

Crumbs for Bangladesh

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How to save the NHS

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For socialist renewal!



For workers' liberty!

Winnie's guilt

page 7



Workers' Liberty alliance launched

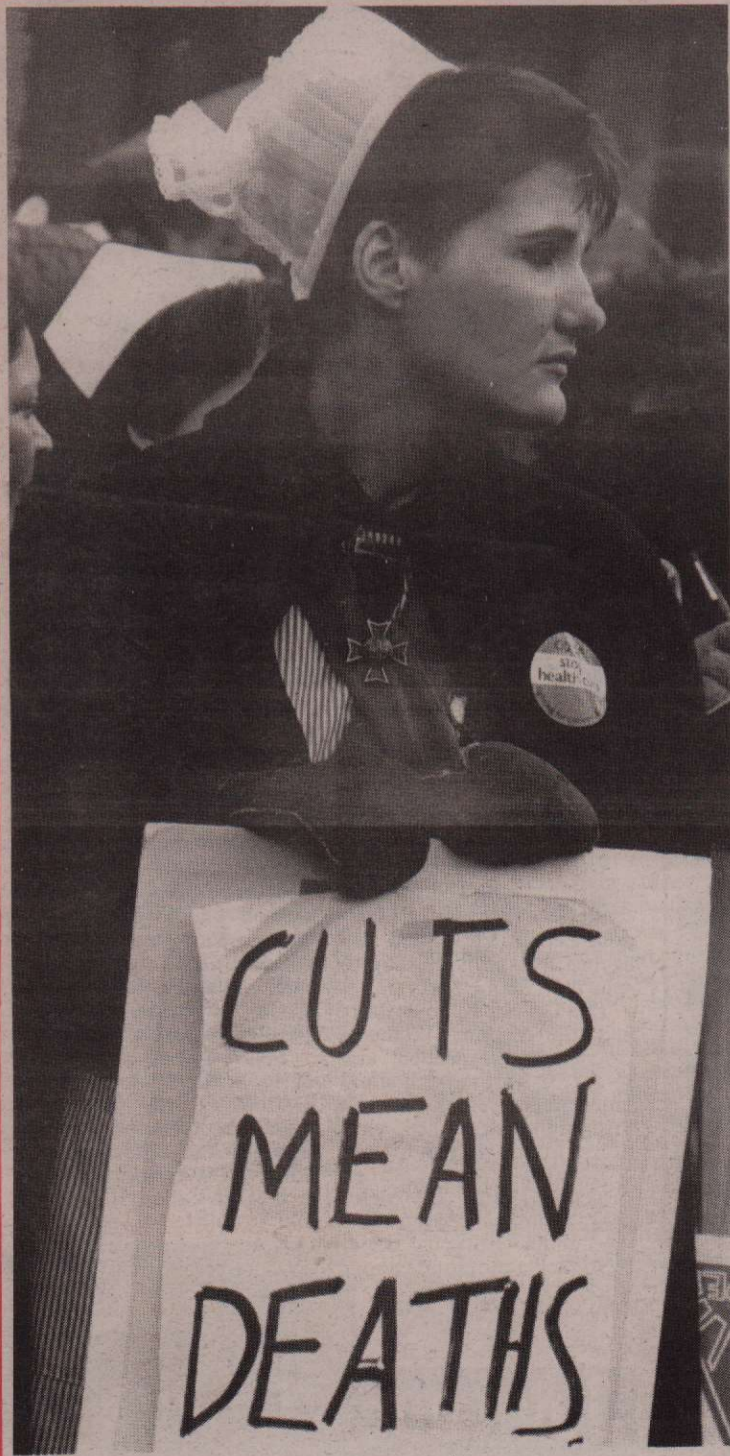
centre pages



SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Fight for a general election!



Save the NHS!

By Mary Williams (NUPE steward, Cardiff)

The Tories' drive to bring the profit ethic into health care is creating confusion

and uncertainty among healthworkers all over the country.

It is hard enough trying to cope with the everyday job of looking after sick people, let

alone to have to think of selling your services. What concerns a lot of nurses is the fact that quality will go down the drain in the bid to be economically successful.

For instance, someone who has just been diagnosed as having diabetes is commenced on insulin. This can be done easily and cheaply.

However, unless the patient

is educated and stabilised in their own self-care and management, they could end up with the complications of

Turn to page 4

The lie machine



What a dilemma they must have had on Tuesday. A full splash of a partly-clad Madonna or another "exclusive" exposé of the DSS giving money to an unscrupulous mastermind. Obviously Madonna had too many clothes on so they went for a £51 million so-called con.



Women magistrates are not supposed to wear Marks and Spencers clothes, nor posh clobber from expensive shops. They are supposed to be just like the punters they're trying. Male magistrates haven't been issued with similar guidelines but if the courts are to be consistent then pin-stripes and grey suits could be a thing of the past.



For me the hero of the week was Carl Shimmin. Even though the Sun held him up to ridicule, his action in refusing the Queen admission to the Windsor Horse Show because he didn't recognise her shows that he has his priorities in the right place. "I thought she was some old dear who had got lost."

Council workers take action over cuts

Link cuts and poll tax battles!

By Ron Strong

Birmingham Labour Council took out a full-page advert in the local press in the run-up to the council elections.

It reminded Birmingham people that the poll tax was still in place and the council would implement it.

Not surprisingly, such dynamic "campaigning" lost Labour some seats.

The message that the Tories have decided to abolish the poll tax hasn't sunk in with the Labour councils. Far from taking heart from the successful battle waged by the 14 million non-payers, and joining forces with community groups to finally finish off the Tories, they say it's business as usual.

Faced with a huge backlash against the Tories, Labour didn't gain as much as it should have done in the local elections. Across the North and Midlands the Liberals did well, in part due to disgust at Labour councils' wholehearted implementation of the Tories' tax.

A determined fight by Labour to take on the Tories, refuse to continue collecting the tax, and campaign for the return of funding stolen from local government by the Tories over the past 12 years could have set Labour on the road to an outright general election victory.

They squandered that opportunity. But the fight will continue. Action by council workers

against cuts arising from the poll tax is increasing. Non-payment levels will surely rise next year in the wake of the Tory U-turn. Protests against committal proceedings will give a new focus to the community campaign.

With the Tories now on the defensive — and not just over the poll tax — it is vital to step up the campaign, to harness the mass movement to get rid of the Tories once and for all.

But some campaigners, heartened by the Tory climb-down, have begun to drop away, thinking the battle won. Many anti-poll tax unions report lower turn-outs at meetings.

Manchester's "No cuts, no poll tax" campaign shows the way forward. Linking council workers with the anti-poll tax unions, it aims to drag the Labour councils in behind the working class, behind our demands. It gives the fight a

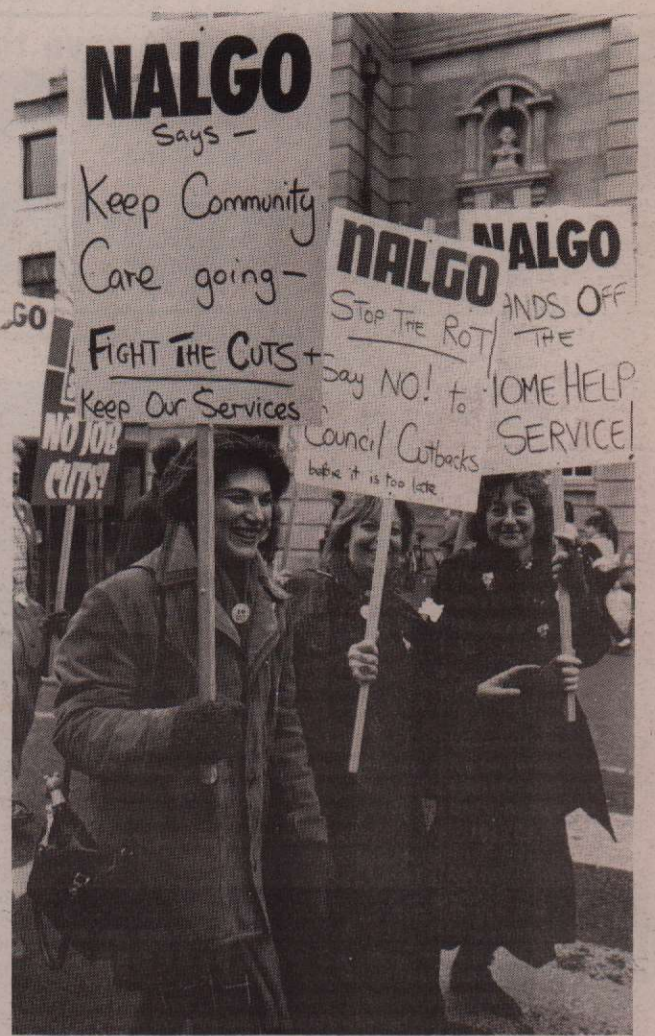
political direction.

A united campaign of the labour movement and community groups is important too in the event of a Labour victory at the next election. The Labour leadership's role in the anti-poll tax revolt has been disgraceful, one of craven capitulation to the Tories. It can't give us much confidence in their promises to repeal the poll tax immediately, and replace it with a fairer system that will benefit the working class.

We will need to continue to fight to hold a Labour government to its manifesto commitments, and fight for them to introduce an amnesty for all non-payers and poll tax prisoners.

That fight is more likely to succeed if we draw in the trade unions and local Labour Party activists now.

No cuts! No poll tax! Amnesty for all non-payers and poll tax prisoners!



Council workers should link up with the anti-poll tax campaign

Student round-up

Brighton Poly occupation: Garry Meyer reports from the south coast: "300 students have occupied against teaching staff cuts. A national demonstration has been called for Wednesday 22 May. Colleges all over the country are backing the action."

Emma Colyer, Socialist Organiser supporter and NUS National Secretary adds: "The Labour right-wing are trying to stop any solidarity action with the Poly students. We are fighting them, to win support for the Brighton action."

Kevin Sexton, Left Unity and Socialist Organiser sup-

porter from Liverpool, was elected to the NUS NEC when the votes for the re-run NEC elections were counted last Saturday. Kev joins four other Left Unity supporters on the NEC.

Labour Left Student Conference will be hosted by Manchester Poly Labour Club on 15 June. Details from Dave on 061-227 9004.

NUS London conference last weekend was Higher Education-based and riven by apolitical clique fighting. Jed Marsh from Left Unity and a Socialist Organiser supporter was elected to the Executive during a brief outburst of sanity.

Labour Party Socialists launch campaign

For a united and democratic Liverpool Labour Party!

By Dale Street

Supporters of Labour Party Socialists in Liverpool decided at their May meeting to launch a campaign for unity and democracy in the city's labour movement.

We will campaign against the right wing's efforts to crush democracy in the Liverpool Labour Party, and also against Militant's decision to split the Labour Party.

The District Labour Party and the Labour Women's Council are suspended, and so are six wards which stood independent candidates in this month's council elections. Many elected Labour councillors have been suspended, and the right-wing rump now controlling the Labour Group has decided to sack a thousand council workers.

Perhaps a hundred or more expulsions are now on the

cards as the local Party officials start weeding out people who canvassed for the independent candidates.

The response of Militant to this is to spin the delusion that this is the beginning of a "centrist" split in the Labour Party and — yet again — to fail to campaign seriously against the witch-hunt.

The decision of Militant and other members of the Broad Left to stand independent candidates has already pushed middle of the road Labour Party members back towards the right-wingers. And an exodus of left wingers would, of course, strengthen the right wing even more.

Following up a proposal from SO readers, Liverpool Labour Party Socialists agreed to campaign to re-establish the District Labour Party in Liverpool; to create a unified Labour Group on the Council; to reverse the policies being pursued by the current right-wing controlled Labour Group; and to oppose further expulsions from the Labour Party.



Armed police on the streets

More armed police than ever will be on the streets from 1 July following the London Metropolitan Force's decision to allow patrol cars to be armed.

This brings to 14 the number of forces that have armed patrols in Britain. Since 1979, under the Tories there has been a substantial increase in the number of armed police on regular public patrol.

The exact number however is kept secret. Obviously the govern-

ment is worried that if the full extent of its policy to have a heavily armed police force was known there would be much opposition.

Even in quiet rural areas like Wiltshire and Lincolnshire there are armed patrols. In the West Midlands there is a higher proportion per head of population of armed police than is planned for London.

Some of the pressure for this in-

crease is coming from the police. The Police Federation, responding to pressure from its lower ranking officers, is thinking of changing its previous opposition to an armed force.

But the real cause is the government's desire to have an armed force ready to protect its class privileges and to guard against the repercussions of the poverty and chaos its policies have caused.

Join our 200 Club

The winner of the May draw of our "200 Club" is Chris Croome in Sheffield.

Contributors to the Club pay a regular amount each month to help keep the paper going, and get one chance for every £1 contributed in our draw for a

£100 prize each month.

For "200 Club" contribution forms, approach local SO sellers or write to SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

We also need one-off donations to maintain the expanded and improved weekly SO.



Bangladesh's tragedy is an indictment of capitalism — but the media try to gloss it over

Bangladesh and capitalism

Much of the coverage of the horrific disaster in Bangladesh, even from the serious media, has been simply obscene.

ITN reports that Britain is giving more aid than any other European country and complains that we cannot go on carrying this burden for much longer. The *Times*, *Independent on Sunday* and countless tabloids, when they find time to even consider the tragedy, pour out vicious little diatribes about the inefficiency of the distribution network in Bangladesh, the bureaucracy of the government, the corruption which prevents aid reaching the right quarters, the venality of politicians.

There is some truth in all that.

But what are the media trying to prove?

The main port in Bangladesh, Chittagong, was destroyed in the cyclone: the links between the country's interior and the coast were eroded; and the entire communications system broke down. To complain of an inefficient distribution network in such circumstances is a sick joke, especially from a country whose transport system was recently paralysed by some mild snow.

Some of the most patronising and hypocritical journalism has been that which arrogantly portrays all Bengali officials, politicians and even ordinary people as inherently corrupt, incompetent and selfish.

