the facts... In March 1991, the NEC laid charges of 'conduct prejudicial to the party' and suspended 13 Councillors and two Party members from activity.

This followed two special council meetings. One was called to oppose using Poll Tax bailiffs and the other condemned the Gulf War. Afterwards, the Kinnockite Labour Coordinating Committee (LCC) cried 'intimidation' to



Cde James Knapp: Outlook's favourite bureaucrat

the party executive (NEC).

These smears were used to launch an 'inquiry' which targeted 13 councillors who had not only supported the council Labour group's policy against the Gulf War and Poll Tax bailiffs, but had also voted against cuts in the past.

They are also attacked for suggesting a dialogue with SinnFein councillors. Nally and Fernandez are fingered for their role in the anti-Poll Tax campaign.

The suspension of the council leader, deputy leader, chief whip and mayor, was effectively a coup against the council leadership to further the ambitions of the LCC. Walworth Road's press office have aided an avalanche of vicious newspaper attacks and launched a sustained smear campaign within the Party.

To many, their 'guilt' is a foregone conclusion and it

simply remains for the NCC to 'rubber-stamp' it. The prosecution case is a scruffy batch of photocopied council minutes (some obtained illegally!) outlining how councillors have voted in the last six years. Charges even include launching a defence campaign.

Desperate to win the election, the Labour leadership wrongly believed that it could form a government by winning 'respectability' in the eyes of the establishment. With Labour's general election defeat, this new realist strategy has clearly failed.

Now attempts to shift the party further to the right, in order to realign the centre of British politics, will not only require a severing of the party's union link, but inevitably a renewal of the witch hunt to distance the party from socialism.

The purge has done nothing for Labour's electoral prospects in Lambeth either. Recent council by-elections have been very bad for the Party, even though Regional Office has excluded anyone who opposes the suspensions or who is remotely on the left from selection contests.

Lambeth Against the Witch-hunt are campaigning for the charges to be dropped. The rail workers' union RMT has defied the suspension by electing Greg Tucker, one of the suspended councillors, as a delegate to Labour Party conference. RMT leader Jimmy Knapp isn't happy!

Support has also been won from across the London regions of the TGWU and white collar union MSF, as well as the Southern Region of the RMT. This needs to be built on across the country. We need to build a united campaign against the witch-hunt, which fights for all socialists threatened by the purges.

Requests for speakers etc. should be sent to the Campaign Against the Witch hunt, 56 Ashby House, Loughborough Road, Brixton, London, SW9 7SL (071 733 3403).

Step up campaign for united left

IN THE WAKE of Labour's election defeat, the need for a stepped up co-ordination of the left has become increasingly obvious. As John Smith is elected Labour leader, the push in the entire leadership of the labour movement is to the right.

Smith as party leader will champion the Maastricht accords, and put his weight behind a review of Labour's links with the unions. With the merger of the AEU and EETPU, the Eric Hammond leadership is back in the TUC strengthening the weight of already dominant new realism.

Socialist Outlook has argued for a long time that what is needed is a fighting left co-ordination which stretches across the labour movement, the mass campaigns and the movements of the oppressed.

It involves building unity between socialists inside and outside of the Labour Party; and in particular strengthening the organisation of the left inside the unions.

As a first step towards building fighting left unity Socialist Outlook has given strong support to the Socialist Movement. Parts of the Socialist Movement have been very effective, in particular the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee, and its exemplary Unshackle the Unions campaign.

But it is now clear that on its own the Socialist Movement cannot act as the kind of umbrella co-ordination which is needed. Sections of the Socialist Movement have developed a completely diversionary debate on building a 'red-green party'. And its paper *Socialist* is increasingly disorientated.

The political basis for such a party does not exist. If it were created it would be smaller than the SWP or Militant and have no united political basis. Nonetheless the Socialist Movement can become an important part of a new left regroupment.

The June Leeds conference organised by the Socialist Campaign Group brought together 500 Labour Party activists determined to fight back against new realism. But the political and organisational outcome of the conference was very weak.



Ken Livingstone MP

At the same time Ken Livingstone has announced the formation of a 'Socialist Forum'. As yet however this is a very unknown quantity with a weak organisational base.

The moves towards reorganising the left represent the response to Labour's election defeat; however there is a limited window of opportunity for carrying through a left regroupment. The mood of resistance and determination must be capitalised on now.

The first thing is clarity on the political basis on which a new left could be built.

A new left regroupment must combine fighting all shades of the new realist right wing, with building campaigns against the key Tory attacks.

Key campaigns in the next period must include opposition to the new Tory anti-union laws and new management techniques, building anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigns, supporting Scottish self-determination and fighting inside the labour movement to defend the trade union links with the Labour Party.

Opposition to the Maastricht treaty must be a plank of left unity. The new bosses' Europe, with its plans for economic harmonisation with the deflationary diktats of the Bundesbank, means a huge attack on workers across Europe.

In October the Conference of the Left organised by the Socialist Movement will offer a unique opportunity to rally forces not in the Movement and put forward the basis for a wider unity. To do this of course the Socialist Movement has to decide that it wants a new fighting unity.

This involves making a decision about what kind of organisation the Socialist Movement wants to be. For some, the legacy of 'Beyond the Fragments' networking dies hard. According to this conception, the Socialist Movement is a forum for socialists to get together and discuss.

Debating socialism is fine. But in itself it won't frighten the right wing or the ruling class. In the end fighting left unity only has any usefulness if it sets itself the target of *renovating the labour movement*; and that means an activist, campaigning orientation.

There is of course no magical formula for building unity in the left. Genuine differences over strategy and objectives cannot be wished away. But disunity and lack of organisation substantially weaken the left's impact.

This is nowhere more true than in the unions. In a union like NALGO, soon to become the biggest part of the UNISON super union, the strong left wing has been incapable of building a viable broad left.

Mind-numbing sectarianism by the SWP and Militant have constantly sabotaged the prospects for unity, until today the 'Broad Left' is an SWP front organisation.

The same story is repeated in many areas of the labour movement. It can be changed, provided we remember the watchword of the most famous Cuban leader: 'division in the face of the enemy was never an intelligent or revolutionary tactic'.

Lobby against the witch hunt!

Lobby the first of the Lambeth hearings

Bring banners

Wednesday 15 July

8.30 am

Greater London Labour Party,
Charles St, N1

Choosing Labour's new leader

Imagine...

IMAGINE the following scenario. In a certain country the mass party of the working class loses its fourth successive election. As a result the party leader resigns. The candidates for his post open up a huge, wide-ranging and comradely debate about socialist perspectives, investigating the fundamental causes of the party's defeat.

The party, re-enthused by this flowering of socialist creativity, and buzzing with new ideas and strategies, is determined to learn past lessons and boldly reorganises itself to combat the hated capitalist government, full of confidence and determination.

Sound familiar? Only up until the end of the second sentence; the rest is a dreamland fantasy a million miles away from today's Labour Party.

Next Saturday week, the election of John Smith will be completed. And if the actual election seems to have arrived suddenly, it is because next to nothing has happened between the announcement of Kinnock's resignation and the election itself.

Indeed the only event of significance has been the campaign of Ken Livingstone and Bernie Grant, prevented by obviously undemocratic rules from being official can-



Cementing a right-wing succession

didates. John Smith is the sole surviving MP from the 69 who voted against the party line in 1973 to ensure Britain's entry into the Common Market. All the others are dead or no longer MPs.

Almost certainly Margaret Beckett will become deputy leader.

In these stitched-up elections socialists can only abstain; there is no political basis for supporting any of the official candidates. Among sections of the left there has been a desperate attempt to find reasons for supporting either Bryan Gould or John Prescott.

But Gould is slap bang in the middle of new realism, a Kinnockite to the core. Prescott has made noises about the importance of the unions, but never once spelt out in detail his conception of the party's links with the unions.

In the long term John Smith as leader will only push the party further to the right. Coalitionism is not on the agenda now, but as the next general election approaches pacts with the Liberals will be at the centre of the agenda.

The old Kinnockites, bereft of ideas, will be in the long term defenceless against the extreme right wing of the bureaucracy – the Hammonds, Lairds and Jordans – who want to turn the Labour party into a British version of the US Democratic Party, a simple capitalist party.

Eventually only a revival of the left will prevent this development. But in today's conditions a left which sticks to activism in the constituencies will be incapable of rebuilding anything.

The response to the election of Smith has to be the building of a fighting and united left across the labour movement, in the Labour Party, the unions and the mass campaigns. Without it, the evacuation of working class politics from the Labour Party will proceed apace.

No to armed intervention in Yugoslavia

THE SEIGE of Sarajevo by Serbian militias has been a heartless and brutal affair. It is the culmination of Serb nationalist aggression unleashed on Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia by the degenerate Milosevic regime in power in Belgrade.

Socialist Outlook has argued for a year that despite reactionary nationalism on all sides, the primary responsibility for the spiral into bloodshed lies with the decision by Milosevic and his cronies to utilise nationalism to stay in power in Serbia.

Turning point

The turning point in the fraught relations between the different republics was the military repression of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo in the late 1980s. This of course was the policy of Milosevic.

When Slovenia and Croatia declared independence in 1991 the only possible response for socialists was to support their right to national self-determination, and to oppose Serbia's military attacks.

There was one important qualification which had to be made to that. Socialists cannot

support the idea of an 'ethnically pure' Slovenia or Croatia. The rights of the Serbs in these republics, their right to live there, without national oppression and harassment, had to be defended.

This was not the response of the reactionary Tudjman leadership in the Croat capital Zagreb. Tudjman and company, as well as some of the right-wing Croat militias, did their part in turning the legitimate struggle for self-defence into an ethnic combat. Massacres of Serbian civilians, although not on the scale of Milosevic's butchers, have oc-

curred.

It is a real tragedy that inter-ethnic strife has now been unleashed on Bosnia-Herzegovina, where Croats, Serbs and Muslims have lived without conflict for decades. Again the prime responsibility lies with Milosevic.

But once the conflict started, the Croat leadership played its role in Milosevic's game, turning on the Muslim community and trying to conquer Croat zones in Bosnia.

The EC and the United Nations have been under pressure to take action to stop the slaughter and suffering in

Sarajevo. Part of that pressure has been the demand for military action, even the use of US aircraft, against the Serbian forces.

The relief effort must be supported. At one level there appears to be no strict boundary between the relief effort and military intervention. Canadian UN troops have secured Sarajevo airport; and the planes coming into Sarajevo with relief supplies have to be defended.

But there is a clear distinction between the use of minimal force to defend the relief supplies and secure their distribution, and a US or EC attempt to

use military force to impose a political solution.

There are no imperialist knights in armour who could be unleashed to defend the communities – Serb, Croat or Muslim – currently under threat, or guarantee national self-determination.

When British troops went in to Ireland in 1969 they went ostensibly to defend the Catholic ghettos being savaged by Protestant mobs and police. That they soon turned on the nationalist community surprised some people, but was a predictable result of the fact that British imperialism had its

own agenda, not identical to defence of the Catholic ghettos.

The way forward for the republics in ex-Yugoslavia has been shown by the growing peace movement against Milosevic in Belgrade. Only recognition of the right to self-determination, and above all the stopping of the war, will recreate the basis for co-operation between the peoples of the area.

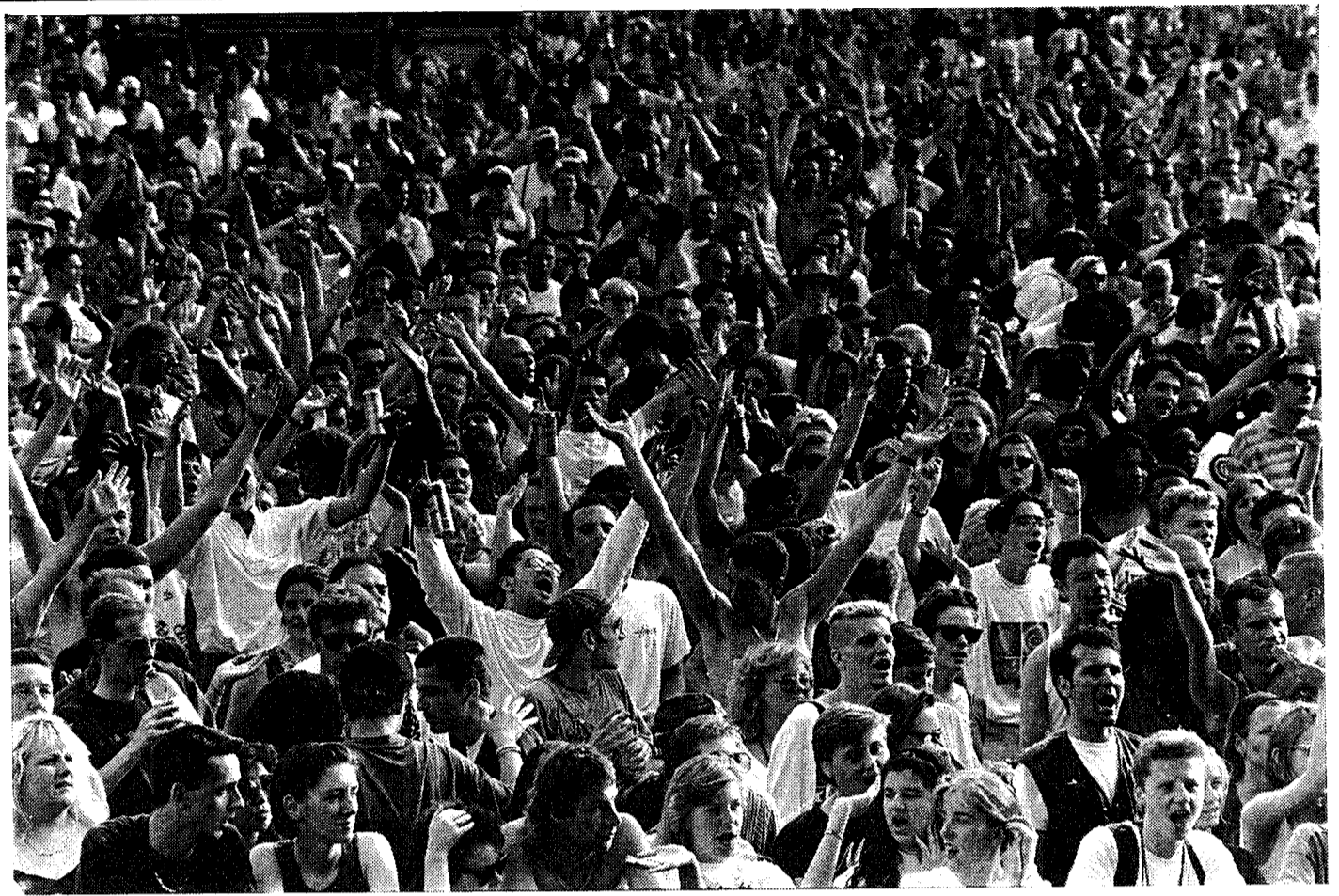
Imperialist intervention will not bring about these objectives; in the long-term it would only frustrate them.