Political squabbling, it seems, is the real problem. It is this, "more than cyclones, floods and famine which is likely to kill off democracy and finish Bangladesh as a country. The national good is not an important factor in Bangladesh; self-interest tends to take control." The same writer, in the *Independent on Sunday*, tells us of a Mr Kamal Hussain, who "is unusual among Bangladeshi politicians". Why? "He makes a proposal not to draw political blood but because he believes it is in the best interests of the country". In our book that makes him unusual amongst politicians of any country.

Self-interest and pointless "squabbling" are not remotely unique to Bangladesh, and anyway, for all this moderate, sensible rhetoric, British liberal journalists would be the first to howl if Bengali parties did unite, bury their differences and create a one-party state. Then the cause of incompetence would be

totalitarianism.

So what's the problem — they haven't got a full democracy, or they have too many parties and debates? It can't be both!

Then there is the claim that "it is in the nature of Bangladeshis to expect aid as a right". The Thatcherite idea that the poor and unemployed in Britain are spongers and that we have a dependency culture is transferred to a world stage and the poor become the biggest cause of their own misery.

The truth is, however, that capitalist governments understand the importance of international subsidy and aid when it serves their own interests.

US aid to the Contras in Nicaragua knew no bounds, aid to Pakistan, a richer country than Bangladesh, is much greater per head, and perhaps most disgusting, the biggest part of US aid money goes to Israel and is spent mainly on arms. Only when it is called upon to relieve misery do commentators find aid dependency dangerous.

All this fog is created to avoid the central issue. No party system, no amount of goodwill, honesty, competence or experience by individuals can overcome the real problem — abject poverty.

Instead of looking for solutions to the poverty, the media give us, at worst, repeated attempts to blame the people of Bangladesh (or Sudan, or Ethiopia) and at best attempts to convince the good people of the civilised and efficient West that, despite the obvious failings of these feckless people, we should demonstrate our superiority and compassion again through large

personal donations.

There is corruption in Bangladesh, and there is a less efficient and more easily corrupted civil service than in Britain, or rather our corruption is regularised and institutionalised for senior civil servants, through patronage, nepotism and honours.

Our civil service exists in conditions of general plenty, job security, pensions and "reasonable" wages. In Bangladesh there is chronic poverty, no job security, and great scarcity. The ability to obtain the most basic of resources is a life and death power to many people. Low-level corruption thrives in such conditions. The poverty produces the corruption and inefficiency, not vice versa.

Bangladesh exists on the margins of the world economy. Once part of the Raj, stripped and plundered by Britain, it was left with no developed infrastructure because its potential profits were considered unworthy of such investment. Then the basis for the religious partition of Bengal (into Muslim East Bengal, now Bangladesh, and Hindu West Bengal, now part of India), was laid down by the, presumably efficient and uncorrupt, Tory leader Curzon.

We receive no analysis and indeed little comment on any of this because events like those in Bangladesh represent the most fundamental challenge to the current capitalist triumphalism. The market is supposed to have solved all the major economic problems of history. The idea of any alternative economic system has been discredited.

Bangladesh, and the capitalist

reaction to it, brings home to a fresh audience the urgency of such an alternative. It also confirms a central aspect of capitalism which Marx pointed to 150 years ago — just as capitalism increases its absolute wealth and riches, the relative misery and poverty of the mass of people becomes greater and sharper.

When you think you have killed off socialism, it becomes vital to rubbish the idea that events like Bangladesh indict capitalism in any way. That is what produces the obscene commentaries of recent weeks.

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"The emancipation of the working class is also the emancipation of all human beings without distinction of sex or race."

Karl Marx

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UCATT: corruption, cover-ups, and chaos

It has been an open secret for many years that UCATT, the building workers' union, is the most corrupt union in Britain.

The right-wing leadership around outgoing General Secretary Albert Williams has presided over blatant ballot-rigging and a series of crude cover-ups going back to the mid-1980s. This culminated in the June 1990 NEC election — a fraudulent *piece de resistance* even by the standards of the UCATT leadership.

Now the cement has hit the mixer: a Channel 4 programme, *The Ballot Fixers*, last week exposed the full extent of the corruption, naming NEC members Danny Crawford and Jack Henry (who is also on the NEC of the Labour Party) as directly involved in ballot-rigging and leaving no doubt that Albert Williams, at the very least, knew what was going on.

The programme came hard on the heels of a re-run of the NEC elections, forced by a court action brought by Broad Left candidate Peter Lennihan. The re-run election used the Electoral Reform Society as scrutineers for the first time: the results were an exact reversal of June 1990, with Lennihan and fellow Broad Left candidates John Flavin and Ron Dale defeating the three sitting members.

Lennihan and Flavin were featured prominently in the Channel 4 programme and it seems likely that they, together with other leading Broad Left figures like Dominic Here (who resigned as London Organiser in 1988 in protest at union corruption) were crucially involved in the production of the programme.

Which brings us to a problem: while it's certainly good to see corrupt old bureaucrats like Rogers and Williams getting their come-uppance, the methods of the UCATT Broad Left — using the courts and the media — will be an anathema to many rank and file trade unionists.

Lennihan, Flavin *et al* will protest that they had no choice, that they were up against a bureaucracy that had closed off all "normal", internal means of obtaining redress. There may be some truth in this.



U.C.A.T.T.

At the 1988 UCATT conference, for instance, the union's solicitor admitted that ballot-rigging had taken place in the 1986 NEC elections, but warned against taking any action over it on the grounds that this would inevitably lead to more such allegations — including, presumably, the conduct of the General Secretary election!

It may also be pointed out that UCATT is, by its very nature, a "top down" union whose rank and file is notoriously transient, and difficult to mobilise.

But when Dominic Here resigned in 1988 (and was immediately banned from holding office for 10 years) the rank and file "Building Worker" group mobilised an extremely effective campaign in his defence and succeeded in forcing the leadership to reduce Here's "punishment" to a five year ban. Unfortunately, Here chose not to build on this support, preferring to take his case to the High Court.

Other issues crying out for attention in UCATT: the failure to mount an effective health and safety campaign, the sweetheart deals with employers like Costains (for whom UCATT tends for business with Labour local authorities), and the chaotic state of the union's membership lists.

The Broad Left will certainly be an improvement on the Williams regime and may even address some of these crucial issues. But the one thing they don't look like doing is mobilising the rank and file.

Meanwhile, when Williams retires next month, UCATT members will be faced with the uninspiring choice between George Branwell, Charlie Curley and Jim Hardiman, all presently NEC members. The Broad Left doesn't have a candidate and is split three ways over who to support.



INSIDE THE UNIONS

By Sleeper

Crisis in the NHS

How to save

Proposals to fight the cuts

By Richard Bayley

The Health Service is in crisis, and the Tory reforms could kill it off altogether. We need both immediate demands to force the Tories to back down, and demands for action from a future Labour government.

Labour's refusal to give unequivocal commitments on the NHS threatens to undermine its credibility on the issue. Publicly, Labour slams the Tories; its more detailed policy documents are vague. We can give no "blank cheque" to the Labour leaders.

- Stop the Cuts and Closures! The British Medical Association estimates that the NHS needs *6 billion to restore it to full health. For an immediate cash injection into the Health Service! It can be paid for by cutting military spending or taxing the rich.

- No Opting-Out! Action by healthworkers and public protest can halt the formation of any more NHS Trusts (ie opted-out hospitals). We need a clear commitment from Labour that any NHS Trusts will be brought back immediately

into the NHS and lose their independent status under a future Labour Government. We should also call for the nationalisation of the big drug companies which profit from the NHS.

- Abolish the "Internal Market"! The new system of contracts and budgets is a nightmare for patients. Instead, thorough regional and local planning — democratically controlled — should determine the levels and availability of healthcare, ensuring equality of healthcare across the country.

- Charges for prescriptions and for tooth and eye care should be scrapped. Services "contracted out" to private companies should be brought back within the NHS.

- For democracy in the NHS! Labour should sweep away the businessmen who currently make up the majority of Health Authority members. Instead local Health Authorities should be directly elected and accountable to the public.

- Fair Pay for Healthworkers! For a National Minimum Wage — the unions must hold Labour to its promise of a national minimum equal to two-thirds average male wages. Defend national terms and conditions and national bargaining!



Organise a day of action

From front page

By Mary Williams (NUPE steward, Cardiff)

the disease, which might not show for another 15-20 years, yet they would be devastating — blindness, kidney failure. But how do you price educating a person about their condition?

At the moment people get as much education as they need. It's all individual, but in the future, or so we are told, a price tag will be hanging over the amount of time we spend with our patients.

GPs will be buying our services — but whereas buying cheaper coffee will not do you any harm, cheaper health care doesn't mean the best.

The British Medical Association (BMA) led the campaign against the NHS Act last year and a number of local campaigns loosely based around London Health Emergency sprang up. Most of these directed themselves towards petitioning and parliamentary lobbying, and although initially well supported, tended to fall apart.

The Labour Party has been more interested in witch-hunting its own members and

telling people to pay the poll tax than gathering support for the campaign. Consequently the labour movement is ill-informed about what the changes in the NHS involve.

You would think that the example of how to beat the poll tax would show the way. In the end it was not Parliamentary squabbling that won the day. It was people on the streets and at the courts which made the poll tax unworkable.

It is high time the Labour Party organised a national demonstration, "No more opt-outs! Don't haggle over our health!". A one-day

stoppage would allow everyone to show how they feel about the Tories dismantling our NHS.

All Labour Party wards and constituencies should pass urgent resolutions to the National Executive calling for a national demo and committing a future Labour government to reversing the changes in the NHS.

However, we can't rely on the promise of a Labour government. We have got to stop Tory wreckers now!

Trade unionists should pass similar resolutions and pledge support for any action that may be organised by health workers, locally or nationally. NUPE, CoHSE, NALGO, and all other unions with NHS members, should be organising protests, lobbies of Health Authorities, petitioning, and public meetings, and putting the pressure on for a national Day of Action and demo.

Broad based campaigns should be set up or revived along the lines of London Health Emergency — with union and Labour Party affiliations sought — to coordinate action and campaigning. CoHSE in Cardiff has organised a candlelight vigil outside the Temple of Peace (South Glamorgan AHA HQ).

We can't allow our Health Service to be run by accountants!

Ancillary deal is not what it seems

Rumours have been around since before Xmas that ancillary staff in the NHS will be offered a substantial pay deal.

NUPE's Roger Poole went so far as to tell the NUPE National Nurses' Committee that higher-grade nurses have done well under the Tories, and that their claims should be overlooked in favour of the ancillaries. The deal that was eventually

agreed was announced by NHS Bosses as being worth 13-18%. NUPE did not seem to dissent from this, and it sailed through NUPE's Health Committee and NEC with little opposition, being heartily recommended by Roger Poole as a good deal.

In reality, the deal is no great shakes; a large proportion of staff will not get even 13%, but more like 11% in real terms (9% now, 4% at the start of next year). Most shift workers will get slightly more. As for the 18%, NUPE stewards up and down the country are still

trying to find the tiny number of staff who qualify for this!

The deal also contains a "flexibility" clause that is still yet to be fully explained. At least one NUPE Branch Secretary I know has no idea what it might mean!

All in all, the selling of this deal looks all too similar to last year's Ambulance Workers' deal, where in reality staff received far less than was promised by their union leaders.

This sort of "soft-sell" only breeds cynicism amongst union members.

e the NHS!



Markets are bad for your health

By Stephen Smith

chronic underfunding by fancy administration and weasel words.

District Health Authorities (the legal bodies charged with health care in a particular area) now have cash-limited budgets from the Government. They 'purchase' health

care from 'providers' which are usually, but not always, local hospitals. A particular hospital or Trust 'contracts' with a Health Authority to provide a certain service, eg 500 hip replacements in the year 1991-2.

Now markets need prices, so a whole bureaucracy has

been set up, with expensive information systems, to cost and issue bills. It's good to know how much treatments cost - but the costings may well be wrong, and the 'providers' will be under pressure to offer deals which look cheaper even when they are, on serious examination, shoddy.

The "market" also leads to the bigger or more ruthless hospitals poaching patients to generate income.

Hospitals can demand premiums above the contract price to deal with patients quickly. For example, the Alder Hey Children's Hospital in Liverpool is asking for £7,500 extra per patient to allow queue-jumping for heart operations, and Watford General Hospital is guaranteeing 'fast-track' treatment for patients of two budget-holding GP practices, in return for contracts for care worth £1.5 million.

The purchasers are also forming combines to purchase services more cheaply, thus resurrecting the idea of 'Areas' of more than one health authority, which the Tories did away with in 1982 on 'efficiency' grounds.

Those patients not on contract can expect very short shrift indeed. A recent case: someone from Lewisham and North Southwark Health Authority recently had an accident in Leeds, and needed dental treatment to restore their face to normal. Because it wasn't emergency treatment, the patient had to pay.

Such 'extra-contractual referrals' are covered by very limited budgets, and cases like this will become more common. So much for a *National Health Service!*

The effect on teaching must also be considered. If teaching hospitals are too expensive then they will go out of business, because of higher overheads, treating unusual conditions or very ill patients, and being unable to treat patients from areas not contracted to them.

Also, students won't see the more common illnesses and treatments, (how do you treat piles?) because these will be dealt with in cheaper local hospitals.

Markets are bad for your health!

What is the "internal market" in the NHS? As usual under the Tories, a way of hiding

Blood tests and cancer unit face cuts at Guys

By Stephen Smith (MSF, Guy's Hospital)

that management consultants prepared for the Trust.

It is known that day-release and in-service training will be cut for these workers, and any loss of jobs would be disastrous: who will do HIV antibody tests on donated blood, for instance? Who will find out if blood is of the right blood group for the intended patient? There is also a move to de-skill jobs.

Guy's has a cancer treatment unit which is expensive, because patients need to be intensively nursed, they might need lots of drugs to counteract the side-effects of the treatment, they and their relatives might need lots of

social services, and drug and radiation therapy for cancer is costly.

There are two wards with 29 beds each, and 8 beds will have to close on each ward. The nurses needed for these beds will either work elsewhere in the hospital or will go.

What are the other workers doing? The meeting that was called for 17 May has been cancelled by management, but meetings happened on 7 and 8 May, with Harriet Harman (Shadow Health Minister and MP for Peckham) and Peter Griffiths. Unfortunately not all trade unionists attended; the meetings were called by NALGO, NUPE, and COHSE and the publicity implied that they were closed meetings.