Milosevic unleashed Serb nationalism

In a massive display of solidarity and strength, 30,000 lesbians and gay men marched in Lesbian and Gay Pride on 27 June. Up to 100,000 took part in the festival which followed in Brockwell Park, making it the largest Pride ever. Some of the racist overtones of 'Europride '92' had been removed as a result of work by anti-racists, but the event retained the theme, and much work remains to be done in winning the lesbian and gay movements to a campaigning, internationalist direction. Building the Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition demonstration on 31 October is the next objective.

PHOTO: Paul Mattson



Victory in sight for Birmingham NALGO

Victory seems certain for 450 Birmingham NALGO workers on strike for two weeks over under staffing at neighbourhood offices.

The dispute stems from the council's decision to extend its neighbourhood office network from 39 to 64 offices without employing more workers.

Shortage of staff has also hit housing workers, burdened with increased work through the poll tax. Housing workers were compelled to become involved in an 'interview service' for 'off the street' inquiries at the neighbourhood offices.

NALGO members hit back with limited industrial action on 15 June, but an attempt to

victimise workers taking industrial action at Washwood Heath Housing Office led to an all-out strike from 16 June.

The strike was called off on 30 June following council commitments on more staff.

No illusions

NALGO branch officer Martin Tolman said: 'We have won a victory here, but we should be under no illusions. Management will probably give extra staff to the neighbourhood offices through redeployment within the existing workforce.'

This dispute tells us a lot about how Labour councils are dealing with the local government crisis and their own staff.

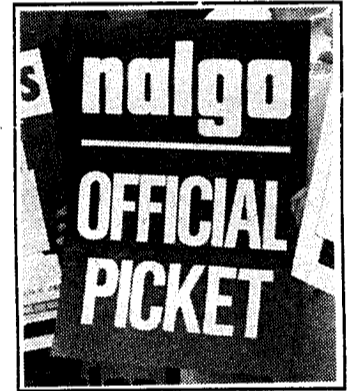
For much of this dispute we were faced with a council refusing to negotiate.

'Labour councils are just implementing cuts; for workers there is little difference between having a Tory or Labour council. The previous "dented shield" strategy is in tatters.'

'The strategy of telling workers not to rock the boat and wait for the election of a Labour government has been proved to be disastrously wrong. With the re-election of the Tories, Labour

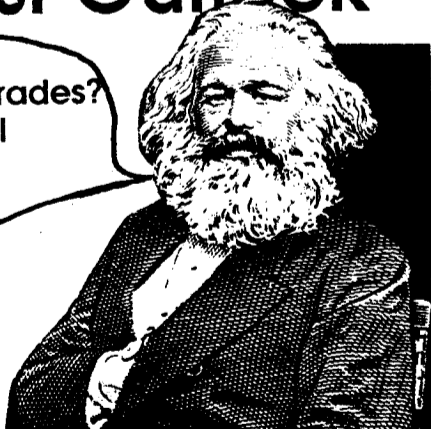
councils either have to fight the government or attack their own workers.'

'There is little doubt what their choice will be. Events in Birmingham, Islington and many other local authorities show us what the reality of the situation now is. Local government workers now have a massive fight on their hands to prevent the destruction of tens of thousands of jobs and defend services.'



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In defence of 'queer politics'

RECENT articles in Socialist Outlook have given a distorted account of the new 'queer politics' and failed to address the key material issues which gave rise to it.

First, the question of language... Language is powerful, as anyone who has been called a queer, a slag or a nigger will testify.

The feelings that flow through your body in times of abuse touch you to the core. And the issue of how you respond is crucial to your whole pride and dignity.

When you're called a queer, you can't engage in some linguistic debate about how 'the word is gay'. That is fine in the security of meetings, but is completely useless on the street or in the playground.

Defiance

You must either claim the word for yourself defiantly, or else deny it to your shame. There is no other choice.

The terms 'gay and lesbian' are relatively powerless, precisely because they are the terms of polite society. On the street, where it counts, where the struggle is engaged, the term is 'queer'.

IN OUR last issue, Rebecca Flemming argued that the movement towards a new conception of 'queer politics' was a retrograde step, an apolitical move away from the struggle for lesbian and gay liberation. Here TOBIE GLENNY takes up the debate, arguing that it is a positive move, bringing together a coalition of the sexually oppressed.

It is the language of the oppressor, the language of power. That is why many of us claim it for ourselves.

But there is another issue at the heart of queer politics, and that is unity.

In the mid-1980s lesbian and gay politics got taken over by a 'right-on' clique, who tried to define the terms 'lesbian and gay' to the exclusion of half of the movement:

- Lesbian and gay groups that included bisexual members were excluded from lesbian and gay venues.

- Lesbian and gay sado-masochists were excluded from demonstrations and

meeting places, and subject to vicious attack.

- Transvestites and transsexuals were rejected and ridiculed.

- Many others who didn't fit into the nice, neat categories of 'right-on' lesbian and gay identity were made to feel completely unwelcome.

Consequently a large number of those who had identified as lesbian and gay stopped seeing the lesbian and gay movement as belonging to them and looked elsewhere. And elsewhere was queer.

Diversity

Queer politics is a politics of diversity. It reaches beyond the old definitions of 'lesbian and gay', seeking to draw together in struggle all those who identify as sexually oppressed.

If the right-on minorities want to be involved in queer politics, then that's fine. If they want to carry on alone, then that's fine too.

But either way they should stop lamenting the fact that those they sought to exclude are now reorganising themselves, independent of right-on control.

Sweat-shop women strike back!

PHOTO: Mark Salmon



Fighting back - Bursall workers want equal pay and safe conditions

By Bob Smith,
Birmingham GPMU

SWEAT-SHOP workers in Birmingham have launched a fight-back for union rights. After one worker was sacked for protesting at excessive overtime, the workforce, predominantly Punjabi women, voted u-

nanimously for all-out action.

The workers are fighting for recognition of their union, the GMB, by Burnsall Ltd, an electroplating firm in Smethwick.

They are also demanding their colleague's reinstatement; equal pay for women - they are paid £20-£30 less per week in the plant; an end to

excessive overtime; and respect for health and safety.

On strike since June 15, the workers have also lodged 11 claims for equal pay and called for the establishment of a joint management/ union Safety Committee.

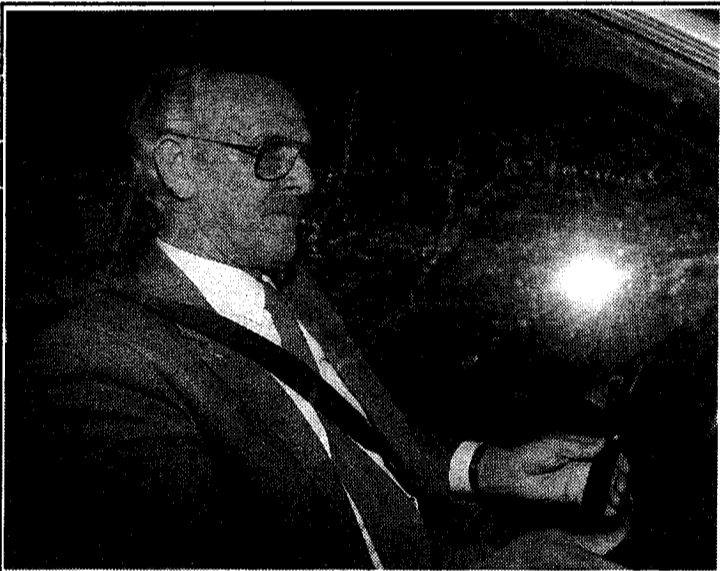
Recent visits by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have found that guidelines in the use of dangerous chemicals

- frequently used in electroplating - were being ignored. A GMB survey of the workforce found many were suffering symptoms associated with the use of chemicals without adequate protection.

The workers have faced racist harassment from the white management and attempts to recruit strike-breakers from outside, but the

action has remained solid. Support has been growing in the local labour movement, with stewards from public sector unions NALGO and NUPE pledging support.

Speakers from/ messages of support & donations to: Joe Quigley, GMB, Will Thorne Hse, 2 Birmingham Rd, Halesowen, W.Midlands B63 3HP. Tel: 021 550 4888.



Peter Heathfield: fight privatisation

Miners ready for action

MINERS' LEADER Arthur Scargill sounded the alarm at the NUM annual conference in Scarborough: the fightback against privatisation has to start now.

Scargill mapped out a strategy for all-out resistance to privatisation, proposing a joint campaign with rail workers to thwart the Tory plans. The NUM executive proposal, overwhelmingly supported by delegates, insisted on a campaign including 'any action necessary' to stop the sell-off.

But the miners' plan came under attack from Labour energy spokesperson Frank Dobson. Dobson argued 'I suspect we may not be able to avoid it (privatisation) for much longer...We would be failing in our duty if we did not give some thought to how best to minimise the damage.'

The defeatist speech drew a blistering response from the NUM leader. 'Once we begin that process everyone in Britain knows we have conceded that

privatisation is inevitable' he said.

It was only Scots and Welsh delegates who abstained on motions opposing management buy-outs and dealing with private companies. Retiring NUM General Secretary Peter Heathfield warned them that any move towards acceptance of privatisation would show that the NUM was a 'paper tiger'.

The miners' leaders didn't move an inch over the rationale for a nationalised coal industry. Scargill pointed out 'If we were to scrap nuclear power, stop coal imports and stop the 'dash for gas', the British taxpayer would be £2.3 billion per year better off.'

It was also announced that plans are afoot to reclaim more than £500 million in EC grants to the coal industry if privatisation plans go ahead; and to immediately take legal action to recover £800 million lost to the miners' pension fund through a management 'contributions holiday'.

London local government

NALGO fights redundancies

By a NALGO activist

London local government workers are stepping up action in defence of jobs. NALGO branches in Islington and Newham are mobilising against redundancies threatened by the local Labour-run councils.

Islington council, the fiefdom of Margaret Hodge, has announced that a new redundancy and redeployment plan is to be imposed. Where posts are cuts there will be no guarantee of a job. But this is not the worst of it.

Targets for redundancy are to be selected on the basis of workers' sickness and disciplinary records and so-called 'performance criteria'. Quite what these criteria will be is a mystery - since Hodge's minions haven't managed to work them out yet.

Islington NALGO has started the fightback with a campaign of strike action by 'key workers' - sections of the workforce who can cripple key council functions. Both Poll tax and Housing Benefit staff are now on indefinite strike.

But the campaign is escalating. Now they are preparing to bring out the whole 2,500 strong branch in an escalating campaign of industrial action.

In Newham NALGO members have been on strike since January against redundancy. The council, following in the footsteps of Camden Council's treatment of its social workers, has refused to re-employ five Poll Tax workers despite 15 vacancies in the section. Housing Benefit workers are also now on strike against redundancies.

It's not that the council are strapped for cash - higher managers had a £10,000 bonus last year, and £2 million has been set aside for redundancy payments. But argu-

ments to use the cash to keep people in work have fallen on deaf ears. Instead the council have threatened the strikers with the sack.

Following the threats, Poll Tax workers returned to work. But other members are still taking action, and



Bashing the workers - Islington's Margaret Hodge

the NALGO branch is balloting for all-out strike action in their support.

"UNSHACKLE THE UNIONS"

"We demand the complete repeal of all anti-union legislation and that the British Government comply with the Conventions and Principles of the United Nations International Labour Organisation for the full restoration of trade union rights.

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

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

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

"Unshackle the Unions" is a campaign launched by the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee, the Haldane Society Employment Committee, Solidarity Network, Labour Party Socialists and Trade Union News. The above statement is being circulated in the labour movement for support from activists.

I/We Labour
Movement
position personal/official capacity
Address
..... Phone.....