The unions must act in concert to defend ourselves and our Health Service. Some useful things have been done; there will have been a lobby of Parliament on 14 May and the Trust Board might be lobbied when it meets on 29 May.

However, the campaign needs to be co-ordinated. The Community Health Council for Guy's and Lewisham, a body which has legal responsibility for overseeing all the health provision for the area, and the power to demand answers to awkward questions, met on 7 May.

It was inordinate, due to Lewisham Council Labour Group having its AGM, so no decisions could be taken.

The local Labour parties must demand to know why such a disgraceful thing happened, and must be prepared to replace the time-servers.

Nobody knows yet the full extent of the redundancies at Guy's Hospital, but there are plenty of rumours and leaks.

The latest edition of the professional magazine *Laboratory World*, says that up to 20 laboratory posts might go at Guy's and up to 100 at Lewisham, but management deny this. The numbers come from a report

A thousand jobs cut in Wales

By Mary Williams

hands of private contractors and encouraging workers not to pay union dues for the last three months of their contract in the NHS. Pay is to be reduced to £1.74 an hour to £1.50.

The AHA meets on Thursday 16 May to finalise policy details. The Joint Shop Stewards will lobby the AHA meeting.

The union full-time officers are encouraging only those who are on lunch breaks or days off to attend the lobby. They should be mobilising for a day of action.

No NHS jobs are safe in South Glamorgan. This time it is the domestics. Next time it will be nurses and medical staff.

A thousand domestic jobs in South Glamorgan Health Authority are to be axed, and the work put out to private contractors.

The plans were revealed at a Joint Shop Stewards' meeting on 13 May by Labour's Welsh Spokesperson on Health, Alan Michael MP, and full-timers of the TGWU, COHSE, NUPE and the GMB. Managers are already at work implementing the policy.

The Area Health Authority (AHA) is telling staff that their jobs will be safe in the

A safe zone for low pay?

By Richard Bayley

The white collar workers' union NALGO recently accepted a pay offer worth 7.9% (or £11.50 a week for those on the lowest scale) for Administrative and Clerical workers.

That effectively ends this year's NHS pay round. Despite widespread (and realistic) fears that this year could see the last nationally negotiated pay round under the Tories' plans for the NHS, there has been a real lack of confidence among healthworkers about action to win real wage increases.

Substantial claims were lodged for both Clerical and Ancillary grades (ie porters, cleaners, nursing auxiliaries and catering staff) but little campaigning took place.

The Union leaders have sat tight, content to simply retain their place at the national negotiating table; and some, like Roger Poole of NUPE, have claimed that recent deals have been real victories, against all evidence.

The NHS still remains a massive low-pay zone, with hundreds of thousands of workers taking home no more than £100 a week in basic pay. The Tories' NHS "reforms" threaten to make things even worse.

For a start, if a hospital "opts out" and becomes a Trust, then it can break away from national pay scales and conditions. Health bosses point out that, of course staff can still keep their existing contracts if they wish. Eric Caines, NHS head of Personnel, however, has stated publicly that he wishes to get rid of national bargaining and the Pay Review bodies (which determine Nurses' pay) altogether - so you take a new contract or get your pay frozen!

So far, none of the first wave of NHS Trusts have gone in for new contracts in a big way. Whilst national bargaining and national scales still function, existing staff would have to be offered a serious pay increase to entice them into throwing away their existing terms and conditions. Cash-strapped hospitals are currently in no position to do this.

The trailblazers for new contracts have been newly opted-out Ambulance Services. The deal offered by the Northumbria Ambulance Service shows



the shape of things to come. Ambulance bosses there have broken the link between the Accident and Emergency crews' pay and the Out-Patient crews' pay (paving the way for the latter to be privatised), and offered Emergency staff a deal worth 21-25%.

In exchange for this, they would lose overtime pay, have a longer basic working week and work a flexible three shift system. 60% of the Emergency staff took this deal; the 40% that stuck by their old contracts have found themselves effectively put on permanent night shifts!

It is likely that this sort of deal will become a model for the NHS Trusts. Small groups of workers identified as "key" staff will be offered new contracts with significantly increased levels of pay in exchange for complete flexibility. These rises will be paid for by cuts in "unprofitable" departments and in the number of fully trained staff used.

For instance, qualified nurses would take greater responsibilities, surrounded by unqualified auxiliaries.

For clerical and ancillary staff, the loss of national terms and conditions and negotiating rights would be nothing short of disastrous; it will mean more temporary contracts, more productivity deals and bonus schemes at the expense of basic pay, and less job security. Oldham Health Authority's immediate sacking of 34 medical records clerks, with 250 years service between them, for striking over a re-grading claim shows the new mood of NHS bosses.

Cost of the cuts

The changes in the NHS are not only throwing thousands of people out of work, they are wasting millions of pounds - money that is not going on treating people's illnesses.

Some examples of this waste include:

- £120,000 for a letter thanking staff for accepting the Tories' cuts to the NHS. Not only a waste of money but a slap in the face to those who don't accept, and are fighting, the cuts.

- £2 million to cut waiting lists in Yorkshire. For every name removed from the list the GP will get £360 and if they manage to get rid of all their patients who have been waiting more than a year, they get a bonus of £2,000. These "incentives" also apply to health districts who will receive £30,000 if they can dispose of all patients who've been waiting more than a year by March.

- £320,000 saved at Guy's hospital in South London will mean a cut by 10% of the hospital's blood transfusion service and a further loss of 20 technicians' jobs.

- Guy's will be charging patients more for a test that fails than one that is successful. For instance, a successful insertion of dye into the aorta will cost £551, an abandoned test £739.

The costs bear no resemblance to reality. One test on cardiac arteries will cost patients £18 while the real cost is £500. The new internal market is nonsensical.

- Teaching hospitals may even be forced to close according to the Universities Funding Council. Already London's teaching hospitals, Guy's, Westminster and Charing Cross, and Bradford's Hospital Trust, have announced more than 1300 job losses.

- In order to keep as much information as possible from the public the NHS is threatening health workers with dismissal if they speak out against the cuts.

In some cases workers are being forced to sign contracts saying they will treat any and all information they receive as confidential.

The vicious action taken against Dr Helen Zeifin is meant as an example for other workers prepared to advocate a decent health service.

GRAFFITI

Taxing times and smear campaigns

PRESS GANG



By Jim Denham



The Fraud Squad tries to smear the Labour Party by linking Kinnock with rag trade boss Charilaos Costa

Last Tuesday, readers of the *Daily Express* were presented with a terrifying prospect: "Nightmare on Downing St — the scary scenario that could haunt Britain. The first 100 days in power of Neil Kinnock and Co."

The horrors conjured up by the *Express* included the mass exodus of pop stars, the age of consent for homosexuals lowered to 16, soaring unemployment (thanks to the minimum wage), wildcat strikes and secondary picketing (union laws repealed), demonstrations by angry parents (because "opting out" has been abolished) and the police under the control of the sinister "committees of councillors".

The *Express's* concluding question to its readers — "Is this a vision of Britain we want for the Nineties?" — seemed a little superfluous after all that.

The cause of all this excitement was a comment from Shadow Chancellor John Smith (on TVAM) to the effect that, under Labour, the requirement to pay National Insurance contributions would be extended to earnings above £20,300. The *Daily Mail*, whose reaction was almost as hysterical, at least quoted what Smith had said: "I don't understand why you pay on 100 per cent of your income up to £20,300 but you don't pay on it beyond that."

I must confess that I'd never realised that you *didn't* pay NI contributions on earnings above that figure.

Monday's *Express* had broken the story under the headline "Labour WILL cost more" and Political Correspondent Charles Lewington informed us that "three million people will be

hit by punishing rises in National Insurance under Labour, Shadow Chancellor John Smith revealed yesterday. After months of ducking and diving, Neil Kinnock's weighty right hand man confirmed that 12 per cent of earners will fall into a trap aimed at raising £2.5 billion for lavish spending programmes."

On Tuesday the front page headline was "Labour's Brain Drain Threat" above a story entirely built around a quote from Treasury Chief Secretary David Mellor, predicting "Britain's economic life-blood of self-starters, entrepreneurs and top professionals would move abroad as they did in the seventies under the last Socialist government". On an inside page, such irreplaceable assets to the nation's well-being as Mick Jagger, Bill Wyman and Michael Winner confirmed that they planned to flee these shores in the event of a Kinnock victory.

The next day's *Daily Mail* front page revealed further evidence of the full extent of the Kinnock reign of terror: "No tax cuts for five years". In a "shock speech" the Labour leader had, apparently, made the "stunning declaration that no-one should expect tax cuts for five

years if Labour was in power".

The *Mail* described this as "one of the most astonishing promises of modern times".

But what have we here? Thursday's *Mail* quoted Norman Lamont repeating the "government aim of cutting the basic rate (of income tax) to 20p in the pound... However, in line with the government commitment to cut taxes only when it is prudent to do so, he signalled that it could take more than one parliament to reach that goal." More than one parliament? A few years perhaps? Five years, even?

As the admirable Anthony Bevis noted in Friday's *Independent*, this represents "just as much of a dilution of commitment as Labour's revised statement that it would now only move 'towards' a minus 20p starting rate of income tax for 'those struggling to escape poverty', over the lifetime of a parliament. For both parties, the pledge has been reduced to a hope."

And as for all that shock-horror stuff about the National Insurance ceiling, Bevis pointed out that "Labour's plan has been around since May 1989."

John Major may still be weighing his options for the timing of the next election,

but as far as the Tory press is concerned, the campaign is well and truly underway.

Last week the *Sun* ran a series of front page stories linking Neil Kinnock with one Charilaos Costa, a rag-trade boss whom the police want to question over an alleged "missing" £10 million. Even the *Sun* admitted (in the small print) that Kinnock's "links" with Costa did not involve any business or financial connections. But it was clearly a damaging smear.

Then came the claim — from the *Sun's* political editor Trevor Kavanagh, no less — that the source of the story was the Fraud Squad. Kinnock's office contacted the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Peter Imbert, who suggested a meeting and an official complaint. Now, on Kinnock's personal instructions, the meeting has been called off and no complaint will be issued. It seems that the Labour leader doesn't want to embarrass the police.

NB. Clare Short MP was recently smeared in the *News of the World*, on the basis of information and a photograph which could only have come from a source within the police.

What the NHS cuts mean for mothers

WOMEN'S EYE

By Belinda Weaver

When my mother went into hospital to give birth to me, my older brother and sister moved out onto the front stairs to wait for her return.

My father convinced them to abandon their vigil; Mum wouldn't be back for several days.

Times have changed. Lots of women have their babies at home instead of in hospital, and lots of women come home one or two days after

the birth. That's fine, if it's what they want.

What's happening in the NHS now, though, is that women are forced to go home whether they want to or not. I should know. My baby is due in a fortnight, and I've known since the start that I must come home 24 hours after the delivery.

The hospital has written to tell me so, explaining that they could not continue to see the same number of women if they didn't send women home almost as soon as they delivered.

Maybe I'll be happier at home. Probably I will. I don't like hospitals much, after all. But I do feel nervous about taking almost sole responsibility for a tiny

newborn at a time when I'll probably be still wiped out from the birth.

Midwives and Health Visitors will call in for the first few days, to help get feeding going and to answer questions, but that's not the same as having hospital resources on 24-hour call.

And what about women who have no partner or family? Who will look after them when they're sent home? How do they cope?

Cuts in the hospital's budget have destroyed choice. The hospital either sends women home straight away or sees fewer women. So much for the Tory claim that health services are not being savaged.

It goes further. The

hospital has sent me a list of things to bring in with me for the birth. I expected to bring nightdresses and my own toothbrush.

But I also have to take soap, towels, and tissues, and cotton wool and disposable nappies for the baby. The hospital can't afford to supply them any more. I guess I'm lucky I don't need to take in sheets, or meals, but that will probably be next. The cuts are continuing.

This is not an opted-out trust-hospital, keen to make savings in its first year of operation. It is an NHS teaching hospital with an international reputation. How can they continue to run a service if they can't afford to pay for toilet paper?



The costs of war

GRAFFITI

Not only the human, but also the financial cost of the Gulf War was grossly underestimated by the Americans. The White House had predicted the total cost would be \$70 billion. Bush reassured Americans that the tab would be picked up by the allies, especially Saudi Arabia, the Japanese and the Germans.

Wrong both times. The Auditor to the US Congress has tallied the war's current costs at \$100 billion, and says that the allies will pay less than half that amount. So George 'read my lips' Bush is going to have to find some way of raising \$50 billion other than raising taxes. That can only mean more cuts in public services, in a country that still doesn't provide universal health care.

The pay-off for the war through contracts for rebuilding Kuwait isn't working out either.

Apparently not enough of Kuwait was destroyed to need rebuilding.

It is more of a renovation job, and that doesn't pay quite as well.

The boom that we were told would follow the war is a long way off, or maybe just obscured by the 800 oil wells still burning in Kuwait.

According to Bob Woodward, of *All the President's Men* fame, both James Baker and General Colin Powell disagreed with the Gulf war strategy and preferred maintaining sanctions.

Bush insisted that his domestic political needs were such that he couldn't wait for sanctions to take effect.

Powell responded by saying that if he had to fight a war he had to be allowed to do it without any constraints. Bush willingly agreed.



James Baker disagreed with Bush

Sunday night's 'The Simple Truth' concert is reported to have raised an impressive

£20 million. No one could fail to be moved by the suffering the Kurds endured in their flight from Saddam.

No one? £20 million is the same as one RAF Tornado. It is more than double what the Tories have contributed in Kurdish aid, and more than three times what the Tories have given in aid to Bangladesh after 150,000 have been killed.

And it is one fifteenth of what it cost the allies to run the first day of the war.

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT OFFICE
SURNAMES L TO Z



Unemployment everywhere

Around the world governments are playing the same old record. The recession is almost over, the recovery is just around the corner, things can only get better.

The record is scratched. Everywhere unemployment is getting worse.

In America unemployment continues to grow and is almost back to the record levels of the 1982 recession. In Poland 1.5 million are without a job, and hundreds of thousands of others are working enforced short hours. In Australia unemployment has hit 12% of the workforce.

On 30 June the West German government will remove all subsidies to East German industry. No one can predict what the exact impact of this will be, but West German Ministers are trying to downplay the impact by saying that somewhere between one million and 1.5 million East Germans will be thrown out of work! On one day!