I support the Unshackle the Union statement.
Please make cheques payable to Socialist
Movement (TU) and send to Carolyn Sikorski 53a
Geere Road, London E15

US elections

Disillusion spawns a right-wing monster

By Patrick Baker

THE DEATH-KNELL of the two-party dictatorship? Maybe. But to be replaced by what?

Ross Perot's twenty-odd point lead in the opinion polls signals the massive disillusion across US society with both Democrats and Republicans, a disillusion that erupted into open rebellion in the riots that swept Los Angeles just a few weeks ago.

Independent

It is the first time in many years that there has been a serious independent challenge to the party candidates for President. Perot's independence, his religious fun-

damentalism and his claim to be an 'apolitical candidate, outside the system' have found an echo across broad swathes of the American people.

But beneath his glitzy, populist style lies a political animal that may prove infinitely more dangerous than either of the established parties. It is not for nothing that he has been dubbed by the liberal *New Republic* '...the closest approximation of fascism ever to have a real shot at the Oval Office.'

Definition

Perot has assiduously avoided defining his policies. But his close association with Oliver North, McCarthy's cronies and his past practices in

EDS, the company on which his fortune is founded, give some pretty clear indicators.

'Do not hire gay people; alcoholics are slob; do not hire any recovering alcoholics; do not hire anyone with mental problems...'. These are the guidelines he laid down for EDS' prospective employees.

It is no great surprise - but in some ways, encouraging - that he is least popular among the poor, women and black people. At least his most direct victims can spot the enemy.

But if Perot is clearly the enemy, it's hard to say who is the friend. Democrat candidate Bill Clinton, now leading George Bush in the polls, has in the past claimed to be the candidate for black people. And the Democrat traditionally picks up the majority of black votes.

Ditched

This may be the election that bucks the trend. After much soul-searching - or rather vote searching - Clinton has decided that his best hope lies in chasing the 'middle ground'. Black

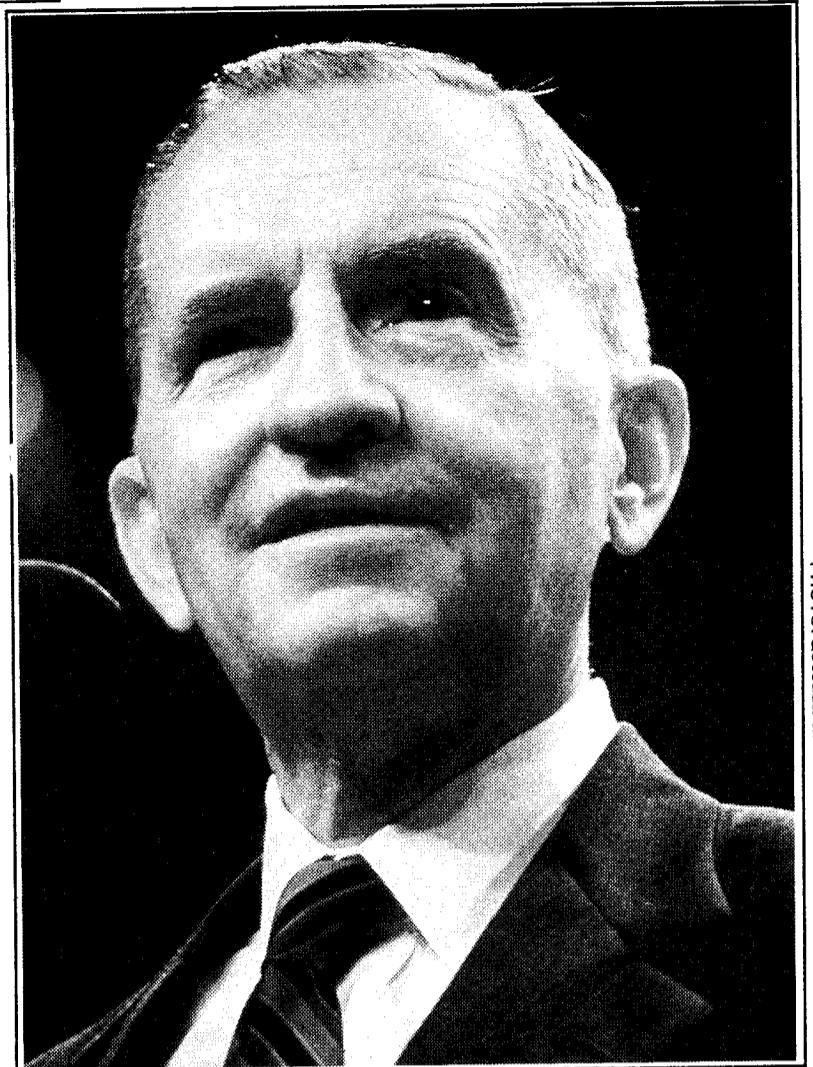


PHOTO: Quesada Matrix/Network

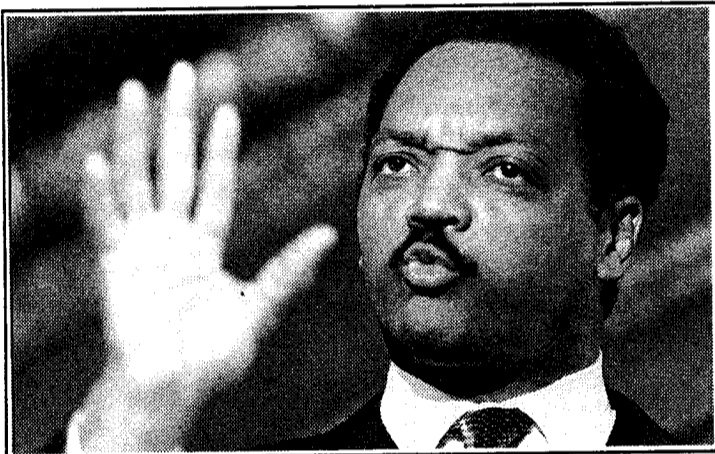
Perot: fundamentalist fruitcake?

people, labour and the poor are to be ditched in favour of the yuppie vote.

This is no quiet strategic move, confined to the smoke-filled rooms of the Democrat HQ. Clinton decided that to win the yuppie vote, he had to say it out loud and clear. And he picked about the most provocative place imaginable to do so, at a

rally with Jesse Jackson where he was expected to announce a 'shift to the left' in his campaign.

So the mass of US voters are once again offered Hobson's choice. No candidate is remotely on their side. The only difference is that now one of them is not only viciously right wing, but a proto-fascist.



Embarrassed by Clinton's abandonment of black vote: Jesse Jackson

Deng deepens Chinese divisions

Three years after Tiananmen Square, China's ageing bureaucracy is in deep trouble. Political struggles within the party are intensifying over market reforms, while the democratic opposition is again beginning to organise.

ZHANG KAI of the Hong Kong trotskyst journal *October Review* reports.

IN EARLY 1992, Deng Xiaoping embarked on a visit to the south to press his views and confront differences within the Party leadership on the question of further economic reform.

In all, Deng branded oppositional ideas as 'leftist'. In this latest round of confrontations, differences are highlighted.

On the question of differen-

tiating what is capitalist and what is socialist, Deng's three criteria are different from those proposed earlier by Jiang Zemin.

In 1991 Jiang said 'An economy of Chinese-style socialism must insist on having as its backbone the socialist public ownership of the means of production...these should not be

privatised...market regulation can function under the guidance of the state plan'.

But in 1992 Deng says the criteria should be 'whether it is advantageous to strengthening the overall power of the socialist country and whether it is advantageous to improving the people's livelihood'.

Deng is obviously pragmatic in his idea of development of productivity and reckless in overlooking the fact that many privately-run enterprises operating under the law of the market claim 'socialist' nature.

Deng said 'whether it is a bit more of the plan or a bit more of the market is not the essential distinction between socialism and capitalism.' The distinctions between capitalism and socialism are blurred and their contradictions reconciled.

Deng is rallying support from high-ranking military leaders and local bureaucratic cadres to compel some party veterans to go along with his proposal of accelerating reform. However, before his speeches were circulated to the entire Party and bureaucracy, the Party Central did some editing and deleted some formulations.

What had been deleted included: 'Whoever is not committed to the reform must step down'; the naming of Deng

Liqun, Song Ping and Li Shim-ing for criticism; and critical words directed at some 'veteran comrades in very high levels of the Party'.

Li Peng's Government Work Report made one or two months later included much of what Deng said, yet made no mention of Deng's critique of the 'left'. 'We must be vigilant against the 'right', but the main question is to guard against the 'left'.

After much argument, the phrase was finally added into the Report after a vote was taken by the National People's Congress. Still, in Li Peng's report, the three criteria were modified to become the 'criteria for defining the success or failure of the reform'. Differences continue to surface.

When confronted with resistance from all sides in launching the economic reform, however, Deng has to resort to exploiting different forces to give him support.

With growing differences in the ruling strata and surfacing out of the differences after Deng's visit to the south, some space has opened up for the people's dissent and activities to revive.

On April 5, about 40 students from Qinghua and Beijing Universities, pinning small white flowers on their clothes, went to Tiananmen Square in

two batches to pay homage to the people's heroes at the Monument. Though they were stopped, the act was symbolic.

Some time earlier, Han Dongfang, the former leader of the now outlawed Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation filed in an application for a parade.

This also indicated a change in the political atmosphere among the people. And the 'Preparatory Committee of the Beijing Free Trade Union' distributed propaganda material about the organisation's appeal to set up independent trade unions.

The acceleration of the economic reform is leading to further sacrifices demanded of the workers, whose right to a job and reasonable wages is undermined. More resistance from the workers is expected to evolve.

Three years after the 1989 crackdown of the democracy movement, the regime is still painstakingly attempting to stabilise its rule. It has come under serious pressure from domestic difficulties, factional power struggles and the impact of the drastic changes in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Signs of people's resistance are emerging here and there, presaging an important struggle yet to come.

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South Africa: the time for rhetoric is over

By Charlie van Gelderen
THE MASSACRE in Boipatong in June did more than mark the foundering of the hopes aroused by the CODESA negotiations.

It also changed the relationship between the ANC leadership, its rank and file and the great mass of the people who looked to Nelson Mandela and the ANC for leadership in the fight against apartheid and for a democratic South Africa.

Archbishop Tutu's plaintive wail to heaven 'God, do you not love black people?' is symbolic of the new mood of the people.

No longer will they look for salvation to those in high offices, whether in government or in the ANC, or live in hope of divine intervention.

New mood

They will rely from now on only on their own organised strength. BBC and ITN reporters at the mass funeral of thirty of the victims of the Boipatong slaughter – significantly on the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre – all speak of the perceptible change of mood.

The speeches from the rostrum were greeted with interruptions 'Guns! Give us guns!'. Rhetoric is no longer enough. The people in the townships are no longer prepared to allow themselves to be used for target practice by the security (sic) forces or their hired Inkatha thugs.

The white reporters, as they pressed through the assembled multitude, were also impressed – and not a little bit frightened – by the muttering of 'One settler, one bullet'. This is the dreaded slogan of the Pan African Congress (PAC), whose support has manifestly increased since the breakdown of negotiations.

Perhaps the most important feature of the funeral proce-

dures was the prominent part played by Jay Naidoo, General Secretary of COSATU. Up to now, the trade union movement as such has played no part in the CODESA negotiations, but only a peripheral, advisory role.

Armed struggle

An armed conflict at this juncture against the super-efficient armed forces of the state can only lead to disaster.

Especially as the ANC and its Communist Party (SACP) ally, deciding to mainly play the negotiation card, placed its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), into cold storage after suspending the armed struggle.

The most powerful weapon in the liberation forces' armoury is the industrial muscle of the black working class. This could bring the already enfeebled South African economy to a standstill overnight.

It is time to turn the much-repeated rhetoric about 'the leading role of the working class', so prominent in ANC and SACP propaganda, into reality.

The more recent events in Cape Town, when the police opened fire on an unarmed demonstration, shows once again that the ruling National Party, like the Bourbons, have learned nothing.

Hanging on

They are prepared to hang on to power by all means at their disposal.

The liberation forces will have to respond in the same language. There must be no more, even token, concessions to the ruling class. Mandela must not return to his old habits of private contacts with cabinet ministers behind the scenes while denouncing negotiations in public.

The pressure from the ranks show that you cannot fool all the people all the time.



PHOTO: Benny Gool/Impact

South African blacks demand an end to brutality

Cossacks and stalinists join forces on Dnestr

By Steve Kaczynski

'A SECOND Bosnia' was how *The Economist* described the conflict between Moldovans and ethnic Russians and Ukrainians in the Dnestr republic – and that was before the latest fighting broke out.

But the situation on the Dnestr is turning into a complex international crisis which could make Bosnia look like a local difficulty.

The Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was created in 1940 when Stalin took the region from Romania. With the collapse of the USSR, the renamed Moldova became an independent country. Its president, Mircea Snegur, has portrayed reunification with Romania as a goal for the future.

But the easternmost part of the country, Transdnestr, not only contains much of Moldova's industry but is mainly inhabited by Russians and Ukrainians. Calling itself the 'Dnestr Moldavian Republic', its aim is to secede from Moldova under the leadership of a stalinist elite headed by one Igor Smirnov.

Recent battles with Moldovan troops and police have

been fought by militia and police who have inherited both equipment and attitudes from the Soviet army, along with Cossacks in tsarist uniforms. The Dnestr republic's symbols tend to be either the flag of the USSR or the black-yellow-white flag of Russia's monarchists.