Jobless people in London should not waste time applying for one recently advertised vacancy at Islington Council. They won't even be able to get an application form for the low-level clerical position.

The Council has decided not to send out any more after posting 1,500 forms in one week.

The politics behind the Mandela scandal

By Bob Fine and Tom Rigby

So Winnie Mandela has been found guilty. She has been sentenced to six years for the kidnapping, and being an accessory "after the fact" to the assault of murdered young black activist Stompie Mokheisi.

But Mrs Mandela will not be going to prison yet, anyway; she has been given bail and leave to appeal, a process that could take a year at least.

Many long-standing opponents of apartheid will be rightly disgusted by the hypocrisy of the South African state. The response of many on the left will be that this vile racist regime, guilty of so many crimes, has no right to stand in judgement on Winnie Mandela.

But there is more to say. The "Winnie Mandela affair" has raised important issues, not least the future and past of the ANC itself.

The Mandela trial fits President De Klerk's purposes very well — though suggestions of a conspiracy are too crude.

De Klerk's basic strategy is to introduce controlled reform from above, culminating in one-person-one-vote, at some time in the not-too-distant future.

For this strategy to be successful it is essential to weaken, divide, disorganise and discredit the ANC. The Mandela trial has provided the perfect opportunity to do this.

Resentment in the townships against Mrs Mandela is not the creation of "the system". Her reputation amongst the black working class is very bad indeed. It was not helped by the large and expensive mansion "fit for a president" she built in Soweto, or by her attempt to profit from the copyright



Winnie remains defiant as Nelson contemplates the future

on the Mandela name or by her arrogant pronouncements such as her infamous "necklace" speech in which she informed the world that the people would rise up when she "gave the word".

Nevertheless, it would be a mistake indeed for the left to allow Mrs Mandela to be turned into a scapegoat for what went wrong with the ANC's pseudo-insurrectionary struggle for "people's power" in 1984-5.

We are not dealing with the "excesses" of Mrs Mandela, but with some of the more grotesque consequences of a flawed political strategy.

A strategy that has sown the

seeds of the present bloody carnage that is ripping the townships apart.

In the mid-1980s the ANC raised such slogans as "make the townships ungovernable", and "no education before liberation". The aim was to create such chaos and mayhem as would force the government to negotiate with the ANC.

But who were the victims of the chaos? As the left wing academic journal *Work in Progress* put it at the time: "Undisciplined comrades, often acting with no organisational basis or mandate, have divided the communities, setting workers against the unemployed, children against parents, trade unions against community groups.

"Some of the rent boycotts have been enforced with a high degree of anti-democratic authoritarianism. The youth have often acted without the organisational structure necessary for democratic decision-making, and without adequate mandate or consultation. Recourse to 'discipline' — 'necklacings', beatings and other punishments — has come too easily to a group which often lacks a mandate to act on behalf of a constituency."

Stompie was not the only victim and he was an especially charismatic activist.

Mrs Mandela was a vocal champion of the "necklace" and of the rather injudicious use of "people's

justice". She delivered political statements without any mandate and "called upon the people" to follow certain lines of struggle with little concern for the norms of democratic decision-making. Her elitism certainly alienated many trade unionists accustomed to the ideas of accountability and participation.

When she spoke at a number of trade union congresses advocating adoption of the Freedom Charter (the ANC's basic programme) and at the miners' conference advocating a united front between the mine owners and the mineworkers against the state, many workers were resentful at having her views imposed upon them.

But this resentment should not simply be turned on Mrs Mandela. Rather it should lead to some serious rethinking in the broad liberation movement.

Coming to terms with Winnie Mandela will involve the ANC coming to terms with its own past. The organisation is now paying the price for the rather narrow political base it built for itself in the townships.

The "workerist" trade union left, who in the mid-'80s focused on building democratic, accountable structures in the workplaces and communities, and criticised the ANC's reliance on "the comrades", have had at least part of their analysis negatively confirmed. The tragedy is that the trade union left abandoned the terrain of politics to the ANC and their pseudo-insurrectionary sloganising.

For us here in the solidarity movement the fall of Mrs Mandela should be a timely reminder where uncritical admiration of leaders may lead, particularly when those leaders are unelected.

Perhaps one day people will name roads, parks and meeting rooms after Stompie Mokheisi.

May Day in Spain

Gordon Woods reports from Spain

In Spain, the annual 1 May workers' rallies were marked this year by greatly increased trade union solidarity.

All across the country the two main Unions, the Socialist UGT and the more Communist CC OO, joined together in massive demonstrations. In Madrid over 200,000 attended, in Barcelona 45,000, and in many other cities tens of thousands.

In Madrid Nicolas Redondo of the UGT and Antonio Gutierrez of CC OO both called for a redirection of the Government's social and economic policy and spoke of the urgent need to raise the national standard of living to a 'European' level.

The high turnout at the rallies and the increased co-operation between the unions is due to disappointment with the Socialist Government. Many demonstrators were angry at Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez's absence. He was 'otherwise engaged', entertaining Helmut Kohl in the Canary Islands.

Serbian opposition calls protest to stop civil war

By Steven Holt

Vuk Draskovic, leader of the anti-Stalinist opposition in Yugoslavia's biggest republic, Serbia, has called for a mass anti-war demonstration in the capital Belgrade.

Support for this demonstration may be an indication of whether the Serbian Stalinists have enough popular support to

start a civil war.

There is a real risk. The Yugoslav army has been mobilised and put on alert following the killing of a soldier in a battle between the army and 30,000 demonstrators in the Croatian port, Split. The demonstration on 6 May was organised by the Croatian independent trade union in support of the Croatian leader Franjo Tudjman.

Thirteen Croatian police and four Serbs died when the police unit in Borovo Selo in Croatia

was attacked by Serbian militia. The Serbian-controlled army (70% of the officers are Serb) has blockaded Kijevo, a Croatian enclave within the mainly Serbian area of Krajina within Croatia.

On 7 May there were clashes between soldiers and workers who had occupied an armaments factory in Slavonki Brod in Croatia. The same day tanks and troops were used to suppress demonstrations in Listica, a Croatian region in the Bosnia-Herzegovina republic.

On 12 May a referendum in Krajina resulted in an overwhelming vote in favour of union with Serbia. The Croatian government has declared the referendum illegal.

The next potential crisis will come when Stipe Mesic (a Croat) is due to take the position of federal president (which is rotated between the various nationalities). Since April this year, control of the army has been held by General Blagoje Adzic, a hardline Serbian Stalinist, whose parents were killed by the Ustashi (Croat fascists) during World War 2.

There are fears that Adzic and the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic will act to prevent a Croat taking the presidency, even to the point of provoking civil war.

Manchester demo backs the Kurds

By Richard Love

On Saturday 11 May 300 people marched through Manchester to support Kurdish self-determination.

The demonstration jointly organised by Manchester Area National Union of

Students and the Kurdish Society, was a lively event with entertainment provided by a traditional Kurdish folk music and dancing band.

The organisers of the demonstration wish to establish a more permanent campaign in solidarity with the Kurds. Anyone wishing to get involved should contact Richard Love at MANUS, 061-736 3636.

Washington riots target police racism

Robin Templeton reports from Washington DC

On Sunday 5 May, a 30 year old Salvadoran man was shot in the chest by an officer of the DC police force, after he and two other men were stopped for drinking beer in public.

It is still unclear if Daniel Enrique Gomez, now in critical condition, had a knife as the police report, or was shot unarmed and perhaps handcuffed. May 5 is a Latino day of festival.

The police shooting of Gomez sparked a street response by Latinos, African-American, and white members of the community, mostly youth. For two days, riots engulfed the Mount Pleasant area: police set up barricades, which the com-

munity resisted. There was street confrontation with police, rock throwing and fires.

At least seven police cars and one city bus were set ablaze, countless businesses were looted, over 170 people were arrested and over 40 police were wounded. From Tuesday 12am to Thursday 5am, an evening curfew was in place and enforced by over 1,000 police.

Public response to the riots has been inconsistent, however, the general sentiment on the streets promises that the protests are not over. Some in the mayor's office and business community feel that the police should have used greater force to confront the rioters. It is the police, however, who have and continue to fan the flames of resistance as they attempt to beat Latinos and African-Americans into submission.

"The battle of ideas

On the weekend of 4-5 May, 150 socialists met in London to launch the "Alliance for Workers' Liberty".

They represented a section of the activists who support and sustain *Socialist Organiser*, and one of their major decisions was to promote this newspaper.

Below we print Cathy Nugent's introduction to the main debate, 'Building the Alliance'.

Chris Reynolds summarises some of the other main debates of the weekend.

In 1847 Marx and Engels drafted the manifesto of the Communist Party. It was the first rounded statement of what we would call Marxian socialism or scientific socialism. It was a statement of what Communists stood for.

The Communist Manifesto is like that record you play when you get a bit down. You play it over and over again. *The Communist Manifesto* you read over and over again, and every time you find something new and something that sums up in a different way how the world is organised.

Generations of working class people have read *The Communist Manifesto* and found that it has literally changed their lives.

Decades of working class struggle and the lessons of those struggles have enriched and further clarified what is in this little book. It is as relevant today as it was in 1847. Maybe that is one way of summing

up how profound Marxist thinking is — its longevity.

There are 3 ideas in *The Communist Manifesto* which I want to mention here. They are just as accessible and equal to summing up what we, *Socialist Organiser*, are about today as they were 140 years ago.

Firstly, capitalist society, with its ruling capitalist class, has, as Marx and Engels put it, "created its own gravedigger".

That gravedigger is the working class, a class that lives only as long as it can find work, a class that is literally a slave to the wages system.

This slavery means if you can't find work and are unemployed you feel useless. And this wage system means that a struggle over wages or jobs can potentially develop towards a struggle that can challenge the whole system, provoking the naked repression of the bourgeois state with its police and its courts just as it did in the miners' strike.

The working class is the basic exploited class, the majority now in this world of advanced but sick capitalism. It is the only class that has no interest in and just not does not have the power to exploit any other section of society.

A workers' socialist revolution is the only genuine democratic revolution — democratic because it will end all exploitation and achieve the liberation of all of humanity.

The second idea in *The Communist Manifesto* is that the dominant ideas in society are those of the ruling class.

The bosses have economic power. Essentially that is the basis of their rule, but class rule is more than this.

The bourgeoisie also have regiments of spokespeople: politi-

cians, thinkers, intellectuals who spend their lives and get paid for explaining, justifying, criticising within limits the way things are, the way things *just are* and, therefore, have got to be.

And they have their gofers, toadies like the populist scum who write for *The Sun*, who manage to reach out to and can find a hearing among working class people, downtrodden and ruled by conventions which say this is how it is and the way things have always been.

The working class does not have these kinds of ready made intellectuals who can speak up for its own interests. And working class politics spontaneously developed through struggle — syndicalism, labourism — has been shaped and marred by bourgeois ideas.

"In 1989-90 there were massive upheavals in Eastern Europe. The tyranny that had been in place in the name of a barbarically corrupt Marxism was overthrown. The working class re-entered centre stage."

Lastly, *The Communist Manifesto* tells us what we have to be.

Communists are the "the most advanced and resolute sections of the working class parties, that section that pushes forward all others". We "have the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement."

We are thoroughly involved in the working class movement but we have set ourselves the goal of being able to rise above the pressures of bourgeois existence and to fight for a vision of the future. We have to fight piecemeal, in small ways, but also to organise and implement the historical goal of working class struggle, the overthrow of the wage slave system, an insurrection to found a socialist and democratic society.

In 1989/1990 there were massive upheavals in Eastern Europe. The tyranny that had been in place in the name of a barbarically corrupt Marxism was overthrown. The working class re-entered centre stage.

But it did not have an independent voice and never had the chance to organise, develop ideas collectively. And so the intellectuals of the 'liberal' opposition with their bourgeois ideals, such as Havel in Czechoslovakia, came to the forefront. There was no revolutionary socialist alternative able to steer the working class away from the bright lights and ephemeral possibilities of western capitalism.

Now the working class in Eastern Europe has to assimilate all the lessons of their own situation but of the past as well. It has to learn about a history that has been buried beneath a huge weight of lies and Stalinist propaganda.

It has to rediscover the ideas that

"You cannot overthrow or supersede advanced capitalism by developing a backward country in competition with it."

Sean Matgamna opened the conference by surveying the "new world order" after the collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe.

The Western bourgeoisie are claiming triumph; and they have good cause.

No-one can overthrow or supersede advanced capitalism by developing a backward country in competition with it. Marx knew that. Lenin and Trotsky knew that. But the bureaucracy, led by Stalin, which overthrew workers' power in Russia, was not influenced by Marxist theory.

It equated "socialism" with its own goal, the development of backward Russia — and then other backward countries — by way of an economic forced march organised by an all-powerful terrorist state. That equation gained great sway in the world workers' movement. Stalinism was the "actually existing" alternative to capitalism.

The collapse of such "socialism" was inevitable.

Nevertheless, nothing of solid value to working-class socialism is lost with the collapse of Stalinism. Much is gained — the freeing of

socialism from confusion and counterfeits.

Already in Eastern Europe and the USSR, where the workers have great cause to hate "socialism", and do hate "socialism", the class struggle is rising. The workers will outgrow their confusion. On the ground scorched and polluted by Stalinism, the green shoots of new life are already visible. The Alliance for Workers' Liberty can look to the future with confidence.

A move by Dennis Church to give conference time to debate the view held by him and a few others, that the Stalinist states should still be defined as "deformed and degenerated workers' states", was rejected. The conference decided that the debate should instead be continued in writing.

Time was, however, given to this argument on the conference "fringe", with a Saturday evening forum in which different analyses of the Stalinist states — "bureaucratic collectivist", "state capitalist", "deformed workers' states", and "dead-end societies without any ruling class" — were debated in a way refreshingly free from the factional point-scoring and scholasticism which has confused this issue for so long.



May 1989. Chinese workers and students demonstrate against their regime. They have yet to win this fight

were found from 1847 in *The Communist Manifesto*, and which were discussed and debated and implemented in the workers' revolution of 1917. That will be a painful, difficult process.