The 14th Army of the Russian armed forces is another key player. Many of its personnel have defected to the Dnestr militia, but even those under Russian control have intervened on their side.

Declared war

On June 22 the town of Bendery fell to the Dnestr forces. Romanian radio reported that President Snegur stated that Russia had 'declared war on the republic of Moldova'.

Russian Vice-President Rutskoi has also fished in the troubled Dnestr waters. He has declared that Russia won't allow Moldova to solve the 'Dnestr problem' by force and would 'put a decisive stop to the mass murder of the civilian population.' Moldovan authorities retorted that Russia was aiding 'authoritarian, neo-communist circles'.

The eddies of the Dnestr whirlpool are spreading wider and wider. Dnestr forces stated

that Romanian citizens were among their Moldovan prisoners. On June 28 Russian TV claimed that a 'presumably Romanian' fighter had been shot down over the Ukraine.

Romania denied any plane had been lost and accused Russia of fighting a media war. Nationalists are calling for the government to come to the aid of the 'Bessarabian Romanians of Moldova'.

The Ukrainian government, meanwhile, is under pressure to support ethnic Ukrainians on the Dnestr, but is frightened of Russian intentions. And Bulgarians are worried that their minority in Moldova could join the swelling refugee figures, while Jews are fleeing both the fighting and anti-semitism.

Even the West has not escaped damage. On June 29, a factory in Bendery – a German-Moldovan joint venture – was shelled. With the possible exception of arms dealers, the conflict is not drawing in Western investment.

Perhaps the only consolation in this scenario is that conflicts such as those in Dnestr threaten to slip further and further from the control of the 'New World Order' string-pullers.

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'There has been no lead from the TUC'

AS MOMENTUM built up for the Unshackle the Unions conference, Socialist Outlook spoke to JOE MARINO, General Secretary of the bakers' and food workers' union, BFAWU. Marino has been a consistent supporter of the campaign, along with miners' leader Arthur Scargill and furniture workers' leader Colin Christopher.

How have the anti-union laws affected your attempts to defend union organisation?

We've had a policy right from the start of totally ignoring the legislation. Any action that's been taken to defend terms and conditions or members' jobs has always got the support of the union, irrespective of any legislation.



Joe Marino

Many industries have faced attempts by employers to derecognise unions. Has BFAWU faced these attacks?

It's not been a problem so far, but that's not to say it won't happen. We're in dispute with a company at the moment now. The workers are talking about coming out over a national agreement that's under attack.

Some figures in the union movement and the Labour Party have argued that rather than industrial action, we should look to the EC social charter.

In our view the European Community only looks good because the attacks by this government have been so bad. But as they say 'beware Greeks bearing gifts'.

We're not too enamoured with what's coming out of the community - we'd treat it with great caution. But in any event, you only have to look at what's happened with the Social Charter to see how it's been watered down to the lowest common denominator.

We'd get very little out of it at all. So we believe that's leading people down the wrong path.

Now that the EC's becoming more of a concrete reality, do you think it's more important that unions and workers' organisations begin to work together on an international level?

Whether the EC's becoming more organised or not is immaterial. Our view is that unions should be organising on an international basis anyway. But it shouldn't just be among the 12 EC members, but throughout Europe, given the way multinational companies are going.

We are facing a multinational company that's been buying heavily in France. We have made links with French unions, irrespective of their political affiliations.

Internationalism has always been part of the working class movement; the EC shouldn't make a difference.



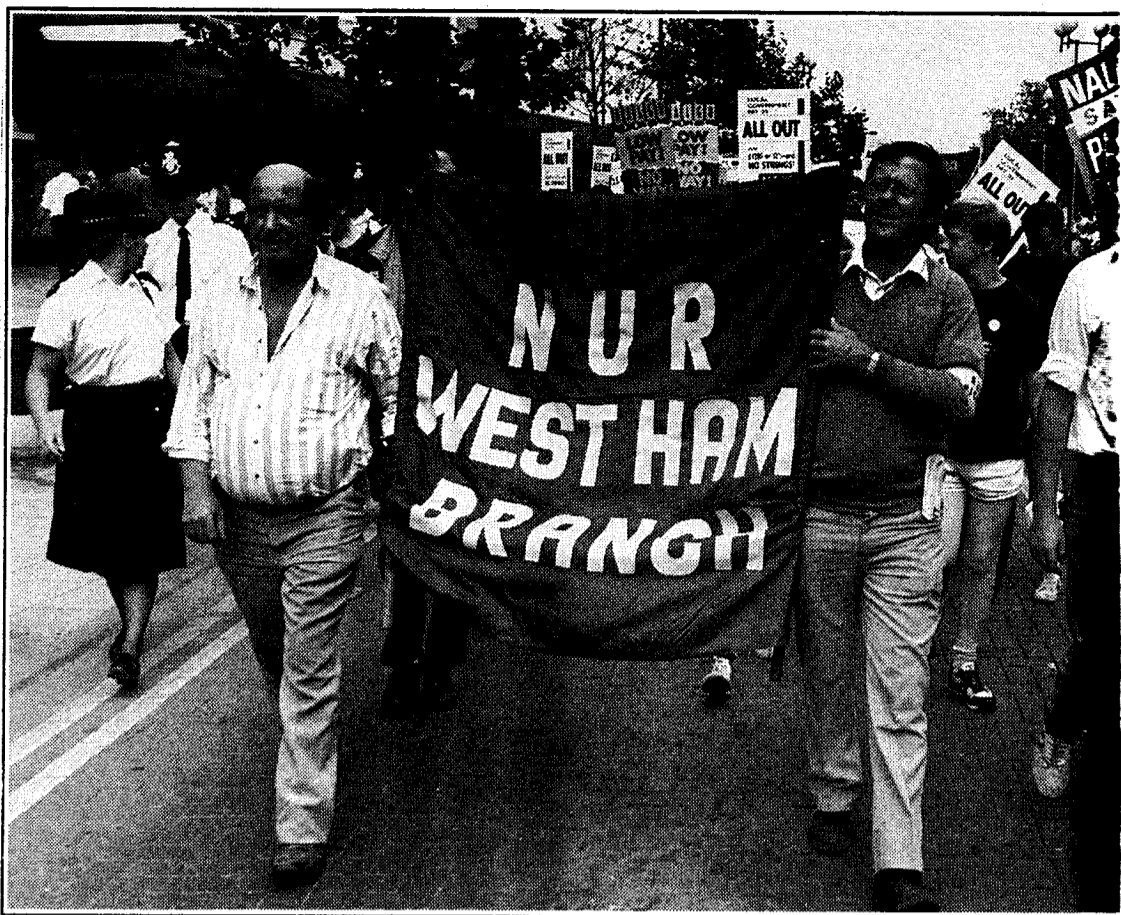
Offering title: EC's Delors

Finally, what role do you see for the Unshackle the Unions conference? How can it aid union activists?

One of the problems that the movement has got is that no lead has been given by the TUC, the Labour Party or indeed the major unions in fighting these laws.

Conferences like 'Unshackle the Unions' should be used in order to begin the fightback against this Tory legislation. It should be used to coordinate the approaches of shop stewards in particular and union activists.

It should also show that there is a lot of resistance out there to the legislation.



Resisting the bosses' offensive

THE SMTUC conference comes at a time when trade unionists are under wide-ranging attack.

The depth of the capitalist crisis and the re-election of the Tories, mean that the bosses' offensive is going to be resumed with an vengeance.

The conference must highlight three key areas for resistance:

- the new anti-union laws, which aim to strike a major blow at the unions' ability to organise.

- the widespread introduction of 'new management techniques'.

- the coming attack on the public sector, which threatens a million public services jobs.

The focus of the conference will be the new management techniques. Although generally associated with manufacturing industry, especially cars, they are now being introduced in the public sector.

Health, education, the post office, telecom and transport all face the same offensive. Few workers will not be faced with some aspect of these techniques in the coming years.

There are four main elements to these techniques. First an **attack on trade unions**. Second, the **transformation of working**

conditions. Third, the **reshaping of the workforce**. Finally, these techniques are held together by an overall **ideological offensive**.

None of these elements, taken separately, is new. What is new and threatening is the way these things are being integrated by management into a coherent approach in which each one reinforces the others.

Attacking the trade unions can involve outright derecognition, as in the Unipart plant in Oxford, and in the print trade.

But derecognition so far has involved relatively few areas. Anti-unionism has included a range of measures designed to break the allegiance of workers to their union, and identify them with their employers.

These measures include performance related pay, individual contracts, no strike agreements and binding arbitration, reduction in trade union facilities and the abolition of the check off system where union dues are deducted at source.

Work teams, often with elected team leaders, are promoted by management as an alternative to unions, and workers are encouraged to look to their team leaders, rather than shop stewards, to solve problems.

The aim of course is to make it appear that pay and conditions depend on individual ef-

fort and not on collective union action.

At Nissan's Sunderland plant workers get an annual pay increment if their performance is judged to be good enough; exactly the same model is being proposed for teachers in higher education.

The new techniques demand an intensification of work levels, achieved through a reduction or abolition of job demarcation, as is being proposed on London Underground, and by putting responsibility for quality control and maintenance on to production workers, thus cutting the workforce.

Defining jobs in terms of tasks to be carried out per week, rather than hours worked per week, effectively introduces compulsory overtime.

Speed-up often operates through team-working. Teams have the responsibility for checking their own output and also checking and reporting on other teams.

But it is not necessary for teams to play this role in every workplace. In education for example the focus is much more on individuals teachers, and instead of team monitoring the emphasis is on formal appraisal systems.

The changing character of the workforce involves increased use of part-time workers and temporary workers and

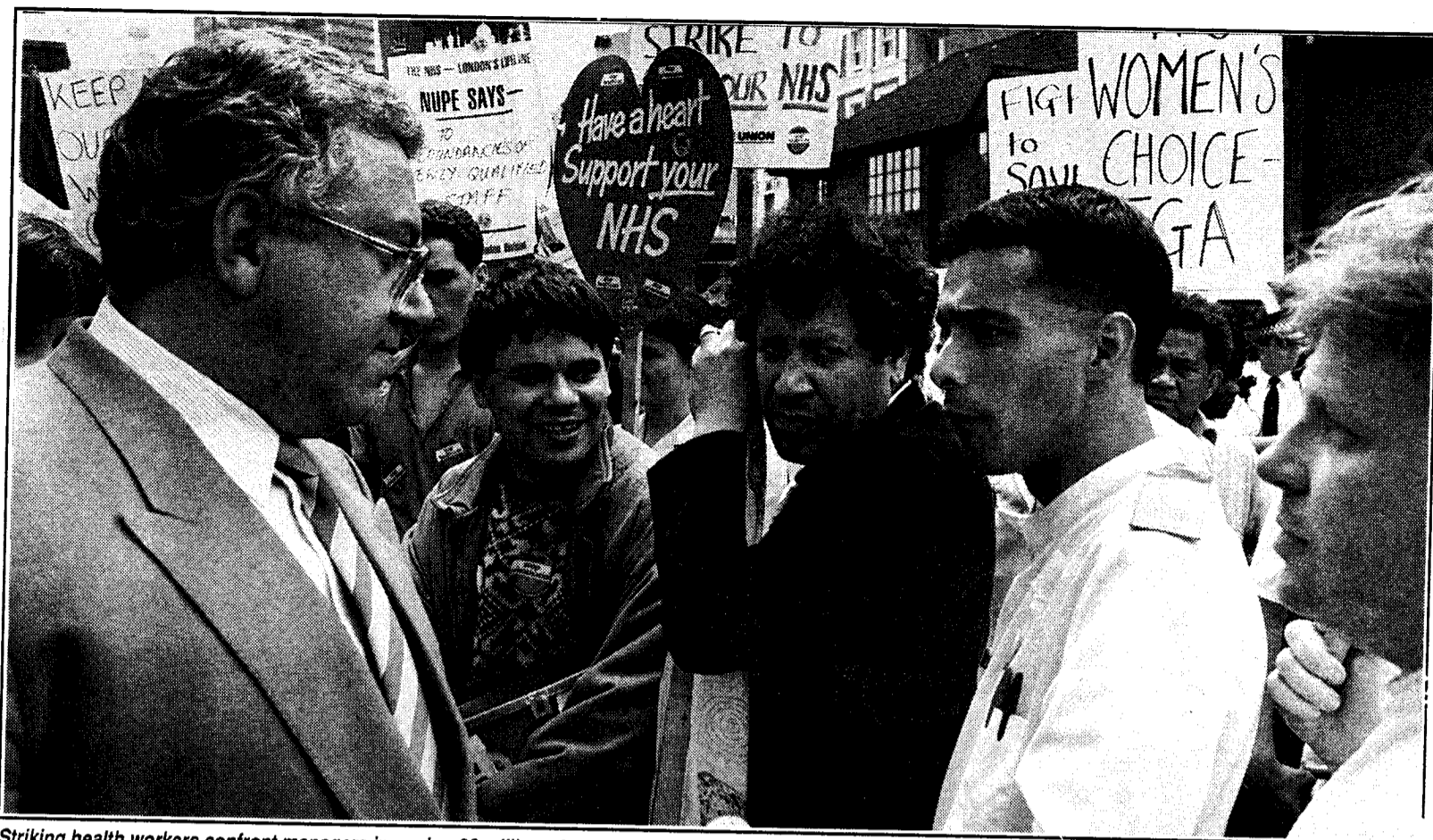


PHOTO: Andrew Ward

Striking health workers confront managers imposing £6 million of cuts in Bloomsbury

stepped-up sub-contracting. In Japan this has played a very important role.

The so-called 'lifetime' employment system in large companies has rested on a huge network of smaller firms which carry out subcontracting work in appalling conditions and provide very insecure employment. In large companies temporary workers have faced particularly severe conditions.

In Britain the main focus in this area has been in the public sector, especially local government, with **compulsory competitive tendering**.

In education, telecommunications, social services and publishing the use of agency staff, freelance workers and workers on short-term contracts is on the increase.

The workforce becomes divided, with obvious implications for those already discriminated against such as women and black workers.

New management techniques are not all-powerful and they can be resisted. This depends to a large extent on the militancy and attitude of the workforce.

Teams cannot be used to replace trade unions if the workers refuse to see the teams as representing their interests. Changes in the workforce need not weaken unity or trade union organisation if the unions respond and actively recruit.

For trade unionists, the first plank of resistance is to build a culture against collaboration with new management systems, and this means trying to build an understanding and a relationship of forces which will enable trade unionists to refuse to get involved in negotiations about their introduction.

All new management techniques have at their heart the destruction of the independent role of the unions, and a philosophy of collaboration with the bosses.

The ideological ploy which this involves is an alleged trade off between increased 'flexibility' and productivity, in return for allegedly higher wages and more job security.

Such a trade off, dangled before workers when the new techniques are introduced, is a

fraud. Even if there are immediate benefits for workers, the destruction of the independent role of the unions makes future redundancies and pay restraint more difficult to resist.

The task for socialists is thus to build a culture against participating in quality circles, becoming team leaders, or accepting other techniques like performance-related pay and individual contracts.

Anti-union laws

THE NEW anti-union laws provide for:

- Compulsory 7-day cooling off periods before a strike decision is acted upon.

- The ending of the check-off system of union dues collection. There is even talk of restrictions of the use of political funds to give money to Labour.

- Compulsory full postal ballots before a strike: up until now workplace ballots have been possible.

- The ability of any worker to 'join the union of "his"(sic) choice'.

- 'Contracting-in' to union political funds.

Key factors here are the legal banning of the 'Bridlington'

agreement; the outlawing of the check-off system; and the requirement for workers to 'opt-in' to political funds.

This is a new stage of the anti-union laws because they go from attacking the right to strike to attempting to hobble working class organisation.

The ending of Bridlington will open up well-organised areas of industry to raiding from company unionism of the type pioneered by Eric Hammond's EETPU. The destruction of the check-off system will involve unions in an enormous effort to maintain their organisation and finances.

And the attack on political funds is designed to help break the union link with Labour, and of course damage Labour party finances.

Attack on the public sector

IN THE LAST 30 years the public sector has become a bastion of trade union organisation; now one million public sector jobs are at risk - in local and national government, in the NHS,

and in education particularly.

The Tory plan to further twist the privatisation screw came with the November 1991 White Paper 'Competing for Quality'. In introducing the White Paper Treasury Minister Francis Maude said the government would 'Extend competition in the provision of public services further and faster than ever before across the public services'.

What this really means was summed up by Graham Mather, the director of the right wing Institute of Economic Affairs, who said 'The government of Britain is moving towards a series of contracts, in which a core of fewer than 10,000 civil servants will specify and buy public services from outside agencies, private contractors and consortia of former public sector managers.'

Among those areas which will be most affected by the privatisation and 'marketisation' plans in the next period will be local government, health and education.

LOCAL COUNCILS have already been hard hit by compulsory competitive tendering in areas like refuse disposal, direct works, leisure services and catering.

100,000 jobs have been lost among manual workers. White collar jobs have been more protected, but NALGO has been very reluctant to admit the extent of the decline among white collar jobs, and doesn't even keep a national database of jobs lost. Probably 20,000 NALGO jobs have already gone.

Now local government faces a funding crunch which is going to lead to much worse in the way of job losses. The room for manoeuvre through negotiations over voluntary redundancies is severely eroded.

Moreover the plans outlined in 'Competing for Quality' include much more extensive local government privatisation than has occurred so far.

The idea of **TEACHERS** facing compulsory redundancies would have seemed unthinkable even a few years ago, but now it is becoming a reality for thousands.

Already LMS has taken a toll in an unknown number of jobs

of school cleaners and other ancillary workers cut. In the coming sackings of school teachers, ironically it will often be the most experienced teachers who will go first.

This is because the present structure of teachers' pay, which involves sharp differentials, makes experienced teachers much more expensive.

Qualified staff are also most at risk in the **HEALTH SERVICE**, where competitive tendering for catering, domestic and laundry services was imposed in the 1980s, slashing jobs and pay.

Other support services are now being put out to tender; no section of staff is secure.

Leading the attack are the 160 opted-out 'Trusts', which are free to tear up nationally-negotiated agreements on pay and conditions and, as some have done, to refuse recognition to unions.

Almost all Trusts and would-be Trusts are now threatening 'skill mix reviews' designed to replace expensive qualified staff with cheaper unqualified workers.

Meanwhile the Tories' 'internal market' is forcing many hospitals to close beds and axe jobs in order to balance their books.

Fighting back

These then are the three attacks which have to be fought - new management techniques, the anti-union laws and the plans to devastate the public sector.

First and foremost the widest possible information about what these attacks mean has to be disseminated. A new culture of opposition to new management techniques has to be created.

The understanding that union laws can only be resisted by defying them has to be established. And the broadest possible alliance against the destruction of the public sector has to be established.

The outcome of the struggle on these questions will determine the shape of trade unionism in Britain for many years to come.



PHOTO: John Harris

It could happen to anyone: biscuit workers on strike in Liverpool

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**What
 is to be
 done
 about...**
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British transport a wreck

With this issue we start a new series about the socialist alternative on basic problems affecting the everyday lives of working people.

PAUL CLARKE argues that there is no more suitable case for socialist treatment than transport.

IF YOU think that the economic laws of the market lead to efficiency, you obviously haven't travelled on London Underground during the rush hour, or tried getting into London on Network South East.

And if you think that state investment and control leads to inefficiency, try travelling on the Paris or Moscow metro systems, where trains come two or three times more often than on the London Underground.

Millions of hours are wasted each year in Britain though inefficient transport, generally the hours of hard-pressed workers. Travelling time and hassle means a reduction in leisure time and significantly higher stress levels for millions.

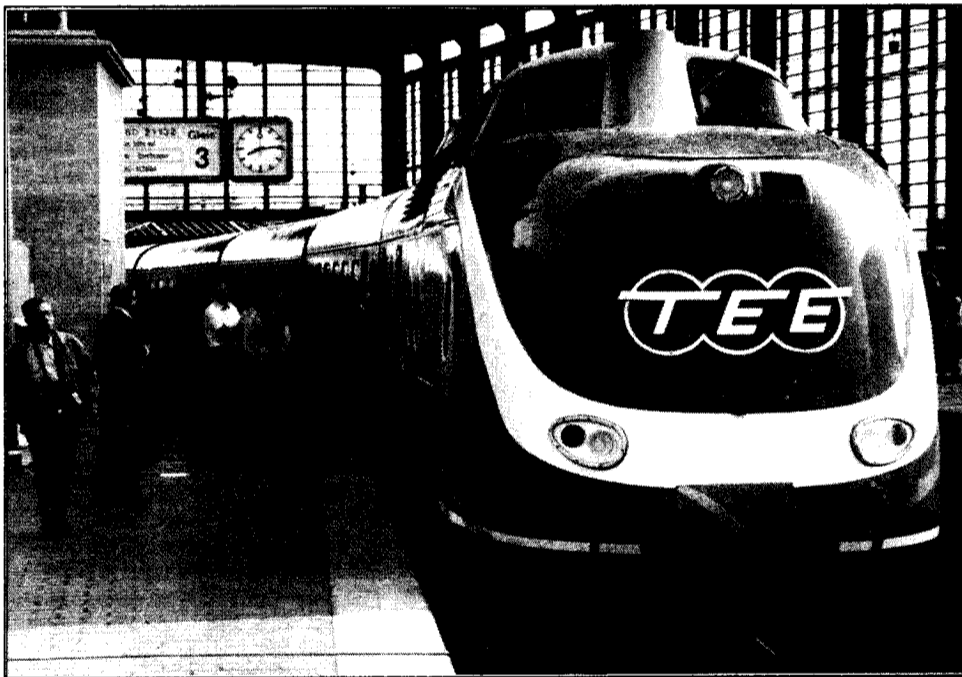
Public transport costs too much; in Britain it is up to 100 per cent more costly than in other advanced countries. Ten Paris metro tickets cost £3.40; 34p for any journey compared with the 80p minimum on London Underground.

While millions of people pay a fortune in road tax to sit in traffic jams, train travel is becoming a luxury. Travelling by train between Scotland and London is not significantly cheaper than going by air.

While buses are disappearing from the countryside altogether through privatisation and de-regulation, visiting relatives or getting to hospital for poorer people can be an expensive nightmare.

The 'great car economy' is in part based upon the fact that for many

TRANSPORT



On the continent they go faster

people in rural areas there is just no alternative. Urban commuters prefer London traffic jams to the filth and crowding of public transport. Meanwhile the daily toll of carbon monoxide emissions goes unchecked.

There is probably no area in which the case for socialist planning is so clear-cut, and no area in which the insanity of capitalism is so obvious. How would a socialist government seek to solve the problem?

The first interim task would be to cut the number of cars on the road, but that could only happen by rapidly improving public transport. If cars were banned from city centres, unimpeded buses would immediately deliver a

more efficient service.

More and faster trains are needed; the rail network would need a huge investment programme. But banning the private car is not an immediate option. Reorganising the transport system would take years and vast investment. Any attempt to ban cars would lead to chaos on a still-inadequate public system.

Diminishing demand

Once public transport became efficient and comfortable the pressure to use cars for simple journeys to work and back would diminish.

Car owners use cars for long distance journeys because they can go directly to their destination, and again because it is often more comfortable and cheaper.

But would they choose to spend hours driving on a motorway if they could go on a comfortable and cheap train? And if they could be certain of getting to their final destination without discovering that the local station had been closed down, or that there were no buses at the end of their journey?

Part of the car economy is the drastic reduction in the amount of freight carried on railways, to be replaced by thousands of trucks clogging the motorways, and in the process wrecking them

—trucks cause a good part of the damage which means that road works on motorways are permanent.

If cars will not immediately disappear, drastic environmental restrictions have to be imposed. Development of electric cars has been restricted by manufacturers and the pressure of the oil companies. Compulsory catalytic converters should be fitted to all cars still running on petrol.

Within big city centres there is no reason why communally-owned bikes and electric cars or carts could not be freely available. People should be able to go from one big city to another by train, and pick up a community-owned car for the final part of their journey, if no direct bus is available to their final destination.

Operating a primarily public transport system requires a greatly expanded rail network, new investment in buses and an end to deregulation, and the building of substantial new networks, like expanding the London tube south of the river and to places like Hackney.

All this means many more jobs, and much more money. To attract new staff to the transport system pay and conditions would have to be radically improved. Where is the cash to come from? For a start there could be a huge cutback in the billions spent on building new motorways and repairing the existing ones.

But most of the money would come from the reorganisation of state spending away from defense and from taxing the rich.

Britain's transport system is way behind international technology advances. We should be looking at trains at least as fast as the French TGV, and new systems like monorails, at the increased use of modern trams and electric cars. Why don't we?

In fact many British capitalists recognise that transport is hopelessly organised and grossly inefficient, damaging their profits. But the scale of the problem, and the public spending programme which would be needed to solve it, is way beyond what British capitalism can currently 'afford'—given the Tories' spending priorities.

Efficient and comfortable transport is a basic index of the level of civilisation and progress in any society. By such criteria Britain is a backward dump. And you just have to look at the tens of thousands of cars queuing to get into Los Angeles and New York at 5 miles an hour to realise that it will get worse.

Transport won't be transformed without state spending, state planning and social ownership. And that means we need socialism.