Socialists such as ourselves have a part to play. The best thing we can do is pass down our ideas of an alternative society and our traditions. We can try to develop a better understanding of how the world works. That job cannot be done by just a few people in our ranks but all of us to the best of our abilities.

Our role of developing ideas is irreplaceable, essential. If we cannot pass the ideas on, we are finished.

But more than this, we have to reach out and also agitate with the paper, *Socialist Organiser*, and use it as a tool to make sense of the world to all working class people, youth, students, everyone who wants to understand more.

This self-renewal, as we have called the task of working towards these high ideas will not be achieved overnight.

'Liberty' launched

's is irreplaceable'



The struggle around the poll tax has been the major class battle of recent times

"We must understand how our routine activities are linked to the future of socialism"

Having set the basic political framework, the conference went on to discuss the practical details of activity.

Joe Macaulay, introducing this session, called on activists not only to read but also to use, *Socialist Organiser* — to sell it, discuss it, write for it.

The main job of the Alliance now, said Macaulay, is political education — educating its own activists, and reaching out to educate others. Everyone who has understood and accepted the basic idea of workers' liberty as the alternative to both capitalism and Stalinism can and should take that idea out to educate others, and educate themselves further in the

process.

The Alliance's activists should also be the best activists in the Labour Party and trade unions, said Macaulay. They should fight every inch of the way against the Labour leadership's attempts to purge socialists from the Party.

Amendments to Macaulay's proposals took the discussion over a wide range of issues — campaigning against Health Service cuts, learning from the experience of Australia's disastrous Labor government, noting the trend for the capitalist world to polarise into "trade blocs", making links with socialists in other countries, developing activity in Labour Party women's sections and the wider women's movement.

"There is no 'rank and file' in the Alliance. Everyone must take responsibility"

Caroline Harrison presented proposals about building local groups of the Alliance.

Again, the focus was on education, on making every person a reliable activist in their own field who deals competently with the political issues and actively spreads socialist ideas rather than just being a "consumer".

Much of the debate was around a proposal for a sales drive with

Socialist Organiser. The principle was agreed unanimously, but some people argued that to call for *SO* sellers immediately to commit themselves to extra sales was too summary, and the details should be remitted to the committee elected by the conference to run the AWL week-to-week. The proposal to remit was defeated by a margin of one-to-three, and the substantive carried unanimously.

"We must be involved in campaigns like those against Paragraph 16 and Clause 25"

Speaking in the debate on lesbian and gay liberation, Janine Booth argued: "Liberation requires the abolition of class society — the achievement of socialism".

Other speakers said that the movements against bigoted Tory

measures — Clause 28, Paragraph 16, Clause 25 — had mobilised tens of thousands of lesbians and gay men who previously took no interest in politics, and forced them to think about the society they live in and how it should be changed. Socialists should be active in the movement, arguing our ideas.

"Poll tax-related cuts are biting: a trade union fight back is needed"

Chris Corbett introduced on the poll tax, Tom Rigby on work in the trade unions, Cate Richards on the Labour Party, and Jill Mountford on students.

The conference agreed to work to link campaigns against the poll tax with battles against local government cuts. Several speakers criticised *Socialist Organiser* for inadequate coverage of poll tax campaigning, and *SO* editor John O'Mahony accepted the criticism.

"The struggle to transform the existing labour movement cannot be done by dipping in and out of the labour movement"

A Central Line guard spoke about the current dispute on the London Underground, and a Sheffield railworker about the strike ballot in British Rail. He stressed

the value and viability of workplace bulletins, presenting socialist ideas every fortnight in close connection with workplace issues.

Arguing for an effort to build groups like "Labour Party Socialists" and fight purges in the Labour Party, Cate Richards stressed: "A revolutionary alternative will be built through the struggle to transform the existing labour movement, which cannot be done by dipping in and out of that labour movement."

However, "student work is the best opportunity we have to recruit young people," said Jill Mountford. Jill urged student activists at the conference to re-double their efforts to tie the struggle for socialist politics to united campaigning. Jill added: "We must strengthen work in initiatives such as Left Unity."

The student debate evoked some controversy about possibilities for organising the left in the National Organisation of Labour Students, and that discussion will continue.

We want to draw upon all our collective experience and all our tremendous youthful enthusiasm to achieve that, for we have set ourselves high standards.

Above all, we have to follow the advice of Marx and Engels: "Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions". We have to be just as open and forthright. We have to go out and win recruits.

Assessing the anti-union laws

The limits of the Tory victory

By John McIlroy

The Tory anti-union laws, as we saw last week, have proved themselves as a powerful weapon on the industrial battlefield. But in more detail the picture is more complex.

Certainly the balloting provisions have met with limited success, and in some cases have boomeranged. By 1990 only one of the 53 unions which had balloted their members on political funds had voted against such a fund. Indeed, 20 unions had been galvanised by the 1984 Act into creating a fund for the first time, and more than 80% of trade unionists are now members of unions with political funds.

The impact of the legislation on the closed shop appears to have been relatively neutral. In 1986 ACAS estimated that only 30,000 out of more than 3 million workers then covered by closed shop arrangements had taken part in ballots required by the 1980 and 1982 Acts to protect 100% union membership. Of the 100 or so ballots reported by that date, more than 75% had resulted in the unions achieving the required 80% majority — quite an achievement for trade unionism.

Since then, ballots have been axed — in itself an acceptance of failure by the government — and the general opinion is that the undoubted decline in the closed shop has been the product of changes in the industrial structure and the decline of manufacturing industry where it was particularly strong. It is not down to the legislation.

Similarly, the best view would seem to be that legal changes have not had a great deal of adverse impact on union recognition: partly because the previous procedures were themselves inadequate and stymied by hostile legal judgements. ACAS reported in 1988 that "formal de-recognition continued to be rare" and that there was no major change in employers recognising unions in comparison with the 1970s.

There have been changes in white-collar and managerial occupations, particularly in printing and publishing, and recent reports argue an increase in de-recognition in the last two years. However, it is difficult to credit the legal changes with this development.

ACAS reported just under 1,200 strike ballots from the inception of the legislation in 1984 until the end of 1989. In that period there were around 1,000 strikes annually, so ballots, although they were on the increase, were only held before around a third of all stoppages. Where ballots were held, 90% of them resulted in a vote for industrial action and in a majority of these cases employers settled without a strike taking place.

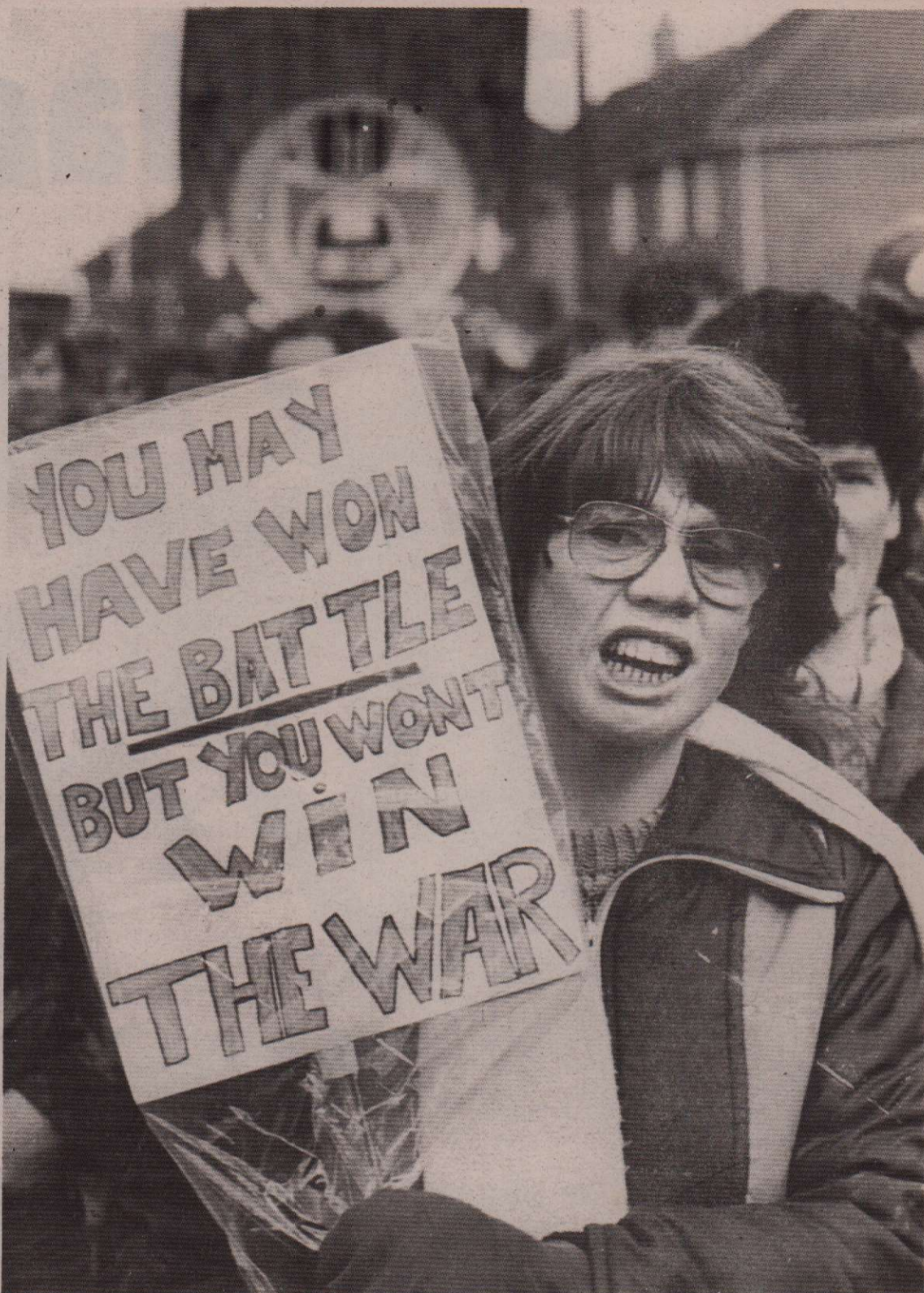
The balloting requirements for the election of union leaders appear to have had little impact in terms of their avowed aim of replacing left with right-wing leaders. They have possibly led to an intensification of, or at least better organised, factionalism within the unions. In practice, the broad lefts have been able to come to terms with the ballots but they have, if anything, increased their pre-existing focus on elections and positions.

The balloting provisions generally have produced greater formalisation and centralisation within the unions. They now have to have computerised membership lists, more carefully kept accounts and, because of the need to win ballots and escape legal liability, greater control over stewards and closer links with the membership.

We should not see that as completely negative. Any socialist rank and file movement will have to attempt to seize control of the union machine, fight to overcome sectionalism, and encourage greater centralisation — albeit on a different, more democratic, fighting basis.

So, if we look beyond the success of the legislation in the big set piece confrontations of the 1980s, a more complex picture begins to emerge. And Thatcher's achievement looks a little shakier. The dramatic battles over the law captured public attention, but by-passed the majority of trade unionists.

In weighing the evidence we have



Trade unionists have accepted the laws as a fact to reckon with, but not necessarily the ideology behind them

to register the resilience of wage growth and the fact that, despite a greater parochialism, workplace organisation has remained remarkably intact, indeed has spread to new areas. If in some sectors it is more consultative and less control conscious than in earlier decades, a majority of employers still involve stewards in changes in the workplaces.

It is true that the 1980s have witnessed a significant decline in the number of strikes. However, the average number of working days "lost" per 1000 employees, at least for most of the decade, compared favourably with the position during the 1960s, whilst the reduction in stoppages was paralleled in other countries which did not introduce new employment legislation.

This raises the vexed question of how we measure the impact, success or failure of the legislation. For example, there have been far less than 200 cases coming before the courts during the whole decade; more than in previous periods, less than might be expected. This could be taken to argue the limits of the legislation's success: employers are ignoring the legislation. Or, alternatively, the extent of its success: employers don't need to use it as workers' knowledge of its existence or the threat of its use is enough to enable bosses to get a result without going to court.

Surely evidence in the latter direction argues use of the law is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of its impact in practice.

But a further key question here is how the legislation is operating, to the degree it has worked, on what basis has it changed the behaviour of trade unions? Tony Cliff of the SWP claims that these laws have been of "mainly ideological importance, to justify the policy, to win the battle for people's minds..."

"Put somewhat crudely, trade unionists have not accepted the legislation because they think it is necessary, just and legitimate. They would break it as quickly as they did in the seventies if they thought they could get away with it."

Another recent review of their impact by Lindsey German of the SWP adds: "the successive anti-union laws have done all these things and nowhere more dangerously than in winning the battle of minds where they have created the idea that the law cannot be broken." (*International*

Socialism 48, p123)

This is at least misleading. If the legislation had won the battle of minds they would have won a *fundamental*, possibly permanent, victory. With the possible exceptions of the provisions on ballots the laws in as much as they have changed behaviour have done so through coercion rather than conviction, through force rather than fraud.

Put somewhat crudely, trade unionists have not accepted the legislation because they think it is *necessary, just and legitimate*. They would break it as quickly as they did in the seventies if they thought they could get away with it. If workers limit their picketing as the law requires to the primary employer do not do so because they think this is the right and decent thing to do; or because they have been convinced by the bosses and their government that secondary picketing is illegitimate.

No sir! The rascals refrain simply because they fear, with justification, the consequences for themselves and for their union's funds and are convinced of these dangers by their officials. It is the 11th commandment which is involved, not the first ten.

They don't do it because they think — and quite realistically — that they or rather their union will get caught. The fact that what success the laws have had depends on coercion not conviction is an important limitation on their achievement (and a pick-me-up which provides hope for the future).