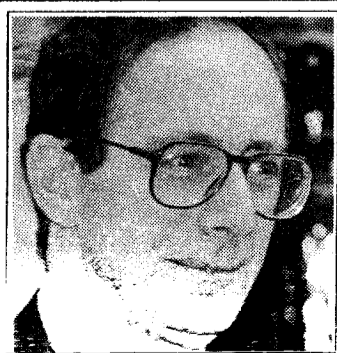
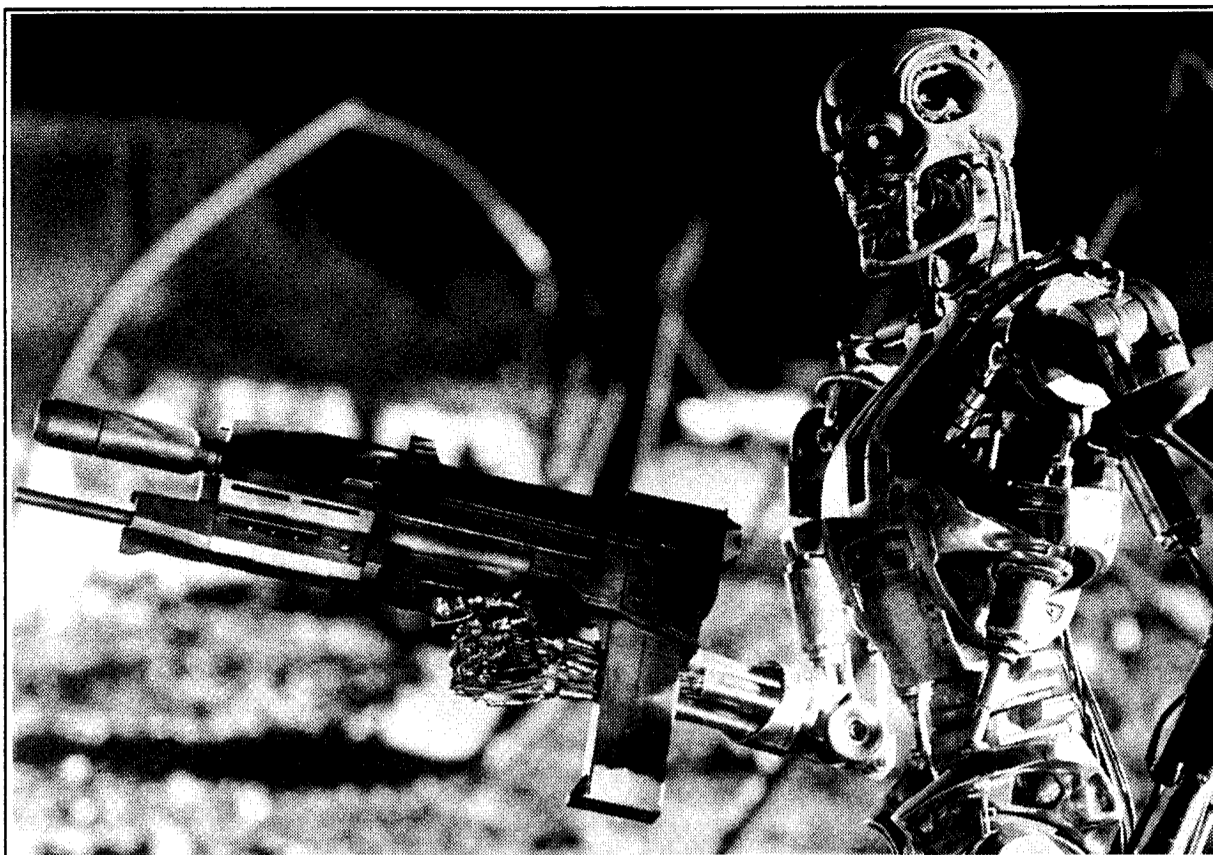


Photo: BTA

Red faces at BR

WHILE the crumbling transport system cries out for investment and socialist planning, Tory policies are set in the opposite direction — towards privatisation of British Rail.

But Transport Secretary Rifkind suffered a setback in these plans with the news that BR lost £145m last year, 14 times the previous year's deficit.



Terminator politics a way of life for Organiser



Socialist Organiser's 'left' candidate: John Prescott

BEN WOLFE looks at some of the recent pronouncements of Socialist Organiser

THE ALLIANCE for Workers Liberty (AWL), which publishes *Socialist Organiser*, has vigorously stepped up its attacks on Socialist Outlook.

In Socialist Organiser 526, Sean Matgamna devoted a whole page to attacking us. His attack was full of personalised vitriol, ending with the bizarre conclusion that Outlook supporters are 'middle aged herbivores'.

What lies behind this outburst is the embarrassment Socialist Organiser has faced on two issues. First their denunciation of Ken Livingstone's Labour leadership challenge, in which Matgamna called Livingstone a 'scumbag'. Second was their gleeful article over the election defeat of Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams, entitled 'Good News from West Belfast'.

Swinging behind Prescott

Socialist Organiser's line on the Labour leadership election has been through curious gyrations. At first their line was that the only potential candidate who could be supported was Bernie Grant, put forward by the left as their candidate for deputy leader. Hence SO students tried to establish 'Students for Grant' groups.

Latterly however, given that Grant was excluded by the undemocratic nomination rules, SO has come out in favour of a vote for John Prescott!

Here is clever logic for you; Ken Livingstone is too right wing to be supported, and indeed a 'scumbag'; but Kinnock's front-bencher John Prescott, deeply mired in complicity with New Realism, is now deemed worthy of support.

Socialist Organiser is a rightward moving sect. It delights in taking positions sharply at variance with the rest of the left, the better to aid the factional training of its largely student supporters.

Another recent case is the debate over the Maastricht agreement. Socialist Outlook, together with most of the rest of the far left, opposes the Maastricht plan for a 'fortress Europe' which would frontally attack the working class, immigrants and asylum seekers.

Demanding the right to abstain

SO boldly demands a referendum on the issue. But then it declares it would advise the working class to *abstain* if such a referendum was held! Even

RoboTrot politics of a right wing sect

though socialists oppose the status quo in Europe, that is no reason not to oppose a major attack on the working class of the whole continent.

A more serious attack on Socialist Outlook has been articles in SO 525 and 526 about the recent strike ballot on London Underground. In both these articles RMT District Council member Patrick Sikorski is named as a supporter of Socialist Outlook. The authors of these articles know full well that this is tantamount to denouncing Sikorski to management.

Witch-hunting

Indeed the first article is signed by a 'Central Line guard', an elementary security precaution given the witch hunting atmosphere on London Underground. But no such security precautions apply to alleged supporters of other far left currents, apparently.

Socialist Organiser should call its authors, Central Line guard and Jim Denham, to order and end this fingering operation.

The articles attacking Sikorski are full of the most apolitical personal abuse ('left talking bureaucrat; washed up; fake-left bureaucrat; and sarcastically 'Great Man' and 'Great Thinker' etc etc'). Moreover they are based on a falsehood; the accusation that Sikorski vigorously supported the calling off of the strike.

No mention is made of the fact that at the crucial District Council meeting of 12 May Sikorski was one of the minority of four people who argued that the *strike should go ahead*. But what do facts matter when you can sling abuse at another far left tendency instead?

What is to be made of a current whose stock in trade is apolitical abuse and frenzied attacks on the rest of the far left? These things have a very specific function for SO.

'Training' its student members in dogmatic factionalism is SO's mechanism for developing sect loyalty. That is why you will find more attacks on the far left in Socialist Organiser than any other far left paper, with the possible exception of the publications of the Spartacists.

The AWL has no policy on building an international revolutionary movement. To give itself a veneer of internationalism and the illusion of international links it ransacks the press of the Fourth International.

A serious article on Algeria will be 'by the PST, the Algerian trotskyst organisation' - without any acknowledgement that this organisation is part of the Fourth International - while the AWL is not. And the same is true of many other countries.

Literally dozens of SO articles in recent years have been culled from Rouge, Critique Communiste, Inprecor and International Viewpoint, all journals of the FI.

International isolation

The AWL's international isolation is a consequence of the decision, in the 1970s, of the AWL's forerunners to refuse to join the FI despite their position of 'critical support' for it. The absence of any regular participation in international discussions is evident in their increasing cranky international politics.

The line adopted by SO on the eastern bloc, a reversion to the positions

adopted by Max Schachtman in the 1940s, is a major sign of this rightward drift. The AWL regards the attempted restoration of capitalism as a 'bourgeois revolution' and thus progressive!

The logic here is very clear and very precise; the AWL regards the ex-Soviet Union and the other post-capitalist states as having been an historical regression on capitalism.

The attempt to restore capitalism may be progressive in SO's view, but for the millions reduced to destitution and poverty by this process it is not.

Ireland

The move to the right is also clear in the gradual change of position on the national question. Support for the national struggle in Ireland was for years a particular point of honour for SO leaders like Matgamna and Martin Thomas; now it has been abandoned.

On the Middle East, the AWL's formal support to the Palestinian national struggle is in fact subordinate to support for a 'two state' solution, and the rights of the present state of Israel, a garbled perversion of the trotskyst position of a socialist federation of the Middle East and the right of self-determination for Israeli jews within it.

Socialist Outlook has major differences with the AWL on building a revolutionary current in Britain. The AWL's work is seriously distorted by its absolute prioritisation of students.

Recruiting students is of course valuable and correct; but a serious and stable revolutionary current in this period cannot be based on students.

Matgamna's assertion that SO's trade union work 'is probably better than Socialist Outlook's' is laughable; you will search high and low for any union with a seriously organised AWL fraction. Indeed ex-student supporters of the AWL have told us that industrial workers have been compelled to 'make the turn' to becoming students!

Sean Matgamna in his attack on Socialist Outlook thinks we are 'funny people' because we don't always respond positively to their numerous invitations to go and 'debate' with them. Our answer is simple. We are always interested in debating other socialists who are serious about ideas.

But we refuse to prioritise discussion with people whose idea of debate is dredging up allegations about what our supporters are alleged to have said in pubs and hurling apolitical abuse.

Chronic factionalism has become a way of life for Socialist Organiser and the AWL; the worst habits of headbanging student RoboTrot politics have become endemic, a part of that grouping's DNA. Such genetic diseases are invariably fatal.

Israeli Labour drops West Bank pledge

The Israeli elections marked a political watershed, with the collapse in support for Yitzhak Shamir's hard-right Likud party and Labour's emergence as the largest party in the Knesset (parliament).

But does Labour's election mean new hope for the Palestinians? Just after the elections, French trotskyst paper *Rouge* asked Israeli revolutionary socialist MICHEL WARSHAWSKY what the elections meant for the future of the Middle East.

Shortly after the interview, Labour dropped its key commitment not to build any further settlements in the occupied territories, in its search for a coalition partner.

What explains Labour's success and the collapse of Likud?

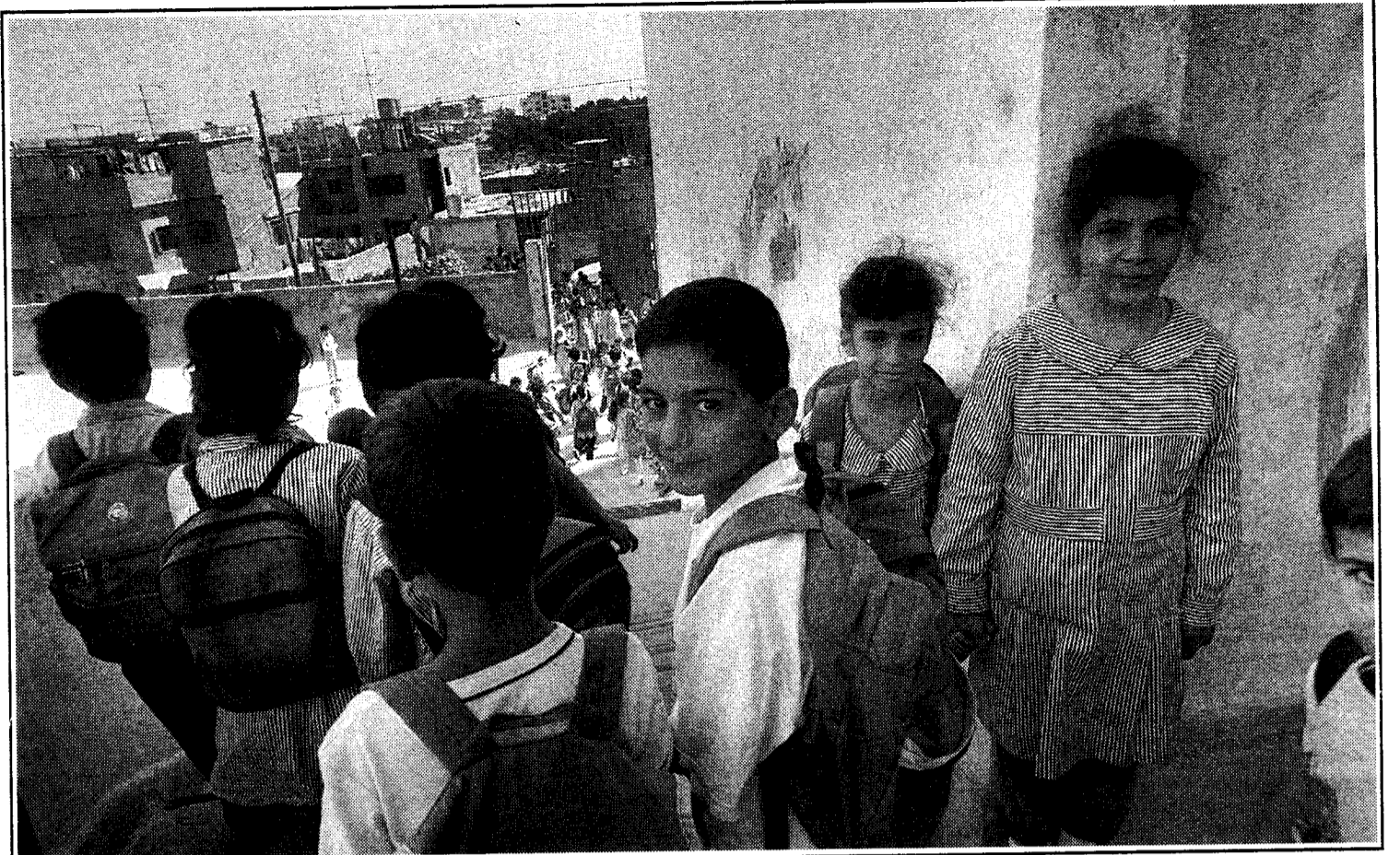
The election results are a punishment for Likud, who as the editorials say 'put two fingers up to the world'. It couldn't answer either the security problems or the considerable economic difficulties facing the Israeli population.

It is also paying for its arrogant attitude, the mistrust with which it treated its most important electoral base: the oriental Jews, those in the working class areas and the small towns.

This explains how Labour, but also others, was able to make a breakthrough and regain part of the electorate that they had lost over the last 15 years. Yitzhak Rabin's success is the product of Likud's votes sliding towards Labour and major changes in Labour's lists of candidates.

Rabin won a new credibility, even though he is already part of the 'old guard'. His trademark was reinforced by a campaign which was vague in terms of general direction, but extremely pro-security.

His past as 'victor of the Six



Labour has nothing to offer Palestinian youth

Day War' was vaunted, as was the fact that, while Minister of Defence, he deported more Palestinians than his Likud successors.

But Likud votes also went to the extreme right. This explains Tsomet's very significant breakthrough, moving from two to seven seats. This is an 'intransigent' organisation led by General Raphael Eytan. It has put down roots in the labour movement rather than in the galaxy of religious extreme right parties.

Tsomet's breakthrough represents the section of opinion that is searching for 'cleaner', less corrupt politics, independent of the administration and the system.

At the other end of the spectrum, Meretz - a front of three left parties: Shinui, Citizens' Movement and Mapam - gained from the same aspiration. In opinion polls, it stood out that between 20 and 30 per cent, particularly among youth, were hesitating between Meretz and Tsomet.

I'd add that among the factors in Likud's defeat, it never gave itself the means to crush the Intifada. Its policies came down to the status quo, and the promise that the future would be better.

But most of the electorate want an end to the status quo - either by military victory or a political solution. Rabin and Labour answered this insecurity with the promise of change.

What were the programmes of the various competing left-wing parties and coalitions?

We should distinguish between the content of the

campaign and the programmes. Apart from the extreme right, all parties had one thing in common - no clear profile.

For example Likud never mentioned its only 'victory', which cost millions of dollars in US loan guarantees - the colonies in the occupied territories. It knew it was very unpopular.

Labour was very careful to keep away from concrete plans. At best, it promised to give a new impetus to the Washington negotiations. As for Meretz, it carefully avoided mentioning the PLO or the Palestinian state.

In terms of programmes, things are a bit different. Labour are deeply divided. Rabin's wing, the 'hawks', don't go beyond the perspective of a plan for autonomy.

Rabin has clearly indicated that the occupied territories would get autonomy within nine months. But he firmly rejects the perspective of a Palestinian state, confining himself to being more flexible over PLO participation in the negotiations.

Another wing, which has been reinforced by the elections, presents autonomy as a transitional solution. It doesn't see the PLO as taboo and doesn't exclude the possibility, at some point, of a Palestinian state.

That's also Meretz's position, though they don't say so openly. But the vast majority of its electorate and its Knesset representatives support the aim of withdrawal from the occupied territories - with the exception of Jerusalem - and Palestinian self-determination.

As for the Arab parties, their divisions were devastating. They won slightly less than 50 per cent of Arab votes, but the fact that they were dispersed between three parties (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, Arab Democratic Party and Progressive List for Peace) meant that they didn't get the equivalent number of seats.

At least three deputies weren't reelected to the Knesset for that reason. It's even more of

a shame because these parties had a clear line. They are for negotiation with the PLO, withdrawal from the occupied territories, and the creation of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

So what is Rabin going to do?

He could get a parliamentary majority with the support of Meretz and the indirect support of the Arab parties, on a line of opposing the right. But that doesn't look like being his plan.

He explained things just after the results - he wants to regroup the centre parties. His project is to split Likud or form an alliance with them on the basis of the policy of autonomy that Shamir himself put forward.

The follow-up to these-called autonomy is left to the aftermath of the next elections in four years time. I think Rabin will do all in his power to integrate one of the religious parties, and then Likud, into his government.

At the moment, Rabin's tactics are unclear. Will he try to form, at first, a majority of 65 to 70 deputies on the basis of an alliance with Meretz and one of the religious formations? And then negotiate with the other religious parties and Likud from a position of strength?

You alluded to Israel's serious economic crisis. What changes in government economic policy are likely?

Rabin will immediately try to reestablish normal relations with the Americans. From now on confrontation with the US will be avoided, in an attempt to obtain substantial economic aid and provide funds for the social organisations close to Labour - for example the union federation Histadrut's sickness insurance fund.

Evidently, Yitzhak Rabin has understood the electorate's message 'We want work, housing, a public health system

which stops going downhill, education for our children...'. This will constrain the new government's choices in the budget.

This obviously won't resolve any of the real problems of Israeli society, but could bring about some improvement.

Palestinian leaders welcomed the election results. Aren't they walking into a trap?

Talking to Palestinian friends this morning made me think that they don't harbour too many illusions. If a possibility of change appears, particularly around the question of settlements, they are right to seize the opportunity.

The new government will make concessions, if only in response to American pressure. It will take various initiatives on a diplomatic level and in the occupied territories.

This will enable the Palestinian leaders to regain a credibility which they had totally lost, due to the complete absence of results from the Washington negotiations and at the same time the deterioration of the situation in the West Bank and Gaza.

This change will inevitably provoke a radicalisation towards the extreme right and among the colonists...

Yes, and the leaders of the extreme right reacted strongly. But their results weren't good; only Tsomet came out unscathed. You have to understand that the settlements are becoming very unpopular in Israel.

The colonists are confronted with the fact that there is no more money to build new settlements and that colonisation puts Israel in conflict with the USA. A determined Labour government - which Rabin's cabinet probably won't be - could profit from this situation and offer hope to the population.

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Magritte exhibition

The yolk's on you!

By Jane Kelly

The image of a bowler-hatted man with a fried egg on his face seems a strange way to advertise an airline – but there's a Magritte exhibition in town!

The bowler-hatted man is synonymous with Magritte: at once representing him and a disguise. Surely a man who identifies with a city gent couldn't paint the pictures in this exhibition? We are left without any idea about Magritte the man or Magritte the artist.

Similarly his images of women, and sometimes men, with a cloth over their heads is apparently explained by the suicide of his mother, who was discovered, drowned, with her face covered by her nightdress – or is it? We don't know.

But it doesn't matter what relation the images might have to Magritte's life for they continue to intrigue, shock and horrify without reference to the artist's biography. They also

make you laugh.

A framed painting of a brie enclosed in a glass cheese case is entitled 'This is a piece of cheese': a linguistic pun similar to the painting of a pipe called 'This is not a pipe'.

Of all the surrealists he understood the complexity of heterosexual relations. Rather than representing women as the unknown 'other', as in the poet Eluard's work, or a passive sexual victim, as does Bellmer, his women are part of, sometimes even central to, both sexes' understanding of desire.

He even seems to have come close to understanding the violence that is endemic to sexual relations under capitalism and the oppression that women suffer from male violence and rape.

A painting like 'The Titanic Days', where a nude woman is invaded by a clothed man, whose own existence is confined to her contours, is a terrifying and violating image. And the work 'The Rape' itself, where the woman's face is

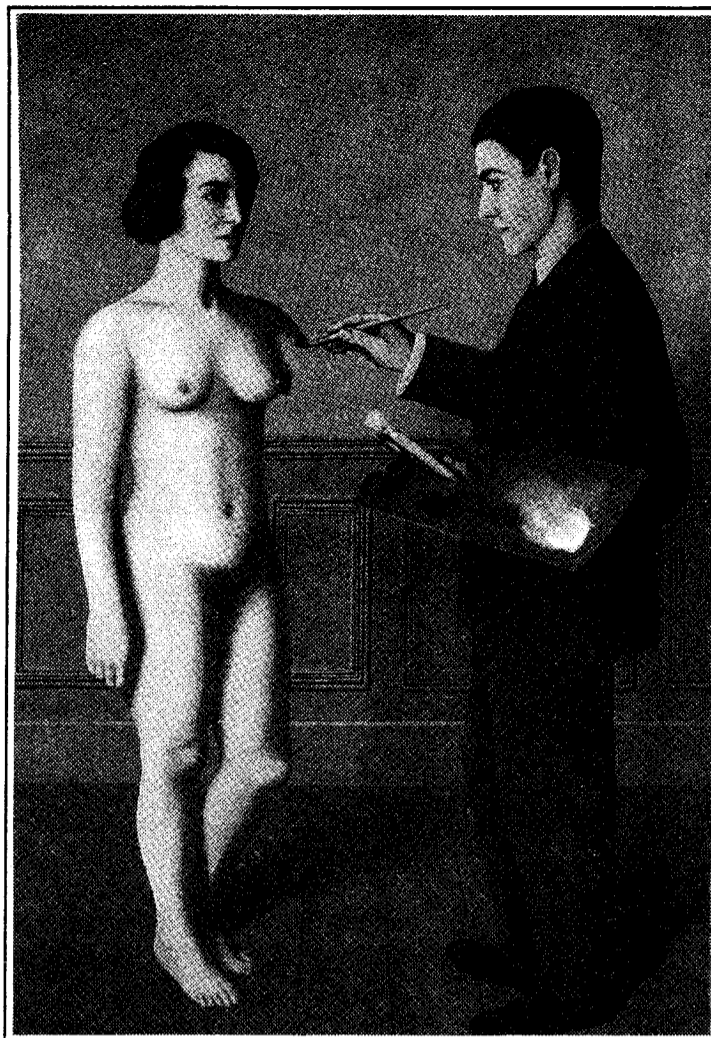
replaced by her torso – breasts for eyes, navel for nose, pubic hair for mouth – all atop an elongated neck: these images go way beyond most surrealist representations of sexual relations.

Much of the early work in the exhibition shows the influence of the ideas of Freud and his work on dreams and their meaning. 'The Reckless Sleeper' from the Tate collection equates sleep with death, while suggesting that dreams are probably worth the danger that you might not wake up again!

Despite the horror of some of the images, the overwhelming feeling of the exhibition is humour. Visual and verbal puns, also part of Freud's legacy, fill the exhibition space.

It is difficult not to laugh out loud at many of the pictures and objects – though of course the atmosphere of a grand Haywood show is not altogether conducive to laughter!

The Magritte exhibition is at the Hayward gallery until 6 August



CIA

The dagger beneath the cloak

CIA

BBC1

Wednesdays at 9.30pm

Reviewed by Phil Hearse

The CIA's role as the world's counter-revolutionary dirty tricks department is being dissected in the Wednesday evening BBC series 'CIA'. It kicked off with the revelations in 1991 about the organisation known as 'Gladio'.

Gladio was a secret paramilitary network established throughout Western Europe after the second world war. To establish this secret network, the CIA relied heavily on co-operation with the far right, including Italian fascists and German Nazis.

The role of Gladio was to prepare military sabotage and destabilisation in the event of Communist parties coming to power. Particularly of concern here was Italy, where Gladio had huge arms and logistics dumps in case the powerful Italian Communists made a bid for power.

Gladio was in fact run by NATO, in collaboration with the CIA. CIA involvement in Italy also included undercover work inside the 1970s Red Brigades.

In 1978 leading Christian Democrat Aldo Moro was as-

sassinated by the Brigades. How much did the CIA know? It is now clear that there was alarm in Washington about Moro's role in trying to involve the Communists in government.

CIA operations against the Soviet Union and eastern Europe are little known. In the 1950s and 1960s the US engaged in regular spy flights over the Soviet Union; and exiles were regularly air-lifted into eastern Europe and even the Soviet Union itself to function as spies. Many of these people ended up in the Gulag.

Last Wednesday's episode dealt with CIA involvement in the military coup in Indonesia in 1965. This was the biggest catastrophe for the international workers movement since Hitler came to power in 1933.

Up to two million people, including more than a million Communists, were murdered. The killing went on for months. CIA station in Jakarta handed over huge lists of people to be assassinated to Suharto's military regime.

The Soviet Union may have collapsed, but the CIA goes on. The work of defeating revolution is still needed; and the CIA has turned to industrial spying against Japan and Europe.

Tune in next week for more revelations.

Counting the cost of bureaucracy

Power and Money

Written by Ernest Mandel, Verso Books, £10.95

Reviewed by Paul Clarke

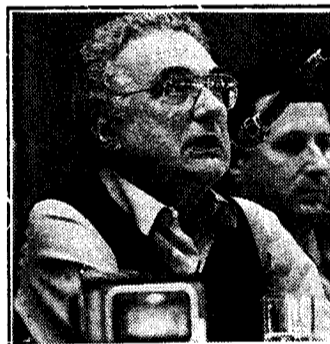
The biggest tragedy for socialism in modern times was Stalinism – the coming to power of a bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union, and then its extension into eastern Europe.

Revolutionary socialists have had to battle against the ugly face of 'actually existing socialism', for much of the 20th century accepted as the reality of the socialist project, by opponents and champions alike.

But is bureaucracy rational? Max Weber, one of the great non-marxist theorists of bureaucracy, thought so. For him, a key characteristic of bureaucracy is expertise, a vital attribute of those who govern.

Ernest Mandel, in his new book, fiercely contests that bureaucracy, in its capitalist and Soviet manifestations, is rational. The fate of the Soviet Union is eloquent here. A bigger and bigger bureaucracy administered society in a less and less rational fashion, leading to ultimate collapse.

Mandel ranges over the key questions for socialists of how and why the mass workers organisations became bureaucratized; and the



Ernest Mandel

character and role of the Stalinist bureaucracies.