More on socialists and the trade unions

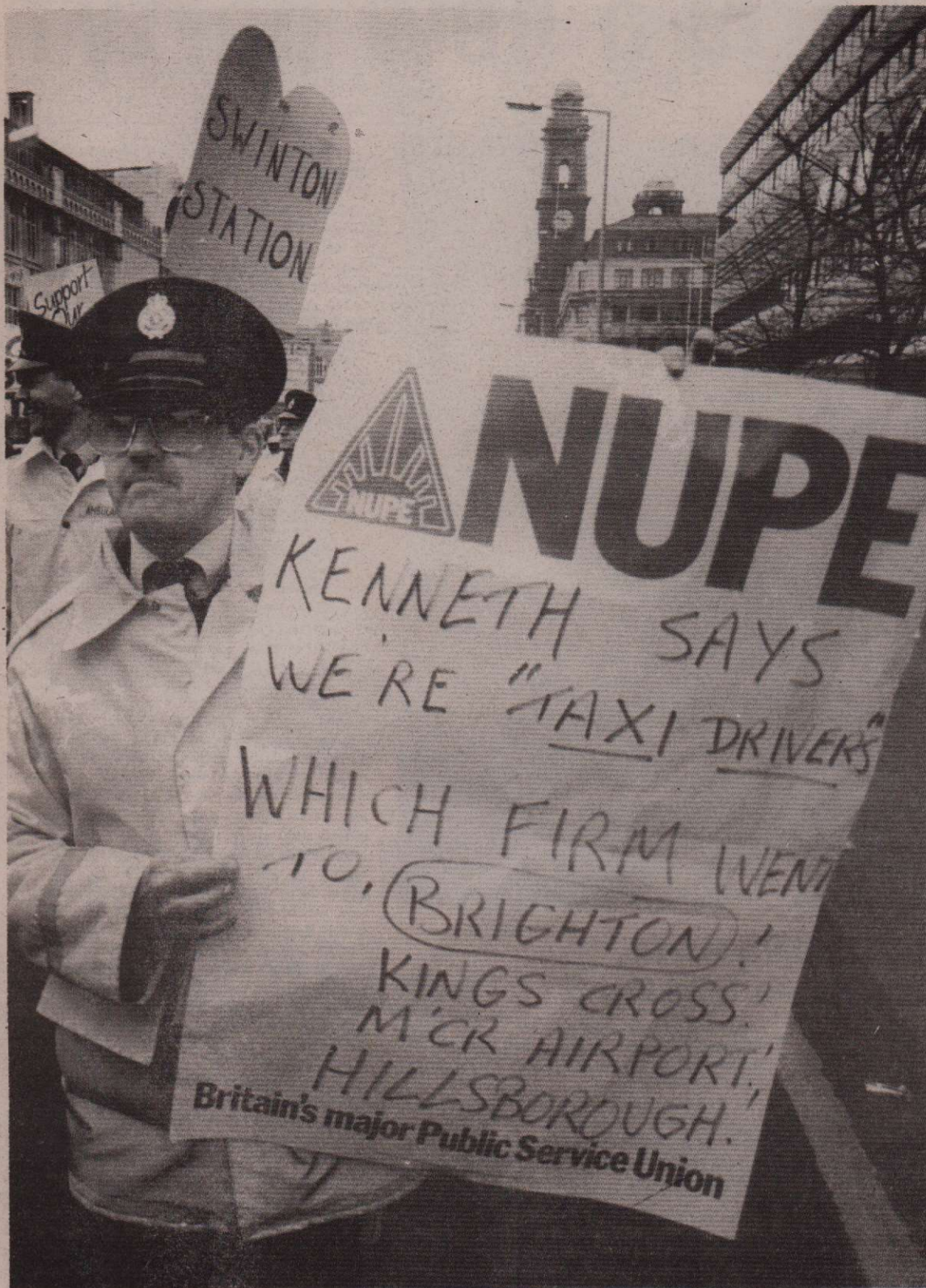
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Struggles like the ambulance workers' can break the law successfully

The ultimate failure of the legislation

In reality, in assessing the impact of the legislation there are insuperable problems in isolating its operation and specific effect from wider political and economic factors which also mould the behaviour of workers.

But, of course, in Mrs Thatcher's project the law was not intended to be isolated. What distinguished her approach from her predecessors was the integration of legal change in wider policies on industrial relations and economic strategy.

Taken as an important ingredient in a total strategy, the legislation has played an important role in producing what is, from a socialist viewpoint, a weaker trade union movement than existed in 1979 — not ignoring the problems that existed then. Taken as an important ancillary to economic and industrial developments, crucially the recession of the early 1980s, increased unemployment and changes in the industrial structure, it has influenced the creation of a trade unionism reduced in coverage — 4 million fewer members, in class awareness, in confidence, in horizons, in political clout, in rank and file

autonomy and in militant aggression.

But if we return to where we started and measure success against the final objectives the legislation was intended to achieve — reduced wages, increased productivity, higher profitability, a regenerated economy — then the picture looks different.

The unions have not been weakened and remoulded enough. The values of the legislation have been denied ideological acceptance by a majority of workers. The coercive power of the law has changed behaviour, but changed it inadequately on too small a scale. The set piece sequestrations have proved of limited value in changing the day-to-day attitude and produce of the workers. As they used to say, you can't dig coal with bayonets!

Average earnings increased annually at between 7% and 8% between 1982 and 1990, significantly out-shooting inflation which itself outstripped the rate of price increases in the UK's competitor countries. Decentralisation of wage bargaining made things worse, not better. The legislation had little im-

act on employment trends. Unemployment remained at levels unknown in the days before the Employment Acts.

The immunities were shredded as Hayek and Thatcher demanded. The impact on the economy was far from what they promised in consequence.

There is no evidence that as they predicted the legislation would influence a decline in the earnings of union members relative to non-organised workers and increase productivity. The union mark-up over non-union labour has, at around 7%, hardly changed at all in the 1980s.

Thatcherism produced, from our viewpoint, weaker unions; from the viewpoint of many members in work through the '80s with rising living standards the picture was different. But it has also produced a weaker economy. The dream is still just that.

John Mellroy is author of *Trade Unions in Britain Today* and a forthcoming book on the anti-union laws.

Socialists should campaign for a republic

SOAPBOX

By the editor of *Republican Marxist*

Sean Matgamna ended his column a few weeks ago (*SO 477*) with "Up the Republic", saying that "clearcut republicanism is still as rare as criticism of the Royal Family used to be. It should not be. Socialists and consistent democrats have to be republicans."

This is a statement that *Republican Marxist* heartily applauds and commends to all socialists. But we would like to add some observations.

Imagine if a socialist said that "it goes without saying that we are anti-racist, and therefore don't need to mention racism". We would all recognise immediately that such a view was adapting itself to the prevailing racism in society. It would be an excuse for accepting racism in practice and not fighting it.

Yet most British socialists say "that of course we are against the monarchy, it goes without saying, take it as read." Therefore we won't mention it. This is also not a genuine socialist view, but an adaptation to the prevailing monarchist ideas.

Despite all the extreme language and calls for world socialism immediately, at heart, British socialism is very conservative. We do want world socialism, but nobody wants to upset our cosy little world by even lifting a finger to get rid of the monarchy. Trotsky himself noticed this fact in his writings on Britain (*Where is Britain going?*).

The bourgeoisie would like us to think of capitalism, and the monarchy, as permanent, timeless institutions which it would be unthinkable to live without. But capitalism and the monarchy will only exist for a certain historical period. We can predict that one day there will be no monarchy.

The only point for socialists is whether it should be abolished now or later. Whether the bourgeoisie or the working class should decide. By reform or mass revolutionary action?

The best policy is that it is abolished now by working class revolutionary action. The worst is that it is abolished 100 years later by the bourgeoisie. Socialists base themselves on the best option, not the worst.

The bourgeois socialist says "leave it up to the bourgeoisie". The working class socialist says mobilise the working class so that the fate of the monarchy is in our hands.

If the working class can determine the fate of the monarchy then it is on the road to determining its own fate as a class.

It is vital to distinguish between the Monarch, the Royal Family, their titles, powers and privileges, and the Constitutional Monarchy as a system of political power.

The Constitutional Monarchy is a total constitutional package. It includes the House of Lords, Northern Ireland, the relationship with Scotland and Wales, Official

Secrecy, the gentlemen's club known as the Commons, the corrupt electoral system, etc. To be against the Constitutional Monarchy is to be against the whole way in which politics is conducted in the United Kingdom.

Defenders of the system would like us to confine criticism to the person of the monarch. The issue is then personalised and depoliticised. Such politics is not much better than *Sun*-type shock horror stories. Then it would be asked — is it really worth getting out of our prams over one rich person when there are a load of other bastards to criticise?

This is to miss the point entirely. It is a new political system we need! This is summed up by the demand for a Republic, or as we would say a Federal Republic of England, Scotland, and Wales and a United Ireland.

Among the working class, we can distinguish different attitudes. The most advanced view is republican. In the past such views were held by Chartists, Marx, Engels, Connolly and MacLean, to name but a few.

Sean says republicans are "rare". It is understandable to say this as far as socialists are concerned. But if we think of the Irish working class, whether in Britain or Northern Ireland, then republicanism is not as rare as one might suppose. There is also a much broader layer of anti-monarchist sentiment. Many workers don't like the monarchy out of gut instinct, but would hardly consider themselves republicans.

Finally there is the most backward layer which supports the monarchy and probably votes Tory.

The distinction between republicanism and anti-monarchism is best illustrated by the anarchists.

They want to abolish the monarchy along with the state as such. There is no need for a republic. Marxists, who agree with the ultimate abolition of the state, see the need to proceed to that goal through the development of higher forms of democracy. Republicanism is part of that historical development. This is why Marxists must not be merely against the monarchy but also positively republican.

Take the example of the SWP. It is anti-monarchist but not republican. *Socialist Worker* criticises the monarchy occasionally, but it has never made any republican demand. This tells us that the SWP dabbles in anarchism. It adapts itself to anarchist sentiments amongst the petty bourgeois youth and students.

Furthermore the SWP does not uphold the most advanced views within the class, but adapts to the average worker's anti-monarchist sentiments. For the SWP it is no more than sentiment. There is no attempt to mobilise working class opinion or action on a republican basis. This is classic economism. The SWP attitude to the monarchy expresses its total attitude to political struggle as such.

Sean ends his column by saying that "republicanism is slowly inching its way back on to the political agenda in Britain. Forward to the Republic". And let us add the hope that *Socialist Organiser* will be one of the papers in the vanguard of any "inching" that is going on, and helping to convert those inches into feet and miles.

Will Militant form a new party?

AGAINST THE TIDE

By Anne Field

The "centrist split" in the Labour Party long predicted by *Militant* founding-father Ted Grant, is now underway in Liverpool.

That is the line now being argued by Merseyside *Militant* supporters intoxicated by their successes in the 2 May Liverpool City council elections. Six Labour Party wards stood their own candidates for council against official candidates imposed by the Labour Party bureaucracy, and five of them won.

When threatened by right-wingers with expulsion from the Labour Party for supporting the rebel candidates, *Militant* supporters have responded by declaring that they are leaving the Labour Party anyway and don't care about being expelled. Next year, they boast, they will have 23 rebels winning council seats.

Given the widespread disillusionment with the Labour Party leadership at both local and national level, *Militant* will doubtless take some people with them. Where to is another question.

Like it or not, the present situation — where 1990 had the smallest number of strikes since 1935, and the left is generally on the defensive — is not one of the wide excitement, enthusiasm and radicalisation necessary to create a mass left-wing alternative to Labour.

If *Militant* goes through with what its Merseyside supporters are now talking about, then the best it can realistically hope to achieve is a duplicate of the Socialist Workers Party. *Militant* will become one of the "sects on the fringes of the labour movement" it has denounced for so long.

The last big attempt to split a sizeable left wing from the Labour Party was in 1932, when the Independent Labour Party broke away. The ILP had been very influential in the party. It had five of the 52 Labour MPs then sitting in Parliament. It had 17,000 members. It was several times stronger than *Militant* can hope to become. Yet its breakaway was a fiasco. By 1935 it was down to 4,000 members.

One factor behind the talk of splitting from the Labour Party is probably *Militant's* exaggerated self-satisfaction about its strength in Liverpool. Maybe *Militant* people outside Liverpool will prove more cool-headed, and restrain their Merseyside comrades.

Militant took the limelight in Liverpool in 1983, when it gained controlling influence in the City Council Labour Group. In the first months of that administration, it ran a good campaign against cuts, demanding money from central government.

In July 1984 the Tory government made some concessions to Liverpool. In fact that deal was the beginning of the end for Liverpool City Council's radical stance; it avoided the possibility of a local government revolt coming together with the miners' strike then in full swing (which is what the Tories wanted to avoid), and it only postponed the council's money problems to the next year.

Militant nevertheless hailed the deal as a "95 per cent victory" and drifted into an attitude of the most stupid bureaucratic arrogance. It alienated the majority of Liverpool's black community, and many council trade unionists, by insisting on one of its own supporters as council race relations officer.

The whole business ended in a fiasco. The council gave redundancy notices to the whole workforce (as a "tactical" move), was forced to withdraw them by court action, and finally collapsed into a deal with Swiss banks which involved making cuts. The leading *Militant* councillor, Derek Hatton, quit the labour movement to become a spiv businessman and showbiz self-publicist.

But *Militant* still gloats about Liverpool! They published a book about their period of



Armoured cars in Oxford Street

Those who do not learn from history are condemned to relive it

The general strike of May 1926 holds many lessons for today. By that year the Tories had laid careful plans to deal with the General Strike. The timidity of the trade union leaders helped their plans along.

The Tories were ready for confrontation when it occurred. In 1925 they established the OMS — Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies — to break any major strikes. It consisted of

middle-class Tories, students (then an overwhelmingly conservative group) and the pro-Mosley fascists. On the eve of the General Strike it had 100,000 members.

88 Voluntary Service Committees were set up. A Special Constabulary was created to enlarge the police force. The armed forces were mobilised to guard the docks, railways and telephone exchanges.

influence on the council which — solemnly and with a straight face — compared that period to the French revolution of 1789-94.

The political horizon of the average *Militant* supporter in Liverpool goes no further than the city boundaries. For over a year their supporters in wards and CLPs have moved an unending series of repetitive resolutions concerned solely with Liverpool and the poll tax. They did not know or did not care about issues such as the Gulf war or attacks on lesbian and gay rights.

It was the climax of this self-immersion in Liverpool parochialism when, last month — after initially opposing the idea as "an act of desperation" — *Militant* decided to back the idea of wards standing their own candidates against official (albeit bureaucratically imposed) Labour candidates.