He includes a vigorous defence of the notion that the Soviet elite was in fact a bureaucratic caste and not a

new ruling class. Indeed the fact that it was not a new ruling class helps to explain its historical fragility and the rapidity of its collapse.

Most important for socialists is the question of whether bureaucracy is inevitable. Is the idea of a society directly administered by its citizens a utopia? Will power and money always dominate the mass of ordinary people?

No prizes for guessing Mandel's answer. His book is a formidable weapon in the struggle against the dictatorship of power and money, in either its capitalist or Stalinist manifestations.



Godfather of the bureaucracy: Joseph Stalin



Against red baiting in RMT

It has come to our notice that in Socialist Organiser the RMT London Transport District Council and its Secretary Pat Sikorski has come under sustained attack.

This attack is disgraceful. We the undersigned members of the RMT consider it as red baiting, which aids management's ability to victimise those involved. It must stop at once.

We fully support the record of the District Council.

Yours in solidarity
Geoff Revell
(President RMT
LTDC); Larry Cotton
(Asst. Sec RMT

LTDC); Diana Udall
(Branch sec. Holborn);
Tony Gildea (Chair
Stratford no 1); Tessa
van Gelderen (Branch
sec. Paddington); Pam
Singer (Branch sec.
Neasden no. 3); Chris
Rackley (Branch sec.
Neasden no.1); Bob
Crow (NEC & Branch
sec. Stratford no 1);
Alan Norman
(Divisional Organiser
LT); Arthur
Richardson (Branch
sec. Eastleigh and

Fareham Rail); Brian
Whipp (Brighton
Joint); Pete Skelly
(Branch sec. Bridgend
and District); Richard
Sheppard (Bristol no
4); Martin Wicks
(Swindon Rail); Alan
Pottage (Edinburgh no
1); Mick Ratcliffe
(Ashington Busmen's
branch).

All signatories in a
personal capacity.
See page 11 for Socialist
Outlook's view

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

Not another bald git!

Sam Inman's article on a socialist strategy for lesbians and gays (SO24) notes that the excellence of Labour Party policy on the question 'may sound boring'. This is rather an understatement!

As 'family man' N.Kinnock is about to be replaced by bald git in a suit John Smith it is just slightly difficult to see Labour taking up the issue seriously.

Of course Inman is right. The lesbian and gay movement should ally itself with the labour movement, not Tory MPs. But if that alliance can be made it will be the pressure that can be exerted which will define the extent of reform conceded, not Labour Party policy.

However, good luck to you if you think you can make



One git makes way for another

Mr.J.Smith come out about lesbians and gays. It won't change the world but it might make me rethink my mindset about bald gits.

Keith Flett
London N17

£7000 appeal



Phil and Dave can call to collect your contribution personally

Now that we're nearing the summer break, Socialist Outlook is preparing for a revamp. We're planning to come back in the autumn, looking better and with more topical industrial reports and political analysis every fortnight.

But - here comes the rub - we need cash! One or two generous supporters have given us £560 to set the ball rolling. But we need lots more.

A lot of the equipment we produce the paper on reached retirement age long ago. We have computers and laser printers that look set to breathe their last almost every issue.

So far we've managed without major disasters. But it can't go on indefinitely. We need to renew our equipment and get some new machines in to stabilise the fortnightly Socialist Outlook.

There's a busy political period ahead - with a lot of challenges facing the left. Socialist Outlook sees the conference of the left in the autumn as a vital opportunity to reorganise a fighting, class struggle left.

But for that to happen we need our paper - and that means £7,000 by November. We appeal to all of our supporters to go out now to raise funds, and send us individual donations big or small, right now.

Free the Cardiff Three!

Mobilisation against racist frame-up

By Pete Bloomer

More than eight hundred activists got a rousing reception as they took the message 'Free the Cardiff 3!' onto the streets on July 4.

Delegations from Newham in east London and Birmingham joined local anti-racist activists and trade unionists from NUM, NALGO and CPSA.

The racist frame-up of the Cardiff 3 - three black men convicted of the murder of Lynette White - has been exposed in both the national press and the documentary

Panorama.

Ex-Chief Constable John Stalker was asked by *Panorama* to review the evidence on which the men were convicted - and concluded that they were innocent.

The original line of investigation of the case - a search for a white man seen near the scene of the crime with blood on his hands - was later dropped.

Police evidence used to convict the Three was wafer-thin. It rested on statements provided by witnesses described by the judge as 'proven liars', and confessions

extracted after days of interrogation. These were later retracted.

An appeal is to be heard, but no date has been set. Following the cases of the Tottenham Three, the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four, the Cardiff Three's supporters have little confidence in the system.

It is only mass pressure from the anti-racist and labour movements that can ensure their release.

Speakers and campaign material/ affiliations from: Cardiff Three Campaign, 56 Alice St, Butetown, Cardiff. Tel: 0222 462821.

Life sentence for race attack victim

By Bill Turner

SATPAL RAM has been in prison for six years for defending himself against a vicious racist attack.

Satpal intervened when a group of white men began to hurl racist abuse at the staff of an Indian restaurant in Lozells, Birmingham. He was attacked with a broken glass for his pains.

Given that the assailant was much larger than him, Satpal picked up a knife to defend himself. Both were taken to hospital. The white man refused to be treated, and later died.

Satpal, then 20 years old, was given a life sentence for murder by an all-white jury. His

defence counsel did not even argue that Satpal was defending himself. And Bengali-speaking waiters, who could have acted as witnesses, were not provided with interpreters.

Once again 'British justice' has shown that in reality there is one law for whites, one law for blacks - and that means if you're black, you're guilty.

Support is growing fast for Satpal's campaign to have his case referred to the Court of Appeal. Write to your MP and/ or the Home Secretary, quoting prison reference no.E94164.

Contact the Free Satpal Campaign c/o 101 Villa Rd, Handsworth, Birmingham B19 1NH. Tel: 021 551 4518.

London's NHS goes bust in Tory market

By John Lister

THE BARTS group of hospitals, due to opt out as a Trust next April, is the latest unit in inner London to report a catastrophic financial deficit, topping £12 million.

Management admit that every department will be hit by cuts as wards and services shut down after Barts lost contracts to treat almost 4,000 patients.

Like nearby Bloomsbury & Islington's Middlesex Hospital and UCH unit (over £20m in the red), Barts is a casualty of the Tories' internal market system which leaves inner London's teaching hospitals at a huge price disadvantage in the cut-throat competition for patients.

Cut-price treatment

Health authorities on the edge or outside the capital are taking the opportunity to save money by sending patients elsewhere, to hospitals where treatment is cheaper.

The cumulative shortfall in the London teaching districts is now in excess of £60 million, and rising with each fresh announcement. With 70 percent

of NHS spending allocated to pay, these massive deficits pose a huge threat to health workers, with simultaneous cuts and closures hitting almost every health authority and Trust in the capital.

'Natural wastage' is unlikely to produce the scale of job cuts needed, while many of the service reductions and bed closures will have a brutal effect on Londoners waiting for treatment at their local hospitals. Waiting lists will grow, and thousands will be forced to travel further for treatment.

Meanwhile the government's determination to hack back the number of hospital beds in the capital received a welcome boost from a major report drawn up in June by a King's Fund Commission.

The poorly-researched and contentious proposals to axe at least 14 hospitals and 5,000 beds in the capital delighted Virginia Bottomley, and will alarm Londoners.

Bottomley will be relieved that the Tories' own inquiry into London's NHS, under Professor Sir Bernard Tomlinson, can now appear relatively moderate in comparison, even while proposing drastic cuts in beds and services.



PHOTO: Andrew Ward

The report contains some astoundingly shoddy research. The highly-publicised call to reduce from 41 major acute hospitals to just 30 is based on an incomplete King's Fund list that leaves out one teaching hospital (St Mary's) a whole health authority (Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton) and a modern local hospital (Harold Wood). In fact there are 44 major units.

Premature closure

Perhaps it is sheer geographical ignorance that brings the King's Fund to propose that Redbridge health authority should be one of three (along with Ealing and Haringey) singled out to lose its existing acute hospital - despite the fact that Redbridge

is currently building a brand new £61m general hospital at Goodmayes - condemned to close before it even opens!

The King's Fund's list of hospital closures in London is five years and thousands of beds out of date: it includes three hospitals that aren't in London, and one that is still open!

Of course the press - including the 'trendies' on the Guardian, which accepted the report without criticism - latched on to the King's Fund's utopian proposals to replace acute hospital beds with localised, community-based services and new-model 'cottage hospitals'.

But the idea that 15 busy acute hospitals could be replaced by just £250 million worth of Community Health

Centres is unproven, and the notion that the same Tory government that has ruthlessly closed almost every small hospital in London is about to fund a new network of cottage hospitals is patently absurd.

Patients, the public and health workers are facing a major threat to the NHS in London. The next few months are likely to see important struggles to defend jobs and services while the Tories map out their plans for closure.

Already health workers in Bloomsbury and in Riverside are fighting back, and women are rallying to the defence of the threatened Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital: this must be the time for socialists to get involved and beat back the Tory onslaught!

London women rally to save the EGA

By Terry Conway

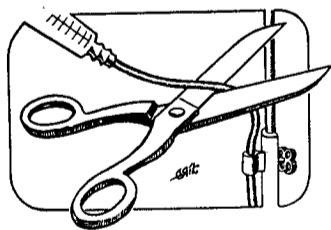
AROUND 70 women participated in a lively 24 hour vigil to protest the threatened closure of London's famous Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Womens hospital on July 4/5th.

Under slogans such as 'Womens health in womens hands' and 'EGA: Alive and Kicking', women came together to sing, chant and collect hundreds of signatures of the petition opposing the attacks on this unique resource for women, still staffed mainly by women.

Women's groups

The vigil, organised at short notice, brought together staff, users and women from a whole range of women's groups across London.

The threat to the hospital, which if it goes ahead will see the loss of the in-patient service and the sacking of 28 nurses from September, is part of a package of cuts being imposed on the EGA, Middlesex and University College hospital which will see the loss of 125 beds. Trade unionists across the three sites par-



ticipated in a successful day of strike action on June 25.

Management are trying to pretend that EGA patients will receive the same service at UCH despite the fact that the transfer will be to a smaller and existing ward - meaning an overall loss of 36 gynaecological beds between the sites, as well as the vital principle of women being able to choose to be seen by women carers.

At the Rally, addressed by among others Glenda Jackson MP, Wendy Savage and COHSE shop steward Pat Taylor, there was a clear demand that the hospital be given 'special status' in recognition of the unique services it provides to women.

There is a need for national funding both to attempt to prevent facilities being perpetually

squeezed by District Health Authority Cuts, and to preserve access for women outside the Health Authority, which would otherwise be unlikely under the Tory market reforms.

Many women commented on the fact that the battle to save the EGA had been a long and hard one since it formed the focus of the first modern hospital 'work-in' in the mid-1970s, and the campaign badge that was current then was revived for this round of protest.

Not a priority

More seriously, this represents the fact that women's health needs are even more deprioritised than those of other working people, and that the sort of preventative and curative work done at the EGA, which sees surgery as a last resort, is not understood or valued by most managers or medical practitioners.

The next stage in the campaign will be a (mixed) lobby of Parliament on July 14 from 2pm-4pm.

For further information about the Campaign to Save the EGA contact Pat Taylor on 071-387-2501 ext 228.

300 Club

Money, money, money!

For just £5 a month you get the chance to win £50 in our monthly draw. In addition you can bask in the knowledge that you have helped Socialist Outlook to continue making life difficult for the capitalists and the New Realist right-wing. Alison Miles wins this month's prize of £50 while Geoff Ryan takes second prize.

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socialist OUTLOOK

Nazi Irving whitewashes Holocaust



FIVE ANTI-FASCIST demonstrators were arrested outside the 'Revisionist seminar' addressed by Nazi historian David Irving last Saturday.

The organisers of the seminar included the fascist British National Party. Revisionist in this context means people who don't think Hitler slaughtered the Jews; fascists use the term as a code word to describe themselves.

Irving has shot into the news as the person paid a fortune by the Sunday Times to translate and edit the newly-discovered complete Goebbels diaries.

The row has cast a spotlight on the operation which Irving has been carrying out for decades. In his formidably researched and documented books, he denies the Holocaust took place, or alternatively that

Hitler knew about it.

In his most famous book, the two volume *Hitler's War* he admits the Nazi extermination programme, but claims it was carried out by Himmler without Hitler's knowledge.

In one of his most infamous public utterances he claimed that the gas chambers at Auschwitz were built after the war as a tourist attraction!

The leaflet advertising last Saturday's meeting declares it will be 'not just a talking shop', but a 'spur to action' to confront the 'liberal/minority' control of the mass media.

Irving has more direct political action in mind. Over the last year he has been regularly speaking in fascist meetings in Germany, talking about the 'exciting

development' of a 'vigorous, young German nationalist movement'— what most people call the new rise of fascism.

He warned German skinheads against Nazi salutes and 'siege heils', saying this would alienate potential support.

Irving is careful to match the message to the audience. Open Nazism is reserved for private meetings and German rallies. In his books he is more cautious.

But his operation has a very precise political function; to legitimise and make respectable the new rise of far right authoritarian and neo-fascist movements.

Anti-fascists will need to continue to combat the Irving operation, and indeed to give Mr Irving the warm welcome he deserves whenever he attempts to purvey his poisonous views.