The six independent candidates, only one or two of whom were actually *Militant* supporters, stood on a platform of opposition to the poll tax (although the Council budget they had supported involved setting a poll tax), opposition to rent increases (although they had abandoned the former policy of a rent freeze), opposition to redundancies (although the budget they had supported proposed a 50% non-filling of council vacancies) and opposition to bailiffs (although they kept quiet about how the "socialist" council of 1984-5 used bailiffs against rates debtors).

Not quite the "bold socialist programme" that *Militant* usually talks about!

The other dimension in this affair is *Militant's* attitude to the Labour Party. For some thirty years, *Militant* and its leading ideologist Ted Grant have been distinguished from other left groups by their slavish devotion to Labour Party routines. They even argued that a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism was possible, and mostly they behaved as if they believed that socialism would eventually come by dint of winning enough resolutions in the Labour

Party to demand the nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies.

In closer argument, however, they would refine the perspective. Some day, they would argue, under the pressure of the terrible crises of capitalism, the Labour Party would split between the right wing and a new "centrist" party (hovering between reform and revolution). *Militant* would gain leadership in the new left party and legislate socialism.

For a long time that perspective was used only to argue for continuing the routine propaganda in the Labour Party, waiting for the expected crisis, and in the meantime opposing any "premature" or "adventurist" ac-

"Liverpool shows not an exciting new departure for the left, but the inability of Militant to campaign seriously in the labour movement against purges."

tivity. Now Merseyside *Militant* supporters are telling us that the long-awaited crisis is here.

If we dig back further into Ted Grant's history and *Militant's* pre-history, there is yet another dimension.

In the 1940s Grant led a faction in the British Trotskyist movement which sternly opposed involvement in the Labour Party, arguing that day-to-day recruitment from industrial battles would build a separate Trotskyist party strong enough to challenge Labour.

In 1949 Grant's faction collapsed and joined the Labour Party because continuing independently seemed hopeless. Grant was no more willing to learn from fiascos than he is now, and long continued to argue that, even if life in the Labour Party was a practical necessity, politically it would be better to be outside. That thought, too, may now be reactivated.

Troops armed with gas were moved to the capital and the industrial centres.

Faced with all this, the TUC did little to prepare. The Samuel Commission Report, published in March 1926, proposed to cut wages of the miners, though not by as much as the mine owners wanted. It also, more tentatively, suggested longer working hours.

The miner's union rejected these proposals but the TUC continued to negotiate. JH Thomas, who was by then a Labour MP, commented: "When the verbatim reports are written I suppose my usual critics will say that Thomas was almost grovelling, and it is true...I have never begged and pleaded like I begged and pleaded today..."

Thomas, who played a particularly treacherous role during the General Strike, later reassured the bosses: "I have never disguised that in a challenge to the Constitution, God help us unless the government won", insisting that the General Strike was no such challenge.

The Labour and TUC leadership was completely outwitted by the Tory government and the mine owners.

The left trade union leaders, meanwhile, were involved in an 'Anglo-Russian Committee' set up to build support for the beleaguered USSR. For the young Communist Party (CP), which was of course centrally involved, it was seen as a good opportunity to spread their influence.

Unfortunately, the pro-Russian stance of left union leaders was really a cheap way of getting radical credentials on faraway issues while they were selling out the workers at home. The CP's alliance with them on the Anglo-Russian Committee could not be allowed to outweigh the organisation of the rank and file in the General Strike.

Yet that is what happened. The labour leaders sold out the General Strike, abandoning the miners despite growing support for the strike. The left leaders were, at best, acquiescent. And the CP did not criticise the left too sharply for fear of splitting the Anglo-Russian Committee.

The General Strike was a very serious defeat. The TUC General Council called it off without any guarantees for the miners. As Charles Duke of the Municipal Workers said: "Every day that the strike proceeded the control and authority of that dispute was passing out of the hands of responsible Executives into the hands of men who had no authority, no control, no responsibility and was wrecking the movement from one end to the other."

We shall see. *Militant* has moved its activity out of the Labour Party a great deal already in recent years, concentrating on anti-poll tax agitation.

Last year many *Militant* supporters in Glasgow wanted to stand their own anti-poll tax candidates against Labour in elections; they were restrained only with difficulty by more thoughtful comrades. It is not clear whether what's happening on Merseyside is another skirmish in the developing struggle among *Militant* supporters over their future, or a decisive victory in that struggle for those who want to go out of the Labour Party.

Either way the prospects are bleak. A local "alternative Labour Party" on Merseyside will soon fade away. An across-the-board split by *Militant* from Labour will only produce an SWP Mark 2.

And that SWP Mark 2 will have, if anything, worse politics than the SWP Mark 1!

Militant is an ossified Stalinoid sect. It supported the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. It believes that Syria is a workers' state. It has an atrocious record with regard to the doubly oppressed (such as Blacks, women, lesbians and gays). It sat out the Gulf war on its backside.

It denounces all other left groups as "sects on the fringes of the labour movement". It has never been prepared to do joint work with any other left group. It even went so far as to scab on *Socialist Organiser* by voting against a resolution tabled at a CPSA Broad Left conference last year which called for defence of this paper against the ban imposed by Labour's NEC. They would not affiliate to the 'End the Ban!' campaign because *SO* had dared to criticise them in articles like these.

In truth, the events in Liverpool show not an exciting new departure for the left, but the political inability of *Militant* to campaign seriously in the labour movement against bans and purges.



Gustavete, Carmela and Paulino seek comfort

Distorting the Spanish Civil War

Cinema

Tony Brown reviews

Ay Carmela!

The Spanish Civil War provides the backdrop to Carlos Saura's latest film *Ay Carmela!*

Set in 1938, the action revolves around the three person cabaret troupe of Carmela, Paulino and Gustavete. We first meet them as they give a performance to Republican fighters on the front. The tide of the war is turning for Franco's Fascist rebellion.

The concert is high spirited and good humoured, and the male and female soldiers enthusiastically join in the chorus for 'liberty, liberty, liberty'.

But for Paulino and Carmela the fighting is too close and they decide to pack up and head for the safety of Valencia, seat of the Popular Front government until its fall in March 1939.

On their journey they are captured by Fascists and interned under the guard of Italian troops.

It's here that the drama is supposed to begin. Paulino and Carmela are caught in the middle of a deep, violent conflict they have no feeling for. They would rather be left alone to sing and perform in peace. Their problem is that it's not possible in 1938 Spain.

They react instinctively yet differently. Paulino is all too ready to collaborate with his captors, to denounce the reds and proclaim his Catholic faith.

Carmela is slower, letting Paulino do the talking in the hope he might get them out of their predicament. Instead he talks them into performing for his captors and a small group of captured Polish members of the International Brigades.

Unfortunately the story lacks any edge. There is no real sense of danger to any of the three main characters, though Saura makes an effort to portray the random

violence and terror that would become a hallmark of Franco's regime.

The story plods along for too long and suffers from Saura's underlying message about the war.

That message is that Spain was being used as a battlefield for a war between Communism, here identified as being Russian, and Fascism, which is shown as being too dominated by the Italians and Germans.

Gustavete, who has been struck dumb as a result of the war and is befriended by Carmela and Paulino, is an allegorical figure for Spain. He is able to see what is happening around him, indeed he is more perceptive than Paulino, but is unable to speak. He is an innocent.

Saura doesn't hide the fact that there are Spaniards on both sides. But his Italians' and Poles' inability to speak Spanish signals that they have no real feeling for Spain, that they are there fighting for an ideology that belongs somewhere else. It is a very nationalistic message.

No explanation is given for what is going on, for what has gone on, for why there is a war at all. The audience is expected to understand the history and the coalitions behind what is being fought for, which is a big ask.

Saura's sympathies are evident however. The contrast between the opening Republican concert and the ordered, repressed humour of the

closing concert, for example, is marked.

The Italian director has brought along the Polish Brigade members to be 'entertained' before their execution in the morning. For Carmela the humiliation is more than she can put up with. In front of the jackbooted audience she speaks up for their dignity and their rights.

Given the strong nationalistic sentiments in the film it's probably not surprising that *Ay Carmela!* won an unprecedented 13 Spanish Oscars this year.

It's disappointing that a film about an event as important as the Spanish Civil War gives it such a lacklustre and misleading treatment.

Food as a shackle and a weapon

Books

Colin Foster reviews *Food in History* by Reay Tannahill

Even for those who still believe in it, today "heaven" is a very shadowy concept.

Most believers, I guess, would say if pressed that descriptions of heaven can only be metaphorical or symbolic.

In the Europe of the Middle Ages it was very different. Then, people had a very vivid and literal picture of heaven. It was a place where you had plenty to eat and drink.

Rather than God in heaven having created the world, material conditions in the world create the ideas that people have at one time or another of "God" and "heaven". In the Middle Ages, as in most of history and indeed in much of the world today, most people lived constantly on the brink of starvation.

They had, or have, a very limited and monotonous diet: rice and a bit of

fermented fish sauce in some parts of the world; rough bread, a few vegetables, and salted meat or fish in another.

And that limited food supply is often stale or rotten. In the Middle Ages European peasants used to have to eat bread several months old during the winter.

Not only religious ideas, but also the whole life of society, revolved for centuries around getting enough to eat.

The life of the ruling class, those who had enough to eat and more, also reflected the central role of hunger in society. The ruling class signalled their status as rulers by flaunting their ample diets, by organising vast banquets and feeding themselves until they were ostentatiously fat.

The banquets were made for display, rather than to satisfy appetites. Tables would be heaped with hundreds of dishes, but each diner could get food only from a few dishes near them, and many dishes, placed beyond everyone's reach, would be rotten and inedible, served up only for show.

The diet of the poor became more varied with the Industrial Revolution, but also, often, shoddier. Bread was bulked out with chalk, and other food with other useless or harmful substances. The struggle against those

additives, and to ensure minimum standards of nutrition and freshness, led to new additives, initially well-intentioned, now a commercial scam.

Today crude, absolute hunger is less of a factor in the metropolitan capitalist countries and even in some Third World countries; the resources available for producing and distributing food are such that it need not be a factor anywhere.

Food has ceased to be a shackle crippling society. But it has become a weapon, wielded by the rich against the poor.

"Just because people are starving is a pretty weak reason to give food aid", said one leading US politician in an unguarded moment. The US and Western Europe are the world's leading agricultural exporters, as well as being industrial powers, and they use their food power to shape the world in their interests.

And — not only in the richer capitalist countries — the selling of ever more processed, more additive-packed food has become a sort of weapon for the food monopolies to generate more and more profit while confining the working class to a junk diet.

Reay Tannahill tells the story well for distant times, but becomes bland and banal on the 20th century.

The trouble with Kurd Aid

Television

By Jean Lane

"Think of the starving millions", my mother used to say to me when I didn't want to finish my dinner.

She would say it with a hint of irony in her voice — knowing that whether I ate my dinner or not had no bearing on how many more millions in another part of the world would be starving. It must have been a phrase that had been said to her, in all seriousness, some time in her own past: by her mother perhaps, or in church.

Princess Anne, judging by the posters on every bus shelter lately, is more backward than my mother; telling us to give up a meal for charity, as if we all have some personal guilt or responsibility for those starving to death in Africa, Bangladesh or the Iraqi-Kurdish mountains.

One of Princess Anne's meals would feed one of the Kurdish families, kids included, for six months, while the working class women of the North Peckham estate or Birkenhead are choosing between feeding the kids or paying the poll tax.

But those working class women will feel more guilt than Princess Anne, for sure. Their kids are not dying of starvation, are they? Their kids are not being put in tiny, doll-sized graves while the mothers weep, helpless to stop the deaths of their own children.

Princess Anne probably makes a monthly standing order out to Oxfam, safe in the knowledge that she has earned every penny she's got and is prepared to be very generous with it, too. Why should she feel guilty?

And the working class women will send money in, despite the choices they have to make week after week, because they do care. Chris Tarrant, on *The Simple Truth* concert for the Kurdish refugees last night (Sunday 12 May) said that kids were sending in 10p coins.

Thank goodness. The idea that "all charity is bad because the state should provide" just doesn't hold water when we watch our TV screens. Even if the governments, both local and imperialist, are responsible for what is happening in parts of Africa, the fact that working class people here feel a social responsibility for, and a sense of solidarity with, those starving to death is a good thing.

So why did last night's concert grate so much? Maybe Lenny Henry has found a knack of mixing humour with pointless death better than Chris Tarrant. Or maybe watching Tracey Ullman make sugar-sweet statements about how awful it must be not to be able to feed your own children, one breath before telling us that her daughter was off visiting Princess Di, has the effect of making you want to puke.

Hopefully Tracey's daughter, when she grows up, will be able to ask her friends in high places why the Kurdish children are dying, who drove them from their homes, who paid the driver for years, and who is prepared to do so much now except get rid of the driver.

And hopefully, when in reply she is told that the only thing she can do is miss a meal, she too will puke in disgust at the hypocrisy of those in power.

LETTERS

Begged questions in Liverpool

WRITEBACK

If the Liverpool "Real Labour" and suspended Labour councillors do go on to set up their own political party, they will be on a road to nowhere.

Unfortunately it is a road down which too many active Labour Party socialists are likely to follow when the Party atmosphere is right-wing and witch-hunting.

It is true enough that standing independent candidates has a dynamic of its own, but is Sam Campbell suggesting (SO 485) that the wards should have accepted defeat and campaigned for the imposed rather than the

democratically selected candidates?

The "lifting of the suspension of the District Labour Party is the key issue", but how can it be achieved? The election results will not help, but perhaps the Labour Party members who backed the "Real Labour" candidates would, if they had some ideas how.

Those on the left who campaigned only for "Real Labour" and not for official Labour candidates in other wards, are alienating themselves from members in non-suspended wards. But surely the members in the suspended wards matter too. How can they focus back on the Labour Party?

Sam Campbell's article begs questions to which answers are needed if Labour Party members are to be con-



Mick Bolland, one of the successful "Real Labour" candidates

vinced to stay and fight. *Militant* supporters may not be open to argument on the issue. But other socialists in the Labour Party can and must be convinced.

I'm not familiar enough with Liverpool to suggest the

answers myself, but the drain of Labour Party members, especially active socialists, needs to be better addressed than it is by Sam Campbell, if it is to be plugged at all.

Margaret Brown
North London

Southwark builders

Tony O'Brien's letter (SO 485) does not present an entirely balanced picture of the attacks that Southwark's building workers faced recently.

The first problem in replying to Tony's letter is that the facts that he criticises us for getting wrong were provided by himself in the form of a "message to the public" given out on the DLO picket lines.

Our total of 320 workers sacked relates to the decline in the DLO workforce over the last six months, not the most recent redundancies.

Obviously Tony would be right to say that not all of Southwark's building work is done by contractors, otherwise the DLO would not exist! And if the DLO didn't

exist, how come there were pickets outside the depots? But that was not what the original article said.

Due to a proofreading/sub-editing error outside of the control of the original author, a clause explaining that contractors Beezers operated *only* in the Rotherhithe and Bermondsey area of the borough was omitted from the text.

"Labour council brings in temporary labour" as a headline was simply a journalistic device to make the political point that a Labour council brings in an anti-union contractor which employs people on a daily basis with no rights.

There are many other issues raised by Tony's letter which will be dealt with in full next week.

Gerry Bates
Walworth

Leading nowhere in Liverpool

It may be true that the victories for the "Real" Labour candidates in local government elections in Liverpool will "lead nowhere" as your analysis (SO 485) suggests. I'm afraid however that the same could be said for your views on the matter as well.

Since all genuine socialists are agreed that what Kinnock and his agents have come up to in Liverpool is absolutely disgraceful, the real question becomes what should be done about it.

Clearly, the "Real" Labour candidates were undecided. Their decision to stand against "official" imposed Labour candidates but still under the banner of Labour ducks the question of

whether socialists should stay in the Labour Party and fight or leave it and build a real socialist party.

But, given the background of those involved it seems clear that they are groping towards the second option. Indeed I would suggest that their victory, and subsequent expulsion from the Labour Party shows two things.

Firstly, that there are large numbers of ordinary working class people who are sick of what Kinnock is doing in the name of socialism. Secondly, that any socialist who publicly opposes the Kinnock Labour Party will get expelled.

The lesson of Liverpool it seems to me is whether socialists keep their heads down in the Labour Party or hold their heads up high outside of it.

Ernie Jones
London N8

What the war was about

Tony Dorman (SO 484) writes: "The war was about US, Britain and Co. teaching Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi ruling order a lesson."

But the Gulf war was much more of a "short sharp shock" for Iraq. Dorman has minimised a number of very obvious facts in order to maintain Iraqi national rights were never under threat.

Three things tell us something about the scale of the war.

One: Iraq is at this moment no longer a regional power. It is politically expedient for the US for now, as Dorman points out, for Hussein to stay in power. But that does not cancel out the fact that Iraq is not at this moment a regional power.

Two: There are effective US enclaves in the North and South of Iraq. This limits still further the power of Hussein's regime.

Three: The military bombardment of Iraq was massive and crippling for civilian life.

From those facts I think you must conclude that the war waged by the US was rather more than the military equivalent of a rap on the knuckles!

I think you can say there were times when *Socialist Organiser* made too much of the perspective of a return to "old style colonialism". But that was a matter of emphasis.

There were and are elements of "old style colonial conquest" in the US's war and its continuing strategy in the region.

Dorman says "The Iraqi military collapse was underestimated by everyone". Let us be honest about this.

That "collapse" came about because of a horrific bombardment of Iraq's cities and population, its army and citizens, by a terrifyingly efficient military arsenal. The Iraqi peoples, not just the regime, were bombed and beaten down.

Iraq's national rights were violated. What the US did after the "military collapse" is neither here nor there. The Iraqi peoples had a right to defend themselves. All the Iraqi peoples, as the Kurds were being bombed too.

Whether they were able to (they weren't, perhaps) or did, again is neither here nor there. Dorman's statement, "If the war was about Iraqi national rights then why did thousands and thousands of Iraqi conscripts refuse to fight and surrender?" contains no political content whatsoever.

The Iraqi conscripts surrendered because they were beaten and kicked into submission.

There were two sides to Iraq's war. One was the expansionist drive into Kuwait by a regional power, the other side was a defence from bombardment and destruction. The brutal toll of casualties on Iraq's side tells us more than an abstract measuring up of categories: "sub-imperialism" versus "imperialism".

Cathy Nugent
London SE15

Of mice, men and genes

Les Hearn's



SCIENCE COLUMN

The birth of a male mouse made the lead in the *Independent* (9 May), the mouse in question having started off as a female.

The story ("Mice embryos' sex changed") is one of those that sounds more interesting than it really is. Nevertheless, the story does have some importance, and the achievement does have wider implications for the understanding of how living things develop.

Behind the headlines lies a long-sought discovery — the gene for the development of the testes and thence the other male sex characteristics. How this gene works could give us much insight into the general way that genes affect the growth of the embryo and into how malfunctioning genes may help cause cancers.

For the first few weeks of growth, human (and other mammalian embryos) do not have sexual differences. The gonads look the same, whether they are destined to become testes or ovaries, and both sets of genital tracts (tubes of various sorts) start developing. Then, obeying some as yet unknown signal, the gonads start turning into male or female organs and the appropriate set of tubes develop further while the other ones wither. What is the source of this signal?

It seems obvious that it is something to do with the "sex" chromosomes, so-called because, unlike all other chromosomes, these are unevenly distributed between the sexes. Females have a pair of X chromosomes while males have only one X, together with a shorter Y chromosome.

Most of the genes on these chromosomes are nothing to do with sex at all. One gene found on the X chromosome

codes for the blood-clotting protein, Factor VIII, faulty in many haemophiliacs. Haemophilia is found predominantly in males because they lack a second X chromosome which might have a normal gene for Factor VIII.

One puzzling finding in the past was that a small number of males possess two Xs while a small number of females possess an X and a Y. Then it was discovered that, due to an accident in the rearrangement of chromosomes that takes place during the formation of sperm and egg cells, the XY females were missing a small segment from the end of their Y chromosomes while the XX males had an extra bit from a Y chromosome on the end of one of their Xs.

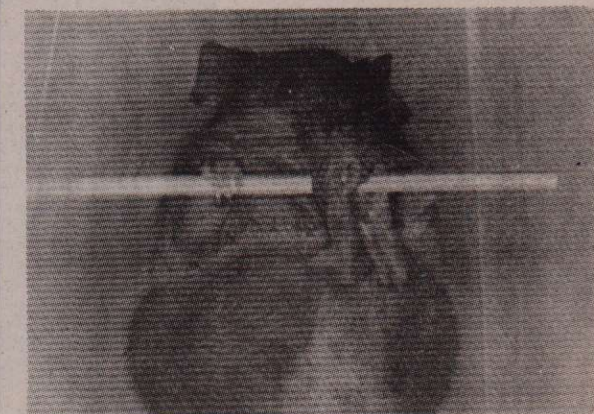
The extra or missing bits were long enough to carry several genes, and these have been studied to see if any of them was the putative "gene for maleness" or testes-determining factor (TDF). One of these genes, SRY (for sex-determining region — Y), has now been positively identified as the TDF.

The experiments reported in last week's *Nature*, carried out by Peter Goodfellow and his team at Imperial Cancer Research Fund labs in London, involved treating hundreds of fertilised mouse eggs, each destined to become female mice, with many copies of the SRY gene from mouse Y chromosomes. Some of these SRY genes were absorbed by the eggs' chromosomes and some of these became functional.

Three embryos developed sex-reversed, of which one was born alive. This is apparently normal, apart from having "exceedingly small" testes, but is, like all XX males, infertile. This is apparently because other genes are necessary for the development of viable sperm.

The SRY gene is therefore not the last word in making males. This point is emphasised by the finding that other mouse eggs absorbed the SRY genes without becoming male. Perhaps another gene controls the SRY gene. Alternatively, perhaps SRY controls another gene. The search for a single gene for maleness seems doomed, despite the success achieved by Goodfellow and colleagues.

One thing that can be ruled out is the treatment of human female eggs to make them turn out male. There are much easier ways of achieving this usually unethical end and, in any case, males produced in this way would be infertile.



The male mouse who used to be female

WHAT'S ON

Thursday 16 May

"Who rules in the Soviet Union?", East London SO meeting. 7.30, Oxford House, Derbyshire St, E2

"The Middle East after the Gulf", Newcastle SO meeting. 7.30, Rossetti Studios, next to Trent pub.

"Socialists and the Labour Party", Oxford SO meeting. 7.30, Room G117, Gibbs Building, Oxford Poly. Speaker: Paul McGarry

Saturday 18 May

Lesbian and Gay conference called by the West Midlands Coalition, Birmingham Council House

Monday 20 May

"Left-wing anti-semitism: myth or reality?", London Socialist Forum. 7.30, LSE, Houghton St, Aldwych

Tuesday 21 May

"Solidarity with the Kurds", South Yorks Area Left Unity meeting. 7.00, Sheffield Poly

Wednesday 22 May

National demonstration to oppose college cuts. Assemble 12.00, The Level, Brighton. Called by Brighton Poly Student Action Committee
National Students Sexual Politics Conference. Sheffield University SU. Details: Steph Ward 0742 722348

Thursday 23 May

"The General Election", Nottingham SO debate between a member of the Green Party and Jim Denham. 8.00, International Community Centre, Mansfield Road

"The struggle for socialism", Sheffield SO meeting. 7.30, Victoria Hall

"Labour and the general election", Leeds SO meeting. 7.30, The Coburg, Woodhouse Lane. Speaker: Ruth Cockcroft

"The new world order and the Kurds", Glasgow SO meeting. 7.30, Glasgow City Hall. Speakers from SO and CARI

Sunday 26 May

"Marxists and national conflicts", Islington SO meeting. 7.30, Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Adam Keller reports from Tel Aviv

Hunger striker demands: talk with PLO!

Abie Nathan, the 64 year old Israeli peace activist, began a hunger strike on Friday 26 April, demanding the abolition of the Israeli law which prohibits contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

On 15 May he is going on trial for meeting Yasser Arafat. He has applied to the Supreme Court to allow safe conduct to PLO members in order for them to come to Israel and testify for him.

He has also asked for official permission for contact with the PLO, in order to prepare his defence.

The Supreme Court have not yet made a decision.

People are worried about his condition. Ten years ago he went on hunger strike for 35 days in protest about the settlements on the West Bank.

Abie Nathan was born in India and is inspired by Mahatma Gandhi. He was a combat pilot in the RAF in the Second World War, then in the Israeli Air Force in 1948. During the '50s he became a pacifist.

He owned a restaurant in Tel Aviv, a very fashionable place where the political and social elite ate. He made quite a lot of money and is accepted in the establishment.

In 1965 he ran for the Knesset, saying he wanted peace with Egypt. He had an airplane and he said that the first thing he would do if elected would be to fly to Egypt and make peace. This was at a time when the Israeli press were treating Egypt's leader, Nasser, as a monster.

Nathan was not elected in 1965, but in 1966 he nevertheless took his plane and flew to Egypt.

He founded the Voice of Peace radio in a ship off the Tel Aviv shore. Lots of young people listen to it. Technically it is illegal but no-one dares to touch him.

Until recently he talked about peace in the abstract. Then in 1988 he decided that the time had come to talk to the PLO. He went and discussed with Arafat.

This was very important — because he is so popular. When he spent six months in prison for meeting Arafat, it was very embarrassing for the government.

I think the government would like to avoid sending him to prison. Last week the speaker of the Knesset, an extreme right-winger, visited him. But Nathan did not agree to stop his hunger strike.

A mass demonstration is planned to support Abie Nathan, in Tel Aviv on 25 May. It could be very big indeed.



Militants feel betrayed by Yeltsin

Soviet miners still say: Gorbachev out!

Socialist Party member
Anatoly Voronov
reports from Moscow

Workers' Liberty 91

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SE15 4NA. Chequest to 'Workers'
Liberty'

Yeltsin has just visited the Kuzbass coalfield and struck a deal with a majority of the strike committees.

Most of the pits have returned to work in Kuzbass and Vorkhuta.

However, there is a minority of the strike committees who do not back Yeltsin. Recently Yeltsin has been seen to be giving support to Gorbachev and his proposals for the Union. The striking miners have been calling for Gorbachev's resignation and some consider

Yeltsin has betrayed them.

The workers in the Kuzbass have returned because the pits in their area have been brought under the Russian Republic's law, and out from the rule of the Soviet Union's government. I doubt that this will yield any real benefits for the miners.

For now the miners have gone back to work. In two months the situation could be very different.

The prices of consumer goods are skyrocketing. But the prices of raw materials do not rise at the same pace. This means an industry like mining always runs at a loss.

The Soviet government compensates for these differences between the general price rise and the rise in the price of raw materials. But now the Soviet Union does not have any money to pay the deficit.

Coal prices are fixed centrally. Obligations to supply coal, for instance to the steel industry, are also fixed. One hundred per cent of the coal is distributed in this centralised manner. Mining enterprises must sell at low prices but buy everything else at high prices.

In the past, the miners have looked to break this centralised control. Coal managers have a small amount of money to pay wages. The salary level is so low that people have to choose between eating and paying for other necessities.

Pavlov, the Soviet Union's Prime Minister, tried to beat the miners by buying coal from abroad. I don't know if he succeeded. I believe that the Polish workers organised an appeal not to sell the coal to the USSR.

The miners have settled with the government of the Russian federation. But at the moment an agreement only exists at the level of promises.

I am sure that Yeltsin has no ability to solve these underlying problems.

The miners are only one of Gorbachev's problems.

Yeltsin has won the political victory and Gorbachev's position has been weakened. Yeltsin is now talking to Gorbachev from a position of force.

Eastern socialists to speak at Workers' Liberty '91

International guests at the three-day Workers' Liberty '91 event include Israel's peace activist Adam Keller, Milka Tyszkiewicz from the Polish Socialist Political Centre, a member of the Socialist Party from Moscow.

Details of other guests will appear next week.

Major sessions will be held on the crisis in Eastern Europe and the emerging new world order.

Jeremy Corbyn MP and Joe Marino from the Bakers' Union discuss "After the Tories — the socialist alternative".

Many varied discussions and debates have been scheduled. There is something here for every socialist interested in debate. Tickets are selling well, right across the country. There are now six weeks left to buy and sell tickets.

A new print run of leaflets and a poster have been produced. For a bundle or for more details about Workers' Liberty '91 contact Mark on 071-639 7965.

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